

# Groton Daily Independent

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## Tuesday, October 6, 2020

State Boys Golf Meet at Southern Hills Golf Course, Hot Springs

6:30 p.m.: Volleyball vs. Leola-Frederick at Frederick. JV starts at 6:30 p.m. followed by the varsity match. There is no C match.

7:00 p.m.: City Council meeting at Groton Community Center

## Thursday, October 8, 2020

1 p.m.: Northeast Conference Cross Country Meet in Webster

1:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.: Parent-Teacher Conferences



I want to thank everyone for the prayers, help, and support while I recuperate from open heart surgery. Whether it is the rides you provided to and from Sioux Falls, the food you brought to our house, the lawn work you volunteered to do, the care for our dog Corky, I sincerely appreciate everything everyone has done!

It is GREAT to live in a small town with such kind and wonderful people!

Thank you very, very much,

*Gordon Nelson*



## OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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## Marching Festival is Friday

The Lake Region Marching Festival is planned for Friday in Groton. The bands will march north on Main Street. The event starts at 10 a.m. Band participating: Simmons/Holgate Middle School,, Leola, Langford, Northwestern, Ipswich, Roncalli, Sully Buttes, Great Plains Lutheran, Warner and Groton Area High School.

Due to the change of moving to remote learning, the Groton Area Junior High Band will NOT be marching in the Lake Region Marching Festival on Friday.



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## COVID-19 arrives in Groton

The Coronavirus has arrived in Groton with a vengeance. Over the weekend, there were at least three reports of students/staff being tested positive for COVID-19. The virus has also affected local businesses.

COVID-19 impacted Emmanuel Lutheran Church. As reported on Emmanuel's facebook page, they were unable to Livestream this past Sunday's service due to those who run the equipment having either tested positive or were in close contact. In addition, it was noted that Sunday School will not start October 11th. They will shoot for October 25th.

Superintendent Joe Schwan sent out the following:

Due to an increase in COVID-related activity in the Groton Area Middle School, including an increase in positive COVID-19 cases, close contact quarantines, and staff exposures, the Groton Area Middle School (grades 6-8) will transition to remote learning beginning on Tuesday, October 6, 2020 for the remainder of the week. We will actively monitor the situation throughout the remainder of the week as we have been since last spring and make a determination about what the best course of action will be for next week.

Barring any changes to our current situation, Groton Area Elementary and Groton Area High School (grades 9-12) will continue with in-person instruction this week.

Parent/Teacher conferences will take place virtually, as planned, on Thursday, October 8. Friday, October 9 remains a day for staff in-service and Monday, October 12 will remain a day for instructional planning.

During the period of remote learning, students must continue to engage with their instructors and the course content.

While this isn't a situation that we've hoped for, it is one for which we've planned. It is our goal to keep students in school as much as possible, and doing so will require the cooperation of the entire school community.

# GDILIVE.COM

## Volleyball

Tuesday, Oct. 6, 2020

Groton at Frederick

6:30 p.m.:

Junior Varsity

Sponsored by

Sharon Bjerke



Sponsored by

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**Lori's Pharmacy**

**Bary Keith @**

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## High School Volleyball

Tuesday, Oct. 6, 2020

Groton Area at Frederick



### Groton Area Tigers

#### Varsity

No.	Name	Ht.	Pos.	Gr.
1	Brooke Gengerke	5'5	S/DS	10
2	Riley Leicht	5'5	DS	11
3	Kenzie Mcinerney	5'9	MH	12
4	Sydney Leicht	5'6	OH	9
5	Alyssa Thaler	5'5	DS/L	11
6	Stella Meier	5'9	MH/RH	11
7	Jasmine Gengerke	5'9	RH/MH	12
8	Trista Keith	5'6	DS/L	11
9	Megan Fliehs	5'8	MH	11
10	Madeline Fliehs	5'9	OH	11
11	Allyssa Locke	5'6	S	11
12	Aspen Johnson	5'8	S/RH	10
13	Grace Wambach	5'7	OH	12
14	Brooklyn Gilbert	5'8	RH/OH	12
15	Maddie Bjerke	5'7	RH/OH	11

#### JUNIOR VARSITY

1	Brooke Gengerke	5'5	S/DS	10
2	Emilie Thurston	5'5	DS/L	11
4	Lydia Meier	5'8	OH	9
5	Sydney Leicht	5'7	OH	9
6	Riley Leicht	5'6	OH/RH	11
8	Emma Schinkel	5'8	MH	9
9	Megan Fliehs	5'8	MH	11
10	Kelsie Frost	5'10	MH/RH	11
11	Anna Fjeldheim	5'7	OH/S	9
12	Aspen Johnson	5'8	S/RH	10
14/10	Elizabeth Fliehs	5'6	S	8
15	Maddie Bjerke	5'7	OH/RH	11

#### C TEAM

1	Carly Guthmiller		L	9
2	Anna Fjeldheim		OH/RH	9
4	Karsyn Jangula		DS/OH	9
5	Camryn Kurtz		DS/RH	9
5	Sydney Leicht		OH	9
6	Ashlyn Sperry		DS/RH	9
7	Shallyn Foertsch		OH	10
8	Abby Jensen		DS	9
9	Cadence Feist		OH	9
9	Rhiannon Mckibben			11
10	Elizabeth Fliehs		S	8
11	Ava Wienk		MH	9
12	Marlee Tollifson		MH	10
13	Hollie Frost		MH	10

Head Coach: Chelsea Hanson

Asst. Coaches: Jenna Strom, Carla Tracy

### Leola-Frederick Titans

#### Varsity

1	Morgan Sumption	5'3	DS/OH	9
2	Katelynn Westphal	5'1	DS	12
3/11	Anna Lapka	5'4	OH/DS	12
10	Olivia Morlock	5'1	DS/S	9
14	Lacey Westphal	5'5	S	10
15	Jocelynn Ellwein	5'8	S	9
20	Chloe Arneson	5'7	OH/DS	9
21	Alyx Hoffman	5'9	MH	10
23	Hannah Johnson	5'4	DS	11
24	Laura Sumption	5'	OH/DS	9
25	Sofia Losure	5'10	MH	9
30	Avery Wolff	5'5	S	12
31	Kaylin Achen	5'6	OH	12

#### JUNIOR VARSITY

1	Morgan Sumption	5'3	DS/OH	9
4	Emma Collins	5'8	MH	9
5	Maddie Dettler	5'5	S/DS	9
10	Olivia Morlock	5'3	S/DS	9
35	Emily Anderson	5'9	MH	9
43	Anari Kallenberger	5'10	MH	10

#### C TEAM

2	Ella Wellnitz	5'4	OH	9
3	Navaeh Rusher	5'5	OH	9
5	Emma Nichols	5'5	MH/OH	9
10	Madison Pickrel	5'3	DS	9
11	Sara Thonvold	5'6	S/MH	9
14	Haylee Tormanen	5'9	MH	9
15	Shelby Anderson	5'5	OH	9
16	Audrye Foster	5'1	DS/OH	10
17	Jalen Hohm	5'5	S	9

Head Coach: Holly Mueller

Asst. Coach: Shekota Lehmann

## Tigers have bad luck in gridiron game with Roncalli

If Groton did not have bad luck, they would not have had any luck in Roncalli's game on Friday at Aberdeen Central. A bad snap with 9:29 left in the game that ended up in the endzone turned into the game winning touchdown for Aberdeen Roncalli. The snap went over the quarterback's head into the endzone and Jayden Monroe pounced on the loose ball for Roncalli. The PAT was good on a pass from Keegan Stewart to Madox May and the Cavaliers ended up winning the game, 18-14.

The game was carried live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Kara and Kevin Pharis with special commentary by Mike Nehls.

The Tigers ended up losing three of seven fumbles and had one interception. The Cavaliers recovered its only fumble and had hone interception by Andrew Marzahn.

Groton Area had more first downs, 15-12, and more yards rushing, 146-84. The Cavaliers completed 10 of 23 passes for 116 yards and the TIGers completed four of 11 for 65 yards.

Jaimen Farrell had 32 carries for 77 yards and two touchdowns, completed one of three passes for 34 yards and had 11 tackles. Andrew Marzahn had 37 yards rushing, 41 yards receiving and one interception. Favian Sanchez had 37 yards rushing, 24 yards receiving and eight tackles. Pierce Kettering had 28 yards rushing. Other defensive leaders were Alex Morris with 11 tackles, Jordan Bjerke with nine, and Paxton Bonn and Kale Pharis with eight each.

Groton Area had five penalties for 55 yards and Ronalli had two for eight yards.

Madox May led the Cavaliers with 61 yards rushing and 73 yards receiving.

The Tigers scored first on a three yard run by Farrell. Jackson Cogley kicked the PAT. Then Jackson Isakson kicked a 39-yard field goal for Roncalli and it was 7-3 after the first quarter.

Groton Area scored first on a one-yard run in the second quarter with Cogley kicking the PAT. Roncalli would score with 17 seconds left in the half on a nine-yard pass from Jackson Isakson to Brett Ekanger. The PAT kick by Isakson was good and it was 14-10 at half time with the Tigers ahead. No one scored in the third quarter and the Cavaliers scored with 9:29 left to win.



## State Golf Meet

**Tristan Traphagen (left photo) and Brevin Fliehs (right photo) took part in the state golf meet held Monday and Tuesday in at Hot Springs.**

(Photo by Joel Guth-miller)



## How do all these COVID-19 cases impact the health care system and what can we do to help?

By **Bonny Specker**

South Dakota is experiencing a large increase in the number of COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations. The seven-day running average for cases has increased 393% from 80 cases per day Aug. 1 to 394 cases per day Sept. 30, while the average the number of hospitalizations has increased 420% from five to 26 hospitalizations per day.

Additionally, the state's number of individuals who are aged 60+ years with COVID-19 has increased with close to 1,200 cases in the past two weeks. Approximately 20% of the individuals who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 in this age group may be hospitalized within the next two to three weeks based on current South Dakota hospitalization rates. There is likely going to be a significant need for hospital and intensive care unit (ICU) beds during October to meet the medical needs of South Dakotans.

The South Dakota Department of Health dashboard provides information on what percentages of hospital beds and ICU beds are COVID-19 occupied, but it is important to understand what beds they are referring to. The denominator in that percentage is based on information from the Hospital Available Beds for Emergencies and Disasters (HAvBED) database for South Dakota. HAvBED is a federally mandated program that requires states to collect and report local hospital available bed data. The system connects to the state's Emergency Operations Center in Pierre and is linked directly to U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Reporting the number of hospitalized patients and number of potential beds can change daily. Hospitalized patients change due to admissions and discharges while the number of potential beds changes due to a hospital's creation and opening of institutional surge beds. Surge beds are additional inpatient beds that are not necessarily operational nor staffed. An example is the Brookings Health System (BHS), which is licensed for 49 beds, but has the surge capability for up to 80 patient beds. Although there could be a maximum of 80 beds at BHS, it currently has the personnel to handle only 45 of these beds. If BHS initiated its surge plan, more beds would become available and the number of potential beds would change. Therefore, when looking at hospital and ICU bed occupancy percentages, it is important to realize that both the numerator (number of currently hospitalized patients) and the denominator (number of potential beds) can change.

Based on a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention clinical guidance document dated Sept. 10, 2020, 26 to 32% of hospitalized COVID-19 patients are admitted to an ICU. COVID-19 patients in an ICU require specialized care 24 hours per day from pulmonologists or critical care physicians, specialized nurses and if the patient is ventilated, from respiratory therapists. Based on a quick count for Sioux Falls and Rapid City, there are approximately 35 pulmonologists and critical care physicians, although there are additional ones throughout the state. We should not forget that other patients may need ICU beds during this time as well for heart attacks, strokes, accidents and other life-threatening events.

Individuals with influenza also may need access to hospital or ICU beds. We will be entering the flu season in the near future, and it will be important to minimize the impact of flu on hospital and ICU admissions since these beds may be close to capacity.

Staffing issues are going to become increasingly important as COVID-19 hospitalizations increase and health care workers also become ill. It is important for us to do whatever we can to keep health care workers safe and hospital and ICU beds available. This can be done by following public health recommendations to practice social distancing, wear a mask to protect others when out in public, practice good hygiene and be sure to receive this year's flu vaccine. Lives may depend it.



**SDSU  
Epidemiologist  
Bonny Specker**

## Groton City Council Meeting Agenda

October 6, 2020 – 7:00pm  
Groton Community Center

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

1. Public Comments - pursuant to SDCL 1-25-1  
(Public Comments will offer the opportunity for anyone not listed on the agenda to speak to the council. Speaking time will be limited to 3 minutes. No action will be taken on questions or items not on the agenda.)
2. Minutes
3. Bills
4. Department Reports
5. Second reading of Ordinance #737 Revising Cemetery Regulations
6. Planning and Zoning board member vacancy
7. Baseball season report
8. Skating rink employee applications are being accepted
9. Pumpkin Fest Reminder October 10<sup>th</sup> 10am – 3pm
10. Executive session personnel & legal 1-25-2 (1) & (3)
11. Adjournment

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*American Standard*  
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## Fall 2020 Headcount at Technical Colleges Increases by 55 over Fall 2019

PIERRE, S.D. – Fall 2020 enrollment in South Dakota’s technical college system has increased by 55 students over last fall, to a total headcount of 7,177. This number includes all full-time and part-time students, as well as participants in the high school dual-credit program.

The system includes Lake Area Technical College in Watertown, Mitchell Technical College in Mitchell, Southeast Technical College in Sioux Falls, and Western Dakota Technical College in Rapid City.

South Dakota’s technical colleges have experienced steady enrollment increases over the past five years, growing from a total headcount of 6,569 in the fall of 2016. The growth can be partially attributed to increased enrollment in programs related to construction, health sciences, and marketing.

