

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 1 of 98

There will be NO BOYS SOCCER MATCH this Saturday. The match will not be rescheduled at this time. The girls match will be played as scheduled. It will kickoff at 1pm in Groton.

[1- Coming up on GDILIVE.COM](#)

[2- Soccer Program](#)

[3- Homecoming Week Information](#)

[4- Covid-19 Update by Marie Miller](#)

[7- Area COVID-19 Cases](#)

[8- Sept. 18th COVID-19 UPDATE](#)

[12- Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs](#)

[13- Weather Pages](#)

[16- Daily Devotional](#)

[17- 2020 Groton Events](#)

[18- News from the Associated Press](#)

Milbank won its homecoming game over Groton Area, 27-0.

"SURROUND YOURSELF
WITH ONLY PEOPLE
WHO ARE GOING TO
LIFT YOU HIGHER."

-OPRAH WINFREY



GDILIVE.COM



Girls Soccer
Garretson in Groton
1 p.m.
Saturday, Sept. 19

Sponsored by
Jason Roberts and Lisa Pray



OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 2 of 98



High School Soccer

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020

Groton Soccer Complex

Groton Area Tigers

Lt.	Dk.	Name	Gr.
0	0	Jaedyn Penning	7
1	1	Riley Leicht	11
2	2	Elizabeth Flihs	8
3	3	Laila Roberts	8
4	4	Sydney Leicht	9
5	5	Gretchen Dinger	8
6	6	Ani Davidson	11
8	8	Emma Schinkel	9
9	9	Kayla Lehr	8
10	10	Trista Keith	11
11	11	Allyssa Locke	11
12	12	Brooklyn Hansen	8
16	16	Kennedy Hansen	8
18	18	Faith Traphagen	8
19	19	Mia Crank	7
20	20	Cali Tollifson	7
22	22	Madeline Flihs	11
23	23	Brooklyn Gilbert	12
25	25	Regan Leicht	12
26	26	Kenzie McInerney	12
28	28	Carly Gilbert	7
29	29	Jerica Locke	7

Head Coach: Chris Kucker
Asst. Coach: Carleen Johnson
Superintendent: Joe Schwan
Principal: Kiersten Sombke
Ath. Director: Brian Dolan
School Colors: Black/Gold
School Song: Fight On

Garretson Blue Dragons

Lt.	Dk.	Name	Pos.	Grade
1	1	Kayla Genzlinger	G/D	10
2	2	Ava Ockenga	D	7
3	3	Madison Ljunggren	F/M	11
4	4	Brooklyn Trudeau	D/M	7
5	5	Raegen Altman	M	10
6	6	Kaycie King	D	12
7	7	Tori Lodmell	D	11
8	8	Morgan Damman	M	10
9	9	Madison Decker	M/D	11
10	10	Leigha Lacey	D/M	11
11	11	Jordyn Williams	M/F	9
12	12	Jenna Vanholland	M/D	10
13	13	Alyssa Olson	D	7
14	14	Miriam Pickard	D/M	11
15	15	Cassidy Braach	D	11
16	16	Joely Sterud	F/M	8
17	17	Paige Sterud	F/M	11
21	21	Adisynn Fink	M/D	9
22	22	Kirti Pickard	F/D	7
29	29	Cortney Rogich	D/G	8

Head Coach: Amber Williamson
Asst. Coach: Carley Shockman
Superintendents: Guy Johnson/Dr. Summer Schultz
Principals: Chris Long/Drew Bunkers
Ath. Directors: Kevin Steckler/Jeff Dvorak
Ath. Trainer: John Shape/Ol
School Colors Royal Blue/White
School Song Illinois Loyalty

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 3 of 98

Groton Area Homecoming Week 2020 September 21-25

Order of Events:

Please read below for guidance regarding COVID19 recommendations:

- Please plan to practice social distancing during all Homecoming activities. Wearing a mask is recommended and encouraged, especially during any of the indoor Homecoming events
- Here's a reminder of the important, practical steps that we can all take to mitigate the risk of spreading the virus:
 - Wash your hands frequently for 20 seconds with soap and warm water.
 - Stay home when you're sick.
 - Avoid close contact with people – practice physical or social distancing.
 - Wear a mask when you're in public spaces.
 - Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or the inside of your elbow.
 - Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily.
 - Monitor your health.

Homecoming theme is: ALL AROUND THE WORLD (COUNTRIES)

Dress-up Days for

Monday- September 21:

Tuesday- September 22:

Wednesday- September 23:

Thursday-September 24:

Friday-September 25:

MS/HS Building

PJ Day

Country Day

Duo Day*

Class Colors

Spirit Day

Elementary

Pajama Day

Jersey Day

Wacky Hair/Wacky Hat Day

Throwback Day

Spirit Day

* (Examples are Salt and Pepper, or Mustard and Ketchup)

Class Colors for MS/HS: (For Thursday September 24)

Seniors: Black

Juniors: White

Sophomores: Grey

Freshmen: Gold

8th Grade: Purple

7th Grade: Blue

6th Grade: Red

Staff/Teachers: Pink

• Prizes will be awarded for best costumes of the day, chosen by MS/HS English Teachers, Mrs. Gonsoir, and Mrs. Madsen

Parade Marshalls for Homecoming 2020-2021 School Year: Mr. and Mrs. Tom and Barb Paepke

Royalty Candidates for the 2020-2021 School Year:

Alexis Hanten

Regan Leicht

Tanae Lipp

Erin Unzen

Grace Wambach

Trey Gengerke

Lee Iverson

Chandler Larson

Alex Morris

Tristan Traphagen

• Coronation will be held in the old GHS gym on Monday, September 21st from 7:30-8:30pm

• The burning of the "G" will be held directly after the crowning of the new Groton Area King and Queen at the Football Field

Homecoming Parade: The parade will be held on Friday, September 25th, starting at 1:00pm

Football Game: The Homecoming Football Game will be held on Friday, September 25th, starting at 7:00pm

• The FFA will be serving a meal during the Football Game on Friday Night

#208 in a series

Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

New case numbers are higher yet today, not a good sign. We had 49,900 new case reports today, a 0.8% increase. We have stayed below 50,000 new cases for almost two weeks; this is scary-close to that number. The past couple of days could be an aberration; let's hope so because it hasn't even gotten cold yet and flu season is a while off yet, so most of the factors we've expected would contribute to a fall surge aren't even in place yet. We now have had 6,746,100 cases reported in the US. On the other hand, only 701 new deaths were reported today, only a 0.4% increase to 198,443. At this rate, we'll hit 200,000 deaths this weekend or surely early next week.

North Dakota seems to be in particular trouble, setting four records today: New cases totaled 508, active cases were at 2986, hospitalizations reached 77, and daily tests hit 10,006. North Dakota, Wisconsin, and Missouri have had their highest 14-day averages of new cases this week. Missouri has had high per capita new cases and positivity rate as well; 60% of counties reported moderate or high levels of community transmission. The state has also reported three of the four highest-ever days for hospitalizations this week, and it is currently hosting Bikefest Lake of the Ozarks, a weekend event expected to draw some 125,000 people to counties with the highest transmission rates. Eight Wisconsin cities appear on a list of the 20 US cities with the fastest increase in rates, and Wisconsin set a single-day new case record today. South Dakota is seeing sharp increases in cases among 60 and over age groups, an indication that the spike in younger cases in the state is rippling out to those most vulnerable to serious disease and death.

According to Johns Hopkins, we have seven states showing 50% or more growth rate in new cases the week: Wyoming, Utah, Colorado, Arizona, Arkansas, New Hampshire, and South Carolina. There are 23 states showing 10-50% increases: Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Texas, Missouri, Wisconsin, Indiana, Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, Maine, New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, West Virginia, and Florida. There are 17 states plus which are steady: Alaska, Washington, Oregon, California, Kansas, Minnesota, Iowa, Michigan, Ohio, Alabama, Vermont, Maryland, District of Columbia, Delaware, Virginia, North Carolina, and Georgia. And there are four states showing 10-50% declines: Hawaii, Nevada, Illinois, and Louisiana. No states show 50% or greater decline.

From my home state, but I think applicable to others, is an evaluation of the issues facing school boards, administrators, and teachers. As the South Dakota Legislature considers the state's situation—second in the nation for 7-day and 14-day per capita new cases, people involved in education spoke up about the difficulty of trying to manage infections in students and staff. The number of infections has, predictably, grown, and administrators face balancing competing issues: keeping schools open, protecting students and staff, and legal liability for infections that do occur.

I've seen evidence in local news from a few towns of the problems caused by vocal members of the community who choose to endanger others—from a dad at a volleyball game to a community member at a school board meeting—and simply refuse to follow district rules while in their buildings. People who know me are aware I'm not much of a rule-following sheeple-type myself; but I take issue with folks who insist on their rights to the detriment of the well-being of others. The director of the Associated School Boards of South Dakota, Wade Pogany, says, "It's just a nightmare."

The CDC has reversed its recent change in guidance for testing. The original change in the guidance said that people who've had close contact with a case do not need testing if they are asymptomatic, and you may recall that change was met with a great deal of consternation in the scientific and medical community. The new guidance issued today has returned to advising those close-contact, asymptomatic folks DO need testing. Given we know people without symptoms can transmit the infection, it is clearly necessary to test close contacts in order to identify those who may act as sources, so this is welcome. Reactions to this reversal have been, predictably, very positive. So we are once again acknowledging it is necessary to test close contacts of identified infected people.

A new method for specimen collection to test for Covid-19 should prove popular: Instead of those long

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 5 of 98

nasopharyngeal swabs, what I've heard called tickling your brain, we have a method approved in Canada for a so-called gargle method. You introduce sterile saline into the mouth, swish, and spit into a tube. The detection rate with this collection method is similar to that with the nasopharyngeal swab, so this should ease things. It will also ease the supply chain pressure on swabs. It is currently being used in Canada only in children, but I'd expect it to expand to adults and across borders fairly quickly—small thing, but we'll take it.

There's a new coronavirus story circulating in the social media world these days, this one from a Chinese virologist, Dr. Li-Meng Yan. She claims to have "solid scientific evidence" that this virus is lab-created and released into the world as part of a biowarfare plot by the Chinese military, and she has been making the rounds on TV and the online world to push these claims. Thing is, she is wrong. Dead wrong. I am not equipped to say whether she is merely mistaken or deliberately trying to mislead; but she is wrong and her claims are false.

None of these claims is justified by the evidence. There has been thoroughgoing genomic analysis of the several variants of this virus that have circulated, and all signs point to a natural origin and spread. We cannot be 100% sure it did not arise accidentally in a lab that studies animals, but that's not where scientists are placing their bets. And the evidence is strongly against the likelihood it was genetically engineered and intentionally released into the population. I discussed those analyses and the reasons for these conclusions in my Update #42 way back on April 6; if you wish to review the evidence, that post is available at this link: <https://www.facebook.com/marie.schwabmiller/posts/3487224904627224>. Vigilance is needed to avoid being sucked in by false information, and I know how difficult it can be to sort through a lot of sciencey-sounding assertions when you're not a scientist. That's one of the reasons I'm still here and still doing this—to help you with that. I hope you find it useful.

The Sisters of St. Joseph have been in New Orleans for 165 years, ever since the first of them arrived from France in 1855. Their grounds, 25 lightly wooded acres tucked in between Lake Pontchartrain and the City Park, constitute the largest single-owned parcel of land within the city; I cannot imagine what that land must be worth. Thing is, the sisters don't really need all of that property any more. The congregation's 1950s-era house flooded in Hurricane Katrina and then was struck by lightning before it could be rebuilt, so they haven't been living there for some time. And there are only 30 sisters left where there once had been as many as 150. So they don't really need that much property these days, which brings them to the question of what to do with those 25 acres.

Although they are not destitute, they probably could use money. They are by no means rich, but finances don't appear to be an urgent concern. While fewer members and an aging congregation likely mean less money coming in, the Sisters have attained a measure of security by merging with six other St. Joseph's communities across the US. That stabilizing move has given them some flexibility in deciding how to proceed. There have been pressures: Developers were, shall we say, very interested in the property. At the same time, the sisters felt a duty to their community in which they have lived and worked all these years. And something their community needs after the horrors of Katrina and the potential for future disasters on a similar scale, is flood control.

After due consideration of their options, the Sisters made a deal. A local architect who has studied Dutch methods for water management has designed a city park, the Mirabeau Water Garden, for the property, one with paths meandering around lakes and trees at different elevations. This will be a lovely place for residents to enjoy—and will have a huge, complex system for water diversion beneath. This Water Garden on the Sisters' land will have the capability of storing up to 10 million gallons of stormwater, drawing it from the city's drainage system and holding it until the surge has subsided, preventing flooding on a large scale—a real-life example of Beauty taming the Beast.

Don't worry, the Sisters are being paid for the use of their property: \$1 per year. I'm not sure whether payments began immediately or commence only upon completion of the project. I'll let them worry about that since it seems they're living their vow of poverty in a serious way. Root & Vine News sums up this arrangement nicely: "When finally complete, land the sisters still consider holy, rooted in generations of

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 6 of 98

service, will serve the community and the planet, providing an example for other cities fighting to manage water. A land once beleaguered by fire and flood will now in the words of Sister Pat Bergen: 'bless the water . . .'" The Sisters' legacy seems assured.

Legacy isn't always—isn't even best—something you're known for; sometimes it's simply something you've done that matters, even if you leave money on the table. Even if in a few years no one remembers it was you. Something to think about.

Keep yourself safe. We'll talk tomorrow.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 7 of 98

Area COVID-19 Cases

	Sept. 9	Sept. 10	Sept. 11	Sept. 12	Sept. 13	Sept. 14	Sept. 15
Minnesota	81,608	81,868	82,249	82,659	83,588	84,311	84,949
Nebraska	36,477	36,917	37,373	37,841	38,108	38,188	38,642
Montana	8,381	8,468	8,663	8785	8925	9021	9,107
Colorado	59,674	59,920	60,185	60,492	60,907	61,324	61,699
Wyoming	3,483	3520	3559		3,635	3,679	3,723
North Dakota	13,872	14,110	14,443	14,684	15,151	15,577	15,831
South Dakota	15,403	15,571	15,834	16,117	16,437	16,638	16,801
United States	6,328,099	6,359,313	6,397,547	6,452,607	6,486,401	6,517,326	6,555,243
US Deaths	189,699	190,784	191,802	193,177	193,705	194,036	194,545

Minnesota	+383	+260	+381	+410	+929	+723	+638
Nebraska	+502	+440	+456	+468	+267	+80	+454
Montana	+65	+87	+195	+122	+140	+86	+86
Colorado	+187	+246	+265	+307	+415	+417	+375
Wyoming	+58	+37	+39		+76	+44	+44
North Dakota	+71	+238	+337	+244	+468	+431	+254
South Dakota	+105	+169	+263	+283	+320	+201	+163
United States	+28,930	+31,214	+38,234	+55,060	+33,794	+30,925	+37,917
US Deaths	+533	+1,085	+1,018	+1,375	+528	+331	+509

	Sept. 16	Sept. 17	Sept. 18	Sept. 19
Minnesota	85,351	85,813	86,722	87,807
Nebraska	38,970	39,419	39,921	40,387
Montana	9,244	9,431	9,647	9,871
Colorado	62,099	62,686	63,145	63,750
Wyoming	3,762	3,866	3,936	4,009
North Dakota	16,066	16,333	16,723	17,230
South Dakota	16,994	17,291	17,686	18,075
United States	6,606,674	6,631,561	6,676,410	6,726,480
US Deaths	195,961	196,831	197,655	198,603

Minnesota	+402	+462	+909	+1,085
Nebraska	+328	+449	+502	+466
Montana	+137	+187	+216	+224
Colorado	+400	+587	+459	+605
Wyoming	+39	+104	+70	+73
North Dakota	+ 235	+267	+390	+507
South Dakota	+195	+297	+395	+389
United States	+51,431	+24,887	+44,849	+50,070
US Deaths	+1,416	+870	+824	+948

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 8 of 98

September 18th COVID-19 UPDATE

Groton Daily Independent
from State Health Lab Reports

South Dakota recorded five more deaths and North Dakota recorded two more. In South Dakota, three were in the 80+ age group, one in the 70s and one in the 40s. One was female and four were male. Turner County recorded its first two deaths while Meade, Hutchinson and Fall River each had one more death.

South Dakota has 389 positive cases today and 190 recovered. Bennett County had 12 more cases making their total active to 21. Brown County has 22 positive and 15 recovered, Day has six positive cases, Marshall has two positive and two recovered, McPherson had three positive, and Spink has five positive and four recovered.

Other counties in double digits today are Beadle 12, Brookings 10, Codington 24, Davison 11, Grant 10, Hughes 22, Jackson 12, Lincoln 19, Minnehaha 72, Pennington 29, Turner 16, and Yankton 12.

Miner County is back on the fully recovered list.

Brown County:

Total Positive: +22 (1,001) Positivity Rate: 17.5%

Total Tests: 129 (9,616)

Recovered: +15 (868)

Active Cases: +7 (130)

Ever Hospitalized: +0 (36)

Deaths: 0 (3)

Percent Recovered: 86.7%

South Dakota:

Positive: +389 (18,075 total) Positivity Rates: 10.5%

Total Tests: 3,688 (238,466 total)

Hospitalized: +15 (1,246 total). 144 currently hospitalized (+6)

Deaths: +5 (198 total)

Recovered: +190 (15,068 total)

Active Cases: +194 (2,809)

Percent Recovered: 83.4%

Staffed Hospital Bed Capacity: 6% Covid, 49% Non-Covid, 45% Available

ICU Bed Capacity: 7% Covid, 64% Non-Covid, 29% Available

Ventilator Capacity: 5% Covid, 16% Non-Covid, 79% Available

Fully recovered from positive cases (gained Miner):
Aurora 42-42, Mellette 25-25, Miner 19-19.

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): +12 positive, +5 recovered (38 active cases)

Bennett (1): +12 positive, +1 recovered (21 active cases)

Bon Homme (1): +2 positive, +1 recovered (19 active cases)

Brookings (2): +10 positive, +5 recovered (90 active cases)

Brown (3): +22 positive, +15 recovered (130 active cases)

Brule: +3 positive, +1 recovered (15 active cases)

Buffalo (3): +2 positive (4 active cases)

Butte (1): +1 positive (18 active cases)

Campbell: 3 active cases

Charles Mix: +1 positive (18 active cases)

Clark: 9 active cases

Clay (5) +3 positive, +7 recovered (61 active cases)

Codington (2): +24 positive, +18 recovered (185 active cases)

Corson (1): +2 positive, +1 recovered (12 active cases)

Custer (2): +1 recovered (56 active case)

Davison (2): +11 positive, +3 recovered (37 active cases)

Day: +6 positive (15 active cases)

Deuel: +1 positive, +2 recovered (13 active cases)

Dewey: +4 positive, +2 recovered (35 active cases)

Douglas: +2 recovered (16 active cases)

Edmunds: +5 positive, +6 recovered (24 active cases)

Fall River (3): +4 positive (19 active cases)

Faulk (1): +1 recovered (13 active cases)

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 9 of 98

Grant (1): +10 positive, +1 recovered (33 active cases)
 Gregory (1): +5 positive, +2 recovered (43 active cases)
 Haakon: 6 active case
 Hamlin: +1 positive (9 active cases)
 Hand: +2 positive (7 active cases)
 Hanson: +1 positive, (5 active cases)
 Harding: Fully Recovered
 Hughes (4): +22 positive, +3 recovered (135 active cases)
 Hutchinson (2): +1 positive, +1 recovered (13 active cases)
 Hyde: +2 positive (6 active cases)
 Jackson (1): +12 positive (8 active cases)
 Jerauld (1): +5 positive, +1 recovered (14 active cases)
 Jones: 1 active case
 Kingsbury: +3 positive (10 active cases)
 Lake (7): +7 positive, +2 recovered (25 active cases)
 Lawrence (4): +4 positive, +3 recovered (62 active cases)
 Lincoln (2): +19 positive, +17 recovered (172 active cases)
 Lyman (3): 3 active cases
 Marshall: +2 positive, +2 recovered (13 active cases)
 McCook (1): +1 recovered (14 active cases)
 McPherson: +3 positive (9 active case)
 Meade (4): +8 positive, +4 recovered (92 active cases)
 Mellette: +1 positive (5 active cases)
 Miner: +1 recovered FULLY RECOVERED
 Minnehaha (76): +72 positive, +40 recovered (567 active cases)
 Moody: +3 positive, +1 recovered (12 active cases)
 Oglala Lakota (3): +1 recovered (23 active cases)
 Pennington (34): +29 positive, +23 recovered (329 active cases)
 Perkins: +1 positive (7 active cases)
 Potter: 12 active cases
 Roberts (1): +2 recovered (32 active cases)
 Sanborn: 4 active cases
 Spink: +5 positive, +4 recovered (27 active cases)
 Stanley: +1 positive, +1 recovered (5 active cases)
 Sully: 1 active case
 Todd (5): +2 positive, +1 recovered (9 active cases)

Tripp: +9 positive (44 active cases)
 Turner (2): +16 positive (32 active cases)
 Union (5): +6 positive, +5 recovered (52 active cases)
 Walworth: +8 positive, +1 recovered (32 active cases)
 Yankton (4): +12 positive, +2 recovered (76 active cases)
 Ziebach: +1 positive (16 active case)

North Dakota Dept. of Health Report
 COVID-19 Daily Report, September 18:

- 5.8% rolling 14-day positivity
- 5.2% daily positivity
- 508 new positives
- 9,730 susceptible test encounters
- 77 currently hospitalized (+8)
- 2,986 active cases (+273)

Total Deaths: +2 (184)

AGE GROUP OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Age Range	# of Cases	# of Deaths
0-9 years	577	0
10-19 years	1969	0
20-29 years	4508	2
30-39 years	3153	7
40-49 years	2478	10
50-59 years	2403	20
60-69 years	1581	32
70-79 years	786	32
80+ years	620	95

SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths
Female	9273	95
Male	8802	103

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 10 of 98

County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Persons	Deceased	Community Spread
Aurora	44	42	478	0	None
Beadle	691	644	2232	9	Substantial
Bennett	57	35	630	1	Substantial
Bon Homme	74	54	1093	1	Moderate
Brookings	632	540	4130	2	Substantial
Brown	1001	868	6373	3	Substantial
Brule	89	74	966	0	Moderate
Buffalo	117	110	711	3	Minimal
Butte	74	55	1150	1	Moderate
Campbell	7	4	137	0	Minimal
Charles Mix	136	118	1957	0	Moderate
Clark	31	22	499	0	Moderate
Clay	529	463	2182	5	Substantial
Codington	662	475	4313	2	Substantial
Corson	80	67	687	1	Moderate
Custer	166	108	977	2	Substantial
Davison	197	158	3125	2	Moderate
Day	58	43	868	0	Moderate
Deuel	75	62	583	0	Substantial
Dewey	112	77	2701	0	Substantial
Douglas	50	35	510	0	Substantial
Edmunds	78	54	542	0	Substantial
Fall River	85	63	1266	3	Substantial
Faulk	57	43	281	1	Moderate
Grant	85	51	1001	1	Substantial
Gregory	85	41	572	1	Substantial
Haakon	15	9	326	0	Moderate
Hamlin	78	69	906	0	Moderate
Hand	24	15	421	0	Moderate
Hanson	28	23	300	0	None
Harding	3	3	65	0	Minimal
Hughes	290	151	2497	4	Moderate
Hutchinson	68	53	1127	2	Moderate

Groton Daily Independent

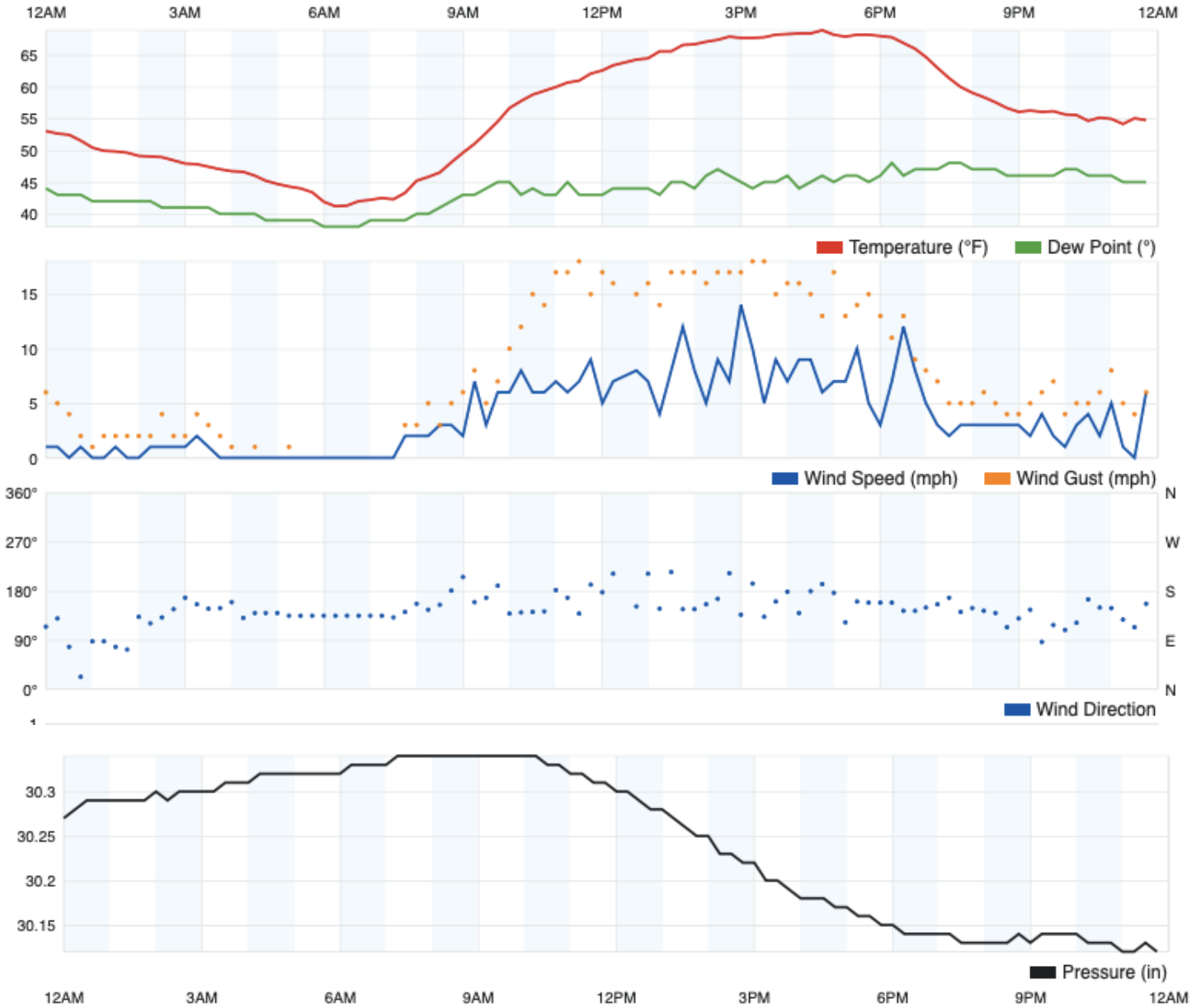
Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 11 of 98

Hyde	11	5	188	0	Minimal
Jackson	20	11	530	1	Minimal
Jerauld	63	48	308	1	Moderate
Jones	6	5	85	0	None
Kingsbury	39	29	733	0	Moderate
Lake	162	130	1187	7	Substantial
Lawrence	312	247	2972	4	Moderate
Lincoln	1169	995	9408	2	Substantial
Lyman	109	103	1151	3	Minimal
Marshall	33	20	602	0	Moderate
McCook	78	63	827	1	Substantial
McPherson	25	16	283	0	Moderate
Meade	430	334	2877	4	Substantial
Mellette	30	25	440	0	None
Miner	19	19	311	0	Minimal
Minnehaha	6105	5462	36222	76	Substantial
Moody	68	56	817	0	Moderate
Oglala Lakota	215	192	3327	3	Moderate
Pennington	1926	1563	14291	34	Substantial
Perkins	28	21	277	0	Minimal
Potter	33	21	402	0	Moderate
Roberts	139	106	2485	1	Substantial
Sanborn	17	15	289	0	Minimal
Spink	97	70	1399	0	Substantial
Stanley	29	24	374	0	Moderate
Sully	9	8	122	0	None
Todd	102	83	2624	5	Moderate
Tripp	72	30	764	0	Substantial
Turner	131	97	1198	2	Moderate
Union	341	290	2488	6	Substantial
Walworth	84	52	1037	0	Substantial
Yankton	335	255	4240	4	Substantial
Ziebach	60	44	487	0	Moderate
Unassigned	0	0	15278	0	

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 12 of 98

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 13 of 98

Today

Tonight

Sunday

Sunday
Night

Monday



Mostly Sunny

High: 77 °F



Partly Cloudy

Low: 63 °F



Slight Chance
T-storms and
Breezy

High: 81 °F



Clear

Low: 53 °F



Sunny

High: 82 °F

Today
Sept 19th
~72-86°

Mild with southeasterly breezes, hazy skies from lofted smoke and dry.

Sunday
Sept 20th
~76-84°

Isolated showers/storms possible during the morning and afternoon. Mild, breezy.

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

Above average temperatures are expected this weekend, and most areas will stay dry as well. However, isolated showers/storms can't be ruled out Sunday morning and afternoon. Hazy skies continue meanwhile.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 14 of 98

Today in Weather History

September 19, 1991: Record to near record cold hit central and northeast South Dakota on this day. Temperatures fell into the 20s during the morning bringing a hard freeze to much of the area. Pierre and Mobridge had record lows of 24 degrees while Timber Lake set a record low of 21 degrees. Near record lows of 28 degrees and 22 degrees occurred at Aberdeen and Kennebec, respectively.

1947: A hurricane made landfall near the Chandeleur Islands, LA on this day. Wind gusts of 112 mph and a central pressure of 967 mb were measured at Moisant International Airport. A storm surge of 9.8 feet reached Shell Beach, Lake Borgne. Moisant Airport field was flooded by two ft. of water while Jefferson Parish was flooded to depths of 3.28 ft. New Orleans suffered \$100 million in damages. Total loss of life was 51 people. As a result of this storm, hurricane protection levees were built along the south shore of Lake Pontchartrain to protect Orleans and Jefferson Parishes from future storm surges.

1947 - The eye of a hurricane passed directly over New Orleans, and the barometric pressure dipped to 28.61 inches. The hurricane killed fifty-one persons, and caused 110 million dollars damage. It produced wind gusts to 155 mph while making landfall over Fort Lauderdale FL two days earlier. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1967 - Hurricane Beulah deluged Brownsville, TX, with 12.19 inches of rain in 24 hours, to establish a record for that location. Hurricane Beulah made landfall on the 20th near the mouth of the Rio Grande River, where a wind gust to 135 mph was reported by a ship in the port. (19th-20th) (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Cool autumn-like weather invaded the Central Rockies. Temperatures dipped into the 30s and 40s, with readings in the teens and 20s reported in the higher elevations. Gunnison CO was the cold spot in the nation with a morning low of 15 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Thunderstorms developing along a fast moving cold front produced severe weather in Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana and Michigan. Eight tornadoes were reported, including five in Indiana. Thunderstorm winds gusted to 74 mph at Wabash IND. Winds associated with the cold front itself gusted to 69 mph at Kenosha WI. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Showers and thunderstorms produced heavy rain in the Middle and Northern Atlantic Coast Region. Cape Hatteras NC was deluged with nearly 3.50 inches of rain in three hours. Syracuse NY reported 1.77 inches of rain, a record for the date, and Chatham NJ reported an all-time record of 3.45 inches in one day. Hurricane Hugo headed for the Bahamas, and Tropical Storm Iris, following close on its heels, strengthened to near hurricane force. (The National Weather Summary)

Groton Daily Independent

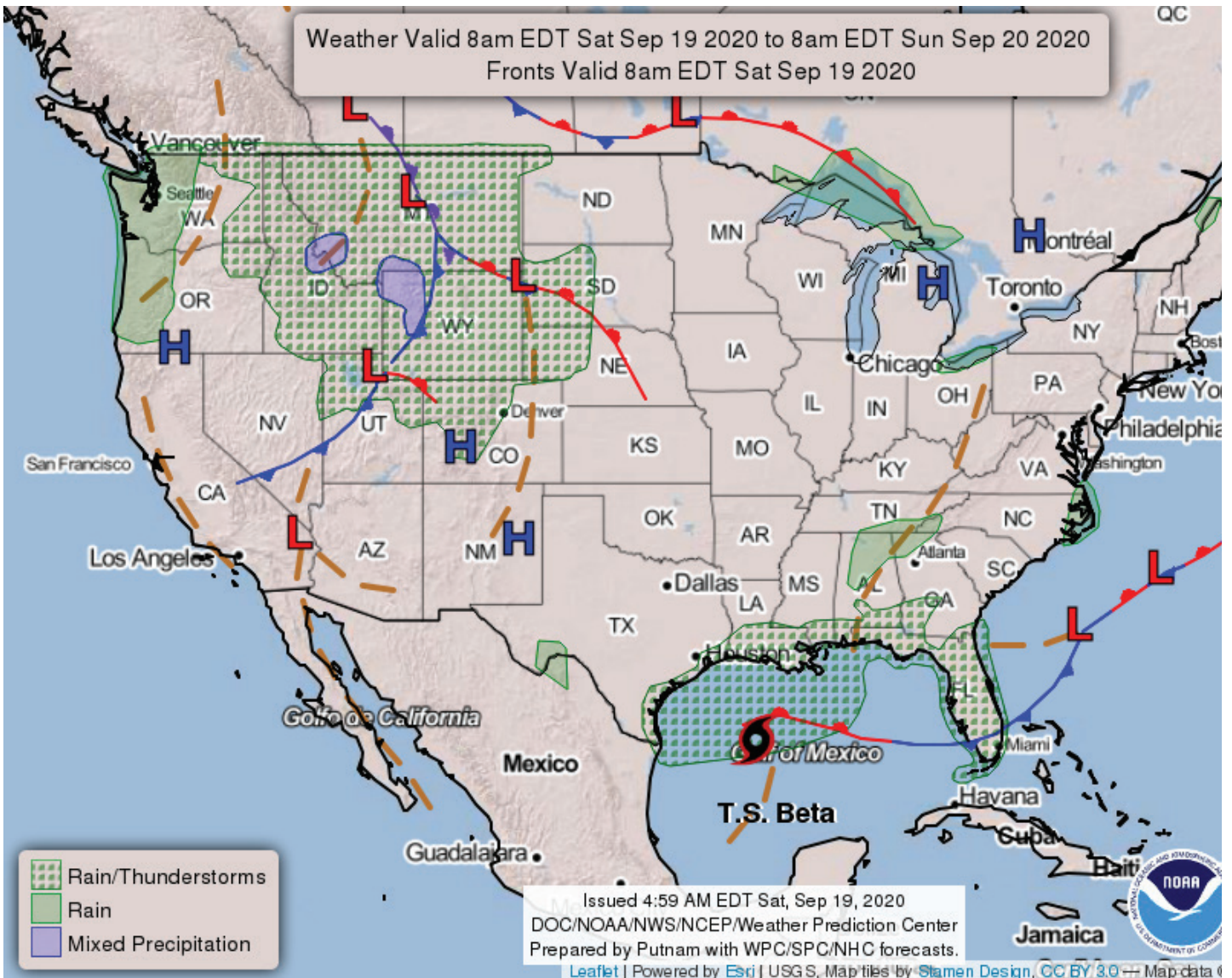
Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 15 of 98

Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 69 °F at 4:40 PM
Low Temp: 41 °F at 6:21 AM
Wind: 18 mph at 11:06 AM
Precip: .00

Today's Info

Record High: 101° in 1895
Record Low: 26° in 1938
Average High: 71°F
Average Low: 44°F
Average Precip in Sept...: 1.34
Precip to date in Sept.: 1.52
Average Precip to date: 17.63
Precip Year to Date: 14.87
Sunset Tonight: 7:36 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:19 a.m.



Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 16 of 98



FROM FARM TO FAME

Grover Cleveland Alexander is recognized as one of the greatest baseball pitchers of all time. His record of ninety shutouts still stands, and his 373 recorded victories has been achieved by only one other pitcher. In 1938 he was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame.

From his earliest days on the farm, his only desire was to play baseball and be a pitcher. Not many know that he began his career by throwing apples and stones at fence posts between chores to sharpen his throwing skills.

One day he bought a few baseballs and nailed an old catcher's mitt to the chicken coop. He would spend every available moment throwing baseballs at the mitt and finally became successful at hitting the mitt nine times out of ten.

During his pitching career, reporters showered heaps of praise on him as his record grew and fame spread. But none of them were ever aware of the many hours he practiced with no one watching or helping him develop the skills that would eventually bring him world recognition.

Fame never comes unless one is willing to pay the price it requires. Hard work is God's plan for all of us. Those who work diligently are the recipients of many benefits in their own lives and the lives of others. God blesses those who develop the skills He gives them.

Prayer: Help us, Lord, to take the gifts You give us with great humility and work with all of our might to develop them. Only then will we bring honor and glory to You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Make it your goal to live a quiet life, minding your own business and working with your hands, just as we instructed you before. Then people who are not believers will respect the way you live, and you will not need to depend on others. 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 17 of 98

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
- **CANCELLED** 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

Officials address drug use in effort to stop homicide spike

By ARIELLE ZIONTS Rapid City Journal

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Betsy Running Shield decided to take action after recent gun violence and a homicide spike in Rapid City.

The 37-year-old's nephew was the victim who survived the Sept. 5 Hemlock Street shooting while her son's friend survived being shot in the head at the same house on July 31. She knows some of the homicide victims and alleged perpetrators as well.

Running Shield, a mother of three, decided to attend community meetings to address the violence and is encouraging everyone to try to help their loved ones struggling with drug and alcohol use.

"Addiction is huge part of why things are happening here," she said. "As a parent and as a grandma we should be doing something because all these problems start in the home."

Other community members, the police department and a criminal justice professor all agree that addressing drug use and other underlying social issues is key to combating the recent homicide spike and all violence in Rapid City.

Rapid City has had 10 criminal homicides this year with seven of them occurring in just over one month, between August 3 and Sept. 6. At least one other death is being investigated as a possible homicide.

This year is the highest number of Rapid City homicides since 2012 beating out the nine recorded in 2015, according to data from the police department. This year's spike is not part of an upward trend in killings, which have fluctuated between two and 10 between 2012 and 2020, the Rapid City Journal reported

Eight of this year's 10 homicides have a connection to drug use or distribution said Captain John Olson, who oversees criminal investigations at the police department. The victim and suspect in each killing knew each other, but none of the homicides are connected, he said.

Olson said methamphetamine is the drug that's most often linked to violence in Rapid City but sometimes heroin and cocaine are involved.

"Bringing firearms into situations involving these drugs is a recipe for violence and victimization," he said.

Olson said it's hard for law enforcement to directly prevent a shooting or assault since they usually happen behind closed doors and police are only called after the violence occurs.

"Doing drugs or acquainting yourself with people who choose to do drugs significantly increases your chances of being involved as either a victim or as an offender of violent crime," he said "This is why it is imperative that the community works together to address the substance abuse issues that affect those in our community."

"It takes early intervention in order to prevent the cycle of violence associated with substance abuse," Olson added. "If a friend or family member is caught up in the cycle of substance abuse/drug addiction, intervene and work to get them the help they need."

Community response

Erick Bringswhite, founder of the I Am Legacy Native American cultural and community center, has hosted three meetings about recent deaths in Rapid City.

Bringswhite, a former gang member who spent time in prison for gun crimes, now works on youth and criminal justice issues. His center, located at the mall, hosts weekly events and provides free counseling for people of all ages.

The first meeting was held at Lakota Homes after two men died there, Bringswhite said. State investigators are looking into the Aug. 11 death of a man that police say died after he set himself and his home on fire while police are investigating whether 22-year-old Brandon Wounded Arrow died by homicide or suicide on Aug. 19. The two other meetings were held at I Am Legacy.

Bringswhite said youth, adults, elders, church leaders and gym groups attended the meetings to talk about the "violence and unprecedented level of fear" while also brainstorming solutions.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 19 of 98

There's a "very high rate of substance abuse and availability here," Bringswhite said. "It's not a law enforcement issue, it's a community issue."

Bringswhite said people who are emotionally struggling turn to drugs to self-medicate, then may cycle in and out of jail, and then may engage in violent crimes. He said many of these people are afraid to seek help so community members need to learn to recognize when others are struggling.

"Nobody is beyond a second chance ... nobody is a lost cause," he said.

Bringswhite said he's planning on hosting more meetings in different housing areas to learn what community members need. He also thinks adults need to show more support and create more programming for youth so he's holding a meeting and meal for young people on Saturday near the skate park.

Woyatan Lutheran Church is hoping to open a youth cafe while the Modern Warrior gym is offering free classes to young people and those struggling with addiction, Bringswhite said.

Running Shield — a full-time, unpaid caregiver for her disabled parents — is raising an 11-month-old grandchild in addition to her 13, 15 and 17-year-old children. She said one of her sons got in a fight in school but the youth diversion program helped inspire him to keep out of trouble.

"I got lucky," my kids like to stay home and be safe, she said.

Running Shield said she attended Bringswhite's most recent meetings because it's sad to see young victims and perpetrators and think about the children who will be raised without parents because they're either dead or in prison.

"There's pain on both sides," Running Shield said.

Running Shield said she agrees that family and community members need to help those who are struggling with drugs, anger or mental health because right now there's a stigma that makes people afraid to ask for help or confront a loved one.

But she also said treatment programs need to be made more available and affordable — that people should be able to receive treatment before it's ordered by a court. Running Shield said she called three inpatient programs for a friend last year that cost up to \$12,000 for those without insurance.

"I know people who would love to go to treatment but they don't have the money, they don't have the insurance," she said.

National context

"That's a lot of homicides to happen in a short amount of time for a city that size," Tom Mrozla, a criminal justice professor at the University of South Dakota, said when told about the seven recent killings.

Mrozla said the entire county, mostly in larger cities, has been seeing an "extreme deviation" in homicide numbers this year, especially since the May 25 police killing of George Floyd.

The murder rate remains low compared with previous decades but homicides are up 24% this year in the nation's 50 largest cities, according to an Aug. 2 analysis by the Wall Street Journal. It found that shootings and gun violence also increased while many other violent crimes decreased.

The homicide spike is so new that researchers are still trying to learn what's behind it and whether levels will stay the same, increase or go back to normal, Mrozla said.

But he said some experts think the killings are linked to stress and economic insecurity caused by the pandemic.

"When stresses add up and many are unemployed, people may turn to illegal means to support oneself, Mrozla said. "When you turn to the underground you might have to maintain that new sort of lifestyle supporting yourself (and) that might increase the likelihood of trying to use violence."

Mrozla said some experts also think the lack of trust in police and the recent uprisings may be behind the recent spike.

People "maybe want to take the law into their own hands with street justice," he said.

Mrozla said he recommends the Rapid City Police Department look at the "focused deterrence" model which identifies repeat offenders and connects them with services as a last chance before there's serious punishment.

He also said governments and the community should "fix those underlying issues" causing crime by funding mental health and drug addiction programs.

Virus doesn't stop South Dakota Special Olympics equestrians

By TRENT ABREGO Aberdeen American News

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — Even though most Special Olympic events have been canceled this year, people at the Special People Using Riding Skills Therapeutic Center in Aberdeen continue to benefit by riding horses. They even had a competition earlier this month.

The Aberdeen center is commonly referred to as SPURS.

With the lack of Special Olympics events because of the COVID-19 pandemic, Melanie Frosch, the vice president of sports and competition for the Special Olympics of South Dakota, noticed while talking to parents that athletes have been struggling.

"What a struggle it is for the athlete right now," Frosch said. "They're bored, not motivated and sad. It's so important that we're able to do something like this. It's hard for all of us, but our athletes don't comprehend it as well as we do, and it's sad."

That's why Frosch and the South Dakota Special Olympics came up with a plan to host the equestrian events in two different cities — one West River and one East River.

"We didn't want our athletes staying overnight anywhere, and we don't want them traveling in large groups, so we decided Rapid City and Aberdeen would be close enough for folks to travel within a day," she said.

It was the third time in 15 years that SPURS was selected as a venue for South Dakota Special Olympics equestrian events, the Aberdeen American News reported.

While the plan was for athletes from across the eastern park of the state to make the trip to Aberdeen, no other teams were able to attend.

"It just ended up being the SPURS group here, which is totally fine," Frosch said. "(The) Aberdeen athletes are lucky they get the opportunity to come out and participate."

Frosch said the athletes who competed were the first to win Special Olympics medals in South Dakota this year. And the might be some of the only ones.

In all, 19 Special Olympians participated. In order to account for social distancing, the competition was broken into three-contestant shifts. Each group was given a specific time slot.

Even though the event included only Aberdeen athletes, it didn't stop Ken Bryan from attending.

Bryan, who lives in Montana, first started to attend the annual equestrian event to take pictures of the competition.

"My public excuse is I come here to take photos, but honestly, I come here to see something you just wanna see in the world," Bryan said. "Every year something different strikes me. Just their focus, drive and last year it was all about grit. In Huron last year it was miserably hot ... It doesn't bug them, they just keep going, keep smiling, the whole works. Just every year it's a different aspect that I benefit from."

Not only does Bryan take lessons away from watching the event, he has also become a familiar face at SPURS.

"It's a family. We always will be. I come out here maybe a couple times a year, but even when we have our masks on we recognize each other," he said.

Another familiar face at SPURS is Lori Westby, who has been at the center for longer than she can recall. Not only has Westby's daughter been involved with the therapeutic riding center for 26 years, Westby is a SPURS board member.

"For our daughter, she can't walk without a walker and now she's had surgeries. But before she did, she couldn't walk because her legs would scissor," Westby said. "When she would get off a horse, she could use a walker and her legs wouldn't scissor. That warm, fluid, slow motion of the horse just gradually worked out all that tension that she has from her cerebral palsy, and I have it on film. It's just amazing what these horses do for the riders."

Carole Weigel, has been taking her son Ryan to SPURS since he was 5. Not only has it helped his coordination, he's also improved his communication skills.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 21 of 98

"The friendship, getting out into the community, the camaraderie of the people and friends, it's just all very beneficial to him," Weigel said.

Riders at the SPURS program are as young as 3 and some are older than 70, according to Linda Ellis, a SPURS board member and volunteer.

A retired counselor from California, Ellis joined the board after she moved to Aberdeen and became lonesome for kids.

By her estimation, it takes four volunteers to get an athlete out of their wheelchair, onto the horse and then to help them ride.

"That core strength is missing, so you need one person walking on either side supporting them so they are able to stay upright and a person leading the horse and someone waiting with the wheelchair. It's a big production" Ellis said.

Athletes in the SPURS program come from different backgrounds including public schools, the South Dakota School for the Blind and Visually Impaired, the South Dakota Developmental Center in Redfield, ASPIRE and Behavior Care Specialists. There are also independent riders.

"Everybody out here is like-minded because they care about being around other people and giving people opportunities and so on," Ellis said. "Some of them are probably more horse people and some of them are people people, but it's a very loving group of people to spend time with developing relationships with the riders and the adults. It's an awesome opportunity."

Friday's Scores

By The Associated Press

PREP FOOTBALL=

Arlington/Lake Preston 36, Deubrook 6
Belle Fourche 42, Hot Springs 12
Brandon Valley 63, Rapid City Central 27
Bridgewater-Emery 52, McCook Central/Montrose 6
Britton-Hecla 14, Florence/Henry 6
Brookings Rangers 43, Madison 14
Canistota 50, Irene-Wakonda 0
Canton 14, Huron 12
Castlewood 41, Colman-Egan 12
Dakota Valley 23, Sioux Falls Christian 21
DeSmet 50, Estelline/Hendricks 0
Dell Rapids 23, Mitchell 22
Dell Rapids St. Mary 46, Avon 8
Deuel 43, Clark/Willow Lake 22
Dupree 42, Newell 28
Gordon/Rushville, Neb. 26, Bennett County 12
Hamlin 54, Elkton-Lake Benton 0
Hanson 52, Bon Homme 13
Harding County 48, Hill City 0
Harrisburg 32, Aberdeen Central 7
Hitchcock-Tulare 36, Waverly-South Shore 12
Howard 57, Chester 14
Jones County/White River 14, New Underwood 12
Langford 52, Northwestern 8
Lemmon/McIntosh 52, Faith 0
Lyman 46, Rapid City Christian 20
Milbank 27, Groton Area 0

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 22 of 98

Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 44, Chamberlain 14
North Border 44, Faulkton 20
Oldham-Ramona/Rutland 22, Wilmot 18
Parkston 27, Tripp-Delmont/Armour/Andes Central/Dakota Christian 8
Platte-Geddes 58, Kimball/White Lake 6
Redfield 34, Webster 6
Scotland 66, Centerville 34
Scottsbluff, Neb. 35, Custer 0
Sioux Falls Roosevelt 42, Rapid City Stevens 0
Sioux Falls Washington 44, Watertown 29
Sioux Valley 44, Elk Point-Jefferson 26
St. Thomas More 41, Spearfish 7
Stanley County 22, Miller/Highmore-Harrold 20
Sturgis Brown 14, Douglas 6
Viborg-Hurley 52, Baltic 20
Wall 34, Kadoka Area 12
Warner 25, Ipswich/Edmunds Central 24
West Central 25, Tri-Valley 8
Wolsey-Wessington 42, Corsica/Stickney 6
Woonsocket/Wessington Springs/Sanborn Central 27, Wagner 6
Yankton 34, Vermillion 21
POSTPONEMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS=
Colome vs. Burke, ppd.
Edgemont vs. Bison, ccd.
Gayville-Volin vs. Alcester-Hudson, ppd.
Sisseton vs. Aberdeen Roncalli, ppd.
Tea Area vs. Pierre, ppd.
Valentine, Neb. vs. Winner, ccd.

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

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Mega Millions

26-29-41-52-64, Mega Ball: 11, Megaplier: 3

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

Estimated jackpot: \$20 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$20 million

As COVID-19 cases rise, South Dakota lawmakers discuss funds

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — While South Dakota reported one of the highest daily tallies for new cases since the beginning of the pandemic on Friday, state lawmakers discussed the economic fallout of the pandemic and suggestions on using federal funds to mitigate it.

The Department of Health reported 389 people who tested positive for COVID-19 along with five deaths. Thursday also brought a near record high for new cases reported in a day with 395. The daily tally has topped 400 only once, on Aug. 29.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 23 of 98

The state has seen a surge in new cases in recent weeks, resulting in outbreaks at a women's minimum-security and prompting high schools to cancel classes and activities. Hospitalizations and deaths from COVID-19 have also been on the rise. State lawmakers were also casting about for ways to address the economic impacts of the pandemic, hosting public input sessions and discussing ways to spend the bulk of \$1.25 billion in federal coronavirus aid.

Over the past two weeks, the rolling average number of daily new cases has decreased by roughly 42, a drop of about 14%. But the state also ranked second in the country for new cases per capita during that time.

The seven-day average positivity testing rate is also just over 15%, which is an indicator that more cases are spreading in the community.

Classes at Pierre's T.F. Riggs High School were canceled Friday after about 150 students were instructed to quarantine after possibly being exposed to people with the virus. School activities like sports, homecoming and arts events have also been delayed.

Meanwhile, state lawmakers appeared to draw closer to giving their OK to a plan to make \$400 million available to businesses affected by the pandemic.

The state government so far has spent roughly \$114 million of the \$1.25 billion it received in the spring from the federal government. The rest must be spent by Dec. 30, the current deadline set by Congress.

Gov. Kristi Noem had proposed grants of up to \$100,000 for businesses that can demonstrate a 25% budget reduction between March and May as a result of COVID-19. A committee of lawmakers responsible for crafting the state budget has offered its suggestions to the plan, which would make businesses with annual revenues as little as \$25,000 eligible.

Noem's administration has taken the stance that it is allowed to spend the federal funds without the Legislature's approval. But lawmakers have held a series of public input sessions this week to discuss how the money can be used and at least offer their input to the governor's office.

Some lawmakers have also pushed for a special session to be called this year, but it does not appear they currently have the necessary support to do that. A special session requires support by two-thirds of both the House or Senate. The governor can also call legislators back into official meetings in Pierre.

Ex-senator pleads not guilty to making false report

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A former South Dakota state senator has pleaded not guilty to making a false domestic violence report against her husband.

Lyndi DiSanto appeared in court Thursday when she entered the plea after being charged by the Pennington County State's Attorney Office. A conviction carries up to a year in jail.

Court records show she and Mark DiSanto, a Pennington County commissioner, are going through a divorce.

Prosecutors say Lyndi DiSanto, also known as Lynne, said her husband assaulted and choked her and punched a hole in the bedroom door when she arrived at their Box Elder home Jan. 6 to collect some belongings, the Rapid City Journal reported.

She also said her husband had abused and threatened to kill her before, but she never called police because he was a county commissioner.

Mark DiSanto disputed that account and said there was no violence during their seven-year marriage.

Lyndi DiSanto resigned from the state Senate last December. She previously served in the state House from 2015 to 2018.

Supreme Court upholds conviction in sexual assault case

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Supreme Court has upheld the conviction of a man accused of sexually assaulting a woman with dementia, ruling that prosecutors didn't have to prove whether he knew she couldn't consent to sex.

A Pennington County jury in 2018 convicted Roger Jackson, now 73, of third-degree rape, which says

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 24 of 98

it's a crime for any person to have sex with someone incapable of giving consent because of physical or mental incapacity.

He appealed his conviction, saying the state should have had to prove that Jackson knew the victim wasn't mentally capable of giving consent and that the state should have questioned the victim, the Argus Leader reported.

The court this week decided that Roger Jackson didn't have to know the 52-year-old woman wasn't legally mentally capable of consenting to be held accountable for the assault.

The justices noted other parts of South Dakota law, including whether a victim is a minor or too intoxicated, where a criminal mindset isn't required to commit a crime.

Jackson befriended the woman when she was at an assisted living facility in Rapid City in 2016 and continued to visit her when when was later moved to a dementia care facility.

Thai protesters rally to push demands for democratic reforms

By TASSANEE VEJPONGSA Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — Thousands of demonstrators defied police warnings and occupied a historic field in Thailand's capital on Saturday to support the demands of a student-led protest movement for new elections and reform of the monarchy.

Organizers predicted that as many as 50,000 people would take part in the two-day protest in an area of Bangkok historically associated with political protests. A march is planned for Sunday.

The early arrivals at Sanam Luang, a large field that has hosted major political demonstrations for decades, were a disparate batch, several with their own flags. An LGBTQ contingent waved their iconic rainbow banners, while red flags sprouted across the area, representing Thailand's Red Shirt political movement, which battled the country's military in Bangkok's streets 10 years ago.

By the time the main speakers took the stage in the evening, Associated Press reporters estimated that around 20,000 people were present. People were still arriving as the nighttime program continued.

At least 8,000 police officers reportedly were deployed for the event, which attracted the usual scores of food and souvenir vendors.

"The people who came here today came here peacefully and are really calling for democracy," said Panupong Jadnok, one of the protest leaders. "The police have called in several companies of officers. I believe they can make sure the people are safe."

Demonstrators wore face masks but ignored a Thursday night plea from Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha to cancel the event, which he said risked spreading the coronavirus and derailing the recovery of Thailand's battered economy.

The core demands declared by the protesters in July were the dissolution of parliament with fresh elections, a new constitution and an end to intimidation of political activists. They have held a series of rallies since then.

They believe that Prayuth, who as then-army commander led a 2014 coup toppling an elected government, was returned to power unfairly in last year's general election because the laws had been changed to favor a pro-military party. A constitution promulgated under military rule is likewise undemocratic, they charge.

The activists raised the stakes dramatically at an Aug. 10 rally by issuing a 10-point manifesto calling for reforming the monarchy. Their demands seek to limit the king's powers, establish tighter controls on palace finances and allow open discussion of the monarchy.

Their boldness was virtually unprecedented, as the monarchy is considered sacrosanct in Thailand. A lese majeste law calls for a prison sentence of three to 15 years for anyone found guilty of defaming the royal institution.

The students are too young to have been caught up in the sometimes violent partisan political battles that roiled Thailand a decade ago, Kevin Hewison, a University of North Carolina professor emeritus and a veteran Thai studies scholar, said in an email interview.

"This is why they look and act differently and why they are so confounding for the regime," Hewison

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 25 of 98

said. "What the regime and its supporters see is relatively well-off kids turned against them and this confounds them."

The appearance of the Red Shirts, besides boosting the protesters' numbers, links the new movement to the political battling that Thailand endured for a large part of the last two decades. The Red Shirts were a movement of mostly poor rural Thais who supported populist billionaire Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra after the army ousted him in a 2006 coup. Thaksin was opposed by the country's traditional royalist establishment.

The sometimes violent subsequent struggle between Thaksin's supporters and foes left Thai society polarized. Thaksin, who now lives in exile overseas, noted on Twitter on Saturday that it was the anniversary of his fall from power and posed the rhetorical question of how the nation had fared since then.

"If we had a good government, a democratic government, our politics, our education and our healthcare system would be better than this," said protester Amorn Panurang. "This is our dream. And we hope that our dream would come true."

Arrests for earlier actions on charges including sedition have failed to faze the young activists. They had been denied permission to enter the Thammasat University campus and Sanam Luang on Saturday, but when they pushed, the authorities retreated, even though police warned them that they were breaking the law.

Students launched the protest movement in February with rallies at universities around the country in reaction to a court ruling that dissolved the popular Future Forward Party and banned its leaders from political activity for 10 years.

The party won the third-highest number of seats in last year's general election with an anti-establishment stance that attracted younger voters, and it is widely seen as being targeted for its popularity and for being critical of the government and the military.

Public protests were suspended in March when Thailand had its first major outbreak of the coronavirus and the government declared a state of emergency to cope with the crisis. The emergency decree is still in effect, but critics allege that it is used to curb dissent.

Royalists have expressed shock at the students' talk about the monarchy, but actual blowback so far has been minor, with only halfhearted organizing efforts by mostly older royalists.

Walmart, Amazon among donors to QAnon-promoting lawmaker

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN Associated Press

Walmart, Amazon and other corporate giants donated money to the reelection campaign of a Tennessee state lawmaker who had used social media to amplify and promote the QAnon conspiracy theory, according to an Associated Press review of campaign finance records and the candidate's posts.

The corporate support for a QAnon-promoting politician is another example of how the conspiracy theory has penetrated mainstream politics, spreading beyond its origins on internet message boards popular with right-wing extremists.

Dozens of QAnon-promoting candidates have run for federal or state offices during this election cycle. Collectively, they have raised millions of dollars from thousands of donors. Individually, however, most of them have run poorly financed campaigns with little or no corporate or party backing. Unlike state Rep. Susan Lynn, who chairs the Tennessee House finance committee, few are incumbents who can attract corporate PAC money.

Though she repeatedly posted a well-known QAnon slogan on her Twitter and Facebook accounts, Lynn told the AP in an interview Friday that she does not support the conspiracy theory.

Walmart did not respond to repeated requests for comment made by email and through its website. An Amazon spokeswoman declined to comment. A spokeswoman for another donor to Lynn's campaign, Kentucky-based distillery company Brown-Forman, which has a facility in Tennessee, said the company didn't know about Lynn's QAnon posts and wouldn't have donated to her campaign through its Jack Daniel's PAC if it had.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 26 of 98

"Now that our awareness is raised, we will reevaluate our criteria for giving to help identify affiliations like this in the future," Elizabeth Conway said in a statement.

Corporate PAC managers typically decide which candidates to support on the basis of narrow, pragmatic policy issues rather than broader political concerns, said Anthony Corrado, a Colby College government professor and campaign finance expert.

"In many instances, you don't have any kind of corporate board oversight or any kind of accountability in terms of review of contributions before they're made," Corrado said. "Some corporations now have adopted policies about the supervision of PAC contributions because of the reputational risks involved in this."

At least 81 current or former congressional candidates have supported the conspiracy theory or promoted QAnon content, with at least 24 qualifying for November's general election ballot, according to the liberal watchdog Media Matters for America.

As of Friday, the candidates collectively had raised nearly \$5 million in contributions for this election cycle, but only eight had raised over \$100,000 individually, according to the AP's review of Federal Election Commission data. The FEC's online database doesn't have any fundraising reports for 30 of the candidates, the vast majority of whom are running as Republicans.

Congress is virtually certain to have at least one QAnon-supporting member next year. Marjorie Taylor Greene, whose campaign has raised over \$1 million, appeared to be coasting to victory in a deep-red congressional district in Georgia even before her Democratic opponent dropped out of the race.

At the state level, the AP and Media Matters have identified more than two dozen legislative candidates who have expressed some support or interest in QAnon.

QAnon centers on the baseless belief that President Donald Trump is waging a secret campaign against enemies in the "deep state" and a child sex trafficking ring run by satanic pedophiles and cannibals. Trump has praised QAnon supporters and often retweets accounts that promote the conspiracy theory.

QAnon has been linked to killings, attempted kidnappings and other crimes. In May 2019, an FBI bulletin mentioning QAnon warned that conspiracy theory-driven extremists have become a domestic terrorism threat.

Lynn said her social media posts do not indicate any support for the conspiracy theory.

"This is the United States of America, and I am absolutely free to tweet or retweet anything I want," she said. "I don't understand why this is even an issue. Believe me, I am not in the inside of some QAnon movement."

But in October 2019, Lynn retweeted posts by QAnon-promoting accounts with tens of thousands of followers. One of the posts she retweeted praised Trump and included the hashtag #TheGreatAwakening, a phrase commonly invoked by QAnon followers.

Between Oct. 31, 2019, and Jan. 9, 2020, her campaign received \$4,750 in donations from Amazon.com Services LLC, BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee's PAC, health insurer Humana, the Southwest Airlines Co. Freedom Fund and Walmart Inc.

"Like many other companies, our PAC periodically contributes to elected officials in Tennessee, including those serving in leadership like Rep. Lynn," BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee spokeswoman Dalya Qualls said in a statement.

In April, Lynn updated her Facebook page with a cover photo that included a flag with stars forming a "Q" above the abbreviation "WWG1WGA," which stands for the QAnon slogan "Where we go one, we go all." In May and June, Lynn punctuated several tweets with the same abbreviation.

And when a leading QAnon supporter nicknamed "Praying Medic" tweeted the message, "Is it time to Q the Trump rallies?" Lynn responded, "It is time!" in a May 31 tweet of her own.

Lynn said she viewed "Where we go one, we go all" as a "very unifying slogan" and didn't know it was a QAnon motto. However, a handful of Facebook users who replied to her updated cover photo in April commented on the QAnon connection. The flag is no longer her cover photo but could still be seen in the feed on her page on Friday.

In July, AT&T Tennessee PAC, Cigna Corporation PAC and Jack Daniel's PAC contributed a total of \$4,000

to Lynn's campaign.

The PACs linked to BlueCross BlueShield, AT&T Tennessee, Cigna, Southwest Airlines and Jack Daniel's had also previously donated to Lynn's campaign before she amplified QAnon-promoting Twitter accounts last year.

AP contacted all of the companies mentioned in this story. Some did not respond to requests for comment and others declined to comment.

Associated Press data journalist Andrew Milligan in New Haven, Connecticut; and Adrian Sainz in Memphis, Tennessee, contributed to this report.

Police: 2 dead, 14 wounded at party in Rochester, New York

ROCHESTER, N.Y. (AP) — Gunfire at a backyard party killed two people and wounded 14 others early Saturday in Rochester, New York, a city that has been roiled in recent weeks by outrage over the suffocation death of Daniel Prude.

As many as 100 people were at the gathering when the shooting started just before 12:30 a.m., Acting Police Chief Mark Simmons told reporters.

Police were still trying to piece together who opened fire and why. Simmons said it was too early to say whether more than one person was shooting or whom the intended targets may have been.

A man and woman, estimated to be in their late teens or early 20s, were killed, Simmons said. Their names weren't immediately released. The 14 wounded by gunfire were not believed to have life-threatening injuries.

The acting chief said no suspects were in custody.

"This is truly a tragedy of epic proportions," Simmons said in a news conference held near the home. "I mean 16 victims is unheard of, and for our community, who's right now going through so much, to have to be dealt with this tragedy, needlessly, for people who decide to act in a violent manner is unfortunate and shameful."

The shooting comes as the city in Western New York has been rocked by protests over Prude's death, caused when Rochester police officers put a hood over his head to stop him from spitting, then pushed his face into the pavement and held him down until he stopped breathing. The details of Prude's death only emerged this month, leading to allegations of a coverup and calls for the arrests of the officers involved.

On Monday, the city's mayor fired Police Chief La'Ron Singletary, who she said initially misled her about the circumstances of the March death. Other senior police officials announced they would retire or leave top command positions.

The acting police chief, Simmons, expressed frustration that someone had held a large, late-night party amid that tumult, apparently in defiance of a state ban on large gatherings because of the coronavirus pandemic.

"This is yet another tragedy where individuals are having these illegal, unsanctioned house parties taking place in these properties, which — number one — is not safe because of COVID, because of the conditions," Simmons said. "And then you add in alcohol and violence and it just becomes a recipe for disaster."

Officers responding to calls of shots fired found "approximately 100 people" running from the scene, Simmons said. Before the call, police were not aware of the party and had received no complaints about noise, he said.

Pastor Marlowe Washington told WROC-TV: "Whoever was the host of this party needs to be held accountable for this."

The wounded were being treated at local hospitals. Two more people were hurt while fleeing, the Major Crimes Unit said in a tweet. Despite the lack of arrests, Simmons said there was no reason to believe the neighborhood was unsafe.

Rochester Mayor Lovely Warren issued a statement asking for "prayers and support for all involved."

"I'm begging everyone to remain calm and exercise deep restraint as RPD investigates what happened

here and seeks those responsible," she said.

McConnell vows quick vote on next justice; Biden says wait

By JONATHAN LEMIRE and LISA MASCARO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The death of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg just six weeks before the election cast an immediate spotlight on the crucial high court vacancy, with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell quickly vowing to bring to a vote whoever President Donald Trump nominates.

Democratic nominee Joe Biden vigorously disagreed, declaring that "voters should pick the president and the president should pick the justice to consider."

McConnell, who sets the calendar in the Senate and has made judicial appointments his priority, declared unequivocally in a statement not long after Ginsburg's death was announced that Trump's nominee would receive a confirmation vote in the chamber. In 2016, McConnell refused to consider President Barack Obama's choice for the high court months ahead of the election, eventually preventing a vote.

The impending clash over the vacant seat — when to fill it and with whom — is sure to significantly affect the stretch run of the presidential race, further stirring passions in a nation already reeling from the pandemic that has killed nearly 200,000 people, left millions unemployed and heightened partisan tensions and anger.

Trump, in brief remarks to reporters after learning of Ginsburg's death, called her "an amazing woman who led an amazing life." He had continued with a campaign speech in Minnesota for about an hour and a half after the nation — as well as aides and many in his audience with cell phones — had learned of her death. He seemed surprised when he spoke with reporters afterward, saying he did not know she had died.

Trump had noted in his rally speech that the next presidential term could offer him as many as four appointments to the nine-member court, whose members are confirmed for life. "This is going to be the most important election in the history of our country and we have to get it right," he added.

Biden said it must be up to the next president, whether himself or Trump, to choose a successor to be submitted for Senate confirmation.

"This was the position that the Republican Senate took in 2016, when there were nearly nine months before the election," he said. "That is the position the United States Senate must take now, when the election is less than two months away. We are talking about the Constitution and the Supreme Court. That institution should not be subject to politics.

A confirmation vote in the Senate is not guaranteed, even with a Republican majority.

Typically it takes several months to vet and hold hearings on a Supreme Court nominee, and time is short ahead of the election. Key senators may be reluctant to cast votes so close to the election. With a slim GOP majority, 53 seats in the 100-member chamber, Trump's choice could afford to lose only a few.

McConnell did not specify the timing, but trying for confirmation in a post-election lame-duck session if Trump had lost to Biden or Republicans had lost the Senate would carry further political complications.

Democrats immediately denounced McConnell's move as hypocritical, pointing out that he refused to call hearings for Merrick Garland, Obama's pick, 237 days before the 2016 election. The 2020 election is 46 days away.

Senate Democratic leader Charles Schumer, in a tweet, echoed word for word what McConnell said in 2016 about the Garland nomination: "The American people should have a voice in the selection of their next Supreme Court Justice. Therefore, this vacancy should not be filled until we have a new president."

Both Trump and McConnell have pointed to appointments to the federal judiciary, including two Supreme Court justices, part of their legacy. Trump said last month that he would "absolutely" try to fill a vacancy if one came up before the end of his first term.

"I would move quickly," Trump said in an interview with conservative radio host Hugh Hewitt. "Why not? I mean, they would. The Democrats would if they were in this position."

While plans were still being formalized, Trump was expected to announce a choice sooner rather than later and may meet with members of his short list in coming days, according to a White House official not

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 29 of 98

authorized to publicly discuss private conversations and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Trump last week added 20 names to his list of candidates he's pledged to choose from if he has future vacancies to fill. He contrasted his list with unnamed "radical justices" he claimed Biden would nominate who would "fundamentally transform America without a single vote of Congress."

Trump released a similar list in 2016 in a bid to win over conservative and evangelical voters who had doubts about his conservative credentials. Among those on his current list: Sens. Ted Cruz and Tom Cotton, former Solicitor General Noel Francisco and Judge Amy Coney Barrett of the 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, in Chicago, long a favorite of conservatives.

The average number of days to confirm a justice, according to the Congressional Research Service, is 69, which would be after the election. But some Republicans quickly noted that Ginsburg was confirmed in just 42 days.

Four GOP defections could defeat a nomination, while a tie vote could be broken by Vice President Mike Pence.

Among the senators to watch are Republicans Susan Collins of Maine, Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, Mitt Romney of Utah and others.

Collins is in a tight race for her own reelection, as are several other GOP senators, including Cory Gardner in Colorado. Murkowski and Romney have been critical of Trump and protective of the institution of the Senate.

Some Republicans, including Collins and Murkowski, have suggested previously that hearings should wait if a seat were to open. And because the Arizona Senate race is a special election, that seat could be filled as early as November 30 — which would narrow the window for McConnell if the Democratic candidate, Mark Kelly, hangs onto his lead.

In a note to his GOP colleagues Friday night, McConnell urged them to "keep their powder dry" and not rush to declare a position on whether a Trump nominee should get a vote this year.

"Over the coming days, we are all going to come under tremendous pressure from the press to announce how we will handle the coming nomination. For those of you who are unsure how to answer, or for those inclined to oppose giving a nominee a vote, I urge you all to keep your powder dry," McConnell wrote. "This is not the time to prematurely lock yourselves into a position you may later regret."

McConnell argued that there would be enough time to fill the vacancy and he restated his argument that the 2016 Senate precedent — in which a GOP-held Senate blocked Obama's election-year nomination — did not establish a rule that applies to the Ginsburg case.

A top aide to a GOP senator confirmed the authenticity of McConnell's email to his fellow senators, which was first reported by The Washington Post.

Under McConnell, the Senate changed the confirmation rules to allow for a simple majority. The Senate's No. 2 Republican, Sen. John Thune, supported McConnell's plan Friday night, though the Judiciary Committee chairman, Lindsey Graham, did not weigh in.

Obama called for Republicans to wait, saying "a basic principle of the law — and of everyday fairness — is that we apply rules with consistency and not based on what's convenient or advantageous in the moment."

One difference from 2016 is that, despite the vacancy resulting from Ginsburg's death, conservatives have a working majority of five justices on a range of issues. When Antonin Scalia died four years ago, the court was divided between four liberals and four conservatives.

The next pick could shape important decisions, including on abortion rights, as well as any legal challenges that may stem from the 2020 election. The 2018 hearings on Trump's second pick, now-Justice Brett Kavanaugh, turned into a bitter partisan battle after sexual assault allegations were made.

Biden has promised to nominate a Black woman to the high court if given the chance. He has said he's also working on a list of potential nominees, but the campaign has given no indication that it will release names before the election.

Democrats believe doing so would unnecessarily distract from Biden's focus on Trump's handling of the pandemic and the economy, while also giving the president and his allies fresh targets to attack. In the

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 30 of 98

hours before Ginsburg's death, Trump trailed Biden in national polling but the race was much tighter in battleground states.

Lemire reported from New York. Associated Press writers Alan Fram, Darlene Superville and Andrew Taylor in Washington, Aamer Madhani in Bemidji, Minnesota, and Will Weissert in Wilmington, Delaware, contributed to this report.

The story has been corrected to change 'like' to 'lock' in McConnell's note to GOP senators.

Underwater and on fire: US climate change magnifies extremes

By SETH BORENSTEIN AP Science Writer

America's worsening climate change problem is as polarized as its politics. Some parts of the country have been burning this month while others were underwater in devastating extreme weather disasters.

The already parched West is getting drier and suffering deadly wildfires because of it, while the much wetter East keeps getting drenched in mega-rainfall events, some hurricane related and others not. Climate change is magnifying both extremes, but it may not be the only factor, several scientists told The Associated Press.

"The story in the West is really going to be ... these hot dry summers getting worse and the fire compounded by decreasing precipitation," said Columbia University climate scientist Richard Seager. "But in the eastern part more of the climate change impact story is going to be more intense precipitation. We see it in Sally."

North Carolina State climatologist Kathie Dello, a former deputy state climatologist in Oregon, this week was talking with friends about the massive Oregon fires while she was huddled under a tent, dodging 4 inches (10 centimeters) of rain falling on the North Carolina mountains.

"The things I worry about are completely different now," Dello said. "We know the West has had fires and droughts. It's hot and dry. We know the East has had hurricanes and it's typically more wet. But we're amping up both of those."

In the federal government's 2017 National Climate Assessment, scientists wrote a special chapter warning of surprises due to global warming from burning of coal, oil and natural gas. And one of the first ones mentioned was "compound extreme events."

"We certainly are getting extremes at the same time with climate change," said University of Illinois climate scientist Donald Wuebbles, one of the main authors.

Since 1980, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has tracked billion-dollar disasters, adjusting for inflation, with four happening in August including the western wildfires. NOAA applied meteorologist Adam Smith said that this year, with at least 14 already, has a high likelihood of being a record.

Fifteen of the 22 billion-dollar droughts in the past 30 years hit states west of the Rockies, while 23 of the 28 billion-dollar non-hurricane flooding events were to the east.

For more than a century scientists have looked at a divide — at the 100th meridian — that splits the country with dry and brown conditions to the west and wet and green ones to the east.

Seager found that the wet-dry line has moved about 140 miles (225 kilometers) east — from western Kansas to eastern Kansas — since 1980.

And it's getting more extreme.

Nearly three-quarters of the West is now in drought, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor. Scientists say the West is in about the 20th year of what they call a "megadrought," the only one since Europeans came to North America.

Meager summer rains are down 26% in the last 30 years west of the Rockies. California's anemic summer rain has dropped 41% in the past 30 years. In the past three years, California hasn't received more than a third of an inch (0.8 centimeters) of rain in June, July and August, according to NOAA records.

California also is suffering its worst fire year on record, with more than 5,300 square miles (13,760 square

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 31 of 98

kilometers) burned. That's more than double the area of the previous record set in 2018. People have been fleeing unprecedented and deadly fires in Oregon and Washington with Colorado also burning this month.

"Climate change is a major factor behind the increase in western U.S. wildfires," said A. Park Williams, a Columbia University scientist who studies fires and climate.

"Since the early 1970s, California's annual wildfire extent increased fivefold, punctuated by extremely large and destructive wildfires in 2017 and 2018," a 2019 study headed by Williams said, attributing it mostly to "drying of fuels promoted by human-induced warming."

During the western wildfires, more than a foot of rain fell on Alabama and Florida as Hurricane Sally parked on the Gulf Coast, dropping as much as 30 inches (76 centimeters) of rain at Orange Beach, Alabama. Studies say hurricanes are slowing down, allowing them to deposit more rain.

The week before Sally hit, a non-tropical storm dumped half a foot of rain on a Washington, D.C., suburb in just a few hours. Bigger downpours are becoming more common in the East, where the summer has gotten 16% wetter in the last 30 years.

In August 2016, a non-tropical storm dumped 31 inches (nearly 79 centimeters) of rain in parts of Louisiana, killing dozens of people and causing nearly \$11 billion in damage. Louisiana and Texas had up to 20 inches (51 centimeters) of rain in March of 2016. In June 2016, torrential rain caused a \$1 billion in flood damage in West Virginia.

In the 1950s, areas east of the Rockies averaged 87 downpours of five inches or more a year. In the 2010s, that had soared to 149 a year, according to data from NOAA research meteorologist Ken Kunkel.

It's simple physics. With each degree Celsius (1.8 degrees Fahrenheit) that the air warms, it holds 7% more moisture that can come down as rain. The East has warmed that much since 1985, according to NOAA.

While climate change is a factor, Seager and Williams said what's happening is more extreme than climate models predict and there must be other, possibly natural weather phenomenon also at work.

Pennsylvania State University climate scientist Michael Mann said that La Nina — a temporary natural cooling of parts of the equatorial Pacific that changes weather worldwide — is partly responsible for some of the drought and hurricane issues this summer. But that's on top of climate change, so together they make for "dual disasters playing out in the U.S.," Mann said.

As for where you can go to escape climate disasters, Dello said, "I don't know where you can go to outrun climate change anymore."

"I'm thinking Vermont," she said, then added Vermont had bad floods from 2011's Hurricane Irene.

Read stories on climate issues by The Associated Press at <https://apnews.com/hub/climate>.

Follow Seth Borenstein on Twitter at @borenbears.

The Associated Press Health and Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg dies at 87

By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, a towering women's rights champion who became the court's second female justice, died Friday at her home in Washington. She was 87.

Ginsburg died of complications from metastatic pancreatic cancer, the court said.

Her death just over six weeks before Election Day is likely to set off a heated battle over whether President Donald Trump should nominate, and the Republican-led Senate should confirm, her replacement, or if the seat should remain vacant until the outcome of his race against Democrat Joe Biden is known. Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said late Friday that the Senate will vote on Trump's pick to replace Ginsburg, even though it's an election year.

Trump called Ginsburg an "amazing woman" and did not mention filling her vacant Supreme Court seat

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 32 of 98

when he spoke to reporters following a rally in Bemidji, Minnesota.

Biden said the winner of the November election should choose Ginsburg's replacement. "There is no doubt — let me be clear — that the voters should pick the president and the president should pick the justice for the Senate to consider," Biden told reporters after returning to his hometown of Wilmington, Delaware, from campaign stops in Minnesota.

Chief Justice John Roberts mourned Ginsburg's passing. "Our Nation has lost a jurist of historic stature. We at the Supreme Court have lost a cherished colleague. Today we mourn, but with confidence that future generations will remember Ruth Bader Ginsburg as we knew her — a tireless and resolute champion of justice," Roberts said in a statement.

Ginsburg announced in July that she was undergoing chemotherapy treatment for lesions on her liver, the latest of her several battles with cancer.

Ginsburg spent her final years on the bench as the unquestioned leader of the court's liberal wing and became something of a rock star to her admirers. Young women especially seemed to embrace the court's Jewish grandmother, affectionately calling her the Notorious RBG, for her defense of the rights of women and minorities, and the strength and resilience she displayed in the face of personal loss and health crises.

Those health issues included five bouts with cancer beginning in 1999, falls that resulted in broken ribs, insertion of a stent to clear a blocked artery and assorted other hospitalizations after she turned 75.

She resisted calls by liberals to retire during Barack Obama's presidency at a time when Democrats held the Senate and a replacement with similar views could have been confirmed. Instead, Trump will almost certainly try to push Ginsburg's successor through the Republican-controlled Senate — and move the conservative court even more to the right.

Ginsburg antagonized Trump during the 2016 presidential campaign in a series of media interviews, including calling him a faker. She soon apologized.

Her appointment by President Bill Clinton in 1993 was the first by a Democrat in 26 years. She initially found a comfortable ideological home somewhere left of center on a conservative court dominated by Republican appointees. Her liberal voice grew stronger the longer she served.

Ginsburg was a mother of two, an opera lover and an intellectual who watched arguments behind oversized glasses for many years, though she ditched them for more fashionable frames in her later years. At argument sessions in the ornate courtroom, she was known for digging deep into case records and for being a stickler for following the rules.

She argued six key cases before the court in the 1970s when she was an architect of the women's rights movement. She won five.

"Ruth Bader Ginsburg does not need a seat on the Supreme Court to earn her place in the American history books," Clinton said at the time of her appointment. "She has already done that."

Following her death, Clinton said, "Her 27 years on the Court exceeded even my highest expectations when I appointed her."

On the court, where she was known as a facile writer, her most significant majority opinions were the 1996 ruling that ordered the Virginia Military Institute to accept women or give up its state funding, and the 2015 decision that upheld independent commissions some states use to draw congressional districts.

Besides civil rights, Ginsburg took an interest in capital punishment, voting repeatedly to limit its use. During her tenure, the court declared it unconstitutional for states to execute the intellectually disabled and killers younger than 18.

In addition, she questioned the quality of lawyers for poor accused murderers. In the most divisive of cases, including the Bush v. Gore decision in 2000, she was often at odds with the court's more conservative members — initially Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist and Justices Sandra Day O'Connor, Antonin Scalia, Anthony M. Kennedy and Clarence Thomas.

The division remained the same after John Roberts replaced Rehnquist as chief justice, Samuel Alito took O'Connor's seat, and, under Trump, Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh joined the court, in seats that had been held by Scalia and Kennedy, respectively.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 33 of 98

Ginsburg would say later that the 5-4 decision that settled the 2000 presidential election for Republican George W. Bush was a "breathtaking episode" at the court.

She was perhaps personally closest on the court to Scalia, her ideological opposite. Ginsburg once explained that she took Scalia's sometimes biting dissents as a challenge to be met. "How am I going to answer this in a way that's a real putdown?" she said.

When Scalia died in 2016, also an election year, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell refused to act on Obama's nomination of Judge Merrick Garland to fill the opening. The seat remained vacant until after Trump's surprising presidential victory. McConnell has said he would move to confirm a Trump nominee if there were a vacancy this year.

Reached by phone late Friday, Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, declined to disclose any plans. He called Ginsburg a "trailblazer" and said, "While I had many differences with her on legal philosophy, I appreciate her service to our nation."

McConnell, in a note to his GOP colleagues Friday night, urged them to "keep their powder dry" and not rush to declare a position on whether a Trump nominee should get a vote this year. "This is not the time to prematurely lock yourselves into a position you may later regret," he said.

Top Senate Democrat Chuck Schumer tweeted: "The American people should have a voice in the selection of their next Supreme Court Justice. Therefore, this vacancy should not be filled until we have a new president."

Ginsburg authored powerful dissents of her own in cases involving abortion, voting rights and pay discrimination against women. She said some were aimed at swaying the opinions of her fellow judges while others were "an appeal to the intelligence of another day" in the hopes that they would provide guidance to future courts.

"Hope springs eternal," she said in 2007, "and when I am writing a dissent, I'm always hoping for that fifth or sixth vote — even though I'm disappointed more often than not."

She wrote memorably in 2013 that the court's decision to cut out a key part of the federal law that had ensured the voting rights of Black people, Hispanics and other minorities was "like throwing away your umbrella in a rainstorm because you are not getting wet."

Change on the court hit Ginsburg especially hard. She dissented forcefully from the court's decision in 2007 to uphold a nationwide ban on an abortion procedure that opponents call partial-birth abortion. The court, with O'Connor still on it, had struck down a similar state ban seven years earlier. The "alarming" ruling, Ginsburg said, "cannot be understood as anything other than an effort to chip away at a right declared again and again by this court — and with increasing comprehension of its centrality to women's lives."

In 1999, Ginsburg had surgery for colon cancer and received radiation and chemotherapy. She had surgery again in 2009 after being diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and in December 2018 for cancerous growths on her left lung. Following the last surgery, she missed court sessions for the first time in more than 25 years on the bench.

Ginsburg also was treated with radiation for a tumor on her pancreas in August 2019. She maintained an active schedule even during the three weeks of radiation. When she revealed a recurrence of her cancer in July 2020, Ginsburg said she remained "fully able" to continue as a justice.

Joan Ruth Bader was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1933, the second daughter in a middle-class family. Her older sister, who gave her the lifelong nickname "Kiki," died at age 6, so Ginsburg grew up in Brooklyn's Flatbush section as an only child. Her dream, she has said, was to be an opera singer.

Ginsburg graduated at the top of her Columbia University law school class in 1959 but could not find a law firm willing to hire her. She had "three strikes against her" — for being Jewish, female and a mother, as she put it in 2007.

She had married her husband, Martin, in 1954, the year she graduated from Cornell University. She attended Harvard University's law school but transferred to Columbia when her husband took a law job there. Martin Ginsburg went on to become a prominent tax attorney and law professor. Martin Ginsburg died in 2010. She is survived by two children, Jane and James, and several grandchildren.

Ginsburg once said that she had not entered the law as an equal-rights champion. "I thought I could do a lawyer's job better than any other," she wrote. "I have no talent in the arts, but I do write fairly well and analyze problems clearly."

The story has been corrected to change 'like' to 'lock' in McConnell's note to GOP senators.

How Ginsburg's death could reshape the presidential campaign

By STEVE PEOPLES Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A presidential campaign that was already tugging at the nation's most searing divides has been jolted by the death of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, potentially reshaping the election at a moment when some Americans were beginning to cast ballots.

For months, the contest has largely centered on President Donald Trump's handling of the coronavirus, the biggest public health crisis in a century that has badly damaged his prospects for reelection as the U.S. death toll nears 200,000 people.

But in a flash, Ginsburg's death on Friday added new weight to the election, with the potential that Trump or his Democratic challenger, Joe Biden, could pick a successor who could decide abortion access, environmental regulations and the power of the presidency for a generation.

With early voting underway in five states and Election Day just over six weeks away, Democrats and Republicans were largely unified late Friday in praising Ginsburg as a leading legal thinker and advocate for women's rights. But strategists in both parties also seized on the moment to find an advantage.

Facing the prospect of losing both the White House and the Senate, some Republicans viewed the Supreme Court vacancy as one of the few avenues remaining for Trump to galvanize supporters beyond his most loyal core of supporters, particularly suburban women who have abandoned the GOP in recent years.

"It's hard to see how this doesn't help Trump politically," said veteran Republican strategist Alex Conant. "Biden wants this election to be a referendum on Trump. Now it's going to be a referendum on whoever he nominates to the Supreme Court."

Multiple Republicans close to the White House believe that Trump will likely nominate a woman, who could serve as a counterweight of sorts to Biden's choice of running mate Kamala Harris, who would be the first woman to serve as vice president.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., pledged to quickly bring to a vote whomever Trump nominates. But he faces potential division within his own ranks, including from Sens. Mitt Romney of Utah, Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, Susan Collins of Maine and Cory Gardner of Colorado. Collins and Gardner are in particularly tight races for reelection this fall.

That's fueling optimism among Democrats that the vacancy could drive home the significance of the election to their base.

"The implications for Senate races could be profound," said Democratic strategist Bill Burton.

"The presidential race will see some immediate churn as activists on both sides will be newly energized," he continued. "The persistent question will be whether huge protests around the Capitol and the country will inflame such vigorous energy that it leads to awful clashes."

McConnell, in a note to his GOP colleagues Friday night, urged them to "keep their powder dry" and not rush to declare a position on whether a Trump nominee should get a vote this year. "This is not the time to prematurely lock yourselves into a position you may later regret," he said.

Biden, who has already pledged to appoint the first Black woman to the Supreme Court, told reporters late Friday that "voters should pick the president and the president should pick the justice to consider."

Democrats are enraged by McConnell's pledge to move forward, especially after he blocked President Barack Obama from appointing a justice to replace Antonin Scalia nine months before the 2016 election. That decision cast a long political shadow, prompting Pete Buttigieg, the former South Bend, Indiana, mayor who mounted a spirited bid for the 2020 Democratic presidential nomination, to make expansion of the Supreme Court a centerpiece of his campaign. Biden rejected the idea.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 35 of 98

Some Democrats privately concede that the Supreme Court vacancy could shift attention away from the virus, which has been a central element of Biden's campaign.

Trump took the unprecedented step in 2016 of releasing a list of Supreme Court picks before he was elected, a move that was credited with unifying skeptical conservative voters to unite behind him. Republicans also believe that the high-profile debate over Trump's last Supreme Court pick, Brett Kavanaugh, helped the GOP retain the Senate during the 2018 midterms, when the party lost control of the House.

The president, seeking to build the same type of energy that surrounded his 2016 bid, released another list of potential Supreme Court nominees last week.

But some Democrats said the political environment is already overheated, with partisan divides over everything from wearing a mask to curb the pandemic to addressing climate change. Ginsburg's death, they say, may not change that.

"It's already pretty ugly out there," said Megan Jones, a Democratic strategist who worked for former Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid. "I do not know how this does not become a fight of epic proportions."

Associated Press writers Andrew Taylor in Washington, Michelle Price in Las Vegas, Nicholas Riccardi in Denver and Bill Barrow in Atlanta contributed to this report.

The story has been corrected to change 'like' to 'lock' in McConnell's note to GOP senators.

AP FACT CHECK: Trump's virus revisionism; Biden on the hoax

By HOPE YEN and CALVIN WOODWARD Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — After months of mass death and sickness, what could possibly count as a success story against the pandemic?

President Donald Trump would have you believe Americans are already living that success story, even as the death toll approaches 200,000 and infections spread by the tens of thousands a day.

Trump's latest revisionism on the pandemic came during a week when he unleashed a torrent of misbegotten claims about mail-in voting, a monthslong preoccupation growing more intense with the approach of the Nov. 3 election.

While Democratic presidential rival Joe Biden laid out a broad and largely supported case that Trump has underplayed the severity of the pandemic, the devil was in the details: No, Trump did not call the coronavirus a hoax.

A review:

PANDEMIC

TRUMP: "If you look at what we've done and all of the lives that we've saved ... this was our prediction, that if we do a really good job, we'll be at about a hundred and — 100,000 to 240,000 deaths. And we're below that substantially, and we'll see what comes out. But that would be if we did the good job. If the not-so-good job was done, you'd be between 1.5 million — I remember these numbers so well — and 2.2 million." — news conference Wednesday.

THE FACTS: He's glossing over grim numbers and wrongly describing the scientific projections.

First and most notably, the U.S. is not running "substantially" below projections that 100,000 to 240,000 would die from COVID-19. The death toll is close to 200,000 and the pandemic is far from over. Tens of thousands of new infections are being reported each day.

The White House and federal public health authorities have often pointed to the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation at the University of Washington as a source for their pandemic projections. The institute now forecasts more than 415,000 U.S. deaths from COVID-19 by Jan. 1.

In early April, U.S. officials estimated at least 100,000 would die from the pandemic even if all conceivable steps were taken against it — a thorough and enduring lockdown, full use of masks and more. A death toll up to 240,000 assumed aggressive mitigation.

Trump has often cited a potential death toll of 2.2 million or so — a number that puts the reality of sev-

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 36 of 98

eral hundred thousand deaths in a better light. He uses it to claim to have saved many lives. But such an extreme projection was merely a baseline if nothing at all were done to fight the pandemic. It was never, as he claimed, an expected death toll if "the not-so-good job was done."

At an April 1 briefing, when Trump and his officials discussed the projection of 100,000 to 240,000 deaths, the president held out hope of keeping deaths under 100,000. "I think we're doing better than that."

Now he's trying to move the goal posts and have the public consider anything under 240,000 deaths a success.

TRUMP: "We'll have manufactured at least 100 million vaccine doses before the end of the year." — news conference Friday.

TRUMP: "We expect to have enough vaccine for every American by April." — news conference Friday.

THE FACTS: Don't count on this.

Even if one or more vaccines is authorized for emergency use by the end of this year, those numbers stretch credulity.

Public authorities are so certain there will be only limited doses at first that they're developing plans to triage them for people who need it the most, such as health workers. In a distribution plan released this past week, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's best-case option was that 35 million to 45 million doses would be available by the end of December if two of the leading candidates both proved safe and effective. And those candidates require two doses, three weeks to four weeks apart.

Having enough vaccine for everyone — whenever that may be — is different from getting it into people's arms. Plans for how to accomplish that are still being worked out.

Trump is pushing hard to have a vaccine announced before the election or at least to convince people that such an outcome is possible. But federal health officials and scientists have signaled or outright stated that that is unlikely.

BIDEN VIDEO: "Trump in public: 'Hoax.' Trump in private: 'Killer.'" — video tweeted by Biden on Tuesday.

BIDEN VIDEO, showing Trump saying at a Feb. 28 campaign rally in South Carolina: "The coronavirus — and this is their new hoax."

THE FACTS: The accusation is misleading. So is the selective video editing that made it appear Trump was calling the coronavirus a "new hoax."

At the rally featured in the video, Trump actually said the phrases "the coronavirus" and "this is their new hoax" at separate points. Although his meaning is difficult to discern, the broader context of his words shows he was railing against Democrats for their denunciations of his administration's coronavirus response.

"Now the Democrats are politicizing the coronavirus," he said. "You know that, right? Coronavirus. They're politicizing it." He meandered briefly to the subject of the messy Democratic primary in Iowa, then the Russia investigation before returning to the pandemic. "They tried the impeachment hoax. ... And this is their new hoax."

Asked at a news conference the next day to clarify his remarks, Trump made clear he was not referring to the coronavirus itself as a hoax.

"No, no, no," he said. "'Hoax' referring to the action that they take to try and pin this on somebody, because we've done such a good job. The hoax is on them, not -- I'm not talking about what's happening here. I'm talking what they're doing. That's the hoax."

He continued: "Certainly not referring to this. How could anybody refer to this? This is very serious stuff."

The video's reference to "Trump in private" calling the virus a "killer" comes from the president's interview in April with author and journalist Bob Woodward, whose new book "Rage" contains Trump's acknowledgment that he was playing down the virus threat in public, so as to avoid panic.

But it is incorrect for Biden to suggest, as the video does, that Trump insisted the virus was a hoax before ultimately acknowledging to the author in April that it was deadly and serious.

Trump on several occasions before that did refer publicly to the virus as a "plague" and a "killer," while

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 37 of 98

also falsely dismissing it as something that would go away on its own, in hot weather or otherwise.

VOTING

TRUMP: "There's going to be fraud. It's a disaster. This is going to be the scam of all time." — news conference Friday.

TRUMP: "The big Unsolicited Ballot States should give it up NOW, before it is too late, and ask people to go to the Polling Booths and, like always before, VOTE. Otherwise, MAYHEM!!! Solicited Ballots (absentee) are OK." — tweet Thursday.

THE FACTS: Trump is overstating the potential for "mayhem" and fraud in "big unsolicited ballot states." There is no such thing as an "unsolicited" ballot. Five states routinely send ballots to all registered voters so they can choose to vote through the mail or in person. Four other states and the District of Columbia will be adopting that system in November, as will almost every county in Montana. Election officials note that, by registering to vote, people are effectively requesting a ballot, so it makes no sense to call the materials sent to them "unsolicited."

More broadly speaking, voter fraud has proved exceedingly rare. The Brennan Center for Justice in 2017 ranked the risk of ballot fraud at 0.00004% to 0.0009%, based on studies of past elections.

In the five states that regularly send ballots to all voters who have registered, there have been no major cases of fraud or difficulty counting the votes.

TRUMP: "Because of the new and unprecedented massive amount of unsolicited ballots which will be sent to 'voters', or wherever, this year, the Nov 3rd Election result may NEVER BE ACCURATELY DETERMINED, which is what some want." — tweet Thursday.

THE FACTS: It's highly unlikely that any chaos in states with universal mail-in voting will cause the election result to "never be accurately determined."

The five states that already have such balloting have had time to strengthen their systems, while four new states adopting it — California, New Jersey, Nevada and Vermont — have not. Of those nine states, only Nevada is a battleground, worth six electoral votes and only likely to be pivotal in a national presidential deadlock. The others, including the District of Columbia, are overwhelmingly Democratic.

The main states that are being contested — Arizona, Florida, Michigan, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin — only send mail ballots to voters who request them. Trump said Thursday that such "solicited" ballots are absolutely "OK."

Trump frequently blasts mail-in voting as flawed and fraudulent while insisting that mail ballots in certain states such as Florida, a must-win state for him, are fine. But mail-in ballots are cast in the same way as what Trump refers to as "absentee" mail ballots, with the same level of scrutiny such as signature verification in many states. In court filings, the Trump campaign has acknowledged that mail-in and absentee ballots are legally interchangeable terms.

States nationwide expect a surge in mail-in voting due to the coronavirus threat.

TRUMP: "Unsolicited Ballots are uncontrollable, totally open to ELECTION INTERFERENCE by foreign countries, and will lead to massive chaos and confusion!" — tweet Thursday.

THE FACTS: Mail-in ballots aren't the biggest risk for foreign interference.

Trying to influence a federal election through mail-in ballots would probably mean paying thousands of U.S. citizens, carefully selected in pivotal states, who are willing to conspire with a foreign government and risk detection and prosecution.

Far easier and cheaper would be a social media campaign seeking to discourage certain groups of people from voting, which is something the FBI has warned about. Or a cyberattack on voter registration data that would eliminate certain voters from the rolls. That could cause havoc at polling places or election offices as officials attempt to count ballots from people who are "missing" from their voter databases.

Attorney General Bill Barr has raised the possibility that a "foreign country could print up tens of thou-

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 38 of 98

sands of counterfeit ballots." He argued they would be hard to detect, but that's been disputed by election experts.

Mail-in ballots are printed on special paper and must be formatted correctly in order to be processed and counted. Ballots are specific to each precinct, often with a long list of local races, and would be identified as fraudulent if everything didn't match precisely.

TRUMP: "The Governor of Nevada worked very hard to cancel all of our venues. Despite the fact that he controls the state, he failed, but would have rather done rally outside. Can you imagine this man is in charge ... of the Ballots in Nevada!? Not fair, Rigged Election!" — tweets Monday.

THE FACTS: You don't have to imagine that man being in charge of the election because he isn't.

Whatever his beef with Nevada's Democratic Gov. Steve Sisolak, the governor isn't running the state's new all-mail election in November. That responsibility falls to Nevada's secretary of state, Barbara Cegavske. She is a Republican.

ABORTION

TRUMP, on Virginia's governor: "He is in favor of executing babies after birth - this isn't late-term abortion, this is a step way beyond!" — tweet Friday, when advance voting opened in Virginia.

THE FACTS: This a gross distortion of Democratic Gov. Ralph Northam's position on late-term abortion. Northam brought trouble on himself with ambiguous comments on the subject but he has certainly not called for executing babies, which is a crime.

It is not necessarily a crime to forgo sophisticated medical intervention in cases where severe fetal abnormalities leave a newborn with no chance of survival. This has happened on rare occasions in the course of a late-term abortion. The U.S. government recorded 143 deaths between 2003 and 2014 involving infants born alive during attempted abortions.

This is the subject Northam addressed more than a year ago in a radio interview when he expressed support for state legislation that would allow late-term abortions. He said if a woman were to want an abortion as she's going into labor, the baby would be delivered and "resuscitated if that's what the mother and the family desired, and then a discussion would ensue" between doctors and the mother. He did not elaborate on the circumstances or what the discussion would be.

Organizations representing obstetricians and gynecologists say laws already provide protections to every healthy newborn, whether born during a failed abortion or under other circumstances.

But when anomalies are so severe that a newborn would die soon after birth, a family may choose what's known as palliative care or comfort care. This might involve allowing the baby to die naturally without medical intervention.

Similar decisions about whether to extend life support in hopeless cases are faced by the families of patients of any age. When families decide not to continue medical intervention in such a case, they are not "executing" the patient.

OBAMA'S NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

TRUMP: "You know, Obama came into office, they gave him the Nobel Prize, like almost immediately, right? In fact, he didn't even know why he got it. He didn't even know. He had no idea why he got it and he was right about that because nobody else does either. They still don't know." -- rally in Minden, Nevada, Sept. 12.

TRUMP: "But it's true, Obama got it for no reason whatsoever." -- rally in Henderson, Nevada, Sept. 13.

Neither of Trump's oft-stated assertions about Obama and his Nobel Peace Prize is true. The Nobel committee announced Obama as recipient of the prize on Oct. 9, 2009, nearly nine months after his inauguration -- that's not "almost immediately."

As far as the reason for awarding the prize to Obama, the committee was quite clear in its 258-word statement issued 11 years ago, which focused on "his extraordinary efforts to strengthen international diplomacy and cooperation between peoples" and noted in particular "Obama's vision of and work for a

world without nuclear weapons.”

“Only very rarely has a person to the same extent as Obama captured the world’s attention and given its people hope for a better future,” the committee said in its statement.

To be sure, the prize reflected aspirations more than accomplishments. When Obama was asked later why he got the prize, he did say: “To be honest, I don’t know.” He said they give those prizes “to just about anybody these days.” He was making self-deprecating jokes, which Trump turned against him at his rally.

But agree or disagree with the committee’s decision, it gave its reasons for honoring Obama.

Associated Press writers Nicholas Riccardi in Denver and Lauran Neergaard, Eric Tucker and Douglass K. Daniel in Washington contributed to this report.

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

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First Native American racer blazes trail at Tour de France

By JOHN LEICESTER AP Sports Writer

LE PECQ, France (AP) — A late draft to the Tour de France, Neilson Powless didn’t have time to scramble together a turtle necklace, the spirit animal of his Native American tribe, or paint one of their wampum bead belts on the frame of the bike that he’s ridden for three punishing weeks, over 3,300 kilometers (2,000 miles) of roads.

But although unable to carry the Oneida Tribe’s symbols with him, the Tour rookie has become a powerful symbol himself as the first tribally recognized Native North American to have raced in the 117-year-old event.

Not only has Powless survived cycling’s greatest and most grueling race, he distinguished himself in a crop of exciting young talents who helped set this Tour alight. Crossing the finish in Paris on Sunday will, he hopes, resonate on reservations back in the United States.

“My main hope is that I can be a positive role model for young indigenous kids who have a lot going against them,” Powless, who turned 24 during the race, told The Associated Press. “I think finishing the Tour de France is a testament to years of hard work and dedication to a lifelong dream. Hopefully I can help drive kids to setting their mind to a goal and going after it.”

“It must make it a lot easier when you can see somebody else who is doing it, or has done it,” he adds.

Word of Powless’ feats in France has already filtered back to the Oneida Nation in Wisconsin. The tribal chairman, Tehassi Hill, says the cyclist is blazing “a trail of journey, hope and inspiration.”

“Whenever one of our own, from the Oneida community, are in the spotlight, it definitely does not go unnoticed. Neilson’s journey and accomplishments I’m sure are spoken of at many gatherings here in Oneida,” Hill told the AP.

“Even during a pandemic, he did not falter or give up on his dreams,” the Oneida leader added. “This is an important message not only to our youth here in Oneida, but to everyone in our community.”

Powless traces his Oneida heritage back to his grandfather, Matthew Powless. The ex-U.S. Army paratrooper lived on the Stockbridge-Munsee Reservation in Wisconsin. He coached boxing and occasionally showed off his tribal smoke-dancing skills to his grandson. He died at age 80 in 2015.

“I saw him dance once or twice when I was younger, but I wish I could have watched him more,” says Powless, who grew up in Roseville, California. “He tried to get me into boxing for a few years and I would train at the gym he coached at sometimes when we would visit.”

The good news for American cycling is that Powless saw his future on a bike, instead. His main job at this Tour has been to ride in support of his team leader, veteran Colombian rider Rigoberto Uran. But Powless has also shown off his own strengths, particularly on arduous climbs. On Stage 6, his birthday,

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 40 of 98

he was part of a small group that powered to the front of the race in a fight on the slopes of the Mont Aigoual, with stunning views across southern France. He placed fourth at the top.

"An amazing experience," he says. "The win would have been nice."

He distinguished himself again two days later, placing fifth on the brutal Stage 8 of climbing in the Pyrenees.

"This Tour will be a massive point of growth for him," Jonathan Vaughters, his boss at the EF Pro Cycling team, told the AP. "Where that heads him is still unknown. But he certainly is coming out of the Tour a much better rider than he went in."

The Tour confirms he is its first Native North American competitor. The cyclist hasn't made a fuss of his heritage. Vaughters says he only found out that Powless is one-quarter Oneida from the rider's dad just days before he took the Tour start on Aug. 29.

Still, when pressed, Powless proudly points out that he has a tribal ID recognizing him as one of the 16,500 Oneida members.

"The tribe has helped me financially with schooling. I have family on the reservation," he says. "It's not that I just had a blood test one day and decided 'Oh, I guess I'm Native American.' It is something I have, like, sort of grown up with and it has been part of my whole life and the tribe recognizes that as well."

Told just days before the Tour that he was on the team, Powless says he didn't have time to discreetly decorate his bike or source a replacement for the turtle necklace he broke last year.

Still, based on his performances, he'll surely be back and able to fix that at future Tours.

"Normally I would have a painting of the Oneida bead belt, the wampum belt, somewhere on my bike, my garment, my shoe," he said. "Just something really small, most people wouldn't even really see it. It's just something that I have always tried to keep close to me."

More Tour de France coverage: <https://apnews.com/tag/TourdeFrance> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Flowers, homemade signs by high court in Ginsburg tribute

By MICHAEL BALSAMO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Mourners dropped off bouquets and gathered outside the Supreme Court early Saturday in quiet tribute to the late Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Homemade cardboard signs and a collection of flowers blanketed the court's grounds.

Hours earlier, hundreds of people had turned out after hearing of Ginsburg's death. They wept and sang in a candlelight vigil, packing the high court's steps in a spontaneous memorial.

Scores of candles flickered in the nighttime wind as people knelt to leave flowers, American flags and handwritten condolence messages for Ginsburg, who died of metastatic pancreatic cancer at age 87 after 27 years on the court. Prayer candles with Ginsburg's photo on them were also left on the steps.

Several times, dozens in the crowd broke out into song, singing "Amazing Grace" and "This Land is Your Land" as others embraced one another and wiped tears from their eyes. At one point, the crowd broke into a thunderous applause — lasting for about a minute — for Ginsburg.

"Thank you RBG," one sign read. On the sidewalk, "RBG" was drawn inside a pink chalk heart.

Jennifer Berger, 37, said she felt compelled to join the large crowd that gathered to pay tribute to Ginsburg's life.

"I think it is important for us to recognize such a trailblazer," she said. "It is amazing to see how many people are feeling this loss tonight and saying goodbye."

Ginsburg spent her final years on the bench as the unquestioned leader of the court's liberal wing and became something of a rock star to her admirers. Young women especially seemed to embrace the court's Jewish grandmother, affectionately calling her the Notorious RBG, for her defense of the rights of women and minorities.

The memorial service remained mostly peaceful and somber, but turned tense for several minutes after a man with a megaphone approached people in the crowd and began to chant that "Roe v. Wade is dead,"

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 41 of 98

a reference to the landmark Supreme Court ruling establishing abortion rights nationwide.

A large group confronted the man, leading to a brief shouting match. Many in the crowd began yelling "RBG" to try to drown out the man's voice as he continued to say Republicans would push to quickly appoint a conservative justice to the court. Supreme Court police officers stood alongside the crowd and the man eventually left the area.

The Latest: 2 more college football games postponed by virus

By The Associated Press undefined

NEW YORK — Two more college football games on Saturday have been postponed because of the coronavirus.

Baylor's season opener against Houston and Florida Atlantic's opener against Georgia Southern have been affected by positive tests. Baylor says its unable to meet the Big 12 roster threshold of a minimum of 53 players available to play.

There's now been 16 Bowl Subdivision games postponed or canceled because of virus issues since Aug. 26.

The pandemic has impacted college basketball, with the start date delayed until Nov. 25. The marquee basketball tournament on Maui has been moved to North Carolina. Meanwhile, the Pac-12 is considering getting back into fall football.