“Given the impact of COVID-19 on post-secondary education, steady overall enrollment with some increases in high-demand areas is good news for the technical colleges in South Dakota,” said Nick Wendell, executive director of the South Dakota Board of Technical Education. “This promising start to the fall of 2020 is a credit to the diligence and innovation of our faculty, staff, and administrators. It also points to the faith South Dakota students and their families have in the quality of our technical education system.”

The Board of Technical Education will discuss the fall 2020 enrollment report and other topics when they convene on the campus of Lake Area Technical College in Watertown on Thursday, October 8, 2020.

Unduplicated enrollment is broken down by technical college and compared to the fall of 2019 in chart one below.

Chart 1 Unduplicated Enrollment (Fall 2020)

College	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Change
Lake Area Technical College	2,228	2,217	-11
Mitchell Technical College	1,191	1,184	-7
Southeast Technical College	2,456	2,426	-30
Western Dakota Technical College	1,247	1,350	103
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,122</b>	<b>7,177</b>	<b>55</b>

## GHS September Students of the Month



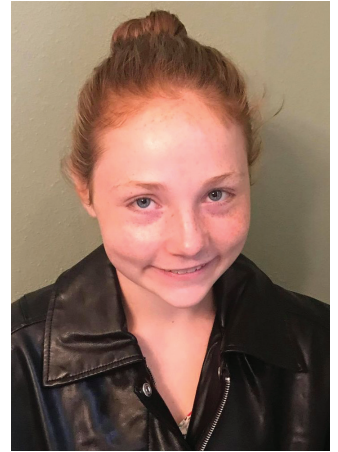
**Sage Mortenson  
(12th)**



**Allyssa Locke  
(11th)**



**Cole Simon  
(10th)**



**Camryn Kurtz  
(9th)**



**Gretchen Dinger  
(8th)**



**Natalia Warrington  
(7th)  
Not pictured**



**Teagan Hanten  
(6th)**

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**#225 in a series**

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

We're continuing as we have been for several days now. We are now up to 7,480,400 cases in the US. 36,900 new cases were reported today, a 0.5% increase. There were 382 deaths reported today, a 0.2% increase to 209,974. I will note that Texas crossed the 800,000-case threshold in the past week; Georgia and Illinois both passed 300,000 cases; and Tennessee passed 200,000 cases. That's a lot of growth.

Having closed the book on September, we observe that the Midwest has been in trouble throughout. The highest per capita increases were all in mostly rural northern states with the Dakotas (still #1 and #2), Wisconsin, and Montana all showing the highest new-case totals they've had since the pandemic began. Twelve states set records for weekly new-case average. Half of them are in the Midwest: North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Minnesota, Indiana, and Kentucky. Three more are in the Mountain West: Utah, Montana, and Wyoming. Wisconsin set a new record for daily new infections for 22 straight days; the streak, mercifully, ended Saturday. Montana has set a new record for 19 straight days; that streak is still alive. Utah set a record for single-day new-case reports yesterday. Wisconsin, Indiana, Montana, and Wyoming have added more cases in the last week than in any other seven-day stretch thus far. Despite some spikes seen in the Northeast in the past couple of weeks, per capita new cases in North Dakota remain more than ten times as high as New York's. This is serious.

Today, the CDC finally—finally—acknowledged that there is "new evidence" that Covid-19 can "spread beyond six feet indoors." This falls short of a recognition that airborne transmission is a route this virus takes even though experts agree it is. Even this feeble statement came months after it was evident that airborne transmission is a thing—months after a March 10 choir practice in Mount Vernon, Washington, resulted in an outbreak that sickened 52 of the 61 people present, killing two, an outbreak that could have occurred only if airborne spread is possible. It is the height of irresponsibility to have waited so long to offer any sort of guidance on the point, and it amounts to reckless disregard of the facts not to have gone further. I am deeply concerned about the "science" coming out of the CDC today; this, from what not so long ago was the preeminent authority on disease transmission, is most troubling. Credibility is lost far more rapidly than it is regained.

It appears we have a possible new superspreader event on the radar: the September 26 ceremony and festivities attendant upon the announcement of Judge Amy Barrett's nomination to the US Supreme Court. More than 200 people mingled at these events, many of which were held indoors and, for the most part, without masks and completely without social distancing. Questions about this incautious behavior were answered with the explanation that everyone was temperature-checked and tested before the events, even though we know for sure that people are capable of spreading the virus without having symptoms, including a fever, and the rapid tests used have a high rate of false negatives (which means you test negative despite being infected). The latest accounting I've seen shows at least eleven people who were in attendance infected. Since then, many of these people have traveled to other places and spent time unmasked with other groups of people, some of whom have now also tested positive with more cases being reported each day since. Because ripples continue for some time from an event like this, it will likely be a few weeks before a full accounting can be made. That 65-person August 6 wedding in Maine that has led to 176 cases and 8 deaths so far was still adding cases and deaths to its toll in mid-September; so it will be quite some time before we have any idea how bad this will get. A complicating problem with this event is that the decision has been made not to do contact tracing for guests and staff members who were present. That pretty much guarantees attempts to tamp down the sequelae will be significantly hampered.

We've known for some time that Covid-19 has neurologic manifestations. A study was published today in the *Annals of Clinical and Translational Neurology* considering the records of 509 hospitalized patients in the Chicago area. Nearly one-third of them experienced altered mental function, known as encephalopathy, ranging from confusion to delirium to unresponsiveness, and these people had significantly worse medical outcomes. Their hospital stays were three times as long as those of patients without altered mental function, and only one third of them were able to handle routine daily activities like cooking and paying

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bills after discharge. Eighty-nine per cent of patients without encephalopathy were able to manage those same activities unassisted. Encephalopathy was also associated with higher mortality, irrespective of the severity of the respiratory disease seen.

No cause for the encephalopathy was identified in this study; it can be triggered by several factors including inflammation and effects on blood circulation. There is little evidence the virus directly attacks the brain, so it seems likely the precipitating factors are inflammatory and immune system responses that may damage several kinds of tissue, including the brain and blood vessels.

I speak from experience when I tell you there is no good age to lose your mother; you're never old enough that this is an easy thing. But I can say with some assurance that, if you're a toddler, it's really, really too soon. There are many sorts of circumstances which can arise to rob you of your parent, and we are seeing this sort of thing play out again and again during this pandemic.

Lunisol Guzman was born in the Dominican Republic. She moved to New Jersey as a young woman and raised three children as a single mother. After losing a baby in her young adult years, she had always felt something was missing in her life, so when she had the opportunity, at the age of 46, to foster a little boy, she jumped at it. A couple of years later, she adopted him. And when his birth mother had another child she was unable to care for, Lunisol adopted her too so that the siblings could be raised together. Then she met and married Ismael Lugo, who was the father of two grown children himself. They had a house full of love with the children—until this pandemic.

Lunisol, who's driven the campus shuttle bus at Montclair State University for the past 11 years, spent six weeks in the hospital with Covid-19 and then lost her battle in May, just about four weeks after her husband died from the same disease, leaving Lunisol's two young children, four-year-old Zavion and two-year-old Jazzmyn behind.

They were left behind, but not alone. Her daughters, 32-year-old Katherine and 28-year-old Jennifer, stepped up. They never considered any other option. Katherine says, "It's a curse because we lost our mom, but it's a blessing overall. We gained two angels." Zavion lives most of the time with Jennifer and her husband in Newark, and Jazzmyn lives most of the time with Katherine and her boyfriend in Elizabeth, just a short drive away, but the siblings see one another often.

Losing their mother was painful, but Katherine and Jennifer will tell you their new role raising their siblings gives them strength. Katherine says, "It's because of them that we've kept it together thus far. We wake up in the morning and it's Zavion and Jazzmyn, and they're relying on us."

Jennifer says, "My message to people is, just because it isn't affecting you individually, it doesn't mean it's not affecting other people. We don't take things serious unless they affect us directly. I think we could've been a little more preventative as a country. Life keeps going, and we want to continue our mother's work. I think that's the most important thing." It's certainly the most important to those two toddlers. I wish them well, and I hope we're each looking for ways to continue good work in the world as well.

Be well. We'll talk again.

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## Area COVID-19 Cases

	Sept. 23	Sept. 24	Sept. 25	Sept. 26	Sept. 27	Sept. 28	Sept. 29
Minnesota	91,422	92,100	93,012	94,189	95,659	96,734	97,638
Nebraska	41,785	42,278	42,731	43,162	43,596	44,063	44,578
Montana	10,700	10,912	11,242	11,564	11,907	12,107	12,413
Colorado	66,053	66,669	67,217	67,926	68,510	69,079	69,490
Wyoming	4,231	4,368	4,488	4,585	4,618	4,780	4,897
North Dakota	18,508	18,981	19,451	19,885	20,380	20,724	20,983
South Dakota	19,189	19,634	20,097	20,544	21,133	21,541	21,738
United States	6,897,495	6,935,415	6,978,874	7,034,824	7,079,689	7,113,666	7,150,117
US Deaths	200,818	201,920	202,819	203,789	204,499	204,750	205,091
Minnesota	+480	+678	+912	+1,177	+1,460	+1,075	+904
Nebraska	+397	+493	+453	+431	+434	+467	+515
Montana	+271	+212	+330	+323	+343	+200	+306
Colorado	+654	+616	+548	+709	+584	+569	+411
Wyoming	+42	+137	+120	+97	+33	+162	+117
North Dakota	+264	+473	+470	+434	+495	+344	+259
South Dakota	+320	+445	+463	+457	+579	+412	+198
United States	+39,357	37,920	+43,459	+55,950	+44,865	+33,977	+38,451
US Deaths	+928	+1,102	+899	+970	+710	+251	+341
	Sept. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 2	Oct. 3	Oct. 4	Oct. 5	Oct. 6
Minnesota	98,447	99,134	100,200	101,366	102,787	103,826	104,799
Nebraska	45,044	45,564	46,185	46,977	47,403	47,807	47,807
Montana	12,724	13,071	13,500	13,855	14,356	14,635	14,847
Colorado	70,025	70,536	71,218	71,898	72,555	73,036	73,537
Wyoming	4,948	5,046	5,170	5,289	5,415	5,546	5,660
North Dakota	21,401	21,846	22,218	22,694	23,134	23,550	23,862
South Dakota	21,997	22,389	23,136	23,522	23,986	24,418	24,598
United States	7,191,349	7,234,257	7,279,065	7,335,946	7,379,614	7,420,476	7,453,829
US Deaths	206,005	206,963	207,816	208,739	209,335	209,820	210,127
Minnesota	+809	+687	+1,066	1,166	+1,421	+1,039	+973
Nebraska	+466	+520	+621	+792	+426	+404	NA
Montana	+311	+347	+429	+355	+501	+279	+212
Colorado	+535	+511	+682	+680	+657	+481	+501
Wyoming	+51	+98	+124	+119	+126	+131	+114
North Dakota	+418	+445	+372	+476	+440	+416	+312
South Dakota	+259	+392	+747	+386	+464	+434	+180
United States	+41,232	+42,909	+44,808	+56,881	+43,668	+40,862	+33,353
US Deaths	+914	+958	+853	+923	+596	+485	+307

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## October 5th COVID-19 UPDATE

### Groton Daily Independent from State Health Lab Reports

Relatively quiet today. Only 181 positive cases with 175 recovered. Three deaths in North Dakota and none in South Dakota. Brown County had 7 positive cases. Double digit increases were Codington with 12, Davison 11, Hughes 28, and Lincoln 10. That's it!

#### **Brown County:**

Total Positive: +7 (1,363) Positivity Rate: 4.7%  
Total Tests: +149 (11,653)  
Recovered: +9 (1,130)  
Active Cases: -2 (229)  
Ever Hospitalized: +0 (56)  
Deaths: +0 (4)  
Percent Recovered: 82.9

#### **South Dakota:**

Positive: +181 (24,598 total) Positivity Rates: 3.2%  
Total Tests: 5,635 (291,769 total)  
Hospitalized: +10 (1,642 total). 241 currently hospitalized +9)  
Deaths: +0 (248 total)  
Recovered: +175 (20,076 total)  
Active Cases: +6 (4,274)  
Percent Recovered: 81.6%  
Staffed Hospital Bed Capacity: 10% Covid, 45% Non-Covid, 45% Available  
ICU Bed Capacity: 16% Covid, 57% Non-Covid, 27% Available  
Ventilator Capacity: 4% Covid, 15% Non-Covid, 81% Available

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: +2 positive, +0 recovered (24 active cases)  
Beadle (10): +3 positive, +12 recovered (86 active cases)  
Bennett (3): +0 positive, +1 recovered (14 active cases)  
Bon Homme (1): +0 positive, +0 recovered (40 active cases)  
Brookings (2): +4 positive, +8 recovered (98 active cases)  
Brown (4): +7 positive, +9 recovered (229 active cases)  
Brule (1): +0 positive, +1 recovered (31 active cases)  
Buffalo (3): +1 positive, +1 recovered (15 active cases)  
Butte (3): +5 positive, +2 recovered (41 active cases)

Campbell: +2 positive, +0 recovered (19 active cases)  
Charles Mix: +4 positive, +2 recovered (65 active cases)  
Clark: +0 positive, +1 recovered (13 active cases)  
Clay (7): +1 positive, +1 recovered (46 active cases)  
Codington (7): +12 positive, +9 recovered (198 active cases)  
Corson (1): +0 positive, +0 recovered (9 active cases)  
Custer (3): +2 positive, +1 recovered (29 active case)  
Davison (2): +11 positive, +8 recovered (166 active cases)  
Day: +1 positive, +1 recovered (32 active cases)  
Deuel: +0 positive, +1 recovered (18 active cases)  
Dewey: +0 positive, +0 recovered (67 active cases)  
Douglas (1): +3 positive, +1 recovered (33 active cases)  
Edmunds: +0 positive, +2 recovered (9 active cases)  
Fall River (5): +0 positive, +0 recovered (14 active cases)  
Faulk (1): +0 positive, +0 recovered (9 active cases)  
Grant (1): +5 positive, +3 recovered (72 active cases)  
Gregory (4): +2 positive, +2 recovered (36 active cases)  
Haakon (1): +0 positive, +1 recovered (8 active case)  
Hamlin: +1 positive, +1 recovered (19 active cases)  
Hand (1): +2 positive, +2 recovered (23 active cases)  
Hanson (1): +2 positive, +0 recovered (16 active cases)  
Harding: +0 positive, +0 recovered (2 active cases)  
Hughes (5): +28 positive, +2 recovered (169 active cases)  
Hutchinson (2): +0 positive, +2 recovered (48 active cases)  
Hyde: Fully Recovered

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Jackson (1): +0 positive, +0 recovered (8 active cases)  
 Jerauld (3): +1 positive, +2 recovered (26 active cases)  
 Jones: +1 positive, +1 recovered (4 active cases)  
 Kingsbury: +1 positive, +0 recovered (17 active cases)  
 Lake (7): +4 positive, +2 recovered (28 active cases)  
 Lawrence (5): +9 positive, +5 recovered (100 active cases)  
 Lincoln (3): +10 positive, +10 recovered (292 active cases)  
 Lyman (3): +1 positive, +3 recovered (34 active cases)  
 Marshall: +1 positive, +0 recovered (13 active cases)  
 McCook (1): +0 positive, +0 recovered (41 active cases)  
 McPherson: +0 positive, +0 recovery (10 active case)  
 Meade (5): +5 positive, +3 recovered (126 active cases)  
 Mellette: +2 positive (9 active cases)  
 Miner: +0 positive (9 active cases)  
 Minnehaha (84): +20 positive, +29 recovered (804 active cases)  
 Moody: +2 positive, +2 recovered (31 active cases)  
 Oglala Lakota (4): +1 positive, +3 recovered (99 active cases)

Pennington (37): +16 positive, +23 recovered (442 active cases)  
 Perkins: +0 positive, +1 recovered (7 active cases)  
 Potter: +1 positive, +0 recovered (10 active cases)  
 Roberts (1): +0 positive, +3 recovered (52 active cases)  
 Sanborn: +0 positive, +0 recovered (15 active cases)  
 Spink: +0 positive, +1 recovered (26 active cases)  
 Stanley: +0 positive, +1 recovery (6 active cases)  
 Sully: +1 positive, +0 recovered (5 active cases)  
 Todd (5): +3 positive, +4 recovered (45 active cases)  
 Tripp (1): +0 positive, +1 recovered (53 active cases)  
 Turner (4): +2 positive, +1 recovered (36 active cases)  
 Union (9): +0 positive, +1 recovered (78 active cases)  
 Walworth (1): +1 positive, +2 recovered (37 active cases)  
 Yankton (4): +4 positive, +4 recovered (107 active cases)  
 Ziebach (1): +0 positive (8 active case)

North Dakota Dept. of Health Report  
 COVID-19 Daily Report, October 5:

- 7.3% rolling 14-day positivity
- 7.0% daily positivity
- 312 new positives
- 4,441 susceptible test encounters
- 112 currently hospitalized (+12)
- 3,693 active cases (-86)

Total Deaths: +3 (277)

## AGE GROUP OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Age Range	# of Cases	# of Deaths
0-9 years	775	0
10-19 years	2765	0
20-29 years	5601	2
30-39 years	4214	7
40-49 years	3347	10
50-59 years	3349	22
60-69 years	2427	38
70-79 years	1214	48
80+ years	906	121

## SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths
Female	12844	110
Male	11754	138

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County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Persons	Deceased	Community Spread
Aurora	73	49	580	0	Substantial
Beadle	850	754	2949	10	Substantial
Bennett	77	60	797	3	Moderate
Bon Homme	114	73	1238	1	Substantial
Brookings	846	746	4989	2	Substantial
Brown	1363	1130	7506	4	Substantial
Brule	147	115	1239	1	Substantial
Buffalo	153	135	793	3	Substantial
Butte	132	88	1684	3	Substantial
Campbell	41	22	159	0	Substantial
Charles Mix	217	152	2436	0	Substantial
Clark	49	36	575	0	Moderate
Clay	586	533	2678	7	Substantial
Codington	1001	796	5240	7	Substantial
Corson	94	84	747	1	Moderate
Custer	196	166	1382	3	Substantial
Davison	423	255	3677	2	Substantial
Day	101	69	981	0	Substantial
Deuel	97	79	657	0	Substantial
Dewey	179	112	2967	0	Substantial
Douglas	103	69	577	1	Substantial
Edmunds	104	95	635	0	Substantial
Fall River	105	86	1504	5	Moderate
Faulk	78	68	323	1	Moderate
Grant	185	112	1238	1	Substantial
Gregory	149	109	680	4	Substantial
Haakon	33	24	388	1	Moderate
Hamlin	109	90	1038	0	Substantial
Hand	60	36	497	1	Substantial
Hanson	49	32	358	1	Moderate
Harding	5	3	91	0	Minimal
Hughes	566	392	3091	5	Substantial
Hutchinson	129	79	1288	2	Substantial



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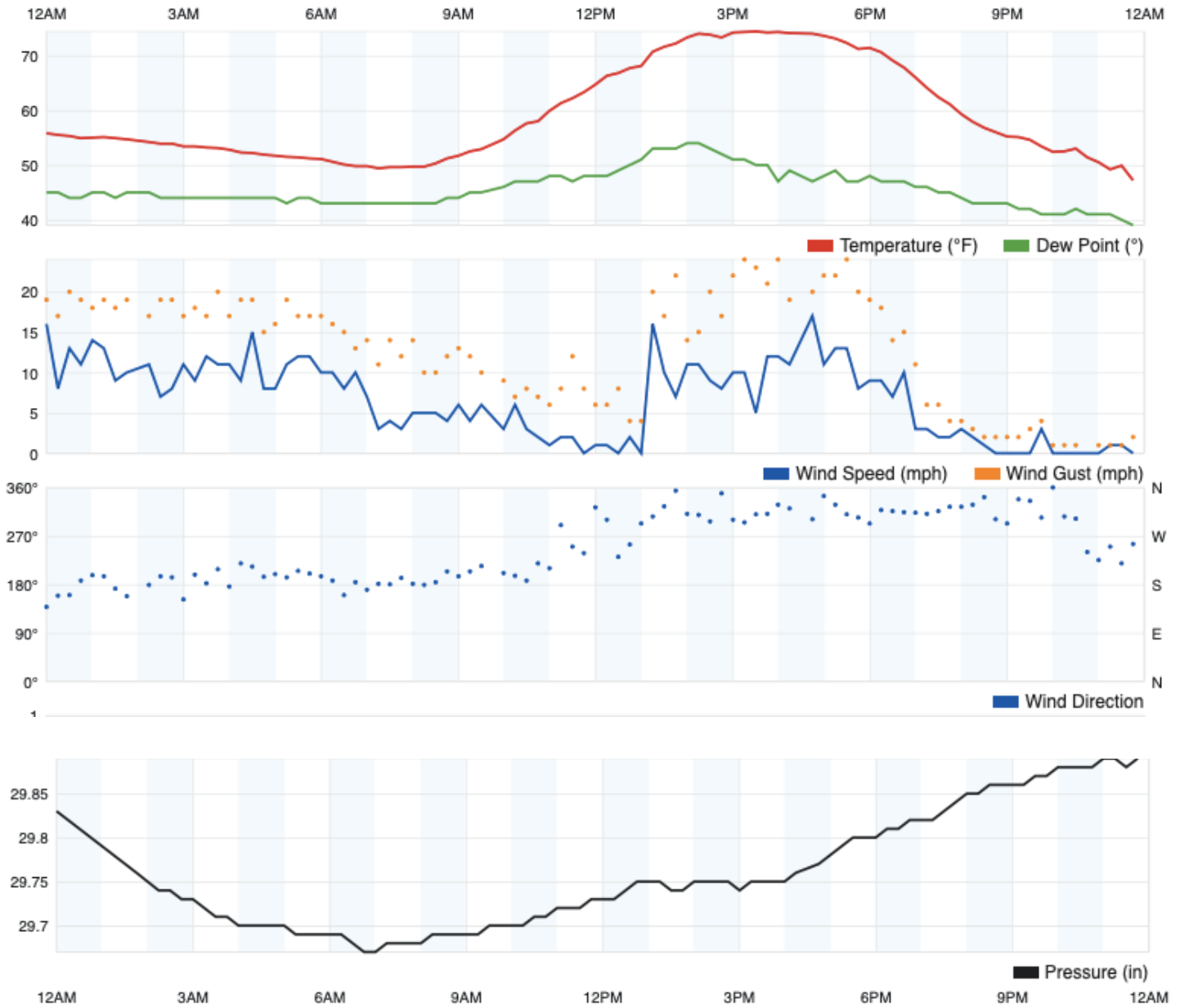
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Hyde	20	20	225	0	Minimal
Jackson	38	29	651	1	Moderate
Jerauld	101	72	345	3	Substantial
Jones	19	15	103	0	Moderate
Kingsbury	68	51	842	0	Substantial
Lake	219	184	1491	7	Substantial
Lawrence	475	370	4369	5	Substantial
Lincoln	1567	1272	11027	3	Substantial
Lyman	184	147	1285	3	Substantial
Marshall	48	35	669	0	Moderate
McCook	127	85	938	1	Substantial
McPherson	42	32	339	0	Moderate
Meade	632	501	3948	5	Substantial
Mellette	38	29	507	0	Moderate
Miner	30	21	358	0	Moderate
Minnehaha	7219	6331	43170	84	Substantial
Moody	114	83	904	0	Substantial
Oglala Lakota	340	237	4618	4	Substantial
Pennington	2623	2144	19043	37	Substantial
Perkins	44	37	375	0	Moderate
Potter	54	44	494	0	Moderate
Roberts	236	183	2797	1	Substantial
Sanborn	40	25	345	0	Moderate
Spink	153	127	1512	0	Substantial
Stanley	47	41	455	0	Moderate
Sully	17	12	140	0	Moderate
Todd	161	111	2931	5	Substantial
Tripp	188	134	962	1	Substantial
Turner	187	147	1446	4	Substantial
Union	458	371	3204	9	Substantial
Walworth	146	108	1183	1	Substantial
Yankton	482	371	5005	4	Substantial
Ziebach	67	58	520	1	Minimal
Unassigned	0	0	4662	0	

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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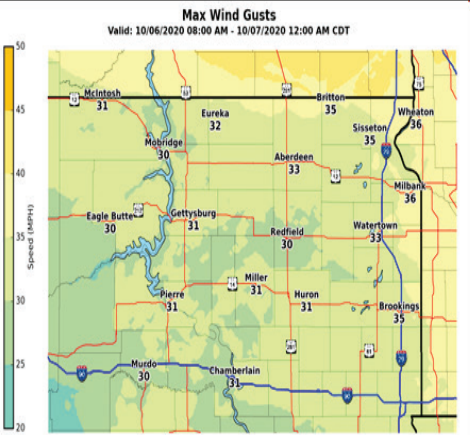
Today	Tonight	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday
				
Sunny then Sunny and Breezy	Partly Cloudy	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny then Mostly Sunny and Breezy
<b>High: 82 °F</b>	<b>Low: 44 °F</b>	<b>High: 69 °F</b>	<b>Low: 42 °F</b>	<b>High: 74 °F</b>

## Very High Fire Danger This Afternoon

- Dry air mass and warm temperatures in place.
- Gusty northwest winds this afternoon.
- Critical fuels.



### Estimated Afternoon Peak Wind Gusts (mph)





Valid: 10/06/2020 08:00 AM - 10/07/2020 12:00 AM CDT

### Forecast Afternoon Minimum Humidity



Valid: October 06, 2020

[weather.gov/Aberdeen](http://weather.gov/Aberdeen)
 National Weather Service Aberdeen
 @NWSAberdeen
Updated: 10/6/2020 5:32 AM Central

The combination of warm temperatures, a dry air mass, gusty northwest winds, and critical fuels will bring very high fire danger to the region this afternoon. Any fires that do start may spread rapidly and become difficult to control or contain. Use caution when outdoors today and be cognizant of any activities that may ignite unwanted fires.

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## Today in Weather History

October 6, 1994: During the late afternoon hours, a small tornado traveled for 3 miles along an intermittent path east of Browns Valley, damaging several buildings on a local farmstead. Another tornado touched down east of Wilmot, South Dakota, in Roberts County. The tornado was on the ground for eight miles and destroyed several small farm buildings, a garage, damaged farm machinery, blew down a grain bin, and uprooted several trees. Several hogs were killed when their shed was destroyed, and minor damage was done to some homes. The tornado drove a 6-foot long 1x6 piece of lumber through the center of a large tree limb.

1836 - A second early season snowstorm produced eleven inches at Wilkes Barre PA and 26 inches at Auburn NY. All the mountains in the northeastern U.S. were whitened with snow. (David Ludlum)

1952: Sleet fell at several locations, making it the earliest documented winter precipitation in Arkansas.

1967: A Canadian weather record one-day rainfall of 19.3 inches falls at Brynnor Mines at Ucluelet. 1981: The Netherlands' fourth-worst aircraft accident (at the time) occurred on this day. At 5:09 PM, the crew noted heavy rainfall in thunderstorms on the weather avoidance radar and received clearance to avoid this area. At 5:12 pm, the aircraft entered a tornado, which caused the right-wing to separate from the plane. All 17 occupants of the plane perished in the accident.