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

- India adds 93,337 new confirmed infections in past 24 hours
- Coronavirus spurs \$7B push for technology in German schools
- University of Colorado has students move out of dorms to provide more isolation housing after virus spike
- Can mandatory masks offer enough protection in lecture halls so packed that late arrivals have to sit on the floor? That's what worries many students at the centuries-old Sorbonne University in Paris with the coronavirus on the rebound across France.
- New nationwide lockdown restrictions in England appear to be on the cards soon as the British government targeted more areas to suppress sharp spike in new coronavirus infections.
- Hungary's prime minister says the government has drawn up a "war plan" to defend against the new wave of the coronavirus and that the country's health care system is prepared to handle more cases.

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

HERE'S WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING:

BERLIN — German Chancellor Angela Merkel says the coronavirus pandemic has highlighted the need for massive upgrades of school technology around the country.

Merkel said Saturday during her weekly video podcast that teachers were left scrambling to teach courses virtually when schools closed at the start of the country's outbreak. She says that underscored how important digital media and other tools are but also exposed widespread infrastructure failings.

The German leader said: "That is why we have to push ahead with the digitization of schools at full speed. We need this as an indispensable addition to face-to-face teaching."

Merkel says the government is committing 6 billion euros (\$7.1 billion) to support the development of digital learning and infrastructure in schools. She says all schools need high-speed internet access as soon as possible and teachers need computers suitable for providing digital lessons.

Germany's schools have reopened and students have returned to in-class learning, but officials have cautioned that the country needs to be better prepared in case virus case numbers spike again.

NEW DELHI — India has maintained its surge in coronavirus cases, adding 93,337 new confirmed infections in the past 24 hours.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 42 of 98

The Health Ministry on Saturday raised the nation's caseload to more than 5.3 million out of the nearly 1.4 billion people. It said 1,247 more people died in the past 24 hours for a total of 85,619. The country has over a million active cases with about 80% recovery rate.

India has been reporting the highest single-day rise in the world every day for more than five weeks. It's expected to become the pandemic's worst-hit country within weeks, surpassing the United States.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government has faced scathing criticism from opposition lawmakers in India's Parliament for its handling of the pandemic amid a contracting economy leaving millions jobless.

More than 10 million migrant workers, out of money and fearing starvation, poured out of cities and headed back to villages when Modi ordered the nationwide lockdown on March 24. The migration was one key reason that the virus spread to the far reaches of the country while the lockdown caused severe economic pain. The economy contracted nearly 24% in the second quarter, the worst among the world's top economies.

DENVER — The University of Colorado has forced some students to move out of their dorms to create more isolation housing for students with coronavirus infections as case numbers continue to increase at the Boulder campus.

The Denver Post reported that the university said in an email to affected students that those living in the Darley North tower at the Williams Village complex must move to other residence halls within the complex by 5 p.m. Sunday.

The announcement came as the university reported 130 newly confirmed coronavirus cases, bringing the total to 671 cases since classes began about a month ago.

Officials say two-thirds of on-campus isolation space at the university is already full, with 151 beds in use out of 267 available as of Thursday.

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — California's unemployment rate fell to 11.4% in August amid its slow recovery from the pandemic's damage to the economy.

The Employment Development Department says the state added 101,900 jobs during the month. Most were government jobs, including temporary positions for the U.S. Census.

California lost more than 2.6 million jobs in March and April because of the coronavirus pandemic. The state has regained nearly a third of those jobs. But experts warn that other indicators show the state's economy has stalled with no quick recovery in sight.

Restaurants and other hospitality businesses have been the hardest hit. The sector lost 14,600 jobs just in August with coronavirus restrictions still in place across much of the state.

BOISE, Idaho -- Idaho will remain under current restrictions of the final stage of Gov. Brad Little's economic reopening plan for at least another two weeks due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The governor said Friday that intensive care unit hospitalizations of those infected remain too high.

Little says Idaho residents have done well in their precautions, such as wearing face coverings, but virus infections have continued. John Hopkins University says that through Thursday, Idaho had more than 36,000 confirmed coronavirus cases, with 434 deaths.

Most Idaho businesses are open in the state's stage 4 restrictions. The governor says the unemployment rate is now at 4.2%, after reaching nearly 12% during spring when the virus entered Idaho and businesses started shutting down.

CONCORD, N.H. — The New Hampshire Department of Education says a public school canceled a scheduled visit from U.S. Education Secretary Betsy DeVos after a staff member tested positive for the coronavirus.

The McKelvie Intermediate School in Bedford informed the department Friday morning that it had a positive test. DeVos did go on to visit Riddle Brook Elementary School in Bedford.

A state education spokesperson says the decision on McKelvie Intermediate was made by school of-

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 43 of 98

ficials in Bedford. According to a school board meeting this week, the schools had been chosen for visits because of how they notified families about earlier cases of the virus.

The U.S. Department of Education did not immediately respond to an email seeking comment.

ROME — Public health authorities in Italy are warning that the average age of coronavirus patients is creeping up as young people infect their more fragile parents and grandparents, risking new strain on the hospital system.

The Superior Institute of Health issued its weekly monitoring report Friday as the country where COVID-19 hit first in the West recorded the highest number of new infections — 1,907 — since May 1. Another 10 people died over the past day, bringing Italy's official death toll to 35,668.

While Italy hasn't seen the thousands of daily new infections other European countries have seen recently, its caseload has crept up steadily over the past seven weeks. Initially, most new infections were in young people who returned from vacation hotspots. The health institute said Friday that they are now infecting their older and more fragile loved ones in home settings, with the average age of positive cases last week at 41 versus the low 30s in August.

The institute warned that while the health system isn't overwhelmed, it risks further strain if Italians don't rigorously adhere to mask mandates and social distancing norms.

SALT LAKE CITY — A spike of coronavirus cases in Utah that began after schools and colleges resumed classes has reached a new peak and led the state's Republican governor to say again that he's considering new measures to combat the spread of the virus.

Gov. Gary Herbert said Friday he will meet with his command team on Monday after what he described as an "alarming" spike that makes him question if previous warnings and public education are enough.

He said one day earlier he's considering a state mask mandate — a move he's stopped short of making despite making repeated pleas for residents to use face coverings when social distancing isn't possible. He has instead allowed counties to decide if they needed bans.

The 1,117 cases reported Friday in Utah surpassed the previous record of about 875 hit twice in July, according to state data. That tally raised the state's rolling average number of daily new confirmed coronavirus cases to 726, more than double 381 just one week ago. The state's positive rate hit 12.5% Friday, up from 8.2% one month ago.

LONDON — British Prime Minister Boris Johnson says a second wave of the coronavirus is coming, on a day when the government reported 4,322 new confirmed cases, the highest since early May.

Speaking at a vaccine manufacturing center under construction near Oxford, Johnson says: "We are seeing it in France, in Spain, across Europe — it has been absolutely, I'm afraid, inevitable we were going to see it in this country."

The weekly survey released Friday by the Office for National Statistics revealed an average of 6,000 people in England were estimated as newly infected between Sept. 4-10, about double from the previous week.

England is preparing for more restrictions on gatherings and other activities in several areas of the country. There is growing speculation Britain may be sliding toward a lockdown in the coming weeks, partly because the testing regime is struggling to cope with higher demand.

The U.K. recorded 27 deaths on Friday, bringing the government's official tally of deaths from COVID-19 to 41,732.

PARIS — France's health agency has recorded 13,215 new coronavirus cases and 123 additional deaths in the last 24 hours.

Public Health France says the country surpassed the 10,000 mark in cases last weekend for the first time since May. In the Paris region, Ile-de-France, the agency reports 2,311 new hospitalizations and 86 deaths in the last 24 hours.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 44 of 98

Many health officials believe France is in the second wave of the coronavirus pandemic. The French government has said it will tighten restrictions in certain virus hotspots in the cities of Nice and Lyon.

The virus hot spots include academies in the cities of Lille, Toulouse, Aix-Marseille, Bordeaux and Versailles. Some 891 students tested positive for the virus in the 24 hours, bringing the weekly rolling tally to 5,056 students. Another 284 more staff tested positive, bringing the weekly rolling tally to 1,307 staff.

LONDON — The World Health Organization's emergencies chief says new global cases of the coronavirus appear to have plateaued at about 2 million and 50,000 deaths every week.

Dr. Michael Ryan says while the global COVID-19 caseload was not rising exponentially, the weekly number of deaths was still very unsettling.

"It's not where developing countries want to be with their health systems under nine months of pressure," Ryan said.

He says there have been recent surges in Europe, Ecuador and Argentina. He adds a lack of large increases in African countries and other nations might reflect a lack of testing.

After wildfire smoke clears, protests resume in Portland

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — Protesters returned to the streets of Portland, Oregon, following a dayslong pause largely due to poor air quality from wildfires on the West Coast.

Police declared an unlawful assembly Friday night in a neighborhood near a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement building where protesters had marched, according to a police statement.

Demonstrators participated in criminal activity and threw items at officers, police said, leading to 11 arrests.

Photos show that smoke was used to clear the crowd, and it appeared that tear gas was deployed. Police initially tweeted that tear gas was on the list of crowd control agents if people did not disperse, but the tweet was later deleted, KOIN-TV reported. Another tweet was issued that didn't mention tear gas.

"No, we are required by law to make that warning," Portland Sgt. Kevin Allen told the television station when asked about the initial tweet. "PPB is still prevented from using tear gas."

Less than two weeks ago the mayor of Portland ordered police to stop using tear gas for crowd control during the frequently violent protests that racked the city for more than three months after the police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis.

Mayor Ted Wheeler, a Democrat, was tear gassed when he went to a demonstration against the presence of federal authorities dispatched to the city to protect federal property.

He said he still wants police to respond aggressively to prevent violence and vandalism. Hundreds of people have been arrested since the protests started in May.

Demonstrators had not gathered in the city since at least Sept. 9, when police and protesters clashed near City Hall. Wildfires have spewed dangerously dirty air across Oregon, California and Washington state, and sent haze across the country.

The protesters in Portland want city officials to slash the police budget and reallocate that money to Black residents and businesses. Some demonstrators are also demanding the resignation of Wheeler, a white man and the scion of a timber company fortune.

In clashes with police, some protesters have broken windows, set small fires, punctured police car tires, shined lasers in officers' eyes and pelted them with rocks and frozen water bottles.

Police criticized Wheeler's move, saying in a statement that it could force them to employ potentially more dangerous crowd control measures to quell violent demonstrations.

Moroccans protest Arab nations normalizing ties with Israel

By TARIK EL BARAKAH Associated Press

RABAT, Morocco (AP) — Despite a government ban on large gatherings to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, scores of demonstrators protested outside the Moroccan Parliament to denounce Arab coun-

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 45 of 98

tries agreeing to normalize ties with Israel.

Israel on Tuesday signed historic diplomatic pacts with the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain in a U.S.-brokered deal. Morocco was reported to be among other Arab countries considering a similar move, though the prime minister rejected the idea last month.

Protesters in Morocco's capital of Rabat Friday waved Palestinian flags, decrying the deals as "treason" and chanting "Palestine is not for sale."

The Palestinians view the pacts as a stab in the back from their fellow Arabs in the Gulf and a betrayal of their cause for a Palestinian state. Israel and Bahrain's agreements have been condemned by many across the Arab world.

The protesters in Rabat also burned a mock Israeli flag. Dozens of police officers watched the scene from a distance.

Organizers interrupted the chanting occasionally to urge participants to wear masks and to respect social distancing rules.

"The normalization deals are an attack on the Palestinian people and their cause," human rights activist Abdelhamid Amine told The Associated Press.

"We are calling on the Moroccan government not to follow suit and we urge it not to surrender to the Zionist and imperialist pressure like other Arab countries," said Amine, former president of the Moroccan Association of Human Rights and one of the rally organizers.

Last month, Moroccan Prime Minister Saad Eddine El Othmani said the kingdom rejects any form of normalization with Israel.

"The Moroccan monarch, government and people will always defend the rights of the Palestinian people and Al-Aqsa Mosque," he said in a meeting with his Islamist party Justice and Development Party (PJD).

Homes destroyed after winds push California fire into desert

By MARCIO JOSE SANCHEZ and CHRISTOPHER WEBER Associated Press

JUNIPER HILLS, Calif. (AP) — Homes were destroyed Friday by an unrelenting wildfire that reached a Mojave Desert community and was still growing on several fronts after burning for nearly two weeks in mountains northeast of Los Angeles.

Officials were investigating the death of a firefighter on the lines of another Southern California wildfire that erupted earlier this month from a smoke-generating pyrotechnic device used by a couple to reveal their baby's gender.

The death occurred Thursday in San Bernardino National Forest as crews battled the El Dorado Fire about 75 miles (120 kilometers) east of LA, the U.S. Forest Service said in a statement.

In northern Los Angeles County, the Bobcat Fire burned semi-rural desert properties when it was pushed by gusts into the community of Juniper Hills after churning all the way across the San Gabriel Mountains.

Crews protected homes and chased spot fires sparked by embers blown across neighborhoods by erratic winds. Surrounding areas were under evacuation orders and residents of ranches scrambled to get horses and other animals out.

"We've got a very active firefight on the north end of this fire and we're bringing in more strike teams. We'll be in this firefight for some time," LA County Fire Captain David Dantic said Friday evening. The blaze was also expanding on the eastern and western edges, officials said.

Wyatt Stephenson helped his friend evacuate his home at the top of Juniper Hills.

"We were waiting for the fire to come over the ridge. When it finally came over, we got him out of there," Stephenson said. "We found out later that his house burned. The fire just burned everything."

It wasn't immediately clear how many homes were burned in the area about 50 miles (80 kilometers) northeast of downtown LA. No injuries were reported.

On the south side of the blaze, firefighters continued to protect Mount Wilson, which overlooks greater Los Angeles and has a historic observatory founded more than a century ago and numerous broadcast antennas serving Southern California.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 46 of 98

The fire that started Sept. 6, has now churned through more than 112 square miles (290 square kilometers) — doubling in size over the last week. It was 15% contained.

The name of the firefighter killed in the nearby El Dorado Fire was being withheld until family members are notified.

"Our deepest sympathies are with the family, friends and fellow firefighters during this time," Forest Service spokesperson Zach Behrens said in the statement.

No other information was released about the firefighter, the agency the firefighter worked for, or the circumstances of the death. The body was escorted down the mountain in a procession of first-responder vehicles.

A statement from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, or Cal Fire, said it was the 26th death involving wildfires besieging the state.

A new blaze sparked by a vehicle that caught fire was growing in wilderness outside Palm Springs.

To the north, a fire burning for nearly a month in Sequoia National Forest roared to life again Friday and prompted evacuation orders for the central California mountain communities of Silver City and Mineral King.

More than 7,900 wildfires have burned more than 5,300 square miles (13,727 square kilometers) in California this year, including many since a mid-August barrage of dry lightning ignited parched vegetation.

The El Dorado Fire has burned more than 33 square miles (85.4 square kilometers) and was 65% contained, with 10 buildings destroyed and six damaged.

Cal Fire said earlier this month that the El Dorado Fire was ignited Sept. 5 when a couple, their young children and someone there to record video staged the baby gender reveal at El Dorado Ranch Park at the foot of the San Bernardino Mountains.

The device was set off in a field and quickly ignited dry grass. The couple frantically tried to use bottled water to extinguish the flames and called 911.

Authorities have not released the identities of the couple, who could face criminal charges and be held liable for the cost of fighting the fire.

Associated Press writer John Antczak in Los Angeles contributed to this report.

Stopgap bill to prevent shutdown held up over farm funding

By ANDREW TAYLOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Efforts to fashion a temporary spending bill needed to avert a government shutdown at the end of the month ran aground Friday amid a fight over farm bailout funding that's a key priority of President Donald Trump and Capitol Hill Republicans.

A House Appropriations Committee spokesman said the measure, which aides had predicted would be released Friday evening, won't be unveiled until next week. The measure needs to be passed by the end of the budget year on Sept. 30 to prevent a shutdown of nonessential government functions.

A tentative proposal by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to permit Trump to keep awarding agricultural funds this campaign season in exchange for food aid for the poor ran into severe turbulence with both House and Senate Democrats.

The evolving measure is a lowest-common-denominator, bare-minimum bill that befits a deeply polarized Congress. Even so, it took intense efforts at the highest levels of Washington to get the measure this far, but a negotiating flurry Friday fell apart. Neither side wants a partial government shutdown.

Aides following the talks closely said Pelosi initially denied an administration request to add routine flexibility to rules governing Trump's farm bailout efforts, which would freeze his ability to dole out subsidy payments until after the election. Trump is using the funding, over which he has much control, to try to shore up his support in farm country, which has been hit hard by low commodity prices and higher tariffs he himself imposed.

The battle prompted Trump on Friday to blast his nemesis on Twitter: "Pelosi wants to take 30 Billion Dollars away from our great Farmers. Can't let that happen!"

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 47 of 98

Pelosi then reversed course Friday afternoon to briefly approve the Trump-sought change — only to again change her mind, Democratic and GOP aides said, speaking on condition of anonymity to publicly characterize behind-the-scenes dealings. Pelosi was also seeking a higher food benefit for families whose children are unable to receive free or reduced lunches because schools are closed over the coronavirus.

It's unclear what happens next, but Pelosi retains the option to try to jam the measure through without the farm provision and try to cast blame on Republicans or Trump if it runs aground in the Senate.

Earlier, Republicans denied Democratic requests involving the census and election administration grants. What remains is not controversial and includes provisions that would extend federal highway and flood insurance programs, along with a variety of other low-profile items.

As previously announced, the bill does not contain COVID-19 relief, leaving that issue in all likelihood for a post-election lame duck session — or for the next administration.

The temporary funding measure comes as some Democrats are increasingly upset that an impasse over coronavirus relief is reflecting poorly on the party and as Trump agitates for a deal that's more generous than other Republicans would like.

But with COVID-19 rescue negotiations dead in the water, the stopgap spending bill is likely to be the only measure of note that passes before the election. Not long ago, such measures barely attracted notice, but there have been a handful of government shutdowns over the past few years. Congress has become so dysfunctional that crafting stopgap measures now requires more attention from top leaders.

Pelosi, D-Calif., and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin negotiated the measure, which would keep the government open through Dec. 11. Democrats had proposed next February, apparently to avert any need to reconvene Congress after the election to deal with Trump, who they predict will lose his bid for a second term in November.

In conversations Friday, Pelosi and Mnuchin abandoned efforts to iron out wrinkles involving the census and election administration grants to states, though a heavily lobbied package to extend a number of health programs was likely to be included.

Democrats, meanwhile, were denied \$400 million in grants to states to help them carry out elections this fall. Republicans also rejected a push by Pelosi to delay the once-a-decade apportionment of House seats after the census until the next administration.

The House is slated to pass the stopgap funding bill — called a continuing resolution, or CR in Washington-speak — next week. They are likely to then recess for the campaign.

Earlier this week, Pelosi said the House would stay in session until a COVID-19 deal was reached. Instead, lawmakers appear likely to leave Washington next week and be on 24 hours' notice to return if there is a coronavirus relief deal to vote on.

Such a situation would surely create angst among Democrats who are increasingly vocal that Pelosi should do more to ease a weekslong standoff in bipartisan COVID-19 relief talks. Pelosi has staked out a hard line for a COVID-19 package of at least \$2.2 trillion, while Republicans controlling the Senate aren't willing to come close to that.

The resulting chasm would only be bridgeable if both sides were to make embarrassing retreats from their stubbornly held positions — something neither side has been willing to do. Instead, they have been devoting their energies to posturing and finger-pointing, much to the dismay of lawmakers who believe a flawed deal is better than none at all.

"We can argue about what the specifics of a plan should look like. But the important thing is that we get back to the negotiating table and hammer out a deal that can be passed into law," said Rep. Stephanie Murphy, D-Fla. "Identify the things that you agree on and build from there to get recovery resources to the American people as soon as possible."

Trump said this week that he wants his GOP allies to go for "higher numbers" that would permit another round of \$1,200 direct stimulus payments that would be sent out under his name. Senate Republicans for the most part dismissed the idea.

While Trump is seen as pushing for a deal — any deal — his top negotiators on COVID-19 relief, Mnuchin

and White House chief of staff Mark Meadows, have been taking a hard line with Pelosi.

Biden would push for less US reliance on nukes for defense

By ROBERT BURNS AP National Security Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Democrat Joe Biden leaves little doubt that if elected he would try to scale back President Donald Trump's buildup in nuclear weapons spending. And although the former vice president has not fully detailed his nuclear priorities, he says he would make the U.S. less reliant on the world's deadliest weapons.

The two candidates' views on nuclear weapons policy and strategy carry unusual significance in this election because the United States is at a turning point in deciding the future of its weapons arsenal and because of growing debate about the threat posed by Chinese and Russian nuclear advances.

China, whose relatively small nuclear force is growing in sophistication, is cited by the Pentagon's top nuclear commander as a leading reason why the United States should go all out on nuclear modernization.

"We are going into a very different world," Adm. Charles Richard, the head of U.S. Strategic Command, said Sept. 14. "We are on a trajectory, for the first time in our nation's history, to face two peer nuclear-capable competitors." He was referring to Russia, which has long been a nuclear peer, and China, whose leaders Richard says have put a strategic nuclear buildup "next on their to-do list."

Days later, Richard said China could become a peer "by the end of the decade, if not sooner." But other estimates suggest a slower pace. The Pentagon recently said Beijing may double its nuclear stockpile over the next 10 years, which would still leave it far behind the U.S.

Trump entered the White House in 2017 with little to say on the subject of nuclear weapons, but his administration produced a policy document a year later that the Pentagon portrayed as largely tracking the path of the Obama administration. Trump did, however, add two weapon types and beef up the budget for a years-long overhaul of the nuclear arsenal — an overhaul that Biden sees as excessive.

"Our nuclear now is in the best shape it's been in decades," the president said this month, although the military says the arsenal's main components are so old they are long past due for replacement. He has boasted in broad, sometimes cryptic, terms of U.S. nuclear advances, telling journalist Bob Woodward in 2019 that he had built a secret nuclear weapon that neither Russian nor China knew about.

If reelected, Trump would be expected to stay on his path of modernizing the nuclear arsenal, which has bipartisan support in Congress despite growing budget pressures. Less clear is how Trump would approach nuclear arms control, including the problem of North Korea's unconstrained arsenal. His administration has walked away from one arms control deal with Russia and balked at extending an Obama-era strategic nuclear treaty with Russia that Biden says he would keep in place.

Just days before Trump entered the White House, then-Vice President Biden cautioned against abandoning Obama's approach.

"If future budgets reverse the choices we've made, and pour additional money into a nuclear buildup, it hearkens back to the Cold War and will do nothing to increase the day-to-day security of the United States or our allies," Biden said in a Jan. 11, 2017, speech at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

James Acton, a nuclear expert at the Carnegie Endowment, says Biden's instincts on nuclear weapons are more liberal than those of much of the Democratic Party's defense establishment. But that doesn't necessarily mean he would fundamentally change U.S. nuclear policy.

"In practice, there are often pressures to continue the status quo," Acton said in an interview.

Biden embraces the notion that nuclear weapons should play a smaller role in defense strategy and that the ultimate goal should be a nuclear-free world. He has not spelled out how he would pursue this, but he has dropped clues.

He has said, for example, that he opposes the Trump administration's decision to develop and deploy two types of missiles armed with less-powerful "low-yield" nuclear warheads. One is a sea-launched cruise missile that is some years from being fielded; the other is a long-range ballistic missile that the Navy began deploying aboard submarines nearly a year ago.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 49 of 98

"Bad idea," Biden said in July 2019. Having these makes the U.S. "more inclined to use them," he added.

During the campaign, Biden also has embraced what nuclear strategists call a "no first use" policy. In simplest terms, that means not initiating a nuclear war — not being the first to pull the trigger, so that in a nuclear crisis, the U.S. president might opt to unleash a retaliatory strike but not a preemptive one. Long-standing U.S. policy has been to reserve the option of striking first, arguing that this makes war less likely. Obama considered but rejected a shift to "no first use."

The Biden campaign has made few pronouncements on U.S. nuclear weapons policy or strategy and it declined to make an adviser available for an interview. The campaign website says Biden believes "the sole purpose of the U.S. nuclear arsenal should be deterring — and if necessary, retaliating against — a nuclear attack. As president, he will work to put that belief into practice, in consultation with our allies and military."

In a questionnaire last year by the Council for a Living World in which Biden and other candidates were asked whether the U.S. should review its policy reserving the option of using nuclear weapons first, Biden said yes but did not elaborate. He also agreed that modernizing the U.S. arsenal could be done for less than the currently projected \$1.2 trillion.

Some have speculated that Biden would consider dropping the plan to build a new nuclear intercontinental ballistic missile force, replacing the Minuteman 3 fleet fielded in 1970. That project is expected to cost at least \$85 billion.

Loren Thompson, a military analyst at the Lexington Institute, believes Biden would stick to the missile program.

"This outcome will result partly from the fact that Joe Biden is a common-sense centrist who respects the views of experts," Thompson wrote recently. "He will find few if any experts in the nation's nuclear establishment who think phasing out ICBMs would make us safer."

The Latest: Trump orders flags at half-staff for Ginsburg

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Latest on the death of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg (all times local):

1:15 a.m. Saturday

President Donald Trump has issued a proclamation directing that flags at the White House and all public buildings and grounds and military facilities be flown at half-staff until the late Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg is interred.

The president has also directed that flags be flown at half-staff at all U.S. embassies and other facilities abroad. The proclamation calls Ginsburg "a trailblazer, not only in the field of law, but in the history of our country."

12:05 a.m. Saturday

Former President Barack Obama is calling Ruth Bader Ginsburg "a relentless litigator and an incisive jurist" who "inspired generations, from the tiniest trick-or-treaters to law students burning the midnight oil to the most powerful leaders in the land."

Obama issued a statement Friday after Ginsburg's death from cancer complications at age 87. He says Ginsburg should be remembered for fighting to the end of her life, through her cancer "with unwavering faith in our democracy and its ideals."

The former president says Republicans, who in 2016 refused to consider his nominee for a court vacancy eight months before an election, must follow the same principle now. The 2020 election is a month and a half away.

He says a basic principle of the law and everyday fairness "is that we apply rules with consistency, and not based on what's convenient or advantageous in the moment."

Obama noted that early voting in the presidential contest has already begun in some states and said questions pending before the court and expected to reach it in the coming years "are too consequential

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 50 of 98

to "to be filled through anything less than an unimpeachable process."

11:40 p.m. Friday

At least three Republican senators suggested before Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg's death that they'd be opposed to voting late this election year on replacing her with a nominee by President Donald Trump.

But one of them, South Carolina Sen. Lindsey Graham, has already reversed himself.

Graham told *The Atlantic* magazine in 2018: "If an opening comes in the last year of President Trump's term and the primary process is started, we'll wait for the next election."

But this past May, he expressed a different opinion. He told reporters there was a distinction between 2020 and 2016, when Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell blocked President Barack Obama's pick for the Supreme Court, Merrick Garland. He said the difference is that now the presidency and Senate are held by the same party.

GOP Sen. Susan Collins of Maine told *The New York Times* earlier this month that she wouldn't favor voting on a new justice in October, saying, "I think that's too close. I really do."

Hours before Ginsburg's death was announced Friday, Alaska Public Radio asked GOP Sen. Lisa Murkowski if she'd vote to confirm a high court nominee before Inauguration Day. She told them, "I would not vote to confirm a Supreme Court nominee. We are 50 some days away from an election."

Graham, Collins and Murkowski all issued statements Friday after Ginsburg's death that praised her but did not mention whether they'd favor voting on a Trump pick to replace her.

10:55 p.m.

President Donald Trump says in a statement that the late Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg was a "titan of the law."

Ginsburg died Friday at her home in Washington of complications from metastatic pancreatic cancer. Trump was speaking at campaign event for more than an hour after the nation learned of her death and later said he had been unaware of the news during his speech.

In a statement posted on Twitter, Trump said Ginsburg was "renowned for her brilliant mind and her powerful dissents at the Supreme Court" and she demonstrated "that one can disagree without being disagreeable toward one's colleagues or different points of view."

Trump did not mention whether he'd nominate a new justice, though he had boasted in the speech that the next presidential term could offer him as many as four appointments to the nine-member court.

The presidential election is 46 days away.

10:45 p.m.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer is using Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's own words to make the point that the Senate shouldn't vote on a nominee by President Donald Trump to replace the late Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

Schumer, a Democrat, tweeted Friday, "The American people should have a voice in the selection of their next Supreme Court Justice. Therefore, this vacancy should not be filled until we have a new president."

That is precisely what the Republican McConnell said in February 2016 the night conservative Justice Antonin Scalia died.

That year the presidential election was nearly nine months off, but the Kentucky Republican refused to allow a vote on then-President Barack Obama's choice to replace Scalia, Merrick Garland. Trump ended up replacing Scalia with Neil Gorsuch, a conservative.

This year's election day is less than seven weeks away.

10:40 p.m.

Former President Bill Clinton, who nominated Ruth Bader Ginsburg for the Supreme Court in 1993, is

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 51 of 98

calling her "one of the most extraordinary justices ever to serve."

In a statement late Friday after her death was announced, Clinton said she was "a brilliant lawyer with a caring heart, common sense, fierce devotion to fairness and equality, and boundless courage in the face of her own adversity."

Ginsburg's appointment was the first high court pick by a Democrat in 26 years, and Clinton said her years on the court "exceeded even my highest expectations when I appointed her."

He said her landmark opinions advanced "gender equality, marriage equality, the rights of people with disabilities, the rights of immigrants, and so many more."

Just as notable, he said, were her dissents, "especially her ringing defense of voting rights and other equal protection claims" that he said "reminded us that we walk away from our Constitution's promise at our peril."

The 87-year-old Ginsburg died Friday from complications of metastatic pancreatic cancer.

10:35 p.m.

Endangered Republican Sen. Kelly Loeffler of Georgia says President Donald Trump has "every right to pick a new justice before the election."

Loeffler tweeted Friday hours after the death of liberal Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg was announced.

Loeffler says that "Our country's future is at stake" and that she looks forward "to supporting a strict constructionist who will protect the right to life & safeguard our conservative values."

Loeffler was tapped by Republican Gov. Brian Kemp to fill the Senate seat of Johnny Isakson, who resigned at the end of 2019 over health problems. She is running in a special election in November to serve the remaining two years of Isakson's term.

The Republican-led Senate in 2016 refused to hold a hearing on President Barack Obama's nomination to replace Antonin Scalia on the Supreme Court after he died that February. Leader Mitch McConnell said then that it wasn't fair because it was an election year but said Friday that he would vote on Trump's pick to replace Ginsburg.

10:25 p.m.

Moderate Republican Sen. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska said in an interview hours before the death of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg was announced that she "would not vote to confirm" her replacement before the next president is inaugurated.

Her comments to Alaska Public Radio on Friday also occurred before Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, commenting after Ginsburg's death, said his chamber will vote on whomever President Donald Trump nominates to replace Ginsburg.

Murkowski's comment appeared to put her at odds with McConnell, who will need at least 50 votes to push a Trump nominee through the Senate, plus a tie-breaking vote by Vice President Mike Pence.

Republicans have a 53-47 majority. The presidential and congressional elections are Nov. 3, and Inauguration Day is Jan. 20.

In her interview, Murkowski noted that when Justice Antonin Scalia died in February 2016, McConnell refused to hold a vote on then-President Barack Obama's choice to replace him, Merrick Garland.

Murkowski added that Scalia's death occurred "too close to an election, and that the people needed to decide. The closer you get to an election, that argument becomes even more important."

10:10 p.m.

Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden says the winner of the November election should pick a successor to the late Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

Calling Ginsburg a "beloved figure," Biden told reporters in Wilmington, Delaware: "There is no doubt -- let me be clear -- that the voters should pick the president and the president should pick the justice for the Senate to consider."

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 52 of 98

Biden noted that the Republican-led Senate in 2016 refused to consider President Barack Obama's Supreme Court nominee, Merrick Garland, to fill the vacancy created when Justice Antonin Scalia died in February of that year. Biden said that Scalia died about with "almost 10 months to go" before the election and that Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell cited it being an election year as the reason a hearing shouldn't take place.

President Donald Trump ended up replacing Scalia with Neil Gorsuch.

Biden says he hopes the coming days are about "the loss of the justice and her enduring legacy." Biden chaired the Senate Judiciary Committee in 1993 when Ginsburg was confirmed to the high court.

Ginsburg died Friday of cancer complications at age 87.

10:05 p.m.

Democratic Sen. Dianne Feinstein says the Senate should not consider a replacement for the late Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg until after Inauguration Day.

The veteran California lawmaker on Friday called Ginsburg a trailblazer for women, "a once-in-a-generation legal mind and a passionate champion for the rights of all Americans."

Feinstein, the top Democrat on the Senate Judiciary Committee, says Republican Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell "made his position clear in 2016" when he refused to hold a confirmation hearing for President Barack Obama's Supreme Court pick during an election year.

Feinstein says, "To jam through a lifetime appointment to the country's highest court – particularly to replace an icon like Justice Ginsburg – would be the height of hypocrisy."

When a president nominates someone to the Supreme Court, the nomination is referred to the Senate, where the Senate Judiciary Committee holds a hearing in which the nominee will provide testimony and respond to questions from members of the panel. The committee then votes on whether to refer the nomination to the full Senate for consideration.

10 p.m.

Republican Sen. Ted Cruz says President Donald Trump should nominate a successor to the late liberal Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg next week.

Cruz said Friday shortly after Ginsburg's death was announced that Trump needs to move quickly. He says a Supreme Court that is split 4-4 "cannot decide anything" and under that scenario, "I think we risk a constitutional crisis."

The Texas senator is a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, which will vote on Ginsburg's successor.

He called on Trump to nominate a "principled constitutionalist with a proven record."

Cruz is also among 20 individuals Trump recently added to his list of potential Supreme Court nominees.

The Republican-led Senate in 2016 refused to hold a hearing on President Barack Obama's nomination to replace Antonin Scalia on the Supreme Court after he died that February. Leader Mitch McConnell said then it wasn't fair because it was an election year.

The 2020 election is 46 days away.

9:45 p.m.

Endangered GOP Sen. Martha McSally of Arizona says the Senate should vote on whomever President Donald Trump nominates to replace the late Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

Some other GOP senators in competitive reelections initially did not address whether the Senate should vote on Trump's pick. Ginsburg died Friday of complications from cancer at age 87.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell says the GOP-run Senate will vote on Trump's selection, whomever it is, even though it's an election year — the reason he gave for not voting on President Barack Obama's court pick in 2016.

But four other Republican senators facing tough reelection fights skirted the question of whether the

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 53 of 98

Senate should vote on a Trump pick.

Maine Sen. Susan Collins called Ginsburg a "trailblazer for women's rights, a fierce champion for equality, and an extremely accomplished American who broke countless barriers in the field of law.

Colorado Sen. Cory Gardner called Ginsburg "a trailblazing leader."

North Carolina Sen. Thom Tillis noted the liberal Ginsburg's friendship with the late conservative Justice Antonin Scalia, saying their relationship showed "we can disagree on fundamental issues but remain civil."

Iowa GOP Sen. Joni Ernst called Ginsburg "an iconic figure who blazed a trail for working moms."

9:30 p.m.

President Donald Trump says the late Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg was "an amazing woman" who led an "amazing life."

Ginsburg died Friday of complications from cancer at the age of 87. The news of her death broke shortly after Trump began to address a campaign rally in Minnesota.

Trump spoke obliquely about future Supreme Court vacancies but did not mention the late justice during nearly two hours of remarks.

Trump told reporters after the rally as he headed back to Air Force One that he didn't know Ginsburg had died.

Ginsburg was a key liberal vote on the court, and her death leaves a vacancy that will spur a fight over her replacement with less than seven weeks before the election.

Republican Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell declined to hold confirmation hearings for President Barack Obama's court pick to replace Antonin Scalia when the justice died in February 2016. He cited the reason as it being an election year. But McConnell said Friday that the Senate will vote on whomever Trump picks to replace Ginsburg.

9:20 p.m.

Former President Jimmy Carter says he and his wife, Rosalynn, are saddened by the death of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, praising her as a "beacon of justice" over a long and remarkable career.

Ginsburg, the court's second female justice, died Friday at her Washington home of complications from metastatic pancreatic cancer. She was 87.