1984 - The temperature at Honolulu, Hawaii, reached 94 degrees to establish an all-time record at that location. (The Weather Channel)

1985 - A tropical wave, later to become Tropical Storm Isabel, struck Puerto Rico. As much as 24 inches of rain fell in 24 hours, and the severe flooding and numerous landslides resulting from the rain claimed about 180 lives. (Storm Data)

1987 - The western U.S. continued to sizzle. Afternoon highs of 85 degrees at Astoria OR, 101 degrees at Tucson AZ, and 102 degrees at Sacramento CA, equalled October records. It marked the fourth time in the month that Sacramento tied their record for October. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Cool Canadian air prevailed across the central and eastern U.S. Toledo OH reported a record low of 27 degrees. Limestone ME received an inch of snow. Warm weather continued in the western U.S. Boise ID reported a record high of 87 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Temperatures soared into the 90s across southern Texas. Afternoon highs of 93 degrees at Houston, and 96 degrees at Austin and Corpus Christi, were records for the date. Beeville was the hot spot in the nation with an afternoon high of 101 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

2010: A significant severe weather event struck northern Arizona with at least eight confirmed tornadoes. This event will go down in history as the most tornadoes to hit Arizona in a single day. An EF2 tornado was on the ground for 34 miles, ranking as the longest-tracked tornado in Arizona history.

2016: Around a half dozen tornadoes struck Kansas, including an EF-2 and EF-3 in Saline County.

2016: The center of Category 4 Hurricane Matthew passed within 100 miles of Miami, Florida.

# Groton Daily Independent

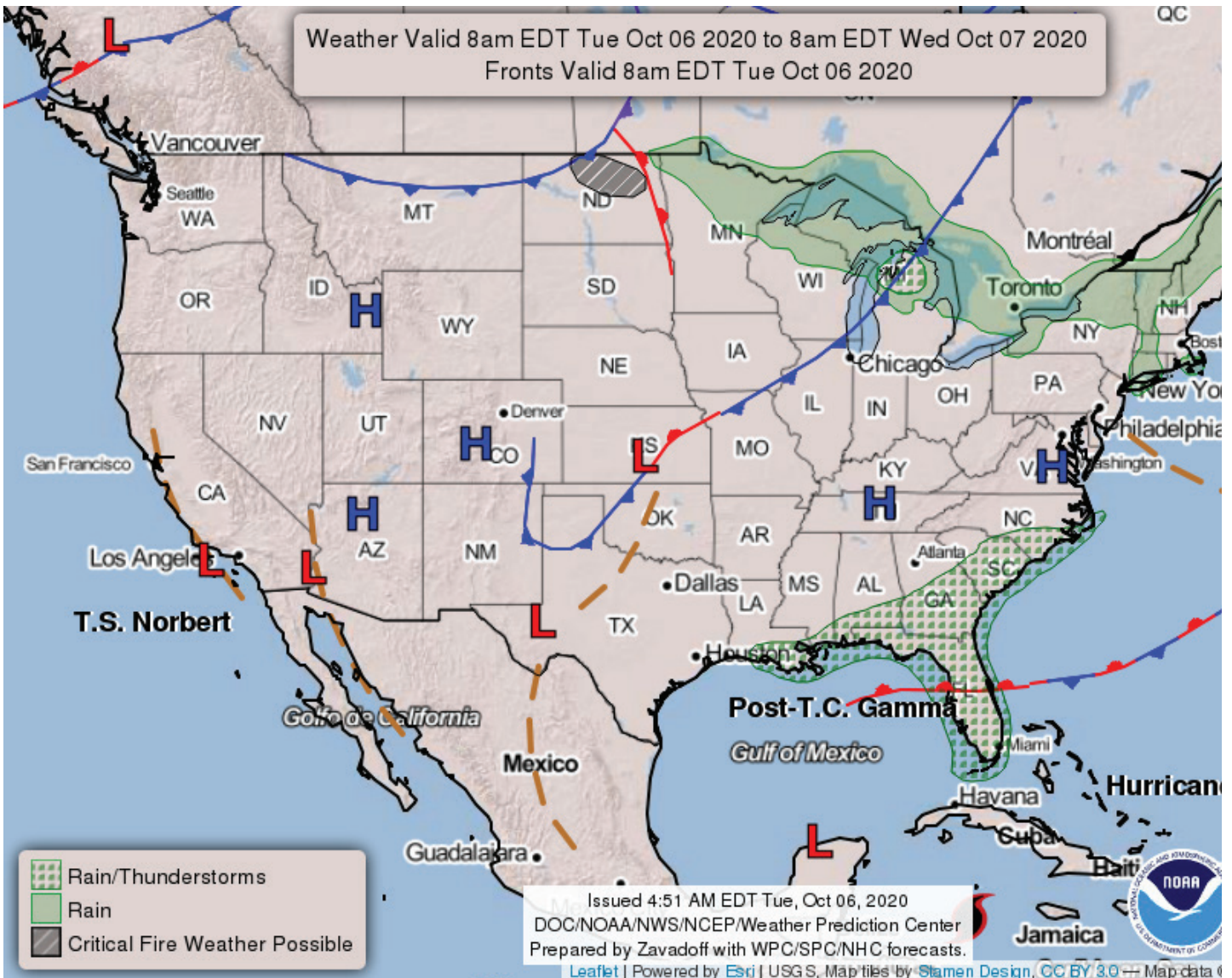
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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 75 °F at 2:22 PM**  
**Low Temp: 47 °F at 11:48 PM**  
**Wind: 26 mph at 5:31 PM**  
**Precip: .00**

## Today's Info

**Record High: 91° in 1961, 1993**  
**Record Low: 19° in 2012**  
**Average High: 63°F**  
**Average Low: 37°F**  
**Average Precip in Oct.: 0.40**  
**Precip to date in Oct.: 0.00**  
**Average Precip to date: 18.88**  
**Precip Year to Date: 15.15**  
**Sunset Tonight: 7:04 p.m.**  
**Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:40 a.m.**



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## WHAT TO ADMIRE IN SOMEONE

Alan was sitting at the table in the kitchen, looking out of the window. His mother noticed that he was in deep thought by the puzzled look on his face. Finally, she said, "Son, is there something I can help you with?"

After a moment's thought, he said, "Please, Mom. My teacher asked us to write a paper on 'The Person I Admire Most,' and I'm writing about you. So I have to think about it for a while. There is so much to write about."

Peter told us about the person he most admired. "Christ," he wrote, "is our example. Follow His steps. He never sinned, and He never deceived anyone. He did not retaliate when He was insulted. When He suffered, He did not threaten to get even. He left His case in the hands of God, Who always judges fairly... He carried away our sins...in His own body... and He is the Shepherd whom we can follow."

Not only is Christ someone for us to admire, but as Peter said, "someone whose example we can follow." Yet, even a casual look at the list of the qualities of Jesus is enough to cause us to feel as though He set the bar too high. It is more than we can handle.

And, humanly speaking, that is true. Fortunately, however, the power of Christ is available to us so that if we choose to do so, we can live life as He did. Paul said, "... do all things through Christ." That means that through Him, there is no room for retaliation, no room threats, no room for judging, and then become an example to those around us who need an example.

Prayer: Admiring You, Heavenly Father, is not enough. If we are genuinely Your disciples, we must not only admire You but serve You faithfully every day. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: For God called you to do good, even if it means suffering, just as Christ suffered for you. He is your example, and you must follow in his steps. 1 Peter 2:21-25

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## 2020 Groton SD Community Events

- **CANCELLED** Groton Lions Club Easter Egg Hunt - City Park (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- **CANCELLED** Dueling Piano's Baseball Fundraiser at the American Legion
- **CANCELLED** Fireman's Fun Night (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
- **POSTPONED** Front Porch 605 Rural Route Road Trip
- **CANCELLED** Father/Daughter dance.
- **CANCELLED** Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales, (1st Saturday in May)
- **CANCELLED** Girls High School Golf Meet at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 05/25/2020 Groton American Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services
- 07/04/2020 Firecracker Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 07/12/2020 Summer Fest/Car Show
- 07/16/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Pro Am Golf Tourney
- 07/24/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Ferney Open Golf Tourney
- 07/25/2020 City-Wide Rummage Sales
- **CANCELLED** State American Legion Baseball Tournament in Groton
- 08/07/2020 Wine on Nine Event at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 09/12-13/2020 Groton Fly-In/Drive-In at the Groton Airport north of Groton
- 09/12/2020 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Sat. after Labor Day)
- 09/13/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Couples Sunflower Classic
- 10/09/2020 Lake Region Marching Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)
- 10/10/2020 Pumpkin Fest (Saturday before Columbus Day)
- 10/30/2020 Downtown Trick or Treat
- 10/31/2020 Groton United Methodist Trunk or Treat
- **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

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## News from the Associated Press

### Monday's Scores

By The Associated Press

PREP VOLLEYBALL=

Baltic def. McCook Central/Montrose, 25-17, 25-27, 23-25, 25-16, 15-11

Bon Homme def. Hanson, 18-25, 24-26, 25-16, 25-16, 15-13

Chester def. Colman-Egan, 25-14, 25-15, 25-21

Edgemont def. Hot Springs, 25-20, 24-26, 25-13, 20-25, 15-10

Elkton-Lake Benton def. Garretson, 25-17, 23-25, 25-18, 25-14

Freeman def. Mitchell Christian, 25-14, 25-18, 23-25, 25-17

Harrisburg def. Pierre, 25-11, 25-15, 25-23

Redfield def. Mobridge-Pollock, 28-26, 25-20, 25-14

Sanborn Central/Woonsocket def. Wessington Springs, 25-18, 25-15, 25-13

Sioux Falls Christian def. Yankton, 25-16, 25-17, 25-15

Vermillion def. Viborg-Hurley, 25-18, 23-25, 25-12, 25-20

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

### South Dakota governor defends her pandemic approach

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem said Monday she provided a blueprint of how to navigate through the coronavirus pandemic without heavy-handed government mandates, telling lawmakers during a special session that she has done a good job in managing the pandemic.

Noem asserted that her approach, including her refusal to issue a stay-at-home order, was the right one, despite a surge in cases in South Dakota, which had the second-highest positivity rate of any state over the past two weeks as of Monday, according to The COVID Tracking Project.

"The mainstream media told us that these steps had to be taken to slow the spread of the virus. Day after day and night after night, they insisted that every decision I was making was wrong," Noem said. "That I was foolish to trust my people. And I was even sillier to respect the oaths I took. They told me I should shut my state down."

The Republican governor also said her health care team team began to study COVID-19 long before it reached the state and that they "turned to the science, the facts, and the data, to get a handle on what was happening on the ground in South Dakota."

"Our initial models showed a very troubling situation: We could expect as many as 600,000 people sick. And at our worst point, we could have up to 10,000 South Dakotans in the hospital," Noem said.

Even with the surge in cases in South Dakota, only 10% of the state's hospital capacity is taken up by COVID-19 patients, she said.

The federal government sent South Dakota \$1.25 billion dollars from the Coronavirus Relief Fund. Noem said she has spent "countless hours" on the phone and in Washington asking for flexibility in how South Dakota spends the money.

"I'll keep pushing Congress to provide greater flexibility, especially as it relates to this deadline. And they may come back and pass something before the upcoming election, or even in a lame duck session," the governor said. She said that the Treasury Department allows states to spend up to \$500 dollars per student to help schools get back to normal, "so we set aside \$75 million for schools.

"It's my hope today that we can set aside personal agendas and reject ideological fights. The people of South Dakota are counting on us to work together, to take this finite amount of money and help as many of our citizens as we can within Treasury's parameters."



## Justices reject South Dakota's only death row inmate's case

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court refused on Monday to take up an appeal from South Dakota's only death row inmate, who pleaded guilty to taking part in a torture killing 20 years ago.

The court did not comment in leaving in place the death sentence for Briley Piper, 39, of Anchorage, Alaska, who was one of three people convicted in the killing of Chester Allen Poage of Spearfish, South Dakota. One has been executed and the other is serving a life sentence in prison.

Prosecutors said the three men were high on methamphetamine and LSD when they decided to burglarize Poage's home. The episode ended with the men stoning Poage to death. One of the defendants, Elijah Page, was executed in 2007. A third man, Darrell Hoadley, was convicted at trial and sentenced to life in prison.

The South Dakota Supreme Court upheld Poage's sentence in 2019. Justices said the arguments from Piper were "untimely" and didn't contest his guilt, Piper had argued in his appeal that his guilty pleas were not made voluntarily or intelligently, and he blamed his defense counsel for that.

South Dakota's last execution was in November 2019, when Charles Russell Rhines died by lethal injection for the 1992 fatal stabbing of a doughnut shop worker.

## Arizona tribe members settle education claims in lawsuit

By FELICIA FONSECA Associated Press

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. (AP) — Members of a small Arizona tribe have reached an agreement with the federal government to partly resolve a lawsuit that sought widespread reform in the agency responsible for educating Native Americans.

Attorneys for Havasupai parents and students say the agreement reached in late September will help thousands of Native Americans who attend U.S. Bureau of Indian Education schools across the country.

A federal court had already determined that the bureau violated its duty to ensure access to special education, therapists and mental health services, including for trauma and childhood adversity. The agreement means a trial that was set to begin in November to consider the remedy for the violations won't happen.

"They weren't providing services for my kids, and they kind of dismissed them," the mother of three students who are identified in the lawsuit by only their first names told The Associated Press. "I thought all of the kids could be struggling with the same thing, and I wanted to make sure that BIE was held accountable."