Carter said in a statement that he was proud to have appointed Ginsburg to the U.S. Court of Appeals in 1980 — a step taken long before her 1993 selection for the nation's highest court by another Democratic president, Bill Clinton.

Carter called Ginsburg "a powerful legal mind and a staunch advocate for gender equality."

9:15 p.m.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi says Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg's death is "an incalculable loss for our democracy and for all who sacrifice and strive to build a better future for our children."

The Democratic leader said Friday that Congress must ensure that the person who replaces Ginsburg on the court "upholds her commitment to equality, opportunity and justice for all."

The liberal justice died Friday of complications from metastatic pancreatic cancer at age 87.

Pelosi said Ginsburg's "tireless advocacy in the fight for gender equality" leaves "an enduring legacy of progress for all women," and her legal opinions "have unequivocally cemented the precedent that all men and women are created equal."

Republican Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell says the Senate will vote on whomever President Donald Trump picks to replace Ginsburg on the Supreme Court, even though it's an election year — the reason he gave for not voting on President Barack Obama's court pick in 2016.

9:10 p.m.

Hundreds of people have gathered outside the U.S. Supreme Court to mourn the death of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 54 of 98

Dozens in the crowd were lighting candles on Friday night and sat somberly on the high court's steps. Ginsburg died Friday of metastatic pancreatic cancer at age 87 after 27 years on the court.

The crowd left candles, flowers, small American flags and handwritten condolence messages. Some wept as they placed the bouquets of flowers on the steps. "RBG" was also drawn inside a pink chalk heart in the sidewalk. Flags outside the court were also flying at half staff.

Jennifer Berger was among those who had gathered outside the courthouse. The 37-year-old said she wanted to show her support and pay tribute to Ginsburg.

Ginsburg spent her final years on the bench as the unquestioned leader of the court's liberal wing and became something of a rock star to her admirers. Young women especially seemed to embrace the court's Jewish grandmother, affectionately calling her the Notorious RBG, for her defense of the rights of women and minorities.

9 p.m.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell says the Senate will vote on President Donald Trump's pick to replace Ruth Bader Ginsburg on the Supreme Court, even though it's an election year.

The Republican Senate leader issued a statement Friday night, about an hour and a half after the Supreme Court announced the liberal justice's death from complications of metastatic pancreatic cancer.

When conservative Justice Antonin Scalia died in February 2016, also an election year, McConnell refused to act on President Barack Obama's nomination of Judge Merrick Garland to fill the opening. The seat remained vacant until after Trump's surprising presidential victory.

Trump ended up nominating Neil Gorsuch, who was confirmed to the court.

The 2020 election is 46 days away.

McConnell had earlier said he would move to confirm a Trump nominee if there were a vacancy this year.

7:40 p.m.

Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, a diminutive yet towering women's rights champion who became the court's second female justice, has died at her home in Washington. She was 87.

The court says Ginsburg died Friday of complications from metastatic pancreatic cancer.

Ginsburg announced in July that she was undergoing chemotherapy treatment for lesions on her liver, the latest of her several battles with cancer.

Ginsburg spent her final years on the bench as the unquestioned leader of the court's liberal wing and became something of a rock star to her admirers. Young women especially seemed to embrace the court's Jewish grandmother, affectionately calling her the Notorious RBG, for her defense of the rights of women and minorities, and the strength and resilience she displayed in the face of personal loss and health crises.

Those health issues included five bouts with cancer beginning in 1999, falls that resulted in broken ribs, insertion of a stent to clear a blocked artery and assorted other hospitalizations after she turned 75.

Lakers roll past Nuggets 126-114 in West finals opener

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. (AP) — Slow starters in the first two rounds, the Los Angeles Lakers appeared to be in a hurry to put away the Denver Nuggets.

It was a strong statement to their opponent — and maybe to the NBA's MVP voters.

Anthony Davis had 37 points and 10 rebounds, LeBron James added 15 points and 12 assists hours after finishing a distant second in the MVP voting, and the Lakers rolled to a 126-114 victory on Friday night in Game 1 of the Western Conference finals.

The top-seeded Lakers opened a double-digit lead in the first half that they easily extended in the third quarter.

"It took a quarter for us to kind of figure it out," James said. "Not saying we fully figured them out because it's too early in the series to say that, but we started to get a better feel. Just started to get in a better rhythm defensively and we started to get some stops in that second quarter and we were able to build that lead up going into halftime."

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 55 of 98

James acknowledged being "pissed off" at receiving just 16 first-place votes to winner Giannis Antetokounmpo's 85 from a panel of global sports writers and broadcasters who cover the league, and the Nuggets may have felt the wrath of that.

"It definitely sparks him and like he got a chip on his shoulder like he's got something to prove," Davis said.

Kentavious Caldwell-Pope scored 18 points and Dwight Howard rejoined the rotation with 13 in a powerful return to the conference finals for the Lakers, who hadn't been to the NBA's final four since winning their last championship in 2010.

Los Angeles dropped Game 1 against both Portland and Houston before winning the next four games. The Lakers quickly knocked off any rust for another long layoff in the bubble against a Denver team that's had things much tougher.

Nikola Jokic and Jamal Murray each scored 21 points for the Nuggets, playing in the conference finals for the first time since the Lakers beat them in 2009.

Denver overcame 3-1 deficits against Utah and the Clippers, becoming the first team to do that twice in a postseason. The Nuggets immediately fell behind again, digging themselves a big hole when Jokic and Murray each picked up three fouls in the first half that just got deeper in the second half.

"We know how it's going to be. We know we're the younger team. We're just going to play through it," Murray said about the fouls discrepancy. "We're going to find a way and we're not going to go away so easy."

Game 2 is Sunday.

Davis scored 14 points in the first quarter, but the Nuggets shot nearly 64 percent, with Murray's 3-pointer as time expired giving them a 38-36 lead.

Alex Caruso converted a three-point play to open the second and start a 17-1 run by the Lakers to start the period and make it 53-39 before the Nuggets made their first field goal after more than five minutes.

The lead stayed right around there for the remainder of the half, as the Lakers paraded to the foul line while Jokic, Murray and Paul Millsap went the bench with three fouls. Los Angeles shot a whopping 24 free throws in the period — more baskets than either team made in the half — and led 70-59 at the break.

An 11-2 burst in the third blew it open at 92-71 and the Lakers cruised home.

TIP-INS

Nuggets: Michael Porter Jr. had 14 points and 10 rebounds. ... The Nuggets fell to 7-22 against the Lakers in the postseason. ... Denver's 16 fouls in the second quarter tied the most by any team in a quarter this season. It was the first time this season that Murray and Jokic both had three fouls before halftime.

Lakers: Rajon Rondo had nine assists to give him 1,025 in the playoffs, passing Michael Jordan (1,022) for 10th on the NBA's career list. ... Howard sat out three games and played only 4 1/2 minutes in the last four minutes against the small-ball Rockets.

VOGEL'S VOTE

Lakers coach Frank Vogel was a little surprised that Giannis Antetokounmpo was so far ahead of James in voting for the MVP award, receiving 85 first-place votes to James' 16.

"No disrespect for Giannis, Giannis had a great season. He's a great player, but what LeBron does for our team to me is unparalleled," Vogel said. "To carry the threat of going for 40 at any point but leading the league in assists and quarterbacking our defense and driving our team to as many wins as we've had and our playoff success, to me he's our MVP.

"But I understand how the voting goes and quite frankly our whole group and I'm sure LeBron would echo this is focused on something bigger than any individual accolades."

MILE HIGH MICHAELS

Nuggets coach Michael Malone said he had been in touch with Denver Mayor Michael Hancock, who told him about the passion back home.

"He's told me that it's just so great to see the city all come together and unite behind a feel-good story in the Nuggets and we still have a lot of work to do," Malone said. "So we appreciate all the love and support back home, no doubt."

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

McConnell vows quick vote on next justice; Biden says wait

By JONATHAN LEMIRE and LISA MASCARO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The death of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg just six weeks before the election cast an immediate spotlight on the crucial high court vacancy, with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell quickly vowing to bring to a vote whoever President Donald Trump nominates.

Democratic nominee Joe Biden vigorously disagreed, declaring that “voters should pick the president and the president should pick the justice to consider.”

McConnell, who sets the calendar in the U.S. Senate and has made judicial appointments his priority, declared unequivocally in a statement not long after Ginsburg’s death was announced that Trump’s nominee would receive a confirmation vote in the chamber. In 2016, McConnell refused to consider President Barack Obama’s choice for the high court months ahead of the election, eventually preventing a vote.

The impending clash over the vacant seat — when to fill it and with whom — is sure to significantly affect the stretch run of the presidential race, further stirring passions in a nation already reeling from the pandemic that has killed nearly 200,000 people, left millions unemployed and heightened partisan tensions and anger.

Trump, in brief remarks to reporters after learning of Ginsburg’s death, called her “an amazing woman who led an amazing life.” He had continued with a campaign speech in Minnesota for about an hour and a half after the nation — as well as aides and many in his audience with cell phones — had learned of her death. He seemed surprised when he spoke with reporters afterward, saying he did not know she had died.

Trump had noted in his rally speech that the next presidential term could offer him as many as four appointments to the nine-member court, whose members are confirmed for life. “This is going to be the most important election in the history of our country and we have to get it right,” he added.

Biden, returning to Delaware from his own campaign stop in Minnesota, praised Ginsburg upon his arrival.

She was “not only a giant of the legal profession but a beloved figure,” he said. She “stood for all of us.”

It must be up to the next president, whether himself or Trump, to choose a successor to be submitted for Senate confirmation, Biden said.

“This was the position that the Republican Senate took in 2016, when there were nearly nine months before the election,” he said. “That is the position the United States Senate must take now, when the election is less than two months away. We are talking about the Constitution and the Supreme Court. That institution should not be subject to politics.

A confirmation vote in the Senate is not guaranteed, even with a Republican majority.

Typically it takes several months to vet and hold hearings on a Supreme Court nominee, and time is short ahead of the election. Key senators may be reluctant to cast votes so close to the election. With a slim GOP majority, 53 seats in the 100-member chamber, Trump’s choice could afford to lose only a few.

McConnell did not specify the timing, but trying for confirmation in a post-election lame-duck session if Trump had lost to Biden or Republicans had lost the Senate would carry further political complications.

Democrats immediately denounced McConnell’s move as hypocritical, pointing out that he refused to call hearings for Merrick Garland, Obama’s pick, 237 days before the 2016 election. The 2020 election is 46 days away.

Senate Democratic leader Charles Schumer, in a tweet, echoed word for word what McConnell said in 2016 about the Garland nomination: “The American people should have a voice in the selection of their next Supreme Court Justice. Therefore, this vacancy should not be filled until we have a new president.”

Both Trump and McConnell have pointed to appointments to the federal judiciary, including two Supreme Court justices, part of their legacy. Trump said last month that he would “absolutely” try to fill a vacancy if one came up before the end of his first term.

“I would move quickly,” Trump said in an interview with conservative radio host Hugh Hewitt. “Why

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 57 of 98

not? I mean, they would. The Democrats would if they were in this position.”

While plans were still being formalized, Trump was expected to announce a choice sooner rather than later and may meet with members of his short list in coming days, according to a White House official not authorized to publicly discuss private conversations.

Trump last week added 20 names to his list of candidates he’s pledged to choose from if he has future vacancies to fill. He contrasted his list with unnamed “radical justices” he claimed Biden would nominate who would “fundamentally transform America without a single vote of Congress.”

Trump released a similar list in 2016 in a bid to win over conservative and evangelical voters who had doubts about his conservative credentials. Among those on his current list: Sens. Ted Cruz and Tom Cotton, former Solicitor General Noel Francisco and Judge Amy Coney Barrett of the 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, in Chicago, long a favorite of conservatives.

The average number of days to confirm a justice, according to the Congressional Research Service, is 69, which would be after the election. But some Republicans quickly noted that Ginsburg was confirmed in just 42 days.

Four GOP defections could defeat a nomination, while a tie vote could be broken by Vice President Mike Pence.

Among the senators to watch are Republicans Susan Collins of Maine, Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, Mitt Romney of Utah and others.

Collins is in a tight race for her own reelection, as are several other GOP senators, including Cory Gardner in Colorado. Murkowski and Romney have been critical of Trump and protective of the institution of the Senate.

Some Republicans, including Collins and Murkowski, have suggested previously that hearings should wait if a seat were to open. And because the Arizona Senate race is a special election, that seat could be filled as early as November 30 — which would narrow the window for McConnell if the Democratic candidate, Mark Kelly, hangs onto his lead.

Under McConnell, the Senate changed the confirmation rules to allow for a simple majority. The Senate’s No. 2 Republican, Sen. John Thune, supported McConnell’s plan Friday night, though the Judiciary Committee chairman, Lindsey Graham, did not weigh in.

As a mourning crowd gathered outside the Supreme Court and tributes poured in, Obama hailed Ginsburg’s life and called for Republicans to wait, saying “a basic principle of the law – and of everyday fairness – is that we apply rules with consistency and not based on what’s convenient or advantageous in the moment.”

One difference from 2016 is that, despite the vacancy resulting from Ginsburg’s death, conservatives have a working majority of five justices on a range of issues. When Antonin Scalia died four years ago, the court was divided between four liberals and four conservatives.

However, the next pick could shape important decisions, including on abortion rights, as well as any legal challenges that may stem from the 2020 election. The 2018 hearings on Trump’s second pick, now-Justice Brett Kavanaugh, turned into a bitter partisan battle after sexual assault allegations were made.

Biden has promised to nominate a Black woman to the high court if given the chance. He has said he’s also working on a list of potential nominees, but the campaign has given no indication that it will release names before the election.

Democrats believe doing so would unnecessarily distract from Biden’s focus on Trump’s handling of the pandemic and the economy, while also giving the president and his allies fresh targets to attack. In the hours before Ginsburg’s death, Trump trailed Biden in national polling but the race was much tighter in battleground states.

Lemire reported from New York. Additional reporting by Associated Press writers Alan Fram and Darlene Superville in Washington, Amer Madhani in Bemidji, Minn. and Will Weissert in Wilmington, Del.

Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg dies at 87

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 58 of 98

By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, a towering women's rights champion who became the court's second female justice, died Friday at her home in Washington. She was 87.

Ginsburg died of complications from metastatic pancreatic cancer, the court said.

Her death just over six weeks before Election Day is likely to set off a heated battle over whether President Donald Trump should nominate, and the Republican-led Senate should confirm, her replacement, or if the seat should remain vacant until the outcome of his race against Democrat Joe Biden is known. Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said late Friday that the Senate will vote on Trump's pick to replace Ginsburg, even though it's an election year.

Trump called Ginsburg an "amazing woman" and did not mention filling her vacant Supreme Court seat when he spoke to reporters following a rally in Bemidji, Minnesota.

Biden said the winner of the November election should choose Ginsburg's replacement. "There is no doubt — let me be clear — that the voters should pick the president and the president should pick the justice for the Senate to consider," Biden told reporters after returning to his hometown of Wilmington, Delaware, from campaign stops in Minnesota.

Chief Justice John Roberts mourned Ginsburg's passing. "Our Nation has lost a jurist of historic stature. We at the Supreme Court have lost a cherished colleague. Today we mourn, but with confidence that future generations will remember Ruth Bader Ginsburg as we knew her — a tireless and resolute champion of justice," Roberts said in a statement.

Ginsburg announced in July that she was undergoing chemotherapy treatment for lesions on her liver, the latest of her several battles with cancer.

Ginsburg spent her final years on the bench as the unquestioned leader of the court's liberal wing and became something of a rock star to her admirers. Young women especially seemed to embrace the court's Jewish grandmother, affectionately calling her the Notorious RBG, for her defense of the rights of women and minorities, and the strength and resilience she displayed in the face of personal loss and health crises.

Those health issues included five bouts with cancer beginning in 1999, falls that resulted in broken ribs, insertion of a stent to clear a blocked artery and assorted other hospitalizations after she turned 75.

She resisted calls by liberals to retire during Barack Obama's presidency at a time when Democrats held the Senate and a replacement with similar views could have been confirmed. Instead, Trump will almost certainly try to push Ginsburg's successor through the Republican-controlled Senate — and move the conservative court even more to the right.

Ginsburg antagonized Trump during the 2016 presidential campaign in a series of media interviews, including calling him a faker. She soon apologized.

Her appointment by President Bill Clinton in 1993 was the first by a Democrat in 26 years. She initially found a comfortable ideological home somewhere left of center on a conservative court dominated by Republican appointees. Her liberal voice grew stronger the longer she served.

Ginsburg was a mother of two, an opera lover and an intellectual who watched arguments behind oversized glasses for many years, though she ditched them for more fashionable frames in her later years. At argument sessions in the ornate courtroom, she was known for digging deep into case records and for being a stickler for following the rules.

She argued six key cases before the court in the 1970s when she was an architect of the women's rights movement. She won five.

"Ruth Bader Ginsburg does not need a seat on the Supreme Court to earn her place in the American history books," Clinton said at the time of her appointment. "She has already done that."

Following her death, Clinton said, "Her 27 years on the Court exceeded even my highest expectations when I appointed her."

On the court, where she was known as a facile writer, her most significant majority opinions were the 1996 ruling that ordered the Virginia Military Institute to accept women or give up its state funding, and the 2015 decision that upheld independent commissions some states use to draw congressional districts.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 59 of 98

Besides civil rights, Ginsburg took an interest in capital punishment, voting repeatedly to limit its use. During her tenure, the court declared it unconstitutional for states to execute the intellectually disabled and killers younger than 18.

In addition, she questioned the quality of lawyers for poor accused murderers. In the most divisive of cases, including the *Bush v. Gore* decision in 2000, she was often at odds with the court's more conservative members — initially Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist and Justices Sandra Day O'Connor, Antonin Scalia, Anthony M. Kennedy and Clarence Thomas.

The division remained the same after John Roberts replaced Rehnquist as chief justice, Samuel Alito took O'Connor's seat, and, under Trump, Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh joined the court, in seats that had been held by Scalia and Kennedy, respectively.

Ginsburg would say later that the 5-4 decision that settled the 2000 presidential election for Republican George W. Bush was a "breathtaking episode" at the court.

She was perhaps personally closest on the court to Scalia, her ideological opposite. Ginsburg once explained that she took Scalia's sometimes biting dissents as a challenge to be met. "How am I going to answer this in a way that's a real putdown?" she said.

When Scalia died in 2016, also an election year, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell refused to act on Obama's nomination of Judge Merrick Garland to fill the opening. The seat remained vacant until after Trump's surprising presidential victory. McConnell has said he would move to confirm a Trump nominee if there were a vacancy this year.

Reached by phone late Friday, Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, declined to disclose any plans. He called Ginsburg a "trailblazer" and said, "While I had many differences with her on legal philosophy, I appreciate her service to our nation."

Top Senate Democrat Chuck Schumer tweeted: "The American people should have a voice in the selection of their next Supreme Court Justice. Therefore, this vacancy should not be filled until we have a new president."

Ginsburg authored powerful dissents of her own in cases involving abortion, voting rights and pay discrimination against women. She said some were aimed at swaying the opinions of her fellow judges while others were "an appeal to the intelligence of another day" in the hopes that they would provide guidance to future courts.

"Hope springs eternal," she said in 2007, "and when I am writing a dissent, I'm always hoping for that fifth or sixth vote — even though I'm disappointed more often than not."

She wrote memorably in 2013 that the court's decision to cut out a key part of the federal law that had ensured the voting rights of Black people, Hispanics and other minorities was "like throwing away your umbrella in a rainstorm because you are not getting wet."

Change on the court hit Ginsburg especially hard. She dissented forcefully from the court's decision in 2007 to uphold a nationwide ban on an abortion procedure that opponents call partial-birth abortion. The court, with O'Connor still on it, had struck down a similar state ban seven years earlier. The "alarming" ruling, Ginsburg said, "cannot be understood as anything other than an effort to chip away at a right declared again and again by this court — and with increasing comprehension of its centrality to women's lives."

In 1999, Ginsburg had surgery for colon cancer and received radiation and chemotherapy. She had surgery again in 2009 after being diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and in December 2018 for cancerous growths on her left lung. Following the last surgery, she missed court sessions for the first time in more than 25 years on the bench.

Ginsburg also was treated with radiation for a tumor on her pancreas in August 2019. She maintained an active schedule even during the three weeks of radiation. When she revealed a recurrence of her cancer in July 2020, Ginsburg said she remained "fully able" to continue as a justice.

Joan Ruth Bader was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1933, the second daughter in a middle-class family. Her older sister, who gave her the lifelong nickname "Kiki," died at age 6, so Ginsburg grew up in Brooklyn's Flatbush section as an only child. Her dream, she has said, was to be an opera singer.

Ginsburg graduated at the top of her Columbia University law school class in 1959 but could not find a

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 60 of 98

law firm willing to hire her. She had “three strikes against her” — for being Jewish, female and a mother, as she put it in 2007.

She had married her husband, Martin, in 1954, the year she graduated from Cornell University. She attended Harvard University’s law school but transferred to Columbia when her husband took a law job there. Martin Ginsburg went on to become a prominent tax attorney and law professor. Martin Ginsburg died in 2010. She is survived by two children, Jane and James, and several grandchildren.

Ginsburg once said that she had not entered the law as an equal-rights champion. “I thought I could do a lawyer’s job better than any other,” she wrote. “I have no talent in the arts, but I do write fairly well and analyze problems clearly.”

Russia’s Navalny says he’s now more than ‘technically alive’

By JIM HEINTZ Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny said he is recovering his verbal and physical abilities at the German hospital where he is being treated for suspected nerve agent poisoning but that he at first felt despair over his condition.

Navalny, the most visible opponent of Russian President Vladimir Putin, fell ill on a domestic flight to Moscow on Aug. 20 and was transferred to Germany for treatment two days later. A German military lab later determined that the Russian politician was poisoned with Novichok, the same class of Soviet-era agent that Britain said was used on a former Russian spy and his daughter in England, in 2018.

Navalny was kept in an induced coma for more than a week while being treated with an antidote. He said in a Saturday post on Instagram that once he was brought out of the coma, he was confused and couldn’t find the words to respond to a doctor’s questions.

“Although I understood in general what the doctor wanted, I did not understand where to get the words. In what part of the head do they appear in?” Navalny wrote in the post, which accompanied a photo of him on a staircase. “I also did not know how to express my despair and, therefore, simply kept silent.”

“Now I’m a guy whose legs are shaking when he walks up the stairs, but he thinks: ‘Oh, this is a staircase! They go up it. Perhaps we should look for an elevator,’” Navalny said. “And before, I would have just stood there and stared.”

The doctors treating him at Berlin’s Charite hospital “turned me from a ‘technically alive person’ into someone who has every chance to become the Highest Form of Being in Modern Society again — a person who can quickly scroll through Instagram and without hesitation understands where to put likes,” he wrote.

The Kremlin has repeatedly said that before Navalny’s transfer to Berlin, Russian labs and a hospital in the Siberian city of Omsk found no sign of a poisoning. Moscow has called for Germany to provide its evidence and bristled at the urging of German Chancellor Angela Merkel and other Western leaders to answer questions about what happened to the politician.

“There is too much absurdity in this case to take anyone at their word,” Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Friday.

Peskov also accused Navalny’s colleagues of hampering a Russian investigation by taking items from his hotel room out of the country, including a water bottle they claimed had traces of the nerve agent.

Navalny’s colleagues said that they removed the bottle and other items from the hotel room in the Siberian city of Tomsk and brought them to Germany as potential evidence. because they didn’t trust Russian authorities to conduct a proper probe.

Homes destroyed after winds push California fire into desert

By MARCIO JOSE SANCHEZ and CHRISTOPHER WEBER Associated Press

JUNIPER HILLS, Calif. (AP) — Homes were destroyed Friday by an unrelenting wildfire that reached a Mojave Desert community and was still growing on several fronts after burning for nearly two weeks in mountains northeast of Los Angeles.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 61 of 98

Officials were investigating the death of a firefighter on the lines of another Southern California wildfire that erupted earlier this month from a smoke-generating pyrotechnic device used by a couple to reveal their baby's gender.

The death occurred Thursday in San Bernardino National Forest as crews battled the El Dorado Fire about 75 miles (120 kilometers) east of LA, the U.S. Forest Service said in a statement.

In northern Los Angeles County, the Bobcat Fire burned semi-rural desert properties when it was pushed by gusts into the community of Juniper Hills after churning all the way across the San Gabriel Mountains.

Crews protected homes and chased spot fires sparked by embers blown across neighborhoods by erratic winds. Surrounding areas were under evacuation orders.

"We've got a very active firefight on the north end of this fire and we're bringing in more strike teams. We'll be in this firefight for some time," LA County Fire Captain David Dantic said Friday evening

Wyatt Stephenson helped his friend evacuate his home at the top of Juniper Hills.

"We were waiting for the fire to come over the ridge. When it finally came over, we got him out of there," Stephenson said. "We found out later that his house burned. The fire just burned everything."

It wasn't immediately clear how many homes were burned in the area about 50 miles (80 kilometers) northeast of downtown LA. No injuries were reported.

On the south side of the blaze, firefighters continued to protect Mount Wilson, which overlooks greater Los Angeles and has a historic observatory founded more than a century ago and numerous broadcast antennas serving Southern California.

The fire that started Sept. 6, has now churned through more than 112 square miles (290 square kilometers) — doubling in size over the last week. It was 15% contained.

The name of the firefighter killed in the nearby El Dorado Fire was being withheld until family members are notified.

"Our deepest sympathies are with the family, friends and fellow firefighters during this time," Forest Service spokesperson Zach Behrens said in the statement.

No other information was released about the firefighter, the agency the firefighter worked for, or the circumstances of the death. The body was escorted down the mountain in a procession of first-responder vehicles.

A statement from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, or Cal Fire, said it was the 26th death involving wildfires besieging the state.

A new blaze sparked by a vehicle that caught fire was growing in wilderness outside Palm Springs.

To the north, a fire burning for nearly a month in Sequoia National Forest roared to life again Friday and prompted evacuation orders for the central California mountain communities of Silver City and Mineral King.

More than 7,900 wildfires have burned more than 5,300 square miles (13,727 square kilometers) in California this year, including many since a mid-August barrage of dry lightning ignited parched vegetation.

The El Dorado Fire has burned more than 33 square miles (85.4 square kilometers) and was 66% contained, with 10 buildings destroyed and six damaged.

Cal Fire said earlier this month that the El Dorado Fire was ignited Sept. 5 when a couple, their young children and someone there to record video staged the baby gender reveal at El Dorado Ranch Park at the foot of the San Bernardino Mountains.

The device was set off in a field and quickly ignited dry grass. The couple frantically tried to use bottled water to extinguish the flames and called 911.

Authorities have not released the identities of the couple, who could face criminal charges and be held liable for the cost of fighting the fire.

Associated Press writer John Antczak in Los Angeles contributed to this report.

Hundreds gather at Supreme Court to mourn Ginsburg's death

By MICHAEL BALSAMO Associated Press

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 62 of 98

WASHINGTON (AP) — Hundreds of people gathered Friday night outside the Supreme Court, singing in a candlelight vigil and weeping together as they mourned the death of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

The large group of mourners packed the high court's steps and the street across from the U.S. Capitol in a nighttime memorial. Dozens of people sat on the steps quietly reflecting on Ginsburg's legacy.

Scores of memorial candles flickered in the wind along the front steps of the court as people knelt to leave bouquets of flowers, small American flags and handwritten condolence messages for Ginsburg, who died Friday of metastatic pancreatic cancer at age 87 after 27 years on the court. Prayer candles with Ginsburg's photo on them were also left on the steps.

Several times, dozens in the crowd broke out into song, singing "Amazing Grace" and "This Land is Your Land" as others embraced one another and wiped tears from their eyes. At one point, the crowd broke into a thunderous applause — lasting for about a minute — for Ginsburg.

"Thank you RBG," one sign read. On the sidewalk, "RBG" was drawn inside a pink chalk heart.

Jennifer Berger, 37, said she felt compelled to join the large crowd that gathered to pay tribute to Ginsburg's life.

"I think it is important for us to recognize such a trailblazer," she said. "It is amazing to see how many people are feeling this loss tonight and saying goodbye."

Ginsburg spent her final years on the bench as the unquestioned leader of the court's liberal wing and became something of a rock star to her admirers. Young women especially seemed to embrace the court's Jewish grandmother, affectionately calling her the Notorious RBG, for her defense of the rights of women and minorities.

The memorial service remained mostly peaceful and somber, but turned tense for several minutes after a man with a megaphone approached people in the crowd and began to chant that "Roe v. Wade is dead," a reference to the landmark Supreme Court ruling establishing abortion rights nationwide.

A large group confronted the man, leading to a brief shouting match. Many in the crowd began yelling "RBG" to try to drown out the man's voice as he continued to say Republicans would push to quickly appoint a conservative justice to the court. Supreme Court police officers stood alongside the crowd and the man eventually left the area.

Peru president survives impeachment vote amid virus turmoil

By CHRISTINE ARMARIO and FRANKLIN BRICEÑO Associated Press

LIMA, Peru (AP) — Peruvian President Martín Vizcarra easily survived an impeachment vote Friday night after opposition lawmakers failed to amass enough support to oust the leader as the country copes with one of the world's worst coronavirus outbreaks.

The decision came after long hours of debate in which legislators blasted Vizcarra but also questioned whether a rushed impeachment process would only create more turmoil in the middle of a health and economic crisis.

"It's not the moment to proceed with an impeachment which would add even more problems to the tragedy we are living," lawmaker Francisco Sagasti said.

In the end, only 32 lawmakers voted to remove the president, while 78 voted against and 15 abstained. A two-thirds majority was needed to oust Vizcarra.

The political feud was sparked by the release of several covertly recorded audios that Vizcarra's detractors contend show he tried to obstruct an influence peddling probe. And despite the failed vote, that conflict was likely to continue, afflicting the president's ability to carry forward his anti-corruption agenda could be indefinitely stymied.

"In the overall scheme of things, Vizcarra has won this round, but winning is a very relative term," said Jo-Marie Burt, a senior fellow with the Washington Office on Latin America.

The political turmoil rocking Peru has briefly distracted attention from the pandemic, which has left hundreds of thousands sick in the South American nation with the highest per capita COVID-19 mortality rate around the globe.

At the center of the ordeal is Vizcarra's relationship with a little-known musician known as Richard Swing

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 63 of 98

and nearly \$50,000 in questionable contracts that the entertainer was given by the Ministry of Culture for activities like motivational speaking.

A covert audio recording shared by Edgar Alarcón — a lawmaker himself charged with embezzlement — appears to show Vizcarra coordinating a defense strategy with two aides, trying to get their stories straight on how many times the musician had visited him.

In remarks before Congress on Friday, Vizcarra asked for forgiveness for the upheaval that the audios have generated but insisted he committed no crime. He called for a proper investigation and urged lawmakers not to aggravate Peru's already precarious situation by rushing through an impeachment proceeding.

"Let's not generate a new crisis, unnecessarily, that would primarily affect the most vulnerable," he said

During a long day of debate, many lawmakers expressed frustration with Vizcarra, denouncing his apology as a weak attempt to make amends and demanding a thorough investigation. But numerous legislators also said they couldn't support an impeachment that itself was rushed and full of flaws, held before an official probe reaches any conclusions.

"This doesn't mean we're handing over a blank check," one lawmaker warned.

Vizcarra became president in 2018 after Pedro Pablo Kuczynski resigned the presidency under pressure by Congress after the discovery of about \$782,000 in undisclosed payments to his private consulting firm by Brazilian construction giant Odebrecht, which is at the center of a regionwide corruption scandal.

Odebrecht has admitted to paying some \$800 million in bribes to officials across Latin America, and nearly every living former Peruvian president has been implicated in the scandal.

Vizcarra, at the time a vice president serving as Peru's ambassador to Canada, is an engineer by training and was considered an unknown political novice. But he has managed to become a highly popular president, recently getting a 57% approval rating in a poll despite Peru's severe economic fallout from the COVID-19 crisis and the high infection rate.

Many Peruvians see him as a frank-talking leader who has taken on corruption, dismissing Congress last year in a brash move cheered by citizens as a victory against a dishonest class of politicians and pushing through initiatives to reform how judges are chosen and bar politicians charged with crimes from running for office.

"He's the only president who — without a lot of power — has faced off against those shameless people," said Pedro Quispe, a retired teacher out selling face masks on a recent day.

Steve Levitsky, a Harvard University political scientist, said Vizcarra has made "some modest steps forward" when it comes to corruption.

"He hasn't been able to carry out all the political reform that he and his allies hope to," Levitsky said. "But corruption in middle-income countries is never eliminated in a single presidency."

Vizcarra tried to halt the impeachment by filing a lawsuit with the Constitutional Tribunal, but magistrates ruled Thursday that the process could proceed, under the belief that lawmakers would not actually be able to oust him.

While analysts criticized the rushed procedure in which the impeachment proceeding was initiated within hours of the audio's release, many agreed the president owed Peruvians an explanation.

Vizcarra didn't delve into details in his statement Friday, though he did point to inconsistencies in statements by a former aide who made the audios and said the only proven misconduct is having been illicitly recorded.

To what degree the scandal could taint the seven months he has left in office remains to be seen. The president has no majority in Congress, a pandemic still to deal with and an economic contraction that has thrown millions into poverty.

His presidency, it appears, will be book-ended by crises.

"He is very isolated, very alone," Burt said. "I really don't think anyone is winning in this situation."

Associated Press writer Christine Armario reported from Bogota, Colombia, and AP writer Franklin Briceño reported in Lima, Peru.

Manager ordered census layoffs despite judge's ruling

By MIKE SCHNEIDER Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — Two weeks after a federal judge prohibited the U.S. Census Bureau from winding down the 2020 census, a manager in Illinois instructed employees to get started with layoffs, according to an audio of the conversation obtained by The Associated Press.

During a conference call Thursday, the Chicago area manager told supervisors who report to him that they should track down census takers who don't currently have any cases, collect the iPhones they use to record information, and bid them goodbye. The manager did not respond to an email from the AP.

"I would really like to get a head start on terminating these people," he said. "All of these inactives that we have, we need to get rid of them. So hunt down your inactives, collect their devices, get them terminated and off of our lists."

It was unclear whether such actions would violate U.S. District Judge Lucy Koh's temporary restraining order prohibiting the Census Bureau from winding down field operations while she considers a request to extend the head count by a month.

Earlier this week, the judge, who is in San Jose, California, held a hearing on other possible violations of the order, but no action was taken after a Census Bureau official said in a declaration that they were unsubstantiated or the result of miscommunication. The judge extended the order for another week on Thursday.

Government attorneys told the judge earlier this month that the Census Bureau would refrain from laying off workers who were in the later stages of door knocking at the homes of residents who hadn't yet answered the census questionnaire. They said workers could still be terminated for performance reasons, however.

While the Chicago area manager told his supervisors they couldn't lay people off for lack of work, he suggested they could encourage census takers who haven't had an assignment in a while to resign or fire them for poor performance.

"It doesn't have to be their performance is poor. It just means it's not good enough," he said. "If you are going to terminate someone for performance, I want you to consult me first. But I'm pretty much going to be on your side, no matter what."

The census manager also suggested that supervisors should unofficially plan on wrapping up their work by Saturday, 11 days short of the Sept. 30 deadline for ending the 2020 census.

Census Bureau spokesman Michael Cook said in a statement Friday that the agency was investigating.

"In the meantime, the U.S. Census Bureau continues to focus on conducting a complete 2020 Census count while instructing field personnel of their continuing obligation to comply with court orders," Cook said.

The once-a-decade head count of every U.S. resident helps determine how \$1.5 trillion in federal funding is distributed annually and how many congressional seats each state gets — a process known as apportionment. The census takers are sent out to knock on the doors of homes that have not yet responded to the census on their own, either online, by phone or by mail.

Before the coronavirus pandemic hit in March, the bureau had planned to complete the 2020 census by the end of July. In response to the pandemic, it extended the deadline to the end of October. That changed to the end of September after the Republican-controlled Senate failed to take up a request from the Census Bureau to extend the deadline for turning over the numbers used for apportionment. As a result, government attorneys told the judge, the Census Bureau has no choice but to finish the count by Sept. 30.