The Bureau of Indian Education did not respond to emails requesting comment. The federal government has said the challenges at Havasupai Elementary School, which lies on the tribe's reservation deep in a gorge off the Grand Canyon, are unique and difficult — if not impossible — to overcome. The reservation is accessible only by foot, mule or helicopter.

Alexis DeLaCruz with the Native American Disability Law Center said the case is a landmark one for educational civil rights on behalf of Native Americans.

"When it was originally filed, it was the first time a group of students and their families stood together with the Native American Disability Law Center to address the wholesale denial of educational opportunities for students attending BIE schools," said DeLaCruz, an attorney for the plaintiffs. "In that sense, it's rare."

The Bureau of Indian Education oversees more than 180 schools in nearly two dozen states but directly operates less than one-third of them, most of which are in Arizona and New Mexico. Havasupai has long been one of the lowest-performing.

The agency didn't admit fault in the agreement that requires it to incorporate a federal disability civil rights law into its manual. Independent monitors would ensure the agency complies with the agreement for the next three years.

The agreement also provides a clear path for parents or students to lodge complaints that could result in corrective action plans.

"We will continue to support the families as they seek to hold the federal government accountable to its promises and obligations to provide education to our children," Havasupai Vice Chairman Matthew Putesoy

Sr. said in a statement.

A dozen current and former Havasupai Elementary School students also will have \$20,000 each set aside for compensatory educational services. One has said he wants to be a lawyer.

"It doesn't make up for what he was not offered during his (elementary) educational years," the mother said. "He wasn't allowed that ... and it angers me."

Havasupai children have no option to attend school beyond sixth grade on their land. Students who are sent off the reservation unprepared sometimes get frustrated, quit and return.

The settlement agreement doesn't affect two counts in the lawsuit that allege the Bureau of Indian Education failed to provide basic education. A federal judge in Arizona dismissed those claims in December, saying the plaintiffs didn't identify a distinct agency action to challenge. The plaintiffs plan to appeal.

Most Havasupai elementary students are doing a mix of in-person and remote learning amid the coronavirus pandemic. But the school still struggles with internet access, staff shortages and turnover, and providing education in subjects beyond math and reading.

## Supreme Court hears arguments at University of South Dakota

VERMILLION, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota's Supreme Court will hear oral arguments on the road Monday. The justices will hold court at the University of South Dakota School of Law in Vermillion with some precautions due to the coronavirus pandemic.

"This courtroom we're in now, at the law school, I believe holds just under 200 people. Because of the COVID requirements, there'll be no more than 40 people in here tomorrow," Chief Justice David Gilbertson said Sunday.

Gilbertson said they will be following the university's policy which requires masks indoors, however, justices and lawyers will not need to have them on when speaking.

The Supreme Court has been relying on technology to continue working on its caseload through the pandemic, KELO-TV reported.

"So, I believe it was in May that we did all our oral arguments by Zoom. The lawyers did not drive to Pierre, they appeared from their law offices through their Zoom cameras. And the five justices were in their home chambers and they also operated by Zoom," Gilbertson said.

## White House virus testing couldn't protect Trump

By KEVIN FREKING and CARLA K. JOHNSON Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — His press secretary once described President Donald Trump as the "most tested man in America" when it came to COVID-19. And variations on that message were the White House ready response any time critics questioned the president's lax approach to following guidelines for avoiding the novel coronavirus.

But that testing operation proved woefully insufficient in protecting the president and those who work for him at the White House, as evidenced by a string of positive tests over the past week for Trump, his wife and others in their orbit.

Trump demonstrated in dramatic fashion that relying on testing alone isn't enough to create a safe bubble. Mask wearing and social distancing are other key ingredients for preventing the spread of COVID-19, and both have often been in short supply at the White House.

From the earliest days of the virus, Trump has provided conflicting advice on wearing a mask, noting that federal health experts were recommending them, but adding that "I don't think I'm going to be doing it."

At another point, he said that "maybe they're great, and maybe they're just good. Maybe they're not so good."

And just last week, he poked at Democratic presidential rival Joe Biden on the topic: "Every time you see him, he's got a mask. He could be speaking 200 feet ways from them, and he shows up with the biggest mask I've ever seen."

While the White House has not insisted on masks, it has insisted on testing. Anyone in close proximity

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to the president or vice president is tested prior to the day's events, including reporters. The White House says the president is also tested regularly, as are his most senior aides.

"He's tested more than anyone, multiple times a day. And we believe that he's acting appropriately," White House press secretary Kayleigh McEnany said in July when asked whether the president was sending mixed messages on mask wearing. McEnany herself tested positive for the virus on Monday, she said.

Trump's doctor, Navy Cmdr. Sean Conley, has refused to say when Trump last tested negative for COVID-19.

A negative test result can sound reassuring, but it doesn't necessarily mean a person is free from the coronavirus and not contagious. When the virus enters the body, it takes over a cell's machinery to copy itself, while fending off the body's immune defenses. But the process takes a few days, so it can take a while before viral particles can be detected by a test. In other words, testing too early can mean no virus will be collected on the swab.

There are other reasons for false negative test results. A test could be conducted poorly and not get a good sample. And compared with other tests, rapid tests return more false negatives. The Food and Drug Administration has said the Abbott ID Now test — one used for screening at the White House — is meant to be used with people who are suspected of being sick and a negative test result doesn't rule out COVID-19.

"It's helpful to keep in mind that tests discover the presence of coronavirus once there's enough viral material in a person to be able to detect it," Abbott spokesman John Koval said in an email. "No test detects the virus immediately after the person becomes infected."

"Testing alone doesn't prevent disease spread," said Dr. Cyrus Shahpar, a former Centers for Disease Control and Prevention scientist now at the nonprofit group Resolve to Save Lives, which works to prevent epidemics. It must be combined with consistent mask wearing, hand washing, staying 6 feet apart and avoiding large gatherings.

The main benefit of testing, Shahpar said, is to identify people with infections and isolate them before they can spread the disease to others.

"Tests can have false positives and false negatives, and no test is perfect. It is also just a snapshot of the situation when the person was tested," Shahpar said.

Asked if the testing provided a false sense of security, spokesman Judd Deere said the physician to the president and the White House Military Office worked with the White House to "ensure all plans and procedures, including testing, incorporate current CDC guidance and best practices for limiting COVID-19 exposure to the greatest extent possible."

Health experts also advise social distancing, but that recommendation has been ignored for several recent White House events, most notably his nomination acceptance speech on the South Lawn in late August and a Sept. 26 Rose Garden ceremony announcing the nomination of Judge Amy Coney Barrett to serve on the Supreme Court. While the events were held outdoors, attendees sat shoulder-to-shoulder with barely a mask in sight.

Trump gathered more than 150 people in the Rose Garden, where they mingled, hugged and shook hands — overwhelmingly without masks. There were also several indoor receptions, where Barrett, her family, senators and others gathered in the close quarters inside the White House.

Among those who attended who have now tested positive, in addition to Trump, his wife Melania and McEnany: former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, former White House counselor Kellyanne Conway, the president of the University of Notre Dame and at least two Republican lawmakers — Utah Sen. Mike Lee and North Carolina Sen. Thom Tillis.

There's no way to know if the Rose Garden event was where Trump was exposed. The president had a full week of official and campaign events before his hospitalization Friday.

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Johnson reported from Washington state.

## Amid rising infections, Israeli ultra-Orthodox defy lockdown

By TIA GOLDENBERG Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — After a revered ultra-Orthodox rabbi died this week from COVID-19, Israeli police thought they had worked out an arrangement with his followers to allow a small, dignified funeral that would conform with public health guidelines under the current coronavirus lockdown.

But when it was time to bury the rabbi on Monday, thousands of people showed up — ignoring social distancing rules and clashing with police who tried to disperse the mass gathering.

Such violations of lockdown rules by segments of the ultra-Orthodox population have angered a broader Israeli public that is largely complying with the restrictions imposed to halt a raging coronavirus outbreak.

The defiance on display has confounded public health experts, tested Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's longstanding political alliance with religious leaders and triggered a new wave of resentment from secular Israelis who fear for their health and livelihoods.

"We've been asked to go into this lockdown, with its insane economic cost, that is causing people to go insane, because of the increase in coronavirus which is mostly occurring in the ultra-Orthodox sector and in large part because of criminal negligence," wrote media personality Judy Shalom Nir Mozes on the Ynet news site. "There are two sets of laws here. One for us and one for them."

The ultra-Orthodox claim they are being unfairly targeted by they authorities. They point to large weekly protests, mainly by secular Israelis, against Netanyahu's handling of the pandemic that have continued throughout the summer. Only last week, the government finally placed limits on the size of the protests, citing violations of public health guidelines.

"We are at the closest point to an explosion in terms of the mistrust," said Israel Cohen, a commentator with the ultra-Orthodox radio station Kol Barama.

A deep chasm has long divided religious and secular Israelis, wrought by years of seemingly preferential treatment for the ultra-Orthodox who are granted government stipends to study full-time. Ultra-Orthodox support is the lifeblood of Netanyahu's coalition and has helped crown him Israel's longest-serving leader.

Israel, with a population of 9 million, is battling one of the world's worst coronavirus outbreaks on a per capita basis. Its ultra-Orthodox community, which makes up roughly 10% of the population, accounts for over one-third of the country's coronavirus cases.

In the last week, Israel has seen highs of 9,000 new virus cases a day. It has recorded over 272,000 confirmed cases and more than 1,700 deaths from the coronavirus since the beginning of the pandemic.

The current spike comes during the Jewish High Holidays, a time when faithful usually pack synagogues and hold large family gatherings — settings that officials feared would ramp up the country's already soaring infection rates.

Israel imposed a second nationwide lockdown ahead of the Jewish New Year last month, aiming to keep people at home.

But parts of the ultra-Orthodox, or Haredi, community have defied those limits, holding massive holiday events, moving back and forth between cities and keeping some schools and synagogues open despite orders to close down.

Despite appeals by some lawmakers and community leaders for compliance, the current harvest holiday of Sukkot has presented another opportunity to defy the lockdown. After the weeklong holiday began on Friday, Israeli news outlets aired images of packed synagogues.

"It disturbs us," Israel's coronavirus czar Ronni Gamzu said last week of the high morbidity, after revealing the ultra-Orthodox made up 40% of the country's total cases.

The ultra-Orthodox have been at the center of the outbreak since it began in the spring. They tend to live in poor, crowded neighborhoods where sickness can quickly spread. Synagogues, the centerpiece of social life, bring men together to pray and socialize in small spaces.

Large parts of the community are adhering to rules. But some ultra-Orthodox view the restrictions as a greater threat than the virus, fearing the lockdown restrictions will undermine their way of life.

The cloistered community has long been separate from mainstream Israeli life, with children studying

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scripture but very little math and English. Men are granted exemptions from military service, which is compulsory for other Jews, and some avoid the workforce while collecting welfare stipends to continue to study full time.

The community's representatives in parliament have acted as kingmakers, granting them disproportionate political power.

Netanyahu has been slammed for his handling of the coronavirus crisis, including for having imposed virus restrictions that critics say favor his ultra-Orthodox partners.

Gamzu had pushed for targeted lockdowns in early September, focused on areas with worrying outbreaks, including many ultra-Orthodox communities.

But after fierce pressure from ultra-Orthodox leaders, Netanyahu decided against such measures and instead imposed a nationwide lockdown weeks later.

"Netanyahu is so afraid of his Haredi partners that he announced he was locking down the whole country without the whole country needing a lockdown," opposition leader Yair Lapid told The Associated Press.

Pointing to continued mass weddings and study sessions among the religious, Lapid said that "before they harm the general public, they are harming themselves."

Secular Israelis have watched with exasperation as police have ticketed individuals not wearing masks or restaurants opening in defiance of the rules, while seemingly turning a blind eye to the transgressions of the ultra-Orthodox. In recent days, however, police have begun to crack down on religious scofflaws as well.

Netanyahu's opponents also accuse him of trying to squash the persistent protests against him, including outside his Jerusalem home, under the guise of the nationwide lockdown.

Experts say any gains made in recent years at integrating the ultra-Orthodox into Israeli society — a crucial step to ensure the sustainable growth of Israel's economy — could be wiped out by the renewed bitterness wrought by the virus.

"The coronavirus will disappear at some point," said Yedidia Stern, an expert on religion and state at the Israel Democracy Institute, a Jerusalem think tank. "But what kind of society will we be after it?"

## 3 scientists win Nobel physics prize for black hole finds

By DAVID KEYTON and SETH BORENSTEIN Associated Press

STOCKHOLM (AP) — Three scientists won this year's Nobel Prize in physics Tuesday for advancing our understanding of black holes, the all-consuming monsters that lurk in the darkest parts of the universe.

Briton Roger Penrose received half of this year's prize "for the discovery that black hole formation is a robust prediction of the general theory of relativity," the Nobel Committee said.

German Reinhard Genzel and American Andrea Ghez received the second half of the prize "for the discovery of a supermassive compact object at the center of our galaxy."

The prize celebrates "one of the most exotic objects in the universe," black holes, which have become a staple of science fact and science fiction and where time seems to stand still, according to the committee.

Black holes are perhaps the most mysterious and powerful objects in astronomy. They are at the center of every galaxy, and smaller ones are dotted around the universe. Nothing, not even light, can escape their incredible gravity. They are the ultimate cosmic dead end.

"Black holes, because they are so hard to understand, is what makes them so appealing," Ghez told The Associated Press Tuesday morning. "I really think of science as a big, giant puzzle."

Penrose proved with mathematics that the formation of black holes was possible, based heavily on Albert Einstein's general theory of relativity.