The temporary restraining order was requested by a coalition of cities, counties and civil rights groups that had sued the Census Bureau, demanding it restore the October deadline. The coalition had argued the earlier deadline would cause the Census Bureau to overlook minority communities in the census, leading to an inaccurate count.

"The idea is, if you have less time and less people, there's going to be less counting," Melissa Sherry, an attorney for the plaintiffs, said during a virtual hearing Friday.

Attorneys for the coalition said Friday that they didn't want to comment on the Chicago case.

Meanwhile, the state of Louisiana on Friday said it was being harmed by the judge's order preventing the Census Bureau from winding down operations. In a court filing asking to intervene in the coalition's lawsuit, the state said if census officials were allowed to shutter operations in places where they had completed their work, they could redirect resources to states like Louisiana that are lagging behind in the count.

"That status quo has been upended," the filing said.

This story has been edited to clarify that it was the census manager, not census taker, who suggested supervisors should wrap up by Saturday.

Follow Mike Schneider on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/MikeSchneiderAP>

More migrant women say they didn't OK surgery in detention

By NOMAAN MERCHANT Associated Press

HOUSTON (AP) — Sitting across from her lawyer at an immigration detention center in rural Georgia, Mileidy Cardentey Fernandez unbuttoned her jail jumpsuit to show the scars on her abdomen. There were three small, circular marks.

The 39-year-old woman from Cuba was told only that she would undergo an operation to treat her ovarian cysts, but a month later, she's still not sure what procedure she got. After Cardentey repeatedly requested her medical records to find out, Irwin County Detention Center gave her more than 100 pages showing a diagnosis of cysts but nothing from the day of the surgery.

"The only thing they told me was: 'You're going to go to sleep and when you wake up, we will have finished,'" Cardentey said this week in a phone interview.

Cardentey kept her hospital bracelet. It has the date, Aug. 14, and part of the doctor's name, Dr. Mahendra Amin, a gynecologist linked this week to allegations of unwanted hysterectomies and other procedures done on detained immigrant women that jeopardize their ability to have children.

An Associated Press review of medical records for four women and interviews with lawyers revealed growing allegations that Amin performed surgeries and other procedures on detained immigrants that they never sought or didn't fully understand. Although some procedures could be justified based on problems documented in the records, the women's lack of consent or knowledge raises severe legal and ethical issues, lawyers and medical experts said.

Amin has performed surgery or other gynecological treatment on at least eight women detained at Irwin County Detention Center since 2017, including one hysterectomy, said Andrew Free, an immigration and civil rights lawyer working with other attorneys to investigate medical treatment at the jail. Doctors are helping the attorneys examine new records and more women are coming forward to report their treatment by Amin, Free said.

"The indication is there's a systemic lack of truly informed and legally valid consent to perform procedures that could ultimately result — intentionally or unintentionally — in sterilization," he said.

The AP's review did not find evidence of mass hysterectomies as alleged in a widely shared complaint filed by a nurse at the detention center. Dawn Wooten alleged that many detained women were taken to an unnamed gynecologist whom she labeled the "uterus collector" because of how many hysterectomies he performed.

The complaint sparked a furious reaction from congressional Democrats and an investigation by the Department of Homeland Security's inspector general. It also evoked comparisons to previous government-sanctioned efforts in the U.S. to sterilize people to supposedly improve society — victims who were disproportionately poor, mentally disabled, American Indian, Black or other people of color. Thirty-three states had forced sterilization programs in the 20th century.

But a lawyer who helped file the complaint said she never spoke to any women who had hysterectomies. Priyanka Bhatt, staff attorney at the advocacy group Project South, told The Washington Post that she included the hysterectomy allegations because she wanted to trigger an investigation to determine

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 66 of 98

if they were true.

"I have a responsibility to listen to the women I've spoken with," Bhatt told the AP on Friday. She said one woman alleged that she was repeatedly pressured to have a hysterectomy and that authorities said they would not pay for her to get a second opinion.

Amin told The Intercept, which first reported Wooten's complaint, that he has only performed one or two hysterectomies in the past three years. His attorney, Scott Grubman, said in a statement: "We look forward to all of the facts coming out, and are confident that once they do, Dr. Amin will be cleared of any wrongdoing."

Grubman did not respond to new questions Thursday.

In a statement Friday, ICE Acting Director Tony Pham said: "If there is any truth to these allegations, it is my commitment to make the corrections necessary to ensure we continue to prioritize the health, welfare and safety of ICE detainees."

LaSalle Corrections, which operates the jail, said in a statement that it "strongly refutes these allegations and any implications of misconduct."

Women housed at Irwin County Detention Center who needed a gynecologist were typically taken to Amin, according to medical records provided to the AP by Free and lawyer Alexis Ruiz, who represents Cardentey. Interviews with detainees and their lawyers suggest some women came to fear the doctor.

Records reviewed by the AP show one woman was given a psychiatric evaluation the same day she refused to undergo a surgical procedure known as dilation and curettage. Commonly known as a D&C, it removes tissue from the uterus and can be used as a treatment for excessive bleeding. A note written on letterhead from Amin's office said the woman was concerned.

According to a written summary of her psychiatric evaluation, the woman said, "I am nervous about my upcoming procedure."

The summary says she denied needing mental health care and added: "I am worried because I saw someone else after they had surgery and what I saw scared me."

The AP also reviewed records for a woman who was given a hysterectomy. She reported irregular bleeding and was taken to see Amin for a D&C. A lab study of the tissue found signs of early cancer, called carcinoma. Amin's notes indicate the woman agreed 11 days later to the hysterectomy.

Free, who spoke to the woman, said she felt pressured by Amin and "didn't have the opportunity to say no" or speak to her family before the procedure.

Doctors told the AP that a hysterectomy could have been appropriate due to the carcinoma, though there may have been less intrusive options available.

Lawyers for both women asked that their names be withheld for fear of retaliation by immigration authorities.

In another case, Pauline Binam, a 30-year-old woman who was brought to the U.S. from Cameroon when she was 2, saw Amin after experiencing an irregular menstrual cycle and was told to have a D&C, said her attorney, Van Huynh.

When she woke up from the surgery, Huynh said, she was told Amin had removed one of her two fallopian tubes, which connect the uterus to the ovaries and are necessary to conceive a child. Binam's medical records indicate that the doctor discovered the tube was swollen.

"She was shocked and sort of confronted him on that — that she hadn't given her consent for him to proceed with that," Huynh said. "The reply that he gave was they were in there anyway and found there was this problem."

While women can potentially still conceive with one intact tube and ovary, doctors who spoke to the AP said removal of the tube was likely unnecessary and should never have happened without Binam's consent.

The doctors also questioned how Amin discovered the swollen tube because performing a D&C would not normally involve exploring a woman's fallopian tubes.

Dr. Julie Graves, a family medicine and public health physician in Florida, called the process "absolutely abhorrent."

"It's established U.S. law that you don't operate on everything that you find," she said. "If you're in a

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 67 of 98

teaching hospital and an attending physician does something like that, it's a scandal and they are fired." Binam was on the verge of deportation Wednesday, but ICE delayed it after calls from members of Congress and a request for an emergency stay by her lawyer.

Grubman, Amin's lawyer, said in a statement that the doctor "has dedicated his adult life to treating a high-risk, underserved population in rural Georgia."

Amin completed medical school in India in 1978 and his residency in gynecology in New Jersey. He has practiced in rural Georgia for at least three decades, according to court filings. State corporate records also show Amin is the executive of a company that manages Irwin County Hospital.

In 2013, state and federal investigators sued Amin, the hospital authority of Irwin County and a group of other doctors over allegations they falsely billed Medicare and Medicaid.

The lawsuit alleged that nurses at Irwin County Hospital were trained to follow a doctor's "standing orders" — described as "scripted procedures based on the nurse's diagnosis." That meant nurses often decided treatment plans, but they were billed to Medicaid and Medicare as if they doctor did, the lawsuit said.

Investigators linked a standing order to Amin, alleging he required "certain tests always be run on pregnant patients, without any medical evaluation and regardless of her condition."

The lawsuit was settled in 2015 with no known sanctions against Amin. The hospital paid a \$520,000 settlement, saying no doctor paid any of it and had been "released from any and all liability."

The Georgia Composite Medical Board lists Amin as a doctor in good standing with no public disciplinary action. Board executive director LaSharn Hughes said records of investigations were confidential under state law.

State prosecutors didn't refer Amin to the medical board after the billing lawsuit because it didn't involve specific allegations of patient harm, said Katie Byrd, a spokeswoman for Georgia Attorney General Chris Carr.

Associated Press journalist Kate Brumback in Atlanta contributed to this report.

Ginsburg, a feminist icon memorialized as the Notorious RBG

By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg moved slowly.

When court was in session, she often had her head down, sometimes leading visitors to think she was asleep. She once acknowledged that she did occasionally nod off. She once confessed to dozing during a State of the Union.

But it was a mistake to equate her gait and gaze with frailty, for Ginsburg showed over and over a steely resilience in the face of personal loss and serious health problems that made the diminutive New Yorker a towering women's rights champion and forceful presence at the court over 27 years.

She made few concessions to age and recurrent health problems, working regularly with a personal trainer. She never missed any time in court before the age of 85, and then only following surgery in December 2018 for lung cancer.

Ginsburg died Friday of complications from metastatic pancreatic cancer at her home in Washington at 87, the court said.

Late in her court tenure, she became a social media icon, the Notorious RBG, a name coined by a law student who admired Ginsburg's dissent in a case cutting back on a key civil rights law.

The justice was at first taken aback. There was nothing "notorious" about this woman of rectitude who wore a variety of lace collars on the bench and often appeared in public in elegant gloves.

But when her law clerks and grandchildren explained the connection to another Brooklynite, the rapper The Notorious B.I.G., her skepticism turned to delight. "In the word the current generation uses, it's awesome," Ginsburg said in 2016, shortly before she turned 83.

In 2018, Ginsburg was the subject of a documentary and a feature film "On the Basis of Sex," in which the actor Felicity Jones portrayed her.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 68 of 98

In her final years on the court, Ginsburg was the unquestioned leader of the liberal justices, as outspoken in dissent as she was cautious in earlier years.

Criticizing the court's conservative majority for getting rid of a key part of the landmark Voting Rights Act in 2013, Ginsburg wrote that it was like "throwing away your umbrella in a rainstorm because you are not getting wet."

Her stature on the court and the death of her husband in 2010 probably contributed to Ginsburg's decision to remain on the bench beyond the goal she initially set for herself, to match Justice Louis Brandeis' 22 years on the court and his retirement at the age of 82.

Ginsburg had special affection for Brandeis, the first Jew named to the high court. She was the court's second woman and its sixth Jewish justice. In time she was joined by two other Jews, Stephen Breyer and Elena Kagan, and two other women, Kagan and Sonia Sotomayor.

Both developments were perhaps unthinkable when Ginsburg graduated from law school in 1959 and faced the triple bogey of looking for work as a woman, a mother and a Jew.

Forty years later, she noted that religion had become irrelevant in the selection of high-court justices and that gender was heading in the same direction, though when asked how many women would be enough for the high court, Ginsburg replied without hesitation, "Nine."

She could take some credit for equality of the sexes in the law. In the 1970s, she argued six key cases before the court when she was an architect of the women's rights movement. She won five.

"Ruth Bader Ginsburg does not need a seat on the Supreme Court to earn her place in the American history books," President Bill Clinton said in 1993 when he announced her appointment. "She has already done that."

Her time as a justice was marked by triumphs for equality for women, as in her opinion for the court ordering the Virginia Military Institute to accept women or give up its state funding.

There were setbacks, too. She dissented forcefully from the court's decision in 2007 to uphold a nationwide ban on an abortion procedure that opponents call partial-birth abortion. The "alarming" ruling, Ginsburg said, "cannot be understood as anything other than an effort to chip away at a right declared again and again by this court — and with increasing comprehension of its centrality to women's lives."

Ginsburg once said that she had not entered the law as a champion of equal rights. "I thought I could do a lawyer's job better than any other," she wrote. "I have no talent in the arts, but I do write fairly well and analyze problems clearly."

Besides civil rights, Ginsburg took an interest in capital punishment, voting repeatedly to limit its use. During her tenure, the court declared it unconstitutional for states to execute the intellectually disabled and killers younger than 18.

She voted most often with the other liberal-leaning justices, fellow Clinton appointee Breyer and two Republican appointees, John Paul Stevens and David Souter, then later with President Barack Obama's two appointees, Sotomayor and Kagan.

In the most divisive of cases, Ginsburg was often at odds with the court's more conservative members. Yet she was personally closest on the court to Justice Antonin Scalia, her ideological opposite.

She once explained that she took Scalia's sometimes biting dissents as a challenge to be met. "How am I going to answer this in a way that's a real putdown?" she said. Scalia died in 2016.

As for her own dissents, Ginsburg said that some were aimed at swaying the opinions of her fellow judges while others were "an appeal to the intelligence of another day" in the hopes that they would provide guidance to future courts.

"Hope springs eternal," she said in 2007, "and when I am writing a dissent, I'm always hoping for that fifth or sixth vote — even though I'm disappointed more often than not."

Joan Ruth Bader was born in Brooklyn in 1933, the second daughter in a middle-class family. Her older sister, who gave her the lifelong nickname "Kiki," died at age 6, so Ginsburg grew up in Brooklyn's Flatbush section as an only child. Her dream, she has said, was to be an opera singer.

Her mother, Celia Bader, died of cancer the night before Ginsburg, then 17, was to graduate from high

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 69 of 98

school. Celia Bader never attended college but worked as a bookkeeper. In a public television documentary about Jewish Americans, Ginsburg said, "What's the difference between a bookkeeper in New York's Garment District and a U.S. Supreme Court justice? One generation."

She first gained fame as a litigator for the Women's Rights Project of the American Civil Liberties Union. She had worked on the legal team that persuaded the high court to rule for the first time ever in 1970 that a state had violated the Constitution by denying women equal treatment.

At argument sessions in the ornate courtroom, Ginsburg was known for digging deep into case records and for being a stickler for following the rules.

She was more comfortable than most with long silences, and in the several interviews Ginsburg granted this reporter in her office at the court, it was difficult, but rewarding, to resist the natural tendency to fill those silences with another question. The most interesting things she said typically followed long pauses.

Appearing at a law school forum in 2008, she noted with relief that there was no retirement age for U.S. judges. "We hold our offices during good behavior," Ginsburg said, citing language from the Constitution. "So all of my colleagues behave very well."

She married her husband, Martin, in 1954, the year she graduated from Cornell University. She attended Harvard University's law school but transferred to Columbia University when her husband took a law job in New York.

Ginsburg had graduated at the top of her Columbia Law School class but could not find a law firm willing to hire her. She later said she'd had more than her share of "mazel" — the Hebrew word for luck — to help her along in life.

"Suppose there had been a Wall Street firm interested in hiring me? What would I be today?" she intoned in 2007. "A retired partner."

Martin Ginsburg went on to become a prominent tax attorney and law professor at Georgetown University. Ginsburg was a law professor at Rutgers University and Columbia, then later a federal appeals court judge for 13 years. Theirs was an equal partnership in which Martin Ginsburg was the undisputed master of the kitchen, often baking cakes for the justices' birthdays.

In 1999, Ginsburg had surgery for colon cancer and received radiation and chemotherapy. She had surgery again in 2009 after being diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and in December 2018 to remove cancerous growths on her left lung.

In 2019, doctors treated Ginsburg with radiation for a tumor on her pancreas. She maintained an active schedule even during the three weeks of radiation. When she revealed a recurrence of her cancer in July 2020, this time with lesions on her liver that were treated with chemotherapy every two weeks, Ginsburg said she remained "fully able" to continue as a justice.

She is survived by two children, Jane and James, and several grandchildren.

Her determination was perhaps most evident on the day the court met for the final time in June 2010. Her husband had died a day earlier, and her children told her their father would want her to go to work. The justices filed into the courtroom that Monday, and Ginsburg was there.

US bans WeChat, TikTok from app stores, threatens shutdowns

By TALI ARBEL, MATT O'BRIEN and MATT OTT AP Technology Writers

The U.S. Commerce Department said Friday it will ban Chinese-owned TikTok and WeChat from U.S. app stores on Sunday and will bar the apps from accessing essential internet services in the U.S. — a move that could effectively wreck the operation of both Chinese services for U.S. users.

TikTok won't face the most drastic sanctions until after the Nov. 3 election, but WeChat users could feel the effects as early as Sunday.

The order, which cited national security and data privacy concerns, follows weeks of dealmaking over the video-sharing service TikTok. President Donald Trump has pressured the app's Chinese owner to sell TikTok's U.S. operations to a domestic company to satisfy U.S. concerns over TikTok's data collection and related issues.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 70 of 98

California tech giant Oracle recently struck a deal with TikTok along those lines, although details remain foggy and the administration is still reviewing it. Trump said Friday he was open to a deal, noting that "we have some great options and maybe we can keep a lot of people happy," suggesting that even Microsoft, which said its TikTok bid had been rejected, might continue to be involved, as well as Oracle and Walmart.

Trump noted that TikTok was "very, very popular," said "we have to have the total security from China," and added that "we can do a combination of both."

The new order puts pressure on TikTok's owner, ByteDance, to make further concessions, said James Lewis of the Center for Strategic and International Studies. Trump had said this week that he does not like the idea of ByteDance keeping majority control of TikTok.

TikTok expressed "disappointment" over the move and said it would continue to challenge President Donald Trump's "unjust executive order." The Commerce Department is enacting an order announced by President Donald Trump in August. TikTok sued to stop that ban.

WeChat owner Tencent said in an emailed statement that it will continue to discuss ways to address concerns with the government and look for long-term solutions.

Google and Apple, the owners of the major mobile app stores, did not immediately reply to questions. Oracle also did not reply.

"At the President's direction, we have taken significant action to combat China's malicious collection of American citizens' personal data, while promoting our national values, democratic rules-based norms, and aggressive enforcement of U.S. laws and regulations," Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross said in a prepared statement.

China's ministry of commerce condemned the ban, and urged the U.S. to stop what it called bullying behavior and wrongdoing. It said China would "take necessary measures to resolutely safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese companies."

The action is the Trump administration's latest attempt to counter the influence of China, a rising economic superpower. Since taking office in 2017, Trump has waged a trade war with China, blocked mergers involving Chinese companies and stifled the business of Chinese firms like Huawei, a maker of phones and telecom equipment.

China-backed hackers, meanwhile, have been blamed for data breaches of U.S. federal databases and the credit agency Equifax, and the Chinese government strictly limits what U.S. tech companies can do in China.

The order requires WeChat, which has millions of U.S. users who rely on the app to stay in touch and conduct business with people and companies in China, to end payments for business transactions through its service as of Sunday and prohibits it from obtaining vital technical services from vendors. The Justice Department said in a filing that it would not target users with criminal or civil penalties for messaging on the app.

WeChat users have sued to stop the ban, and a federal judge in California on Friday set an emergency hearing for Saturday at 1:30 p.m. Pacific time.

Similar technical limitations for TikTok don't go into effect until Nov. 12, shortly after the U.S. election. Ross said early Friday on Fox Business Network that access to that app may be possible if certain safeguards are put into place. TikTok says it has 100 million U.S. users and 700 million globally.

Nicholas Weaver, a computer science lecturer at UC Berkeley, said the actions taking effect Sunday are short-sighted and suggest that "the U.S. is not to be trusted and not a friendly place for business." Users, meanwhile, face a security "nightmare" because they won't be able to get app updates that fix bugs and security vulnerabilities, he said.

The technical measures are "enforceable, the question is whether they are legal," said the Center for Strategic and International Studies' Lewis, likening them to a U.S. version of China's "Great Firewall," which censors its domestic internet. He said there could be a First Amendment challenge.

Like most social networks, TikTok collects user data and moderates users' posts. It grabs users' locations

and messages and tracks what they watch to figure out how best to target ads to them.

Similar concerns apply to U.S.-based social networks such as Facebook and Twitter, but Chinese ownership adds an extra wrinkle because the Chinese government could demand cooperation from Chinese companies. The administration, however, has provided no specific evidence that TikTok has made U.S. users' data available to the Chinese government. Some cybersecurity experts question whether the administration's efforts are more political than rooted in legitimate concerns about Chinese threats to data security.

"If there are direct national security threats, that information should be shared with the U.S. population," said David Kennedy, CEO of cybersecurity firm TrustedSec, before the Commerce Department's regulations were announced. "We're not taking about what needs to happen policy-wise, we're trying to hack this together to hurt China."

TikTok says it does not store U.S. user data in China and that it would not give user data to the government, and does not censor videos per dictates from China.

Homeland Security whistleblower not yet ready to testify

By MARY CLARE JALONICK and ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A whistleblower from the Department of Homeland Security who says he was pressured to suppress facts in intelligence reports says he won't be able to testify before a House panel until the department gives him more access to "relevant information," according to his lawyer.

Attorney Mark Zaid said Brian Murphy, a former top intelligence official at the department, won't participate in a closed-door deposition with the House Intelligence Committee "until the clearance issues have been resolved favorably in order to properly protect Mr. Murphy's legal rights." He says he and Murphy "look forward to and desire the opportunity" to participate.

"Mr. Murphy wishes to provide protected, classified whistleblower disclosures to the relevant oversight authorities in the Executive and Legislative Branches," Zaid said in a statement. "That requires his access, as well as his legal counsel, to all relevant information."

House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff made Murphy's complaint public last week and said he had been invited to provide a deposition on Sept. 21. He has not been subpoenaed and was asked to participate voluntarily.

An intelligence committee official said the panel hasn't rescheduled the deposition at this time, but said DHS had delayed the processing of his lawyers' clearances. The official, who was granted anonymity to discuss the closed-door meeting, said the clearances were needed so Murphy could be properly represented during any classified portions of the deposition.

Murphy said in the complaint that he was pressured by senior officials to suppress facts in intelligence reports that President Donald Trump might find objectionable, including information about Russian interference in the election and the rising threat posed by white supremacists. The department has denied his allegations.

Murphy, a former FBI agent and Marine Corps veteran, also alleged that senior DHS officials pressed him to alter reports so they would reflect administration policy goals and that he was demoted from his post as principal deputy under secretary in the Office of Intelligence and Analysis for refusing to go along with the changes and for filing confidential internal complaints about the conduct. He remains with the department in a different capacity.

Trump and Biden hit unlikely battleground state of Minnesota

By WILL WEISSERT and STEVE PEOPLES Associated Press

DULUTH, Minn. (AP) — A solidly blue state for the past half century, Minnesota became an unquestioned presidential battleground on Friday as President Donald Trump and Democratic challenger Joe Biden fought for working-class voters in dueling events that marked the beginning of early voting.

Their campaigning was knocked off front pages and broadcasts in the state and nationally Friday night

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 72 of 98

by the death of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, But before that, their contrasting styles and stances during the day and evening gave fresh signs of the campaign to come in the final weeks before Election Day.

The candidates steered clear of the state's most populated areas near Minneapolis to focus on blue-collar voters, some of whom shifted to Republicans for the first time in 2016. Trump went to Bemidji, about 200 miles (320 kilometers) north of Minneapolis, while Biden campaigned in a suburb of Duluth, on the banks of Lake Superior and close to the Wisconsin border.

Biden railed against Trump's inability to control the pandemic, casting the president's reluctance to embrace more serious social distancing safeguards as "negligence and selfishness" that cost American lives. Trump, before leaving the White House, said as he has many times that "we've done a phenomenal job" against the virus and predicted mass vaccinations by spring.

Biden, at a carpenter union's training hall in Minnesota, emphasized his plans to boost American manufacturing.

"It's time to reward hard work in America and not wealth," Biden declared with roughly a dozen workers looking on.

"When the government spends taxpayers' money, we should spend that money to buy American products made by American workers and American supply chains to generate American growth," Biden said. He promised to invest \$400 billion in federal money over his first term to ensure more products are made in America.

Trump, meanwhile, predicted victory in Minnesota in November despite the state's long history of backing Democratic candidates.

"Forty-six days from now we're going to win Minnesota and we're going to win four more years in the White House," Trump told thousands of supporters at the regional airport in Bemidji.

Since narrowly losing Minnesota in 2016, Trump has emphasized the state in hopes that a victory this year could offset losses in other states. He has visited regularly and kept a close eye on issues of particular importance to rural corners of the state. He's reversed an Obama administration policy prohibiting the development of copper-nickel mining and has bailed out soybean, corn and other farmers who have been hurt by trade clashes with China.

More recently, he's embraced a "law and order" message aimed nationally at white suburban and rural voters who may be concerned by protests that have sometimes become violent. That's especially true in Minnesota, where the May killing of George Floyd by a police officer sparked a national reckoning on racism.

But for all the work Trump has put into the state, it may elude him again in November.

A series of polls over the past week show Biden has built a consistent lead in Minnesota. And in the 2018 midterms, Democratic turnout surged in suburbs, small cities and even on the Iron Range, across the blue-collar mining towns that were once labor strongholds but had been trending Republican.

David McIntosh, president of the conservative Club for Growth, which has produced anti-Biden ads, said Minnesota may help the Trump campaign build momentum.

"They're looking beyond the poll numbers and seeing the potential there," said McIntosh, a former congressman from Indiana. "It's always smart strategy to go on offense somewhere."

In 2018, Democrats flipped two suburban congressional districts, took back control of the state House by winning suburban Trump-voting areas and came within one seat of winning control of the state Senate. Democrats won every statewide race that year, even as they lost a rural congressional district.

Trump's path to Minnesota success likely depends on finding more votes in rural, conservative areas -- running up the score beyond his 2016 tally. It's a strategy he's trying to pull off in other states and it depends on a robust field operation with the money and time to track down infrequent or first-time voters. That could be a tall order since Minnesota already has one of the nation's highest voter turnout rates.

"I don't think they're there," said Joe Radinovich, a Democrat who lost a bid for a northern Minnesota congressional district in 2018. Radinovich noted the major organizational challenge and expense in tracking new voters, making sure they're registered and getting them to vote -- especially during a pandemic. "We

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 73 of 98

have relatively high turnout already. Most people vote. I just don't think it's there. I think those people showed up in 2016," he said.

In 2016, Trump won that district, which includes the Democratic city of Duluth, by 15 percentage points. But in the midterms two years later, Radinovich lost by just under 6 percentage points.

Still, Trump has spent more than a year building a sizable Minnesota ground game. Republicans are out knocking on doors and interacting personally with voters in ways that Democrats mostly have not, preferring online operations because of the coronavirus.

The president's reelection campaign announced this week a \$10 million ad buy in a series of states, including Minnesota. It has spent nearly \$17 million on advertising in the state since last October, compared with almost \$6.3 million for Biden over the same period, according to a review of Kantar/CMAG data by The Associated Press.

Democrats warn that Biden still may have his work cut out for him.

Duluth Mayor Emily Larson said the Trump campaign has far outpaced Biden in local yard signs — which indicates enthusiasm but may not ultimately affect the outcome.

"One of the things the Trump campaign has been very good about is visibility in Duluth, but also in areas around Duluth," Larson said.

After Biden's speech, his motorcade rolled into downtown Duluth, where he stepped out onto a brick plaza in front of Little Angie's Cantina and Grill and began to elbow bump and chat with passersby.

Within minutes, a crowd of around 200 gathered, virtually all of them in masks except for two men in Trump hats. It was the largest in-person crowd Biden has had since the pandemic exploded in March.

One man yelled from a deck above the plaza, "Go home, Joe!"

Two women closer to Biden responded, "You are home, Joe."

Peoples reported from New York. Associated Press writers Steve Karnowski in Minneapolis and Aamer Madhani in Bemidji, Minn., contributed to this report.

Stoppag bill to prevent shutdown held up over farm funding

By ANDREW TAYLOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Efforts to fashion a temporary spending bill needed to avert a government shutdown at the end of the month ran aground Friday amid a fight over farm bailout funding that's a key priority of President Donald Trump and Capitol Hill Republicans.

A House Appropriations Committee spokesman said the measure, which aides had predicted would be released Friday evening, won't be unveiled until next week. The measure needs to be passed by the end of the budget year on Sept. 30 to prevent a shutdown of nonessential government functions.

A tentative proposal by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to permit Trump to keep awarding agricultural funds this campaign season in exchange for food aid for the poor ran into severe turbulence with both House and Senate Democrats.

The evolving measure is a lowest-common-denominator, bare-minimum bill that befits a deeply polarized Congress. Even so, it took intense efforts at the highest levels of Washington to get the measure this far, but a negotiating flurry Friday fell apart. Neither side wants a partial government shutdown.

Aides following the talks closely said Pelosi initially denied an administration request to add routine flexibility to rules governing Trump's farm bailout efforts, which would freeze his ability to dole out subsidy payments until after the election. Trump is using the funding, over which he has much control, to try to shore up his support in farm country, which has been hit hard by low commodity prices and higher tariffs he himself imposed.

The battle prompted Trump on Friday to blast his nemesis on Twitter: "Pelosi wants to take 30 Billion Dollars away from our great Farmers. Can't let that happen!"

Pelosi then reversed course Friday afternoon to briefly approve the Trump-sought change — only to again change her mind, Democratic and GOP aides said, speaking on condition of anonymity to publicly

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 74 of 98

characterize behind-the-scenes dealings. Pelosi was also seeking a higher food benefit for families whose children are unable to receive free or reduced lunches because schools are closed over the coronavirus.

It's unclear what happens next, but Pelosi retains the option to try to jam the measure through without the farm provision and try to cast blame on Republicans or Trump if it runs aground in the Senate.

Earlier, Republicans denied Democratic requests involving the census and election administration grants. What remains is not controversial and includes provisions that would extend federal highway and flood insurance programs, along with a variety of other low-profile items.

As previously announced, the bill does not contain COVID-19 relief, leaving that issue in all likelihood for a post-election lame duck session — or for the next administration.

The temporary funding measure comes as some Democrats are increasingly upset that an impasse over coronavirus relief is reflecting poorly on the party and as Trump agitates for a deal that's more generous than other Republicans would like.

But with COVID-19 rescue negotiations dead in the water, the stopgap spending bill is likely to be the only measure of note that passes before the election. Not long ago, such measures barely attracted notice, but there have been a handful of government shutdowns over the past few years. Congress has become so dysfunctional that crafting stopgap measures now requires more attention from top leaders.

Pelosi, D-Calif., and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin negotiated the measure, which would keep the government open through Dec. 11. Democrats had proposed next February, apparently to avert any need to reconvene Congress after the election to deal with Trump, who they predict will lose his bid for a second term in November.

In conversations Friday, Pelosi and Mnuchin abandoned efforts to iron out wrinkles involving the census and election administration grants to states, though a heavily lobbied package to extend a number of health programs was likely to be included.

Democrats, meanwhile, were denied \$400 million in grants to states to help them carry out elections this fall. Republicans also rejected a push by Pelosi to delay the once-a-decade apportionment of House seats after the census until the next administration.

The House is slated to pass the stopgap funding bill — called a continuing resolution, or CR in Washington-speak — next week. They are likely to then recess for the campaign.

Earlier this week, Pelosi said the House would stay in session until a COVID-19 deal was reached. Instead, lawmakers appear likely to leave Washington next week and be on 24 hours' notice to return if there is a coronavirus relief deal to vote on.

Such a situation would surely create angst among Democrats who are increasingly vocal that Pelosi should do more to ease a weekslong standoff in bipartisan COVID-19 relief talks. Pelosi has staked out a hard line for a COVID-19 package of at least \$2.2 trillion, while Republicans controlling the Senate aren't willing to come close to that.

The resulting chasm would only be bridgeable if both sides were to make embarrassing retreats from their stubbornly held positions — something neither side has been willing to do. Instead, they have been devoting their energies to posturing and finger-pointing, much to the dismay of lawmakers who believe a flawed deal is better than none at all.

"We can argue about what the specifics of a plan should look like. But the important thing is that we get back to the negotiating table and hammer out a deal that can be passed into law," said Rep. Stephanie Murphy, D-Fla. "Identify the things that you agree on and build from there to get recovery resources to the American people as soon as possible."

Trump said this week that he wants his GOP allies to go for "higher numbers" that would permit another round of \$1,200 direct stimulus payments that would be sent out under his name. Senate Republicans for the most part dismissed the idea.

While Trump is seen as pushing for a deal — any deal — his top negotiators on COVID-19 relief, Mnuchin and White House chief of staff Mark Meadows, have been taking a hard line with Pelosi.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 75 of 98

Hundreds of thousands still without power in Sally cleanup

By ANGIE WANG and JAY REEVES Associated Press

LOXLEY, Ala. (AP) — Hundreds of thousands of people were still without power Friday along the Alabama coast and the Florida Panhandle in the aftermath of Hurricane Sally as officials assessed millions of dollars in damage that included a broken bridge in Pensacola and ships thrown onto dry land.

While the cleanup pressed on, the record-shattering hurricane season notched another milestone: Forecasters ran out of traditional names for storms after three new systems formed in about six hours. That forced them to begin using the Greek alphabet for only the second time since the 1950s.

In Loxley, Alabama, Catherine Williams lost power and some of her roof to Sally. The storm also destroyed three pecan trees in her yard that she used to try to make ends meet.

"There's no food, no money. I took my last heart pill today," said Williams, who has been laid off twice from her job as a cook because of the economic problems caused by COVID-19. She hoped that the Red Cross would soon show up at her home.

Two people in Alabama were reported killed — a drowning and a death during the cleanup in Baldwin County. In Florida, authorities were looking for a missing kayaker who was feared dead in Escambia County.

The supercharged Atlantic hurricane season has produced so many named storms that scientists ran out of traditional names as Tropical Storm Wilfred developed in the eastern Atlantic. It was only the second time that has happened since forecasters standardized the naming system in 1953. Wilfred was weak and far from land.

Two hours after Wilfred took shape, the National Hurricane Center moved to the Greek alphabet when Subtropical Storm Alpha formed just off the coast of Portugal. It was followed later in the day by Tropical Storm Beta, which formed in the western Gulf of Mexico. The same practice will govern storm names for the rest of hurricane season, which lasts until the end of November.

The only other time the hurricane center dipped into the Greek alphabet was the deadly 2005 hurricane season, which included Hurricane Katrina's strike on New Orleans.

The onslaught of hurricanes has focused attention on climate change, which scientists say is causing wetter, stronger and more destructive storms.

In Pensacola, Mamie Patterson was cleaning the yard of her cousin who was recovering from heart surgery after they lost power in a low-income neighborhood in Pensacola.

Patterson's mother uses an oxygen machine that they took to an uncle's home to charge because he had power. She saw utility trucks all over the city and wondered when power would be restored in her neighborhood, where several inches of water was standing in streets more than 48 hours after the storm.

"We feel a lot forgotten back here," she said. "I hate to say it, but it's the ghetto neighborhoods. We don't have lights."

Elsewhere in the city, Karen Robinson sat on the steps of her first-floor apartment and rattled off a list of belongings ruined by 4 feet (120 centimeters) of water from Sally — clothes, shoes, furniture and food.

It took months to recover from a 2015 flood after a heavy rainstorm sent nearly the same amount of water from a creek into the 200-unit complex. She was concerned because more than two months are left in hurricane season.

"This could happen again. That's the problem," Robinson said as men tossed soggy items out of an apartment window nearby.

In Louisiana, about 41,000 people remain without power around Lake Charles, where Hurricane Laura made landfall on Aug. 27. On Oak Island, North Carolina, which was ground zero for Hurricane Isaias on Aug. 3, some rental homes finally reopened by Labor Day.

"It wasn't pretty. We had piles of sand everywhere, plies of debris everywhere, but the roads were open," Mayor Ken Thomas said.

With the dunes that provide some protection to the island gone, Thomas said people will be nervous for the rest of the storm season.

"There's a hurricane for everyone out there," he said.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 76 of 98

Escambia County, which includes Pensacola, estimated that Sally caused at least \$21 million in damage to public infrastructure such as roads and drainage. It will likely cost an additional \$8 million to restore the sand washed away at Pensacola Beach, officials said.

The year-old Three Mile Bridge that connects Pensacola to the beaches was heavily damaged in at least two places, and authorities do not know how much money or time it will take to fix.

In several places along the Gulf Coast, ships washed up on shore. They included pleasure boats and even a replica of Christopher Columbus' ship the Nina, which docked in Pensacola to ride out the storm and came loose from its mooring. The vessel came to rest in mud and grass at a nearby marina.