"Einstein did not himself believe that black holes really exist, these super-heavyweight monsters that capture everything that enters them," the committee said. "Nothing can escape, not even light."

Penrose's detailed his studies in 1965, but it wasn't until the 1990s that Reinhard Genzel and Andrea Ghez, each leading a group of astronomers, trained their sights on the dust-covered center of our Milky Way galaxy, a region called Sagittarius A(asterisk), where something strange was going on.

They both found that there was "an extremely heavy, invisible object that pulls on the jumble of stars,

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causing them to rush around at dizzying speeds.”

It was a black hole. Not just an ordinary black hole, but a supermassive black hole, 4 million times the mass of our sun.

Now scientists know that all galaxies have supermassive black holes.

In 2019, scientists got the first optical image of a black hole, and Ghez, who was not involved, praised the discovery.

“Today we accept these objects are critical to the building blocks of the universe,” Ghez told an audience at the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences by phone shortly after the announcement.

Ghez is the fourth woman to be awarded the Nobel Prize for physics, after Marie Curie in 1903, Maria Goeppert-Mayer in 1963, and Donna Strickland in 2018.

“I hope I can inspire other young women into the field. It’s a field that has so many pleasures. And if you’re passionate about the science, there’s so much that can be done,” Ghez said.

The Nobel Committee said black holes “still pose many questions that beg for answers and motivate future research.”

“Not only questions about their inner structure, but also questions about how to test our theory of gravity under the extreme conditions in the immediate vicinity of a black hole,” it said.

It is common for several scientists who worked in related fields to share the prize. Last year’s prize went to Canadian-born cosmologist James Peebles for theoretical work about the early moments after the Big Bang, and Swiss astronomers Michel Mayor and Didier Queloz for discovering a planet outside our solar system.

The prestigious award comes with a gold medal and prize money of 10 million Swedish kronor (more than \$1.1 million), courtesy of a bequest left 124 years ago by the prize’s creator, Swedish inventor Alfred Nobel. The amount was increased recently to adjust for inflation.

On Monday, the Nobel Committee awarded the prize for physiology and medicine to Americans Harvey J. Alter and Charles M. Rice and British-born scientist Michael Houghton for discovering the liver-ravaging hepatitis C virus.

The other prizes, to be announced in the coming days, are for outstanding work in the fields of chemistry, literature, peace and economics.

Borenstein reported from Kensington, Maryland. Associated Press writer Frank Jordans in Berlin contributed to this report.

Read more stories about Nobel Prizes past and present by The Associated Press at <https://www.apnews.com/NobelPrizes>

## The Latest: 15 vaccine clinical trials underway in Africa

By The Associated Press undefined

JOHANNESBURG — Fifteen clinical trials of COVID-19 vaccines are underway across the African continent, according to a comment published in the journal Nature by Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Five trials are occurring in South Africa and four in Egypt, with a single trial each in Guinea-Bissau, Ghana, Uganda, Kenya, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

African nations have teamed up to combat the pandemic, with painful memories of millions of Africans dying in the decade it took for affordable HIV drugs to become available on the continent.

“Africa has ended up at the end of the queue every time” in the race for disease therapies, the Nature comment said. But COVID-19 has jolted the African Union into jointly pursuing vaccine trials and even vaccine manufacturing.

The Africa CDC estimates the continent will need 1.5 billion vaccine doses, enough to give 60% of the population the two doses likely required. Vaccines and delivery could cost up to \$10 billion, and delivery

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across the vast continent will be a major challenge.

The Nature comment indicates that authorities are willing to partner with beverage companies, noting that "refrigerated bottles of Coca-Cola are available in even the remotest areas of Africa."

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

- Trump staged a dramatic return to the White House after leaving hospital where he received unprecedented level of care for COVID-19
- Trump's return to the White House puts focus on people who could be further exposed if he doesn't abide by isolation protocols
- Some survivors and kin of those who have died are angry over Trump's advice not to fear COVID-19
- White House blocks FDA guidelines on bringing potential vaccines to market that would almost certainly prevent approval before election
- Ultra-Orthodox Jews account for over one-third of Israel's virus patients as non-compliance tests gov't and public health officials
- About 25 residents from Easter Island stranded 6 months in Tahiti will finally be able to return home this week on French military plane
- Follow AP's pandemic coverage at <http://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

## HERE'S WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING:

ROME — Italy's health minister says the government is examining a proposal to make masks mandatory outdoors as the country enters a difficult phase of living alongside COVID-19, with the number of infections growing steadily for the last nine weeks.

Roberto Speranza told the lower house of parliament on Tuesday that as infections spread, it is necessary to return to restrictions that were gradually loosened over the spring and summer months after Italy's strict nearly three-month lockdown.

"We must raise our guard with the awareness that our country is better off than others," Speranza said.

The government is expected to pass new measures by Wednesday making it necessary to wear masks outdoors and limit gatherings. The government also wants to extend the state of emergency put into place on Jan. 31, while the epidemic was still believed confined to China, until the end of January 2022, making it easier to enforce new measures on a national level.

Speranza said the recent uptick in cases has been primarily from gatherings of friends and acquaintances, making it even more pressing for people to wear masks in the presence of those not living in the same household. He noted that there are currently 58,900 cases of the virus in Italy, compared with 12,600 two months ago, an indication of how it is spreading even if it is well below the peaks of last March and April.

LONDON — The European Medicines Agency has begun reviewing a second potential coronavirus vaccine in an expedited process that could grant approval earlier than normal if it proves safe and effective.

In a statement Tuesday, the EU regulator said it has started examining early laboratory data from a COVID-19 vaccine being developed by BioNTech and Pfizer.

"This does not mean that a conclusion can be reached yet on the vaccine's safety and effectiveness, as much of the evidence is still to be submitted to the committee," the EMA said. It added that the agency's decision to start the expedited approval process was based on preliminary results from studies in adults which suggest the vaccine triggers the body's immune system to fight COVID-19.

Advanced tests involving thousands of people getting the vaccine developed by BioNTech and Pfizer are ongoing and results will likely become available in the coming months.

Last week, EMA announced it had begun a similar fast-track approval process for a coronavirus vaccine still being tested by Oxford University and AstraZeneca. The expedited process means an approval could be granted in weeks rather than months.

TOKYO — Japan and South Korea have agreed to resume business travel between them starting Oct.

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8, according to the Japanese Foreign Ministry. South Koreans will be able to enter Japan for business and conduct work but will be required to undergo a 14-day quarantine after entry, the ministry said in a statement Tuesday.

South Korea has reported slightly more than 400 deaths from the coronavirus, while Japan has confirmed about 1,600.

Japan has imposed an entry ban on people from many countries because of the pandemic. The ban has been gradually relaxed, including for travelers from Thailand, Singapore and Vietnam, although a 14-day quarantine is required.

**MANILA, Philippines** — Philippine Airlines has called on its employees to apply for voluntary separation as part of a retrenchment plan that may affect up to 35% of its 7,000 workers.

PAL said it resorted to furloughs and flexible working arrangements at the height of the pandemic to preserve jobs. But it is operating only 15% of its normal flights and says collapsing demand and ongoing travel restrictions make retrenchment inevitable.

The retrenchments would involve voluntary and mandatory steps to be carried out in the remaining months of the year, PAL said. It assured employees of fair treatment.

PAL, one of Asia's oldest commercial airlines, is among the largest Philippine companies reeling from COVID-19. The disease has infected nearly 325,000 Filipinos, the highest number in Southeast Asia, and caused 5,840 deaths.

**NEW DELHI** — India has registered 61,267 new coronavirus cases, its lowest daily increase since Aug. 25.

The country with nearly 6.7 million reported infections has had the highest single-day increases in the world for nearly 45 days. The last three weeks, however, have seen a gradual decline.

The Health Ministry on Tuesday also reported 884 deaths in the past 24 hours. The death toll now stands at 103,569.

India has the second-highest number of reported infections and is on track to exceed the caseload in the United States within weeks.

India's recovery rate is more than 84%, the highest in the world, and nearly 5.7 million people have recovered, according to the Health Ministry.

**COLOMBO, Sri Lanka** — Sri Lanka has confirmed that more than 300 garment factory workers have been infected with the coronavirus, after reporting its first community infection in two months.

The health ministry said 321 cases have been identified in the cluster as of Tuesday after the first patient was diagnosed at a hospital two days ago.

To contain the outbreak, the government imposed a curfew in two suburbs of the capital where the majority of patients live, closed schools and universities, and imposed restrictions on public transport.

For more than two months, Sri Lanka health officials have said they have prevented a community spread of the virus and that all diagnosed patients had belonged to two known clusters.

The country has reported 3,471 patients with 13 deaths. Of the total patients, 3,259 have recovered.

## **Kyrgyzstan cancels parliament election results after unrest**

By DARIA LITVINOVA Associated Press

**MOSCOW (AP)** — The Central Election Commission of Kyrgyzstan declared the results of the weekend's parliamentary election invalid on Tuesday after mass protests erupted in the Kyrgyz capital, Bishkek, and other cities, with opposition supporters seizing government buildings overnight and demanding a new election.

Hundreds were injured, and one person died. Members of several opposition parties announced plans to oust the president and form a new government.



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The decision to cancel the results of the vote was made in order to "prevent tension" in the country, head of the Commission Nurzhan Shaldabekova told the Interfax news agency.

Mass protests in the capital, Bishkek, and other cities broke out after the authorities announced early results of Sunday's parliamentary election. They attributed the majority of votes to two parties with ties to the ruling elites, amid reports of vote buying and other violations.

Supporters of a dozen opposition parties took to the streets on Monday, demanding the cancellation of the vote and a new election. Police moved to disperse the crowds with water cannons, tear gas and flashbang grenades. Some 590 people sustained injuries in clashes with police and one person died, the Interfax news agency reported, citing Kyrgyzstan's Health Ministry.

The violent crackdown failed to curb the unrest, and during the night the protesters broke into the government complex that houses both the parliament and the presidential office. Interfax reported that opposition supporters also took control of Bishkek's City Hall.

Another group of protesters went to Kyrgyzstan's State Committee of National Security, demanding to free former president Almazbek Atambayev, who was convicted on corruption charges earlier this year and sentenced to 11 years and two months in prison. Security officers released Atambayev after negotiations with the protesters.

Members of several opposition parties announced plans to oust Jeenbekov and create a new government.

"We intend to seek the dismissal of Sooronbai Jeenbekov from his post," Maksat Mamytkanov, a member of the Chon Kazat party, told Interfax on Tuesday, adding that opposition parties also insist on adopting a new constitution.

Zhanar Akayev of the Ata Meken opposition party was quoted by the Kyrgyz service of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty as saying that "a new prime minister and the people's government need to be appointed," and then "a popular election" needs to be held.

Jeenbekov on Tuesday urged leaders of opposition parties to "calm their supporters down and take them away" from the streets.

"I call on all (political) forces to put the fate of the country above their political ambitions and return to (acting) within the law," Jeenbekov said.

## Moving the flip zone: Democrats march deeper into suburbia

By ANGELIKI KASTANIS, JOSH BOAK and DARIO LOPEZ-MILLS Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — When Katherine Rutigliano and her husband moved away from San Francisco in 2013, they figured they would never meet a fellow Democrat again.

But housing was affordable around Phoenix. No more cramped condo. No more suffocating mortgage payments. No more tech-boom exhaustion. Everything would be easier for them and their kids in the suburbs — everything, that is, except talking politics with neighbors.

Then came an unexpected visitor at the door. It was a Democratic volunteer rounding up votes ahead of the 2018 Senate election. Rutigliano invited her in and inspected the map on her iPad. She was elated to see all the flashing lights that marked where Democrats lived in her stucco neighborhood on the northern edge of Phoenix.

These San Francisco transplants were not alone.

"It was like Christmas," said Rutigliano, 37, a mother of three and trained chef who is now sending out mailers for local Democrats.

Rutigliano didn't realize it, but she had moved her family to what is now the front lines in American politics. Once firmly in Republican control, suburbs like hers are increasingly politically divided — a rare common ground shared by Republicans and Democrats.

As such, they are poised to decide not just who wins the White House this year but also who controls the Senate and the contours of the debate over guns, immigration, work, schools, housing and health care for years to come.

The reasons for the shift are many. Suburbs have grown more racially diverse, more educated, more

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economically prosperous and more liberal — all factors making them more likely to vote Democratic. But demographers and political scientists are just as likely to point to another trend: density. Suburbs have grown more crowded, looking more and more like cities and voting like them, too.

For decades, an area's population per square mile has been a reliable indicator of its political tilt. Denser areas vote Democratic, less dense areas vote Republican. The correlation between density and voting has been getting stronger, as people began to sort themselves by ethnicity, education, personality, income and lifestyle.

The pattern is so reliable it can be quantified, averaged and applied to most American cities. At around 800 households per square mile, the blue of Democratic areas starts to bleed into red Republican neighborhoods.

A purple ring — call it the flip zone — emerges through the suburbs.

But the midterm elections of 2018 showed that the flip zone has moved in the era of President Donald Trump, with dramatic consequences. When Democrats across the country penetrated deeper into the suburbs, finding voters farther away from the city, they flipped a net 39 House districts and won a majority of the chamber.

An Associated Press analysis of recent election results and density shows Democrats in Arizona moved the flip zone 2 miles deeper into the suburbs from 2016 to 2018, reaching right to the northern edge of Interstate 101 in Phoenix into areas filled with cul-de-sacs of homes and backyards large enough for swimming pools. The shift helped them win a Senate seat for the first time in 24 years.

The AP's analysis essentially maps the challenge Trump and his Republican Party are facing today. Polling shows the president trailing Democrat Joe Biden badly in many key suburbs in battleground states. To hold the White House and control of the Senate, he and his party must stop the flip zone from moving farther out again.