Back in the Atlantic, Hurricane Teddy was a powerful Category 4 storm about 850 miles (1,370 kilometers) southeast of Bermuda. The island was hit directly by Hurricane Paulette on Monday, and forecasters said a hurricane watch for Teddy may be issued soon.

Associated Press writers Bobby Caina Calvan in Tallahassee, Florida; Jeff Martin in Marietta, Georgia; and Jeffrey Collins in Columbia, South Carolina, also contributed to this report.

Running out of storm names, Atlantic season goes Greek

By SETH BORENSTEIN AP Science Writer

The Atlantic's record-breaking "crazy" hurricane season got a bizarre European remake Friday as forecasters ran out of traditional names and trotted out the Greek alphabet for subtropical storm Alpha. And the geographically misplaced storm promptly sloshed ashore in Portugal.

But wait there's more. The busy Atlantic is beta testing the Greek alphabet as Beta formed late Friday afternoon.

This is only the second time National Hurricane Center forecasters have had to pull out the Greek alphabet for names, with the last time being 2005. Tropical Storm Wilfred, the last of traditional names, officially formed little more than an hour before Alpha, prompting the hurricane center to tweet "get out the Greek alphabet."

And they quickly had to use it again, when a tropical depression in the western Gulf of Mexico became Tropical Storm Beta. That's three storms forming in about six hours.

"It's crazy," said University of Miami hurricane researcher Brian McNoldy. "This is just off the charts., We've made a joke of breaking records."

Wilfred, Alpha and Beta set records for earliest 21st, 22nd and 23rd named Atlantic storms, beating 2005 by a few weeks.

Alpha is odd in another way. It's misplaced into an area where storms don't generally brew. That's so unusual that Alpha barely shows up on the hurricane center's real time storm tracking map, which is focused on the Americas. Only the "Al" of its Greek name shows and it was expected to dissipate in less than a day.

But Alpha fits with the rest of this season in another way. About half of the storms this busy hurricane season have only lasted a few days and have been quite weak, McNoldy said. Vicky for example popped up quickly and soon dissipated without much notice. And with 22 storms only two of them — Laura and Teddy, which is still swirling — reached major hurricane status, which is also kind of unusual, McNoldy said.

McNoldy said the environmental conditions reduce high level winds enough for storms to form, but not enough for them to strengthen or even survive long. La Nina, which is a cooling of parts of the equatorial Pacific that changes weather worldwide, is a factor in making some but not all of the Atlantic more active, he said. It doesn't explain Alpha forming, he said.

McNoldy does not see a human-caused climate change connection at work in the number of storms.

Just to remind people, the hurricane center tweeted out the entire 24-letter Greek alphabet, with a red slash through Alpha. McNoldy joked that after that there's no official name list, but the Russian alphabet is available.

With at least another month of the heart of the busiest part of hurricane season to go, one weather-watcher on Twitter talked of "Hurricane Pi on Thanksgiving."

Actor Masterson's lawyer denies and denounces rape charges

By ANDREW DALTON AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — "That '70s Show" actor Danny Masterson, charged with raping three women, made his first appearance Friday in a Los Angeles courtroom, where his attorney declared his innocence and denounced the charges against him as "politicized."

Masterson, 44, who has been free on bail since his June arrest, stood in court in a blue suit and face mask next to attorneys Tom Mesereau and Sharon Appelbaum, as the three women sat in the gallery.

Masterson did not enter a plea, but Mesereau said the charges, based on events nearly 20 years old, were the result of unfair hype from media outlets and pressure to prosecute his client as Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey faces an election.

"There have been repeated attempts to politicize this case," said Mesereau, who also represented Bill Cosby and Michael Jackson in their sexual misconduct cases. "He is absolutely not guilty and we're going to prove it."

Deputy District Attorney Reinhold Mueller called the statements "pure speculation, with no basis in fact."

Mesereau spoke as the judge was considering media requests to allow media cameras in court, which he approved.

Mesereau argued that the media presence would be unfairly prejudicial to Masterson and taint potential jurors.

"We want to do anything we can to tone down the cameras and the circus-like atmosphere that have pervaded this case," the attorney said. "We're just trying to protect his rights."

Superior Court Judge Miguel T. Espinoza also denied a request from the defense for a protective order sealing case files and preventing police, prosecutors and potential witnesses from revealing case information to the media, but said he would reconsider similar request later.

The defense has filed documents asking the criminal complaint against Masterson be thrown out as insufficient. A hearing on the issue will be held before Masterson is asked to enter a plea.

Masterson's arrest came after a three-year investigation that resulted in the rare prosecution of a famous Hollywood figure in the #MeToo era. Despite dozens of investigations, most have led to no charges based on lack of evidence or too much time passing.

About 20 friends and supporters accompanied Masterson to court, standing in the courthouse hall with him as he awaited the hearing, but only a few were allowed inside the courtroom because of coronavirus distancing requirements.

He spoke only to answer "yes" to the judge's questions.

Masterson is charged with three counts of rape by force or fear. Prosecutors allege that he raped a 23-year-old woman sometime in 2001, a 28-year-old woman in April of 2003, and a 23-year-old woman between October and December of 2003. Prosecutors said all of the alleged attacks happened in his home.

He could face up to 45 years in prison if convicted.

Neither Masterson and his attorneys nor the three women spoke to reporters outside of court.

The women, who are not named in the charging documents said in a statement through their attorneys when Masterson was arrested that they had suffered "harassment, embarrassment and re-victimization" since they began cooperating with authorities and that they are "thankful that the Los Angeles County District Attorney's office is finally seeking criminal justice."

The alleged rapes came at the height of Masterson's fame as he starred as Steven Hyde on the ensemble retro sitcom "That '70s Show" alongside Ashton Kutcher, Mila Kunis and Topher Grace. The series ran on Fox TV from 1998 to 2006 and has had a long afterlife in reruns.

He was removed from the Netflix show "The Ranch" in 2017 over the allegations that would eventually lead to the charges.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 78 of 98

Donor cash surges to Harrison, the Democrat taking on Graham

By MEG KINNARD Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — It won't be known until Election Day if a poll showing a tightening contest between Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham and Democrat Jaime Harrison portends an upset — but the gains are real enough in the Democrat's campaign account.

On the heels of a Quinnipiac University poll that has him tied with Graham among likely voters in South Carolina, Harrison's campaign has marked two back-to-back fundraising days of \$1 million apiece, bringing his total fundraising to over \$30 million.

It's a staggering sum, unheard of for a Democrat competing in this conservative state, and matches what Graham has also raised in his pursuit of a fourth term. It also dwarfs the \$10 million figure Harrison previously told The Associated Press he thought necessary to win.

The influx of cash for Harrison — a Democratic National Committee associate chair and former state party chair — is providing a rare opportunity to blanket the airwaves in a place where Democrats haven't won a statewide contest in 15 years, bolstering the party in their fight to win back the Senate majority.

On Labor Day, the pro-Harrison political action committee Lindsey Must Go flew a banner plane along the South Carolina coast deriding Graham's stance on offshore drilling, a day before President Donald Trump expanded a moratorium on the practice. This week, the PAC announced it would spend \$300,000 on a Charleston-area television ad on the same topic.

The Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee has also pledged to spend at least \$1 million in the race's closing weeks, funding polling, field organizing and advertising.

"Having that kind of cash available means you can explore many different strategies at one time, which will be difficult for the Republicans to deal with," said Democratic media consultant Martha McKenna, who has previously helmed media buying for the DSCC. "I think it's a huge advantage for Democrats that we have not enjoyed in previous cycles."

National GOP groups including the National Republican Senatorial Committee haven't devoted the same level of resources to Graham, but the group told the AP on Friday it was monitoring the contest and felt Graham was well-positioned to win it. A pro-Graham PAC, Security is Strength, showed about \$1.6 million in fundraising. On his own, Graham has run a vigorous advertising campaign, including criticism of Harrison's past work as a Washington lobbyist.

Much of Harrison's money has come from out of state, with national Democrats long ago marking the contest among their top targets. Harrison launched his campaign not in local media but on MSNBC, where he has been a frequent guest and where his campaign regularly advertises.

Harrison and the groups backing him argue that Graham, a Trump critic turned close ally, is too easily influenced by the president. But Graham, who has said "elections have consequences" to explain his previous support of Obama-era Supreme Court picks, used that same explanation in a 2018 interview with the AP as to why his attitude toward Trump had shifted from animosity to alliance.

Trump carried South Carolina by double digits over Democrat Hillary Clinton in 2016, and Republicans control both legislative chambers, all statewide offices and most of the state's congressional seats. South Carolina is assumed to be safely in his reelection column, and Trump hasn't announced plans to stump there for himself — or Graham — and is instead spending time in states that are general election battlegrounds.

Trump's popularity in South Carolina is a significant challenge for the groups working against Graham. Steve Schmidt, co-founder of The Lincoln Project — an outside group of Republicans devoted to defeating Trump — said he's trying to convince voters that Trump's relationship with Graham speaks poorly to Graham's character. His group has paid for jarring ads portraying Graham as a "parasite."

"You voted for Lindsey Graham before, but this is really the first race where you get to vote for Lindsey Graham where you know, really, who he is," Schmidt said during a recent meeting with AP reporters. "Lindsey's got an affectation as a goofy sidekick, a funny guy. But I think when you strip it all away in 2020, it's really not that funny."

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 79 of 98

Graham, who easily bested several primary challengers, has rarely faced formidable general election competition. In 2014, he defeated a longtime state senator by double digits, with both candidates raising a combined total of less than \$8 million.

Terry Sullivan, a GOP consultant who headed up media for Marco Rubio's 2016 White House bid, said that, while Graham's national profile has been on the rise since 2016, his home-state status has suffered because of linkages to Trump.

"Lindsey Graham, prior to the last two years, always had the ability to seem the most real and authentic politician in South Carolina, and maybe the country," Sullivan said. "I can't help but think, as much as I love Lindsey Graham, is that he's lost a lot of that in the age of Trump."

Regardless of Democrats' attention, said Matt Moore, who chaired the state's Republicans during the 2016 election cycle, South Carolina voters remain conservative and do not want Democratic representation in the Senate.

"South Carolina Republicans always show up at game time," Moore said. "Despite the claims of Democrats that they've made up ground in the past, there are still no elections the party can point to where they've won."

For Harrison, the survey data — and the windfall it's created — backs up what he's said throughout the race: A statewide Democratic win is possible in South Carolina.

"From day one I felt like I could win this race," Harrison told the AP recently. "I just feel like everybody is coming to where I've been since day one of this campaign."

Meg Kinnard can be reached at <http://twitter.com/MegKinnardAP>.

CDC drops controversial testing advice that caused backlash

By MIKE STOBBE AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — U.S. health officials on Friday dropped a controversial piece of coronavirus guidance and said anyone who has been in close contact with an infected person should get tested.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention essentially returned to its previous testing guidance, getting rid of language posted last month that said people didn't need to get tested if they didn't feel sick. That change had set off a rash of criticism from health experts who couldn't fathom why the nation's top public health agency would say such a thing amid the pandemic.

It was "not consistent with the basic principles of controlling an epidemic," said Dr. Silvia Chiang, a pediatric infectious diseases expert at Brown University who applauded the change announced Friday.

The CDC now says anyone who has been within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes should get a test. In a statement, the agency called the changes a "clarification" that was needed "due to the significance of asymptomatic and pre-symptomatic transmission."

Agency officials declined additional comment.

Health officials were evasive about why they had made the change in August, and some outside observers speculated it was forced on the CDC by political appointees within the Trump administration.

At the time, administration officials said the language originated at the CDC but the decision came out of meetings of the White House coronavirus task force. Dr. Brett Giroir, an assistant secretary at the Department of Health and Human Services, said many federal leaders outside the agency were involved in "lots of editing, lots of input." He said it was difficult to attribute the final language to any one source.

The New York Times, citing internal federal documents and unnamed sources, on Thursday reported that the guidance was placed on the CDC's website over the objections of agency scientists.

Public health experts have noted that testing the contacts of infected people is a core element of efforts to keep outbreaks in check, and that a large percentage of those infected with the coronavirus exhibit no COVID-19 symptoms.

The CDC's chief, Dr. Robert Redfield, issued a statement shortly after the controversy erupted that did little to clarify why the change was deemed necessary. The main intent seemed to be to assure state

health officials that they could continue to recommend that all close contacts be tested if they felt that was wisest, despite the website language that said it was not necessary.

During a U.S. Senate hearing on Wednesday, Redfield continued to defend the language that was dropped Friday. He said the August changes had been "misinterpreted" and were part of an effort to increase engagement by doctors and local health officials in the handling of potential illness clusters.

Adriane Casalotti, of the National Association of County and City Health Officials, said the now-deleted guidance caused confusion among the public. She said local health officials spent a lot of time answering questions about whether people should get testing, "as opposed to actually doing the testing."

Dr. Richard Besser, chief executive of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, said he believes the August change was made to give "wiggle room" to governors who did not want to increase testing.

The whole episode is disturbing, because it makes it harder for the public to understand why the CDC is making recommendations and whether that advice can be trusted, added Besser, who previously spent 13 years at CDC and was acting director at the beginning of a 2009 flu pandemic.

The CDC and Food and Drug Administration have to be seen as reliable sources of science information as the administration gears up for a national coronavirus vaccination campaign, Besser said.

"If we can't believe that, then even if there is a safe and effective vaccine, a significant portion of the population will not want to get it," he said.

The Associated Press Health and Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

NYC tries \$50 fines to get scofflaws to don masks on subway

By DAVID PORTER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The young man slouched against the inside of the subway doors as the No. 3 train headed south along Broadway. Across the aisle, another young man lay asleep, sprawled across three seats.

In ordinary times, it would be the snoozing seat hog who got angry glares. But in the age of COVID-19, it was the other guy who drew silent notice because he, unlike the oblivious napper, wore no face covering.

The agency that runs New York City's subway and bus systems implemented a \$50 fine this week for the scofflaws who, even in a region with more than 25,000 coronavirus dead, refuse to follow rules requiring masks to be worn at all times on public transit.

Metropolitan Transportation Authority officials have promised to enforce the rule with a light touch — certainly far lighter than the city's famously zero-tolerance approach to parking violations. And they have dismissed criticisms that the fines are aimed at easing what officials have called an existential budget crisis brought on by the pandemic.

When recalcitrant riders are identified, MTA employees and New York City police have been instructed to provide a mask first and issue a ticket only as a last resort. Through Thursday, none had been issued, but MTA police reported about 1,700 instances of riders being given a mask, or of people being cautioned that they were wearing their mask improperly.

Still, even some riders who are irritated by masklessness on buses and trains were unsure about the idea of getting compliance through fines.

Kathryn Lois, who rides the subway on Manhattan's Upper West Side, decried the fine even as she noted three maskless people entering the station at 96th Street and Broadway within a span of about 5 minutes.

"We can't afford it, not with everything else that's been going on," Lois said, referring to the economic downturn brought on by the pandemic. "It's not fair."

Tim Kelly, a Queens resident working a construction job in Manhattan, was more blunt, calling it bull excrement.

"If nobody's around you and you want to pull your mask off and breathe air normally, why shouldn't you be able to?" Kelly said as he waited for a No. 2 subway train on Tuesday, his face covered by an American flag-themed mask.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 81 of 98

As New York takes halting steps toward reopening its economy and restoring the rhythms and routines that define it, its subway system remains underused. Many longtime commuters either are still working from home or using other means to get to work, possibly out of fear that they could be infected by fellow passengers.

The virus can be caught by inhaling droplets from another person's sneeze, cough or even conversation, according to the Centers for Disease for Control and Prevention, and some research suggests droplets can remain in the air in a closed environment for as long as 14 minutes.

New York's subways have a daily ridership of more than 5 million. An MTA-commissioned study last spring projected 60% of riders would return to the subways by now; the actual number is less than half of that, according to the agency.

More than 130 MTA employees have been killed by the coronavirus, most in the initial three months of its assault on New York.

Of those who are riding buses and subways, fewer than one in 10 aren't wearing masks, according to spot surveys conducted by the MTA throughout the system. MTA Chairman Patrick Foye said one of the goals of the fine, in addition to protecting the health of customers and MTA employees, is to drive mask usage even higher and give riders more reason to return.

Interim New York City Transit head Sarah Feinberg, who oversees city subways and buses, compared the mask rule to other subway rules prohibiting littering, smoking or drinking — conventions New Yorkers follow or not on the honor system, because there are relatively few people enforcing rules in the sprawling network. Gov. Andrew Cuomo signed an executive order mandating mask usage several months ago.

"This is just another one; it gives us another tool in our toolbox," Feinberg said. "We're not looking to fine people, we're not looking for the police to fine people; what we're looking for is compliance. Our point is to make sure we can get as close to 100% compliance as we can."

Dan Pearlstein, spokesperson for the Riders Alliance, said that while his advocacy organization shares the MTA's goal of getting everyone wearing a mask, he was also concerned about how aggressively the fines might be used.

"I think the MTA is trying to broadcast the message that they are doing everything possible, but invoking the law enforcement angle is sort of a recipe for trouble," he said. "Things can go very wrong in conflicts between police and riders, and with all the publicity it will not have been worth it."

In the early months of the coronavirus outbreak, New York City police had taken a more active role in enforcing mask rules until a bystander recorded officers pinning a young woman to the ground in front of her young child at a Brooklyn subway station after she argued with cops who had confronted her about not wearing her mask properly.

The episode led Mayor Bill de Blasio to announce police officers would no longer take enforcement actions over mask-wearing unless there was serious danger to the public.

"What we want is compliance," NYPD Commissioner Dermot Shea told television station NY1 on Monday. "We're not looking to have summonses issued and further hurt people that are already hurting in New York City, but we want compliance and that's the message."

The agency said last month that it needs \$12 billion in funding before the end of 2021 to avoid drastic measures, like service reductions and a 36% fare hike. The federal government supplied nearly \$4 billion in coronavirus relief.

NOT REAL NEWS: A look at what didn't happen this week

The Associated Press undefined

A roundup of some of the most popular but completely untrue stories and visuals of the week. None of these are legit, even though they were shared widely on social media. The Associated Press checked them out. Here are the facts:

CLAIM: Maps of recent wildfires in the Pacific Northwest show the fires stop abruptly at the Canadian

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 82 of 98

border.

THE FACTS: Maps circulating on social media with this claim include only American data. Canada has its own fire mapping system, which shows there are fires burning in British Columbia, just north of the western U.S. Social media posts this week noted what seemed like a curious phenomenon: Wildfire maps show the blazes stretch across much of the western United States, but end at the Canadian border. Facebook users joked that the fires must "lack Canadian passports" and called it a "geographical oddity." A Twitter user in Canada said he was "gratified to see" that climate change stops at the 49th parallel. "Must be that carbon tax," he wrote. The maps were also shared by Emerald Robinson, a White House correspondent for Newsmax. "If the fires in Oregon & Washington are 'climate change' then why do the fires stop at the Canadian border?" she wrote in a tweet shared nearly 4,000 times. The answer is that these maps only show American data. One map shared in several social media posts, for example, is a "USA Wildfires" map from the geographic information system software supplier Esri. It shows more than 100 wildfires in the western United States but doesn't display Canada's fires. Canadians are seeing some fires, and have also endured unhealthy air quality levels as strong winds blow smoke and ash particles from U.S. fires to the north, the AP has reported. But British Columbia's wildfire season has been less severe than that of Washington, Oregon and California this year thanks to cooler and wetter conditions in that part of Canada this summer, according to Lori Daniels, a forestry professor at the University of British Columbia. Weather patterns originating in California that have exacerbated the fires along the West Coast of the U.S. became weaker as they traveled north to Canada, Daniels told the AP. Scientists say climate change has contributed to more intense wildfires in both countries in recent years. "This is everywhere," Daniels said. "We're all experiencing extreme temperatures, extreme droughts, extreme fires driven by those droughts, and they are the hallmarks of climate change."

— Associated Press writer Ali Swenson contributed this report.

CLAIM: Antifa is now carrying chainsaws, cutting down utility poles and starting more fires as wildfires rage across the Pacific Northwest.

THE FACTS: There is no evidence that antifa activists have wielded chainsaws, cut down utility poles or started any of the fires currently spreading across Washington, Oregon and California. Public officials in the Pacific Northwest have been fighting misinformation along with deadly wildfires as a surge of false posts on social media blame the fires on antifa, short for anti-fascist, a range of far-left militant groups that oppose white supremacists. "Oh boy!" read one false Facebook post on Sunday that was shared more than 3,300 times in 24 hours. "ANTIFA is now carrying chain saws, and cutting down utility poles, and starting more fires. Is there any doubt that we have a war on our hands now?" Oregon State Police Capt. Tim Fox told The Associated Press on Monday he had not received any reports of antifa activists using chainsaws or cutting down utility poles. Also, the FBI on Friday issued a statement saying it had investigated several claims about extremist groups starting the fires in Oregon, and found them to be untrue. The claim emerged in the days after a public Zoom meeting in Oregon's Clackamas County on Sept. 10, when a captain from the sheriff's office said he had received reports of "suspected antifa" agitators "armed with chainsaws" near Estacada, Oregon. "The goal was to fall telephone poles in hopes of starting further fires," Capt. Jeff Smith said in the meeting. Smith also mentioned reports of people in extremist groups "staging gas cans for later destruction." He said the claims came to the sheriff's office from a "sergeant on the street." However, the sheriff confirmed in a Sept. 14 press conference that these reports were baseless. "I want to clarify for the record that one of our captains indicated a source stated that antifa was involved in possible criminal activity," Sheriff Craig Roberts said in Monday's press conference. "That source has since been determined to be false." Roberts added that the sheriff's office did not have any suspects "associated with any groups" in connection to the wildfires.

— Ali Swenson

CLAIM: CDC warns that non-N95 masks will do nothing to protect you from wildfire smoke because "they do not catch small particles." Smoke particles are larger than those of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 83 of 98

COVID-19, so masks do not work.

THE FACTS: Cloth and surgical masks are designed to prevent the spread of the coronavirus by catching respiratory droplets coming from the person wearing the mask. Respiratory droplets are larger than smoke particles. Social media posts are misrepresenting information from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention regarding masks and wildfires to claim that masks do not work. The CDC recently updated its guidance on wildfires to include information about the coronavirus. On the page titled "Wildfire Smoke and COVID-19," the agency said that cloth masks would not protect anyone from wildfire smoke. "Cloth masks that are used to slow the spread of COVID-19 by blocking respiratory droplets offer little protection against wildfire smoke. They do not catch small, harmful particles in smoke that can harm your health," the agency said. Online posts are using that information to say that if smoke particles are larger than those of the coronavirus, then how could masks be effective in stopping COVID-19. "Mask won't prevent smoke inhalation. But keep thinking they are protecting you from a virus," one post on Facebook said. The posts were shared across Facebook and Twitter with one post on Twitter receiving more than 8,000 likes. Such posts miss the point of wearing cloth or surgical masks. "If the wearer has a respiratory droplet that has a virus, facial coverings keep that droplet from going out into the area around them which is why facial coverings are recommended when people are not social distancing," said Dr. Albert Rizzo, chief medical officer for the American Lung Association. "It's never been designed to protect the person wearing the mask." N95 masks are engineered to protect against inhaling very small particles about .3 microns in size and larger, making them effective against smoke and virus particles, said Dr. Jonathan Parsons, a pulmonologist at The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center. Wildfire particles are up to 2.5 microns. A coronavirus particle is about .125 microns in size. "Cloth masks and surgical masks are not designed to protect you against particles that small so the smoke goes through," Parsons said. "Respiratory droplets are much larger than the harmful materials in the wildfire smoke." Parsons recommends wearing cloth and surgical masks to curb the spread of COVID-19 in wildfire areas even if they do not protect against smoke particles.

— Associated Press writer Beatrice Dupuy contributed this report.

CLAIM: Video of Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden deplaning at a Tampa, Florida, campaign stop shows him waving to an empty field.

THE FACTS: An Associated Press reporter traveling with Biden on Tuesday confirmed he was waving to firefighters and other ground personnel outside the frame of the video. In the video, taken from a Fox News report, Biden points to his right and waves as he steps from the plane in Tampa, but only an empty field can be seen in the distance. A woman in the background of the video laughs and makes fun of Biden, yelling, "Who's he waving to? There's nobody there. He thinks he's Trump." One version of the video was retweeted more than 17,000 times. Versions of the same video also appeared on YouTube and various conservative blogs, and were viewed hundreds of thousands of times on Facebook. In reality, Biden was waving to people outside the frame of the video. Beyond the AP's account, a Bloomberg News reporter posted video of the scene from a different angle, capturing four people standing near a fire truck and other personnel on the runway.

— Ali Swenson

CLAIM: A Sept. 9 photo of three Democrats — presidential candidate Joe Biden, Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan — without masks at the Detroit Athletic Club in Michigan shows they are flouting mask guidelines during the coronavirus pandemic.

THE FACTS: The photo was not taken Sept. 9. It was taken in early March, before Michigan had its first confirmed case of the coronavirus, the Detroit Athletic Club confirmed in a statement. In the days since Biden's campaign visit to suburban Detroit last week, social media users have been widely circulating photos of Biden shaking hands with former Detroit Mayor Dennis Archer Jr., with Whitmer and Duggan in the background. None of the politicians is wearing a mask. Facebook and Instagram posts call Biden, Whitmer and Duggan hypocrites for encouraging Americans to wear masks and follow social distancing

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 84 of 98

guidelines during the coronavirus pandemic while ignoring their own advice. "While OUR children are being mandated to wear a mask while playing outdoor sports these hypocrites are at the Detroit Athletic Club yesterday maskless!" read a Thursday Facebook post with the photo. "When will the sheeple wake up! This is ALL about control and it has to STOP." "Say it isn't so," read another Facebook post on Thursday. "Biden, Whitmer, Duggan and others at the Detroit Athletic Club last night. Masks? Distancing? Nope. Touching? Yep!" The miscaptioned posts emerged after Archer posted the photo on his Instagram account on Sept. 9, with the caption, "It was good to catch up with dear friend @joebiden and @vrdarcher earlier this year (pre Covid) #lets go #2020." The Detroit Athletic Club confirmed on its Facebook page that the photo was taken there in March. In addition, the clothing worn by Biden and Whitmer in the photo matches Associated Press photos from a Detroit rally on March 9. Biden was at the club earlier that day, attending a fundraiser hosted by Michigan politicians, according to the Detroit Free Press. Michigan had not yet announced any confirmed COVID-19 cases. The state reported its first presumptive positive COVID-19 case a day later, on March 10. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention did not begin advising all Americans to wear cloth face coverings until early April, according to AP reporting.

— Ali Swenson

CLAIM: COVID-19 is a man-made virus intentionally manufactured in a lab and released to the public.

THE FACTS: Scientists say the molecular structure of SARS-CoV-2 rules out the possibility that the virus was created in a lab. A draft study associated with a group founded by former Trump adviser Steve Bannon is giving new life to false claims that the coronavirus was manufactured intentionally in a Chinese lab. The study, which has not been peer-reviewed, was released Monday by Chinese virologist Li-Meng Yan and three colleagues. It claims to show evidence the virus did not originate in nature. The four authors list their affiliation as the Rule of Law Society, a group founded by Bannon that says its mission is "to expose corruption, obstruction, illegality, brutality, false imprisonment, excessive sentencing, harassment, and inhumanity pervasive in the political, legal, business and financial systems of China." It is not a scientific organization. Twitter suspended Yan's account on Monday and declined to comment on the reason for the suspension. The same evening, Yan appeared on Tucker Carlson's show on Fox News, claiming the coronavirus is a Frankenstein-like virus manufactured and released intentionally by the Chinese government. The video of her Fox News appearance, shared widely on social media and retweeted by the president, sparked a swell of social media posts backing the theory. Carlson has been speculating on the virus's origins since the onset of the pandemic in the U.S. Despite top medical officials and researchers debunking the conspiracy theory that the virus originated in a lab, it continues to thrive. Scientists have repeatedly said that the genetic sequence of the virus and its similarities to SARS, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, prove that the virus was not made in a lab or engineered. In a paper titled "The proximal origin of SARS-CoV-2" published in Nature in March, scientists with Scripps Research who studied the genome sequence of the virus concluded that it originated through natural processes. By looking at the virus's molecular structure, they were able to determine that the backbone of the virus differed from coronaviruses already known to scientists and rather it resembled viruses found in bats and pangolins. Scientists have said that if the virus was made in a lab then its structure would reveal that it would have been created from viruses that are already known and there would be signs of manipulation. "These two features of the virus, the mutations in the RBD portion of the spike protein and its distinct backbone, rules out laboratory manipulation as a potential origin for SARS-CoV-2," Kristian Andersen, an associate professor of immunology and microbiology at Scripps Research and one of the authors of the paper, said in a news release in March.

CLAIM: McDonald's removed its American flags nationwide in support of antifa and Black Lives Matter.

THE FACTS: A McDonald's USA spokesperson confirmed this claim is not true and there is no coordinated effort to remove American flags from its restaurants. Twitter and Facebook users this week spread a false rumor about America's largest fast-food chain in posts collectively shared more than 10,000 times. "McDonald's removes their American flags in support of Antifa & BLM nationwide," the posts read. A Facebook

post added the hashtag "#boycottMcDonalds." A McDonald's spokesperson told The Associated Press there is no truth to this claim. In addition, there is no evidence in news reports or other publications that any such action is being taken. The company recently published a statement on its website saying that Black lives matter and announcing donations to the National Urban League and the NAACP. It also announced a new diversity and inclusion initiative on July 30. McDonald's has not published any public statements about antifa, short for anti-fascist, an umbrella term for left-leaning militant groups that oppose white supremacists at protests. "McDonald's unequivocally stands behind the need for equality and social justice, and these rumors are not true," the company told The Associated Press in a statement.

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One family's desperate, deadly attempt to flee Lebanon

By BASSAM HATOUM and HUSSEIN MALLA Associated Press

TRIPOLI, Lebanon (AP) — Mohammed Sufian did not dream of much: a job, food on the table, the chance to buy his 2½-year-old son the little things a toddler wants.

So when he heard that smugglers were taking people from his hometown of Tripoli to the nearby Mediterranean island of Cyprus, he decided to take the chance with his pregnant wife and child. To pay their way, he sold his furniture and two of his sister's bracelets.

They boarded a small fishing boat with the others. But what would be expected to be a 40-hour trip went badly: For eight harrowing days, they were stranded in the Mediterranean Sea, apparently losing their way and running out of diesel. At least four adults and two children died — including Sufian's little boy. Six are missing.

"I took my son with me not to give him a high life, not to give him the life of rich people," said Sufian, 21. "I was trying to give him a good life where if he will ask me for a potato chip bag or a juice box I am able to give it to him. This is what drove me out of the country."

In recent weeks, scores of others have tried to make the same illicit sea crossing, attempting to flee a country facing multiple crises and an unprecedented economic and financial collapse.

Generations of Lebanese have emigrated due to war and conflict, including waves of Lebanese who traveled by boat legally to Cyprus during the country's 1975-90 war. But this new flight — people risking their lives to make illegal crossings in rickety fishing boats to escape poverty — reflects a level of desperation the country has not seen before.

Tens of thousands of people have lost their jobs in the past months. The local currency has lost 80% of its value, eradicating the purchasing power of many in this tiny country of 5 million where corruption and mismanagement are widespread. Unemployment has reached a soaring 35% and poverty is skyrocketing.

The crisis has been worsened by the coronavirus pandemic and last month's massive explosion at Beirut port which fed despair among a population that has long given up on its leaders.

Tripoli, Lebanon's second largest city, had been one of the poorest and most neglected regions even before the crisis. The city is also home to tens of thousands of Syrians who fled civil war in their country that broke out in March 2011. Many of those taking the boats have been Syrian refugees.

Earlier this month, authorities in Cyprus said they were alarmed by the arrival of four boats carrying Syrian and Lebanese migrants in waters off its coastline. European Union member Cyprus and Lebanon have an agreement to prevent migrants from reaching the island nation.

The boat carrying Sufian's family and 46 other men, women and children, mostly Lebanese and Syrians, left Tripoli on Sept. 7. Each had paid the smuggler the equivalent of up to \$930 in Lebanese pounds.

Upon boarding, all their belongings, including food and water, were taken away — ostensibly, they were too heavy. All would be returned, brought to them by another boat once they are away from Lebanon's

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 86 of 98

coast, they were told.

They never got them back, and were left under the scorching sun, without water or food.

Sufian said that 20 hours after they sailed, his son began asking for water and milk. Having nothing to give and overcome by the heat and his own worry, Sufian fainted, he says. When he woke up, Sufian found that his relatives had given the boy three bottles of sea water.

"My son died later because of lack of food and water," Sufian said. He washed his son and followed the Islamic tradition of covering him with a cloth. Three days later, he dropped the body into the sea, thinking they might never make it back to land.

Sufian said several ships passed the stranded boat but no one helped, perhaps because they feared pirates. After six deaths, a half-dozen men leapt into the sea to seek help.

Ibrahim Lisheen, a 22-year-old migrant, swam for hours. Finally, he reached a warship for the U.N. peacekeeping force in Lebanon known as UNIFIL; its crew rescued those remaining on the boat. They were offered treatment and handed over to Lebanese authorities in Beirut.

Late Thursday, the body of a young man believed to have been on the ship washed up on the coast south of Beirut. Six are still missing, among them Mohammed Mohammed, 27, who left Lebanon to help his parents and seven sisters.

His father, Khaldoun, says his son had been jobless for years after he lost his job at a shop that sells fire extinguishers; he grew tired of taking "money from me to buy cigarettes," and decided to join cousins who were making the crossing. Mohammed had sold his sister's neckless to pay the smugglers.

The two men who took the money and put the migrants on the fishing boat are in hiding and families are demanding that they be punished.

Mohammed's mother, Afaf Abdul-Hamid, goes to the coast of Tripoli every day, hoping that her son will swim home. "These are human traffickers. They took my son to the middle of the sea and left him there with no food or water."

Lisheen, whose heroics led to the rescue, is furious. "Look at my body, it was eaten by fish. My body is swollen, my teeth were broken due to the salty water and I lost a lot of things," he said, as friends massaged his body with Aloe Vera to alleviate his sunburn.

Why did he take the risk? "I did that because of poverty, it makes us blind," he said. "To those who are asking me why you are leaving, I am telling them why, I am leaving in order to feed my family, my mother."

Sufian and his wife, expected to give birth in two months, live with their sorrow. And the grieving father relives, again and again, the moment when his dreams of a better life for his family became a nightmare.

"My son died due to thirst, I shrouded him with my hands, I washed him with my hands and with my hands I dropped him in the water after three days, because I lost hope."

Associated Press writers Zeina Karam and Bassem Mroue in Beirut contributed to this report.

Push is underway to test COVID-19 vaccines in diverse groups

By LAURAN NEERGAARD and FEDERICA NARANCIO Associated Press

TAKOMA PARK, Md. (AP) — In front of baskets of tomatoes and peppers, near a sizzling burrito grill, the "promotoras" stop masked shoppers at a busy Latino farmers market: Want to test a COVID-19 vaccine?

Aided by Spanish-speaking "health promoters" and Black pastors, a stepped-up effort is underway around the U.S. to recruit minorities to ensure potential vaccines against the scourge are tested in the populations most ravaged by the virus.

Many thousands of volunteers from minority groups are needed for huge clinical trials underway or about to begin. Scientists say a diverse group of test subjects is vital to determining whether a vaccine is safe and effective for everyone and instilling broad public confidence in the shots once they become available.

The expanded outreach by vaccine researchers and health officials is getting a late start in communities that, because of a history of scientific exploitation and racism, may be the most reluctant to roll up their sleeves.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 87 of 98

Just getting the word out takes time.

"I didn't know anything about the vaccine until now," said Ingrid Guerra, who signed up last week at the farmers market in Takoma Park, Maryland, outside the nation's capital.

The health promoters from CASA, a Hispanic advocacy group, explained how the research process works and how a vaccine could help end the coronavirus pandemic.

"I'm not afraid," Guerra decided. "I want to participate for me, my family, my people."

University of Maryland researchers agreed to set up a temporary lab at CASA's local community center so that people struggling financially wouldn't have to travel to participate.

The hardest part, many experts say, is gaining trust.

"A white guy from NIH is probably not going to be as effective by far in convincing somebody from a minority community that this is the kind of science they might want to trust, as would a doctor from their own community," said Dr. Francis Collins, director of the National Institutes of Health.

Recruiting African Americans in particular will be "a heavy, heavy lift," Collins said, because of the legacy of mistrust after the infamous Tuskegee experiment, when Black men in Alabama were left untreated for syphilis as part of a study that ran from the 1930s into the '70s.

Some Black doctors, too, are wrestling with doubts. Dr. Tina Carroll-Scott, medical director of the South Miami Children's Clinic, described a "really, really tough" time, considering the political influence that the Trump administration has exerted on long-trusted health agencies like the Food and Drug Administration.

"Wondering whether that's going to affect the trials and even the vaccine that comes out I think are all valid concerns," said Carroll-Scott, who ultimately decided to recommend the studies. "We know that Blacks and Latinos are bearing the brunt of this virus and, yeah, we definitely need to make sure that this vaccine works for them."

In the U.S., Black, Latino, Native Americans and Asians are more at risk of hospitalization and death from the coronavirus. Together they make up nearly 40% of the U.S. population, and an equitable vaccine study would match those demographics, though health officials would like to see even greater numbers.

As Moderna Inc. neared its goal of 30,000 study participants, some sites slowed recruitment in recent weeks to increase minority enrollment, now at about 28%.

Pfizer Inc., which recently asked the FDA for permission to expand to 44,000 volunteers, says about a quarter of its U.S. participants are from communities of color, more when counting trial sites in Brazil and Argentina. Both companies are having the most success in recruiting Hispanics.

"It's really important that this vaccine work for everyone, or if it doesn't, that we understand why," said Dr. Susanne Doblecki-Lewis of the University of Miami, who is helping to test the Moderna vaccine. Researchers might need to compare the different vaccines "and see how one might better fit a population than another."

A lack of diversity in the research would have ripple effects once any vaccine is approved for widespread use. Even before final testing began, a poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research found just 25% of African Americans and 37% of Hispanics would get a vaccine once it's available, compared with 56% of whites.

"If and when we have a vaccine ready, if you didn't have enrollment of minorities, then people are going to say, 'Why should I put the vaccine in myself?'" said Dr. Carlos del Rio of Emory University, another study site.

Yet too often, when Dr. Christian Ramers of Family Health Centers of San Diego tries to recruit, he is told: "How can you possibly expect me to be a guinea pig when time and again we've volunteered our community members and not seen the benefits of the research?"

Theresa Hagen of Miami Beach, Florida, hopes she is a role model for other African Americans considering volunteering.

"I may be part of history right here," she said after enrolling in the University of Miami's study. The research "benefits not only African Americans but everyone in general."

Researchers are gearing up to recruit thousands more volunteers over the next two months, as shots

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 88 of 98

made by Johnson & Johnson and Novavax enter final testing and a paused study from AstraZeneca is expected to resume in the U.S.

NIH this week began a program to better inform minority populations about the vaccine studies — and other COVID-19 information — and awarded \$12 million to help form “community engagement” teams in 11 especially hard-hit states.

And as part of the NIH’s COVID-19 Prevention Network, the Rev. Edwin Sanders II of the Metropolitan Interdenominational Church in Nashville is heading a separate national project for “faith ambassadors” and clergy to dispel misinformation about vaccines and research.

“We’re not trying to twist anybody’s arm,” said Sanders, who has spent decades working with AIDS researchers to increase Black participation in studies of HIV vaccines and treatments.

People will have reasonable questions and fears, he said. The key is bringing them together with scientists and trusted community leaders for respectful, open conversations.

“We’re trying to change consciousness and change mindset,” Sanders said. “It’s not a quick fix.”

Neergaard reported from Alexandria, Virginia. Associated Press video journalist Cody Jackson in Miami contributed to this report.

The Associated Press Health and Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute’s Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

Raiders ready for big opening act on Las Vegas Strip

By TIM DAHLBERG AP Sports Writer

LAS VEGAS (AP) — The Death Star comes alive for the first time Monday night in a prime-time debut that just a few years ago would have been unimaginable.

The NFL in Sin City. Even the bookies in this gambling city would never have bet on this happening.

It took a seismic shift in philosophy from a league that once feared sports betting more than anything. It also took a leap of faith by the Raiders — along with \$750 million in taxpayer money — to embrace a city that seems to fit perfectly with the culture of the Silver and Black fan base.

The gamble pays off Monday night when the Raiders meet the New Orleans Saints in the opening game of the glittering \$2 billion stadium that Raiders owner Mark Davis dubbed the Death Star. They’ll do it in a spectacular new home that looms over the Las Vegas Strip, a far cry from the dilapidated stadium in Oakland where players often churned through a dirt infield.

The moment is bittersweet. No fans will be allowed because of the pandemic, and Davis himself will stay away in solidarity with them. But a national TV audience will tune in for some football and spectacular vistas, and with typical Las Vegas glitz the Killers will rock the nation during halftime from the rooftop of nearby Caesars Palace.

It’s a new era for the NFL, which once forbid players to even go into casinos. It’s also confirmation of Las Vegas as one of the great sporting cities in the world, as well as a needed psychological boost to a town suffering badly from a drop in tourism caused by COVID-19.

“I feel bad that (fans) won’t be able to be at the game, but I do know that with us being here and playing a home game there is still a feel around town: ‘Oh, the Raiders are playing in town,’” quarterback Derek Carr said. “So, it’s still exciting and I got people driving up next to my car and waving and going nuts and stuff.”

If the Raiders have embraced Las Vegas, the city has embraced them back. Season tickets were quickly sold out even with hefty prices for seat licenses — and before it became clear that no fans would attend the Raiders were the hottest team in the NFL in the secondary ticket market.

Around the city there are fans wearing silver and black, and you don’t have to drive far to see Raiders flags flying. There will be no Black Hole filled with crazed fans as in Oakland, largely because ticket prices are so expensive, but the team is eager to create new traditions in a home it has committed to spend

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 89 of 98

the next 30 years playing in.

And when the lanai doors open on the north end of the stadium Monday night to reveal a panoramic view of the Las Vegas Strip just past the massive torch honoring the late Al Davis, the moment will finally be at hand.

"This is our field of dreams," Mark Davis told the team last month when it gathered at the stadium for the first time. "This is our house."

And quite a house it is. The black glassed stadium — which some say resembles a giant Roomba — sits just off I-15 next to the Las Vegas Strip, looming over the main road that brings tourists in from Southern California. It has a translucent roof, natural grass and seats 65,000, bringing the city a state-of-the-art stadium venue it never had that will be used for concerts, fights, UFC events and likely a Super Bowl.

The view through the huge lanai doors and the Al Davis torch will be the iconic features, but everything about the stadium seems to scream Raiders in Las Vegas, including the location at Dean Martin Dr. and Al Davis Way.

"It's imposing and intimidating, and it's perfect for the Raiders," team president Marc Badain said. "We love the way it looks."

A lot of moving parts had to come together — and quickly — to get to this point. The Raiders at first were going to partner with the Chargers on a stadium in Los Angeles, but NFL owners instead decided to approve the new \$5 billion stadium built by the Rams that opened last week.

A few weeks after that vote in January 2016, the Raiders were still trying to decide what to do when the phone rang, with former Raiders running back Napoleon McCallum on the line. McCallum, who works for Sheldon Adelson, said the casino owner was interested in getting both a stadium built and an NFL team to put in it.

"Vegas wasn't really a thought at the time," Badain said. "They were instrumental in making it happen and guiding us through the process."

Adelson would later drop out of the project, but the Raiders moved forward. They got state legislators to guarantee \$750 million in hotel room taxes, took out loans from the NFL and Bank of America, and then sold a whopping \$549.2 million in PSLs to make up the difference.

The stadium, which will also host UNLV football games, came in on budget and on time. It's vastly different from the open air complex in Los Angeles that opened to rave reviews last week, but unique in its own way.

"The bright lights, the natural grass in a domed stadium, the spectacular locker room, it's a state-of-the-art facility," coach Jon Gruden said. "It's got everything you can imagine, and I can't wait to share it with our fans. It's a lot different than Alameda. No disrespect to the old stadium, but it's a lot different."

The Raiders are trying not to disrespect anyone, counting on fans from around the West — and the world — to fill the stadium on game days once the pandemic has subsided. The team has a regional brand and fans who travel, and Badain said 40% of season tickets were sold to people who don't live in Las Vegas.

"To have a venue this size adjacent to the resort corridor is overdue," Badain said. "It's going to be a catalyst and economic driver for this market coming out of the pandemic. I think this town will rally quickly and we'll be a big driver of that."

That will have to wait, at least until health conditions improve. For now, the seats will be empty, just as they are at most NFL stadiums around the country.

Still, there's a buzz around town. The Raiders won their opener on the road and are undefeated as a Las Vegas team as they return to a city that loves winners more than anything. Pandemic or not, people will gather to watch them on TV in their home debut, and it wouldn't be surprising to see a lot of fans in black and silver gathered outside the stadium on opening night.

A city built on fun and games got its first major professional sports team just three years ago in the NHL's Golden Knights. Now it has a marquee team in the biggest league in the country — along with a stadium to match.

"This is now both the sports and entertainment capital of the world," Badain said. "Who's going to top this? There's no competition."

More AP NFL: <https://apnews.com/NFL> and <https://twitter.com/AP>—

Firefighters battle exhaustion along with wildfire flames

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST Associated Press

BEAVERCREEK, Ore. (AP) — They work 50 hours at a stretch and sleep on gymnasium floors. Exploding trees shower them with embers. They lose track of time when the sun is blotted out by smoke, and they sometimes have to run for their lives from advancing flames.

Firefighters trying to contain the massive wildfires in Oregon, California and Washington state are constantly on the verge of exhaustion as they try to save suburban houses, including some in their own neighborhoods. Each home or barn lost is a mental blow for teams trained to protect lives and property.

And their own safety is never assured. Oregon firefighter Steve McAdoo's shift on Sept. 7 seemed mostly normal, until late evening, when the team went to a fire along a highway south of Portland.

"Within 10 minutes of being there, it advanced too fast and so quick ... we had to cut and run," he said. "You can't breathe, you can't see."

That happened again and again as he and the rest of the crew worked shifts that lasted two full days with little rest or food. They toiled in an alien environment where the sky turns lurid colors, ash falls like rain and towering trees explode into flames, sending a cascade of embers to the forest floor.

"The sky was just orange or black, and so we weren't sure if was morning or night," he said. "My crew and I said that to each other many times, 'What is going on? When is this going to end?'"

As he worked, McAdoo worried about his wife and daughter, who had to evacuate the family's home. Often all he could do was send painfully short text messages: "Unless they were running from fire, all I could say was 'I'm busy,'" he said.

His family is safe, and his house is still standing, but he has not been able to check on it yet. Never before have flames crept so close to his Portland-area home.

Many firefighters are trying to protect the communities where they live. In California, Jesse Barnes had spent a full day working on another fire when he was called to a fast-moving blaze near his home county, close to Berry Creek, on the night of Sept. 9. An evacuation warning went out hours before, but some homes do not have cellphone service, and a few homes have no phones at all, he said. Some residents were reluctant to leave at first.

The crews saw people trying to escape the flames along the side of the road or in smoke-filled cars making panicked bids to outrun the blaze responsible for more than a dozen deaths so far.

Some had burns. Everyone was covered in ash. "They were terrified," Barnes said.

The firefighters tried to protect homes where they could, but the winds were so strong they could do little to stop the inferno as it spewed embers up to 10 miles away.

Instead, they worked to make sure people could get out, clearing trees off the roads, sometimes just feet from the flames. Barnes said it felt like being in the stinging, acrid path of campfire smoke — for two days straight.

The speed of the winds and the dryness of the forest made this fire one of the worst he's seen. "There was no stopping it," he said.

"We're tired and covered in ash and soot all blowing in our faces, coughing from the smoke," he said. But with so many wildfires burning, there was no one to take their places. "Once you're there, there's no relief," he said.

Western states usually turn to each other for help, but that's been hard with the number of places under siege in this historic wildfire season, which has killed more than 30 people and destroyed thousands of structures in three states.

One of the few places initially able to send help was Utah. Firefighters from communities in the Salt Lake area went to southern Oregon to battle fires that have destroyed entire towns. They've been trying to keep forested communities from going up in smoke.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 91 of 98

The teams are working 12-hour shifts, ending in the early morning hours to get a few hours of rest. They sleep on school gym floors or under the stars. At fire camps, they also must take precautions against the coronavirus, wearing face coverings, drinking water only from bottles and staying with their own small groups rather than mixing with others.

As they pulled into to the town of Butte Falls over the weekend, the sky filled with an eerie light, and ash started to fall — danger signs that the blaze could be getting closer, said firefighter Matthew McFarland, a spokesman with Unified Fire Authority.

The fire did not get any closer that night, but as the week wore on, they worked to build fire lines, trying to draw the blaze away from town, sometimes with the help of local loggers.

"An active wildfire is almost impossible to attack head-on," McFarland said. Instead, they use bulldozers to dig trenches it can't jump or burn the wood and brush it needs for fuel.

Those techniques helped save a small collection of homes in southern Oregon late Sunday, said Bart Vawdrey, deputy fire chief in Draper, Utah.

The Pacific Northwest is new territory for many Utah firefighters, who typically battle wildfires fed by smaller trees in the mountains of that desert state. The giant trees of Oregon tend to burn hotter, drying out the forest nearby and further feeding the blaze.

Still, the basic tactics are the same. Firefighters cleared out brush, cut fire lines and laid out hoses near the school in Butte Falls so crews can grab them quickly if the blaze roars into town.

"Sometimes it's like a game of chess," Vawdrey said, "and mother nature usually wins."

Amal Clooney quits UK role over 'lamentable' Brexit plan

By PAN PYLAS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Amal Clooney has become the highest profile lawyer to quit an official job over her opposition to the British government's suggestion that it could break international law in the event it fails to agree a trade deal with the European Union.

In a letter Friday to British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab, the human rights lawyer said she is quitting her role as the U.K.'s special envoy on media freedom over the government's "lamentable" suggestion.

She said she was "dismayed" to learn that the government intends to pass legislation that would effectively override sections of the Brexit withdrawal agreement that Prime Minister Boris Johnson had himself negotiated.

"Although the government has suggested that the violation of international law would be 'specific and limited', it is lamentable for the U.K. to be speaking of its intention to violate an international treaty signed by the Prime Minister less than a year ago," she said in her letter.

The Internal Market Bill, which is currently being debated by British lawmakers, 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.

Clooney, who married movie star George Clooney in 2014, becomes the latest lawyer to resign over the planned legislation. Richard Keen, the British government's law officer for Scotland, and the head of its legal department, Jonathan Jones, have also quit in the past couple of weeks.

The British government has admitted that the legislation could potentially 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."

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 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, an agreement that the planned legislation could breach.

Clooney said she had accepted the role in April 2019 because she believed "in the importance of the cause, and appreciate the significant role that the U.K. has played and can continue to play in promoting the international legal order."

Clooney said she had spoken to Raab about her concerns but that she had "received no assurance that any change of position is imminent."

As a result, she said she had "no alternative but to resign."

Follow AP's full coverage of Brexit and British politics at <https://www.apnews.com/Brexit>

Disgraced mogul Harvey Weinstein stripped of UK honor

LONDON (AP) — Britain on Friday stripped disgraced movie mogul Harvey Weinstein of an honor recognizing his contribution to the U.K. film industry.

Weinstein, 68, was given the honor in 2004. The 68-year-old former Hollywood producer was convicted earlier this year of rape and sexual assault against two women and sentenced to 23 years in prison.

Accusations by dozens of women in 2017 led to the end of his career and helped spur #MeToo — a global movement demanding that powerful men be held accountable for their sexual misconduct.

"The Queen has directed that the appointment of Harvey Weinstein to be an Honorary Commander of the Civil Division of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, dated January 19 2004, shall be cancelled and annulled and that his name shall be erased from the Register of the said Order," according to a notice in *The Gazette*, the U.K.'s official public record.

The forfeiture committee can remove a honor, with the approval of the queen.

Once one of the most powerful people in Hollywood, Weinstein's credits include "The English Patient," "Good Will Hunting," and "Shakespeare In Love."

Drug shows promise in 1st largely minority COVID-19 study

By MARILYNN MARCHIONE AP Chief Medical Writer

A drug company said Friday that a medicine it sells to tamp down inflammation has helped prevent the need for breathing machines in hospitalized COVID-19 patients in the first large study that primarily enrolled Hispanics and Blacks.

Switzerland-based Roche reported the results for tocilizumab, sold now as Actemra and RoActemra for treating rheumatoid arthritis and some other diseases. The company said it would quickly publish the results, which have not yet been reviewed by independent scientists, and would speak with regulators about next steps.

The drug, given through an IV, tamps down a protein called interleukin-6 that's often found in excess in COVID-19 patients. It failed in a previous study that tested it in people more severely ill from the coronavirus. The new study was done in the United States, South Africa, Kenya, Brazil, Mexico and Peru. About 85% of the 389 participants were Hispanic, Black, Native American or other ethnic or racial minorities. These groups have been disproportionately hurt by the pandemic.

About 12% given the drug needed a breathing machine or died within 28 days versus about 19% of patients given a placebo. Looked at separately, deaths were statistically similar in the two groups.

It's unclear how the results will be viewed; another drug that works in a similar way failed in an experiment rigorously testing it in COVID-19 patients but some less scientific, observational studies have suggested benefit.

This is the third time this week that companies have announced positive results from studies testing COVID treatments via press releases. Companies often are required to disclose results that could affect their financial situation.

On Monday, Eli Lilly reported benefits from a study testing its anti-inflammatory drug baricitinib when combined with the antiviral drug remdesivir. On Wednesday, it said interim results from very early testing suggested that its experimental antibody drug showed promise for helping clear the virus and possibly

reducing the need for hospitalization in mild to moderately ill patients.

Marilynn Marchione can be followed on Twitter: @MMarchioneAP

The Associated Press Health and Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

AP-NORC poll: Majority plan to vote before Election Day

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI and HANNAH FINGERHUT Associated Press

DENVER (AP) — A majority of President Donald Trump's supporters plan to cast their ballot on Election Day, while about half of Joe Biden's backers plan to vote by mail, a sign of a growing partisan divide over how best to conduct elections in the United States.

Overall, 39% of registered voters say they will vote by mail, well above the 21% who say they normally do so, according to a new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. The rise is skewed toward backers of the former vice president, 53% of whom plan to vote by mail. Fifty-seven percent of Trump's supporters say they'll vote in person on Nov. 3.

Fifty-four percent of voters say they will vote before polls open on Election Day. In 2016, roughly 42% of voters did so.

Trump for months has denigrated mail voting, and Democrats have expressed concern about postal delays that could keep such ballots from being counted. The poll finds ebbing enthusiasm for mail voting: Only 28% of Americans say they would favor their state holding elections exclusively by mail, down from the 40% who said so in April as the coronavirus pandemic was first spreading in the U.S. and before Trump launched his anti-mail campaign.

Support for states allowing voters to cast an absentee ballot without requiring a reason is higher, but also down since April, from 56% to 47%.

Sherry Santiago, 55, of Palm Bay, Florida, is disabled and cannot drive. The Democrat said she almost lost her chance to vote in 2016 because she couldn't get a lift to the polling place and she's happy to sign up for a mail-in ballot this year.

"I don't want to take a chance of missing it," Santiago said of the election. "I have total confidence in voting by mail. I don't worry there will be a problem."

But Michelle Harman, 44, a Republican who works in the oil and gas industry in Artesia, New Mexico, plans to vote in person on Election Day.

"This year more than any other, there's a lot of gray area about what could happen to your vote," said Harman, who said she didn't question voting by mail in 2016 when she was out of town.

Traditionally, voting by mail has not been a partisan issue. Until recently, Republicans were more likely to do so than Democrats, because older voters have tended to vote by mail more often than younger voters.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommended earlier this year voting by mail as an alternative to face-to-face interactions at polling places, which could pose a risk of coronavirus infection. States have scrambled to adjust to an expected surge in advance voting, with nearly three dozen changing their mail or absentee voting rules in response to the pandemic.

The president has since tried to fan skepticism of mail voting, baselessly claiming that its widespread use will lead to fraud. Trump warned that mail voting could lead to so many people voting that "you'd never have a Republican elected in this country again." He condemned on Thursday the plan in 10 states to proactively send mail-in ballots to registered voters, claiming without evidence it means the result of November's election would never be accurately determined.

Studies of past elections have shown voter fraud to be exceedingly rare. In the five states that regularly send ballots to all voters, there have been no major cases of fraud or difficulty counting the votes.

The poll found that 33% of Democrats, but just 12% of Republicans, favor mail-only elections. That's a decline across the board from April, when 47% of Democrats and 29% of Republicans backed the idea.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 94 of 98

Seventy-two percent of Democrats, but just 25% of Republicans, favor no-excuse absentee voting.

In swing states like Florida, North Carolina and Pennsylvania, Democrats have far outpaced Republicans in requesting mail-in ballots so far this year.

John Mohr, 58, who works at a Dollar General store in Wilmington, North Carolina, asked for a mail-in ballot, but he plans to drop it off at his local elections office. He's seen videos on Facebook saying — falsely — that mail-in ballots are labeled by party, tipping off postal workers who could throw them out before they reach the elections office.

"I don't trust the postal service and I sure don't trust Democrats," Mohr said. Trump in North Carolina this month called for his supporters to vote twice — once by mail and once on Election Day — to ensure their vote is counted, which would be illegal. The president now urges supporters voting by mail to check at their polling place whether their ballot was received, but Mohr said he doesn't want to deal with social distancing rules.

"I don't want to stand there with 50 different rules," Mohr said.

The poll shows only 34% of Americans have great confidence in the U.S. Postal Service, following a summer of controversy over slowed service resulting from cuts made by Trump's appointee. Still, 49% say they have some confidence.

Democrats suspect the cuts are an effort to sabotage mail voting, and Trump himself said he'd be happy if the post office got less money to stop Democratic efforts to expand that method of voting.

Robert Schott, a Republican, plans to vote in person because his polling place is 500 yards from his home in Cranford, New Jersey, and is rarely crowded. "It's easier than going to the post office," said Schott, 62.

Schott, who dislikes Trump and does not know who he will vote for, spoke as he looked at the ballot that just arrived by mail. Though Trump has criticized that practice, Schott sees nothing wrong with it. Nor does he distrust the postal service.

"If they can't handle 50 million ballots but they can handle 2 billion Christmas cards, c'mon," Schott said.

Christopher Roquemore, 47, a Democrat in Montgomery, Alabama, will vote early in person because he's volunteering as a poll worker on Election Day. "I figure as long as I wear a mask and I wash my hands and do everything I'm supposed to do, it'll be as safe as going into a grocery store," he said.

But his parents, who live across the street, will be voting by mail.

Fingerhut reported from Washington.

The AP-NORC poll of 1,108 adults was conducted Sept. 11-14 using a sample drawn from NORC's probability-based AmeriSpeak Panel, which is designed to be representative of the U.S. population. The margin of sampling error for all respondents is plus or minus 4.0 percentage points.

Online:

AP-NORC Center: <http://www.apnorc.org/>

Pope seeks to 'liberate' Virgin Mary from the Mafia

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Pope Francis is giving his blessing to a new Vatican think tank that is seeking to prevent the Mafia and organized crime groups from exploiting the image of the Virgin Mary for their own illicit ends.

The Vatican's Pontifical Marian Academy launched the think tank Friday at a conference titled "Liberating Mary from the Mafia." It was a reference to the historic relationship between the Italian mob and the Catholic Church, and the popular displays of Marian devotion by mobsters in Italy and beyond.

In a message from the pope read out at the start of the conference, held at Rome's Museum of Civilizations, Francis said the religious and cultural image and patrimony of the Madonna "must be preserved in its original purity."

He said any popular displays of devotion to Mary must "conform to the message of the Gospel and the

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 95 of 98

teachings of the church," and that people participating in them must be true Christians who look out for others, and especially the poor.

The Catholic Church in Italy has long been associated with the Mafia, thanks in part to their post-war common cause against communism. While some Catholic priests have courageously opposed the mob — and paid for it with their lives — others have been called to explain their celebration of funerals, weddings and other sacraments for mafia dons, acceptance of their donations and participation in their religious processions.

St. John Paul II in 1993 famously demanded Mafiosi convert, change their ways or face the wrath of God's final judgment as he made a historic visit to Sicily after the mob slayings of two leading anti-Mafia prosecutors.

Francis has followed in that tradition, declaring that mobsters were "excommunicated" and saying mobsters can't live Christian lives because their lifestyle "blasphemes" God. Marian devotion is particularly important to Francis, history's first pope from Latin America, where displays of such popular piety are common.

Francis' message to the new think tank, which includes clergy as well as law enforcement experts involved in the fight against organized crime, was dated Aug. 15, a major Catholic feast day devoted to Mary.

VIRUS DIARY: Always learning from 'happy little accidents'

By FRANK ELTMAN Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — I'm not alone in confessing that I have always enjoyed those Bob Ross instructional painting programs that ran on PBS for many years. Perhaps it was his soothing voice as a tree appeared like magic on a lake with the flick of his wrist. Maybe it was his Mr. Rogers-like guidance that there were no mistakes, "just happy little accidents."

Bob died 25 years ago. But his legacy lives on, thanks to YouTube videos, books, even a collection of T-shirts.

Sometime in March or April (who can remember anymore?), as it became clear that the coronavirus pandemic was going to be keeping us out of movie theaters, restaurants, concert halls and ballparks, we came across a Bob Ross video as we searched through our obscene number of cable channels and streaming services.

"Did you know, I used to enjoy doing paint-by-numbers when I was a kid," I said to my sweetheart, the person destined to share our couch for more hours than we had ever contemplated. "You should do it again," she said. "You're getting ready to retire, and this might be something you would enjoy. Besides, what else do you have to do?"

In an instant, she was searching the internet for paint-by-numbers kits. Turns out that craft supplies, like many things in the pandemic's early days, were hard to come by. We finally came across a modestly priced painting of the Beatles' "Abbey Road" cover that could be obtained in a week to 10 days.

"Sure, order it," I said almost dismissively. "I'll give it a try."

Before long, a 16x20 blank canvas with John, Paul, George and Ringo had arrived with two dozen tiny paint containers, each embossed with a number to guide you down the long and winding road. I learned quickly that this was not going to come together in the half hour that old Bob Ross took to create one of his babbling brook masterpieces. But where was I going, anyway?

Little by little, the No. 2 black filled in Paul's pants legs, No. 12 yellow brought the Volkswagen parked up the street to life, and Nos. 12, 16, 18 and 19 of various shades of green helped the trees frame the Fab Four on their stroll across the legendary London crosswalk. With daily encouragement from my muse, it was finished. She ordered a wooden frame to give the work a proper place in our alcove.

I was hooked.

Soon, we found an online paint-by-numbers company that had more products ready to ship. Next: a bucolic scene of an old red barn adorned with a faded American flag and a rusting old farm truck sitting in a field nearby. I was on my way. Streaks of reddish brown came down the barn; tiny birds found themselves flying across a blue sky filled with puffy white clouds.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 96 of 98

Then, as I was nearly finished, disaster struck. I had put some of the dark blue paint for the truck on a paper plate and laid it on a corner of the painting. It seeped through the plate, leaving a streak of navy blue running through the clouds and into some trees. I was distraught.

Then I remembered Bob Ross. I got out some very fine sandpaper, gently sanded away the blue, then took some white and painted two coats over the scar. After it dried, I restored the sky without numbers to guide me. The trees came back to life with a little freehand technique I had seen on those shows.

When I was finished, no one would know how close I came to tossing the picture, and the hobby, in the trash. But I was inspired by the rescue and am now working on more masterpieces.

No mistakes. Just "happy little accidents."

Virus Diary, an occasional feature, showcases the coronavirus pandemic through the eyes of Associated Press journalists around the world. West Desk editor Frank Eltman retires from AP today after 32 years. Follow him on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/feltman41>

Biden makes push for voters on National Black Voter Day

By KAT STAFFORD Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — Joe Biden's campaign unveiled a series of nationwide digital events Friday targeting Black voters in swing states — a strategic move by the Democratic presidential nominee to further energize the key demographic as the race heads into its final weeks.

The virtual events, which will commemorate Friday's inaugural National Black Voter Day, will begin with a voter registration and early vote rally in North Carolina featuring vice presidential nominee Sen. Kamala Harris as part of the campaign's "Turn Up and Turn out the Vote Virtual Bus Tour." The tour is a joint effort with the Congressional Black Caucus' PAC and will be spread across a full weekend of events, according to plans shared first with The Associated Press.

Harris will speak about what's at stake for Black Americans in November and urge voters to register and make a plan to vote. National Black Voter Day was created this year as a collaborative effort by the National Urban League, BET and a number of civil rights organizations.

Black Americans have largely supported Biden's presidential bid and have been credited with transforming the Democratic presidential race and cementing his status as front-runner after his decisive primary win in South Carolina.

Throughout the course of his campaign, Biden has detailed plans to address issues facing Black Americans, vowing to address institutional racism in his first 100 days in office. It's a sharp contrast to President Donald Trump, who has made little effort to unite the country and leaned heavily on "law and order" rhetoric.

Black women in particular are viewed as the Democratic Party's most loyal voting bloc but political experts say in the final stretch of the election, work remains to capture support among key groups of African Americans including Black men and progressive voters.

The digital events also underscore how the presidential race has been transformed by the coronavirus pandemic, preventing typical in-person voter outreach events. Black Americans have also been among the hardest hit by the pandemic, suffering high rates of deaths and unemployment from its economic fallout.

Biden's campaign, along with several other organizations marking the first National Black Voter Day, are channeling resources behind that effort. The day also coincides with the first day of early voting in South Dakota and Minnesota, where Biden will tour a union training center and deliver remarks.

Friday events are also planned in Georgia, Wisconsin, Virginia, Texas and Pennsylvania — all crucial states Biden hopes to win with the help of Black voters who have sizable populations in each state.

Among a series of Sunday events, the campaign will host a voter protection training with Reps. Cedric Richmond, Lisa Blunt Rochester and Marcia Fudge; a national Black youth event to mobilize young Black voters; and the BlackOUT Party, which will serve as the launch of Biden's Black LGBTQ+ engagement program.

Nadia Brown, a Purdue University political science professor, said Biden's targeted push is a smart tactic

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 97 of 98

with few weeks to go before the election. But Brown said the final days will be key toward connecting with some Black voters who feel Biden needs to do more to earn their vote.

"This push is what the campaign really needs to do, to sell the Biden and Kamala Harris ticket," Brown said. "Voters want Biden to come out and talk to them about the things they care about. What he needs to do now is respond to the people in the streets and say this is not a transactional election, that Democrats really do hear you."

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Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Saturday, Sept. 19, the 263rd day of 2020. There are 103 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Sept. 19, 1881, the 20th president of the United States, James A. Garfield, died 2½ months after being shot by Charles Guiteau; Chester Alan Arthur became president.

On this date:

In 1783, Jacques Etienne Montgolfier (zhahk ayt-YEHN' mohn-gohl-fee-AY') launched a duck, a sheep and a rooster aboard a hot-air balloon at Versailles (vehr-SY') in France.

In 1796, President George Washington's farewell address was published. In it, America's first chief executive advised, "Observe good faith and justice toward all nations. Cultivate peace and harmony with all."

In 1934, Bruno Hauptmann was arrested in New York and charged with the kidnap-murder of 20-month-old Charles A. Lindbergh Jr.

In 1955, President Juan Peron of Argentina was ousted after a revolt by the army and navy.

In 1984, Britain and China completed a draft agreement on transferring Hong Kong from British to Chinese rule by 1997.

In 1985, the Mexico City area was struck by a devastating earthquake that killed at least 9,500 people.

In 1986, federal health officials announced that the experimental drug AZT would be made available to thousands of AIDS patients.

In 1995, The New York Times and The Washington Post published the manifesto of Unabomber Ted Kaczynski (kah-ZIHN'-skee), which proved instrumental in identifying and capturing him.

In 1996, IBM announced it would extend health benefits to the partners of its gay employees.

In 2001, The Pentagon ordered dozens of advanced aircraft to the Persian Gulf region as the hour of military retaliation for deadly terrorist attacks on Sept. 11 drew closer.

In 2004, Hu Jintao (hoo jin-tow) became the undisputed leader of China with the departure of former President Jiang Zemin (jahng zuh-MEEN') from his top military post.

In 2008, struggling to stave off financial catastrophe, the Bush administration laid out a radical bailout plan calling for a takeover of a half-trillion dollars or more in worthless mortgages and other bad debt held by tottering institutions. Relieved investors sent stocks soaring on Wall Street and around the globe.

Ten years ago: The BP oil well at the bottom of the Gulf of Mexico was declared "effectively dead" by retired Coast Guard Adm. Thad Allen, the government's point man on the blowout disaster, after it was sealed with a permanent cement plug. On the final day of his four-day visit to Britain, Pope Benedict XVI celebrated Mass to beatify Cardinal John Henry Newman, the 19th century Anglican convert.

Five years ago: Pope Francis, arriving in Havana, hailed detente between Cuba and the United States as a model of reconciliation for the world as he launched a 10-day tour of the former Cold War foes. President Barack Obama paid tribute to Black women for their role in helping shape American democracy as he delivered the keynote address to the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation's annual awards dinner. Jackie

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Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 ~ Vol. 29 - No. 078 ~ 98 of 98

Collins, 77, the bestselling author of dozens of novels including "Hollywood Wives," died in Los Angeles. One year ago: Under orders from the Trump administration, the intelligence community's inspector general refused to tell members of a House panel what was in a whistleblower's complaint about a private conversation between President Donald Trump and Ukraine's president. Trump began responding to published reports about the phone call, tweeting that he would never "say something inappropriate with a foreign leader while on such a potentially 'heavily populated' call," and that he would only "do what is right anyway." As the U.S. and Saudi Arabia considered a response to a drone-and-missile strike on the Saudi oil industry, Iran's top diplomat warned that an attack by either country would bring "all-out war." New York Yankees pitcher Domingo Germán was put on administrative leave as Major League Baseball investigated an alleged domestic violence incident involving his girlfriend. (The pitcher would miss the rest of the season as part of a suspension that would also cover all of the abbreviated 2020 season.)

Today's Birthdays: Author Roger Angell is 100. Actor Rosemary Harris is 93. Actor David McCallum is 87. Singer-songwriter Paul Williams is 80. Singer Bill Medley is 80. Singer Sylvia Tyson (Ian and Sylvia) is 80. R&B singer Freda Payne is 78. Retired professional golfer Jane Blalock is 75. Singer David Bromberg is 75. Actor Randolph Mantooth is 75. Rock singer-musician Lol Creme (10cc) is 73. Former NFL running back Larry Brown is 73. Actor Jeremy Irons is 72. Actor Twiggy Lawson is 71. TV personality Joan Lunden is 70. Singer-producer Daniel Lanois (lan-WAH') is 69. Actor Scott Colomby is 68. Musician-producer Nile Rodgers is 68. Singer-actor Rex Smith is 65. Rock singer Lita Ford is 62. Actor Kevin Hooks is 62. Actor Carolyn McCormick is 61. Celebrity chef Mario Batali is 60. Actor-comedian Cheri Oteri is 58. Country singer Jeff Bates is 57. Country singer Trisha Yearwood is 56. News anchor Soledad O'Brien is 54. Celebrity chef Michael Symon is 51. Actor Victor Williams is 50. Actor Sanaa Lathan (suh-NAH' LAY'-thun) is 49. Actor Stephanie J. Block is 48. Rock singer A. Jay Popoff (Lit) is 47. "Tonight Show" host Jimmy Fallon is 46. TV personality Carter Oosterhouse is 44. Actor-TV host Alison Sweeney is 44. Rock musician Ryan Dusick is 43. Folk-rock singers-musicians Sara and Tegan (TEE'-gan) Quin are 40. Actor Columbus Short is 38. Rapper Eamon is 37. Actor Kevin Zegers is 36. Actor Danielle Panabaker is 33. Actor Katrina Bowden is 32.