Republicans are working against the recent trend in metros across the country. In 2018 in Milwaukee, the flip zone moved out less than half a mile as Wisconsin elected a Democratic governor. Its distance from city hall grew 2.6 miles in Richmond, Virginia, helping deliver the congressional seat once held by a conservative House majority leader, Eric Cantor.

Many political scientists think the trend toward political segregation has put the Democratic Party at a disadvantage. Its voters are more concentrated in cities. Republicans are dispersed across larger areas, making it easier for that party to draw favorable districts and win a majority of legislative seats even if it loses the total vote count. In 2018, Wisconsin Democrats received 53% of state assembly votes in 2018, yet they hold only 36 of the 99 seats in the chamber. Under the Electoral College, Republicans have twice in the modern era won the White House despite losing the popular vote.

The geographic divide has also had a real impact on policy and politics. The needs of cities and farm towns are often perceived as being in conflict — a tug of war between Republican and Democratic voters over resources. Until recently, scant racial diversity in the suburbs had allowed Republican politicians to cater to the concerns of white voters — and prey on their biases.

The geographic split also has exacerbated the tensions on display during the pandemic. Dense, Democratic areas were hit first by the coronavirus, allowing Trump to initially describe the disease as an urban problem and attack Democratic leaders for mishandling the response. Similarly, civil rights protests have been largest and most contentious in cities, and Trump has blamed their Democratic mayors.

Jonathan Rodden, a Stanford University political scientist and author of the 2019 book "Why Cities Lose," said this political divide on density has eroded the shared responsibility among elected leaders. Instead, they think of themselves as representing different voter groups and that gives them less incentive to work together.

"Municipal officials can blame state and federal officials, who in turn blame lower-level officials," Rodden said.

But he also believes the geographic divides can focus voters on local issues, where they're more likely

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to have an impact, and lead to more local activism.

After the Arizona teacher strike in 2018, Democrats organized with the goal of increasing pay and reducing class sizes — issues with real impact on suburban families. A study by the Morrison Institute at Arizona State University had found teachers earned higher salaries in 2001 than in 2016 after adjusting for inflation. The effort galvanized local Democrats to elect Kathy Hoffman as state superintendent of public instruction, ending a 24-year Republican grip on the office.

“There are a lot of classrooms that don’t have certified teachers because the teacher pay is so god-awful,” said Mary Witzel, a retiree and member of a Democratic precinct committee in the Phoenix flip zone. “The whole education situation in Arizona is causing a lot of people who have never been engaged before to start paying attention.”

Cliche campaign ads might show acres of wheat and bustling cities, but the United States is a suburban nation.

AP VoteCast, a survey of the electorate, found that 52% of voters in 2018 said they live in suburbia. It’s not surprising that Trump and Biden have been tussling over suburban voters for months.

Trump has suggested that efforts to racially integrate the suburbs would destroy those communities with crime and poverty, despite clear data showing that many suburbs are increasingly diverse. At the first presidential debate, he accused Biden of wanting to kill off the suburbs.

“Our suburbs would be gone, and you would see problems like you’ve never seen before,” Trump said.

“He wouldn’t know a suburb unless he took a wrong turn,” Biden responded. “This is not 1950. All these dog whistles on racism don’t work anymore.”

In fact, not all suburbs are alike, and “knowing” them can be difficult.

There are the English-style garden cities built a century ago for the affluent. Following World War II, mazes of Cape Cod houses and ranches sprawled near highways. There are gated communities, over-55 communities, planned communities, working-class suburbs, inner-ring suburbs and distant exurbs — and all have their own local characteristics.

Likewise, these battleground areas — the flip zones — are not uniform, AP’s analysis shows.

— In Dallas, the purple ring through the suburbs was 18.7 miles in 2016 out from city hall, at an average of 714 households per square mile. The border runs close to AT&T Stadium in Arlington, where the Dallas Cowboys play. Arlington is a so-called boomburb that morphed through new construction from a suburb to a city of 400,000.

— In Atlanta, the flip zone was nearly 24 miles out, at 434 households per square mile. It stretches out to diverse suburbs such as Kennesaw, where Black and Latino residents have nearly doubled their share of the population in the last two decades.

— In reliably Democratic Boston, Chicago and Seattle, one must drive out more than 40 miles, to what is essentially farmland, to find the flip zone.

Now the suburbs are the places delivering a referendum on Trump. And neatly manicured neighborhoods conceal a more complicated political biosphere.

Trump’s election caused Marshall Militano, 73, to leave his morning Bible study. He gave his life to Jesus Christ twice, first at a 1959 Billy Graham crusade in Madison Square Garden and again three decades later after dealing with drug and alcohol addictions.

The former long-haul trucker met his wife at church. He could not understand how so many in his breakfast fellowship saw the president as defending Christianity. Trump had stiffed contractors as a real estate developer and mocked veterans and immigrants — showing none of God’s grace.

Living in Glendale to the northwest of Phoenix, Militano turned on his computer two years ago and switched his voter registration from independent to Democrat. He and his wife cried after he told her.

“I want our country to get back to calm,” he said. “I’m not talking about kumbaya — I’m talking about rational. We haven’t done anything in this country in four years except hate.”

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Along the same streets, Republican Michael Nudo sees the new partisan tensions.

The 27-year-old was concerned by sometimes violent civil rights protests in distant cities this summer. He believes people in Glendale, where he lives and volunteers for the local GOP, want the stability of law and order. Republican leaders, he says, understand that.

Still, he's started carrying a gun in his truck because "with what's going on in our country, you don't know what you're going to end up in the middle of."

Nudo grew up in the flip zone — when it was more securely Republican territory. During his freshman year in high school, his family lost their house to foreclosure as millions of other Americans did during the Great Recession. Then their rental house was foreclosed on, and they had to move again.

The experience instilled in him a conservative belief that the government, like families, must be financially responsible.

Now Nudo sees that housing crash as the beginning of another wave of change in his hometown — "a huge turnover." As the economy recovered, big companies relocated workers from around the country. Others moved in chasing low housing prices and lower taxes and bringing their politics with them. The Phoenix area became splintered.

"You can walk across the street and be in a whole other community, whole other city," he said. "But they're your neighbors."

## 'An embarrassment': Trump tweet angers pandemic survivors

By GENE JOHNSON and PETER PRENGAMAN Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — Dizzy with a soaring fever and unable to breathe, Scott Sedlacek had one thing going for him: He was among the first people to be treated for COVID-19 at Seattle's Swedish Medical Center, and the doctors and nurses were able to give him plenty of attention.

The 64-year-old recovered after being treated with a bronchial nebulizer in March, but the ensuing months have done little to dull the trauma of his illness. Hearing of President Donald Trump's advice by Tweet and video on Monday not to fear the disease — as well as the president's insistence on riding in a motorcade outside Walter Reed Medical Center and returning to the White House while still infectious — enraged him.

"I'm so glad that he appears to be doing well, that he has doctors who can give him experimental drugs that aren't available to the masses," Sedlacek said. "For the rest of us, who are trying to protect ourselves, that behavior is an embarrassment."

COVID-19 has infected about 7.5 million Americans, leaving more than 210,000 dead and millions more unemployed, including Sedlacek. The U.S. has less than 5% of the globe's population but more than 20% of the reported deaths.

Yet the world's highest-profile coronavirus patient tweeted on Monday, as he was due to be released from the hospital following a three-day stay: "Don't be afraid of Covid. Don't let it dominate your life. We have developed, under the Trump Administration, some really great drugs & knowledge. I feel better than I did 20 years ago!"

He reiterated the message in a video Monday night, saying "Be careful," but "don't let it dominate you." "You're going to beat it," he said. "We have the best medical equipment, we have the best medicines."

The advice fit in with Trump's downplaying of the virus, his ridiculing of those who wear masks to protect themselves and others, and his insistence on holding rallies and White House events in contravention of federal guidelines. But emergency room doctors, public health experts, survivors of the disease and those who have lost loved ones were nevertheless aghast, saying his cavalier words were especially dangerous at a time when infections are on the rise in many places.

Marc Papaj, a Seneca Nation member who lives in Orchard Park, New York, lost his mother, grandmother and aunt to COVID-19. He was finding it tough to follow the president's advice not to let the virus "dominate your life."

"The loss of my dearest family members will forever dominate my life in every way for all of my days," Papaj said, adding this about Trump: "He does not care about any of us — he's feeling good."

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Dr. Tien Vo, who has administered more than 40,000 coronavirus tests at his clinics in California's Imperial County, had this to say: "Oh, my Lord. That's a very bad recommendation from the president."

The county is a farming region along the Mexican border that, at one point, had California's highest infection rate. Its 180,000 residents are largely Latino and low-income, groups that have suffered disproportionately from the virus. Cases overwhelmed its two hospitals in May.

"The president has access to the best medical care in the world, along with a helicopter to transport him to the hospital as needed," Dr. Janet Baseman, an epidemiologist at the University of Washington's School of Public Health, wrote in an email. "The rest of us who don't have such ready access to care should continue to worry about covid, which has killed a million people around the world in just a handful of months."

Some of Trump's supporters said they wouldn't be swayed by the White House outbreak: Wearing a mask is a choice, and to mandate its use limits freedom, said Melissa Blundo, chairwoman of the "No Mask Nevada" PAC.

"I'm not saying the coronavirus isn't real. I'm not saying that it isn't a pandemic," she said. "I believe tuberculosis could be called a pandemic when it kills a person every 21 seconds, but we haven't shut down the entire world. I just find it interesting that we are taking this particular pandemic and shutting down economies."

Data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control show 8,920 cases of tuberculosis in 2019. In 2017, the most recent year it reported deaths, 515 died from the bacterial lung infection.

Candy Boyd, the owner of Boyd Funeral Home in Los Angeles, which serves many Black families, said Trump's comments were infuriating and an "example of him not living in reality." The funeral home receives fewer virus victims now than it did in the spring, when it was several a day, but people continue to die, she said.

"We have people dying and this is a joke to him," Boyd said. "I don't take that lightly. This is sad. This is absurd."

Prengaman reported from Phoenix. Associated Press reporters Elliot Spagat in San Diego, Michelle Price in Las Vegas and Report for America's Sam Metz in Carson City, Nevada, contributed.

## After 6 months stranded, Easter Islanders will return home

By NICK PERRY Associated Press

RUSSELL, New Zealand (AP) — About 25 residents from remote Easter Island who have been stranded far from their loved ones for more than six months because of the coronavirus will finally be able to return home this week on a French military plane.

The group has been stranded on Tahiti in French Polynesia. Many arrived in March planning to stay for just a few weeks, but they got stuck when the virus swept across the globe and their flights back home on LATAM airlines were canceled.

A second group of about 15 Tahitians have also been stranded on Easter Island because of the flight cancellations.

French authorities announced Tuesday they would use an Airbus A400M Atlas turboprop to repatriate both groups in a flight that would take about six hours in each direction.

Also named Rapa Nui, Easter Island is a Chilean territory located midway between Polynesia, in the South Pacific, and South America.

The French state department said it launched the mission following a request from Chilean authorities, and it was being conducted in close coordination with the French embassy in Santiago, Chile. The plane is currently deployed with the French military in Tahiti.

The group of Easter Islanders had been begging authorities for help for months — in Spanish, in French, and in English. They had even written to Chilean President Sebastián Piñera. The Associated Press first wrote about their plight last month.

"I'm so happy!!!" said the group's unofficial leader, Kissy Baude, in a WhatsApp message to the AP. "We

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are very happy and relieved to finally be able to return home and to know that the Tahitians stranded in Rapa Nui will also return home in the same mission.”

Baude thanked authorities in France, French Polynesia, Chile and Easter Island for putting the logistics in place, including airport management and a 14-day virus quarantine they will undergo at a health center when they arrive back on Easter Island.

Among those stranded is a 21-year-old mom who gave birth to her second son just a few days ago without her husband by her side, because he was back home. It was unclear whether she and her newborn would be ready to return home on Thursday’s flight.

Home to about 8,000 people, Easter Island is a tiny speck in the vast Pacific Ocean renowned for its imposing moai — giant heads carved from volcanic rock by inhabitants hundreds of years ago. For Easter Islanders, Tahiti has long been a stopping-off point, a connection to the rest of the world.

Until the virus struck, LATAM airlines ran a regular return route from Santiago, Chile, to Easter Island and on to Tahiti. LATAM said it suspended the route in March because of the virus and doesn’t have a timeline for restarting it. No other airlines offer a similar service.

“The resumption of this flight is subject to the development of the pandemic and travel restrictions in place,” the airline said in a statement last month.

## Trump, still infectious, back at White House — without mask

By ZEKE MILLER, JILL COLVIN and AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump staged a dramatic return to the White House after leaving the military hospital where he was receiving an unprecedented level of care for COVID-19. He immediately ignited a new controversy by declaring that despite his illness the nation should not fear the virus that has killed more than 210,000 Americans — and then he entered the White House without a protective mask.

Trump’s message alarmed infectious disease experts and suggested the president’s own illness had not caused him to rethink his often-cavalier attitude toward the disease, which has also infected the first lady and several White House aides, including new cases revealed Monday.

Landing Monday night at the White House on Marine One, Trump gingerly climbed the South Portico steps, removed his mask and declared, “I feel good.” He gave a double thumbs-up to the departing helicopter from the portico terrace, where aides had arranged American flags for the sunset occasion. He entered the White House, where aides were visible milling about the Blue Room, without wearing a face covering.

The president left Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, where his doctor, Navy Cmdr. Sean Conley, said earlier Monday that the president remains contagious and would not be fully “out of the woods” for another week but that Trump had met or exceeded standards for discharge from the hospital. Trump is expected to continue his recovery at the White House, where the reach of the outbreak that has infected the highest levels of the U.S. government is still being uncovered.

Still, just a month before the election and anxious to project strength, Trump tweeted before leaving the hospital, “Will be back on the Campaign Trail soon!!!” And in case anyone missed his don’t-worry message earlier, he rushed out a new video from the White House.

“Don’t be afraid of it,” Trump said of the virus. “You’re going to beat it. We have the best medical equipment, we have the best medicines.” His remarks were strong, but he was taking deeper breaths than usual as he delivered them.

Trump’s nonchalant message about not fearing the virus comes as his own administration has encouraged Americans to be very careful and take precautions to avoid contracting and spreading the disease as cases continue to spike across the country. For more than eight months, Trump’s efforts to play down the threat of the virus in hopes of propping up the economy ahead of the election have drawn bipartisan criticism.

“We have to be realistic in this: COVID is a complete threat to the American population,” Dr. David Nace of the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, said of Trump’s comment.

“Most of the people aren’t so lucky as the president,” with an in-house medical unit and access to experimental treatments, added Nace, an expert on infections in older adults.

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"It's an unconscionable message," agreed Dr. Sadiya Khan of Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. "I would go so far as to say that it may precipitate or worsen spread."

Likewise, Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden, who spent more than 90 minutes on the debate stage with Trump last week, said during an NBC town hall Monday night that he was glad Trump seemed to be recovering well, "but there's a lot to be concerned about -- 210,000 people have died. I hope no one walks away with the message that it's not a problem." Biden tested negative for the virus on Sunday.

There was pushback from a prominent Trump political supporter as well.

Republican Sen. John Cornyn of Texas told the Houston Chronicle editorial board that Trump had "let his guard down" in his effort to show that the country was moving beyond the virus and had created "confusion" about how to stay safe.

Conley said that because of Trump's unusual level of treatment so early after discovery of his illness he was in "uncharted territory." But the doctor also was upbeat at an afternoon briefing and said the president could resume his normal schedule once "there is no evidence of live virus still present."

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, those with mild to moderate symptoms of COVID-19 can be contagious for as many as — and should isolate for at least — 10 days.

Trump's arrival back at the White House raised new questions about how the administration was going to protect other officials from a disease that remains rampant in the president's body. Press secretary Kayleigh McEnany announced she had tested positive for the virus Monday morning and was entering quarantine.

There were also lingering questions about potential long-term effects to the president — and even when he first came down with the virus.

Conley repeatedly declined to share results of medical scans of Trump's lungs, saying he was not at liberty to discuss the information because Trump did not waive doctor-patient confidentiality on the subject. COVID-19 has been known to cause significant damage to the lungs of some patients. Conley also declined to share the date of Trump's most recent negative test for the virus — a critical point for contact tracing and understanding where Trump was in the course of the disease.

Only a day earlier, Trump suggested he had finally grasped the true nature of the virus, saying in a video, "I get it." But on Sunday afternoon, he ventured out of the hospital while contagious to salute cheering supporters by motorcade — an outing that disregarded precautions meant to contain the virus.

At the hospital, doctors revealed that his blood oxygen level had dropped suddenly twice in recent days and that they gave him a steroid typically only recommended for the very sick.

Trump's experience with the disease has been dramatically different from most Americans, who do not have access to the same kind of monitoring and care. While most must cope with their symptoms — and fear of whether they'll take a turn for the worse — at home and alone, Trump has been staying in the presidential suite of one of the nation's best hospitals and has been given experimental drugs not readily available to the public. He returns to the White House, where there is a team of doctors on call with 24-hour monitoring.

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Trump, in his new video, defended his decision to repeatedly flout his own administration's guidelines to slow the spread of the virus, including by holding rallies with thousands of mostly maskless supporters.

Apparently referring to any potential danger to himself rather than others, he said: "I stood out front. I led. Nobody that's a leader would not do what I did." He added: "And I know there's a risk, there's a danger. But that's OK. And now I'm better. And maybe I'm immune, I don't know."

Even before Trump's motorcade outing Sunday, some Secret Service agents had expressed concern about the lackadaisical attitude toward masks and social distancing inside the White House, but there isn't much they can do, according to agents and officials who spoke to The Associated Press.

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Trump's aggressive course of treatment included the steroid dexamethasone and the single dose he was given Friday of an experimental drug from Regeneron Pharmaceuticals Inc. that supplies antibodies to help the immune system fight the virus. Trump on Friday also began a five-day course of remdesivir, a Gilead Sciences drug currently used for moderately and severely ill patients. The drugs work in different ways — the antibodies help the immune system rid the body of virus, and remdesivir curbs the virus's ability to multiply.

Madhani reported from Bethesda, Maryland. Associated Press writers Lauran Neergaard and Jonathan Lemire in Washington, and Bill Barrow in Wilmington, Delaware, contributed to this report.

## California wildfires are huge this year, but not deadliest

By JULIET WILLIAMS and JOCELYN GECKER Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — With months still to go in California's fire season, the state has already shattered records for the amount of land scorched in a single year — more than 4 million acres to date, with one blaze alone surpassing the 1 million acre mark. Five of the 10 largest wildfires in state history have occurred since August.

Beyond their size, how do the scope and devastation of this year's fires compare to previous wildfire seasons in California? Here are some comparisons:

### 4 MILLION ACRES

The 6,250 square miles or 16,000 square kilometers that have burned this year are more than double the previous record for the most land burned in a single year in the state — roughly the size of Connecticut. The previous record was set in 2018 when deadly wildfires destroyed 1.67 million acres (2,609 square miles or 6,760 square kilometers). The August Complex, burning in the Coast Range between San Francisco and the Oregon border, surpassed 1 million acres, another record.

"We used to think a 50,000-acre fire was huge. Now we're dealing with an average of over 300,000 acres," said Scott McLean, a spokesman for the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, known as Cal Fire, who called this year's blazes "horrendous."

Gov. Gavin Newsom said the amount of land scorched by the August Complex is larger than all the recorded fires in California between 1932 and 1999.

### DEATH & DESTRUCTION

The wildfires have incinerated at least 8,700 structures, many of them homes, from the San Bernardino National Forest east of Los Angeles to Napa Valley and up to the Oregon border. They have also killed 31 people. While those figures are terrible, the numbers have been higher. Many of this year's biggest fires are burning on largely unpopulated federal land.

Wildfires in 2018 destroyed more than 22,000 structures in the most devastating year on record. They included the Camp Fire, which nearly wiped out the town of Paradise, destroying almost 19,000 structures, many of them homes, and killing 85 people. Another 15 people died in other blazes that year.

In 2017, 37 people were killed as three major fires swept through Northern California wine country, destroying more than 8,800 buildings and leaving a permanent scar in the area for survivors.

Since then, officials have become more aggressive about issuing large-scale evacuation orders sooner, and residents seem more likely to heed the pleas to depart.

### OVERWHELMED FIREFIGHTERS

When the scourge of fires sparked by thousands of lightning strikes hit in mid-September, with major blazes roaring in neighboring states, California found itself short-staffed to fight them. The typical fire shift is 24 hours on followed by 24 hours off, but this year, many firefighters have been unable to leave the line of duty for days.

"I had a friend that's worked 50 days straight. Some people have stayed on the line 36 hours or 72 hours before getting relief," McLean said. "The fires have really put a strain on everybody this year. We have never seen anything like this before."



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More reinforcements have come since then, with firefighters arriving from other U.S. states and from Canada and Mexico, but there are still months left to go in the wildfire season and no break in sight.

## TINDER-DRY CONDITIONS

Numerous studies have linked bigger wildfires in America to climate change from the burning of coal, oil and gas. Scientists say climate change has made California much drier, making trees and other plants more flammable.

"The real crux is fuel moisture," said Mike Flannigan, who directs the Canadian Partnership for Wildland Fire Science at Canada's University of Alberta. "The weather's responsible for how dry the fuels are. Here we're mostly talking about dead fuels ... the stuff on the forest floor on the Earth's surface. The grass, the needles, the leaves. The drier the fuel, the easier for fires to start."

California was turned into a tinderbox of dead trees after a five-year drought and a bark beetle epidemic that killed 150 million trees, the largest die-off in modern history. The Mendocino Complex that broke the previous record for the largest blaze in California history tore through steep slopes and canyons filled with dead trees in the Mendocino National Forest in 2018 and took seven months to contain.

"The velocity, the speed of these fires, is consuming so much so fast. We've never seen this before," said McLean, who expects it will take years to replenish the moisture.

Associated Press writers Olga R. Rodriguez in San Francisco and Suman Naishadham in Phoenix also contributed to this story.

## Trump, still infectious, back at White House — without mask

By ZEKE MILLER, JILL COLVIN and AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

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"We have to be realistic in this: COVID is a complete threat to the American population," Dr. David Nace

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of the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, said of Trump's comment.

"Most of the people aren't so lucky as the president," with an in-house medical unit and access to experimental treatments, added Nace, an expert on infections in older adults.

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## **210K in US have died from virus. Now Trump says he 'gets it'**

By JONATHAN LEMIRE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Now that he has contracted COVID-19, President Donald Trump says he does "get it." That revelation, seven months into the pandemic and after almost 210,000 American deaths, is not the first time he has relied on personal experience to shape his views.

He said he now "understands" the virus. But because of his own experience, as a patient at one of the nation's finest medical facilities with treatment options available to very few, the president also reinforced that he has struggled to relate with everyday Americans, millions of whom have lost their jobs because of the coronavirus.

Instead, as he has in relationships with other countries, he has prioritized his own personal experience over that of experts. He has been reluctant, for instance, to call out Russian President Vladimir Putin over interference in American elections in the face of clear evidence from the U.S. intelligence community that it has occurred.

He has also drawn frequently on his experience with the business world or his own family to set the White House agenda. He cited his business acumen as helping him land a deal for the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem, and he said he understands the airline industry because of his time running the failed Trump Shuttle.

Despite months of briefings from the nation's leading infectious disease experts, it was the onset of his own symptoms, as he was brought low by a lethal virus, that he said gave him a greater understanding.

That understanding, however, seemed very much in conflict with expert public health guidance about how the virus behaves and the precautions that people infected, particularly those in a higher risk group like the president, need to take.

"It's been a very interesting journey," Trump said in a video released Sunday night. "I learned a lot about COVID. I learned it by really going to school. This is the real school. And I get it, and I understand it, and it's a very interesting thing, and I'm going to be letting you know about it."

But it soon became clear that he did not, in fact, get it.

Trump took a surprise ride in a motorcade to pay tribute to his supporters, potentially exposing the Secret Service agents who rode in the vehicle with him. The next day, when announcing that he would be returning to the White House, he took a tone that suggested he was out of touch with suffering Americans who could not receive the same level of presidential care.

"Don't be afraid of Covid. Don't let it dominate your life," Trump tweeted. "We have developed, under the Trump Administration, some really great drugs & knowledge. I feel better than I did 20 years ago!"

At no point since he tested positive for the virus has Trump acknowledged others afflicted with the deadly disease. His general election foe, Democrat Joe Biden, on Monday urged him to fundamentally change how he manages the pandemic.

"I was glad to see the president speaking and recording videos over the weekend," Biden said in Miami.

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"Now that he's busy tweeting campaign messages, I would ask him to do this: Listen to the scientists, support masks."

Even when the virus struck longtime friends, like Stanley Chera, a New Jersey developer who died of the disease in April, Trump did not change his approach and continued to talk about the virus as though it would soon be a thing of the past.

"We've always said that he has no capacity for empathy. His sense of self-regard is so overwhelming, he views everything that passes through the world through the lens of what it does for him," said Eddie Glaude, chair of the department of African American Studies at Princeton University.

"Even though more than 200,000 Americans are dead, the nature of the crisis doesn't come home unless it actually touches him," Glaude said. "Could he ever represent anyone other than himself?"

Trump has said he could deal with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un because he had established a personal rapport with the authoritarian figure in ways that his predecessors could not.

"I was being really tough and so was he. And then we would go back and forth," Trump said at a 2018 rally. "And then we fell in love. No really. He wrote me beautiful letters."

Since Trump has in effect declared his battle with the disease successful — an assessment that available medical evidence suggests is premature — it remains doubtful that Trump would take his personal experience battling COVID-19 and rethink his administration's policies or attitudes toward the pandemic, especially given the competing imperative of continuing his presidential campaign.

Trump often has had difficulty embracing a central role of the American presidency: consoling people dealing with intense grief, regardless of their political affiliation or support for the White House's agenda. It's a quality rarely debated or analyzed during a campaign, yet one that can shape the way people view the success of their president.

But in 2020, it has become a central issue. The president has rarely mentioned the toll of the virus on the nation, instead focusing on an economic recovery or a rise in the stock market.

He has largely eschewed wearing a mask and mocked those who have. And he has ignored his own federal government's guidelines when holding rallies and large-scale White House events.

Trump may draw lessons from his own experiences but will rarely ever acknowledge a misstep, said former campaign adviser Sam Nunberg.

"He once said, 'It is what it is' about the impact of COVID. His video (Sunday night) was better than that, it was probably the closest he is going to get to an apology," said Nunberg. "That's not who he is."

The White House sees it differently.

"He has experience now fighting the coronavirus as an individual," said Erin Perrine, a campaign spokeswoman. "Joe Biden doesn't have that."

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## **Biden aims to expand map as Trump recovers from coronavirus**

By WILL WEISSERT and BILL BARROW Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — As President Donald Trump recovers from the coronavirus, Joe Biden is capitalizing on having the campaign trail largely to himself by hitting critical swing states and investing in longtime Republican bastions that he hopes might expand his path to victory.

The Democratic presidential nominee made his second trip to Florida in a little over two weeks on Monday. His visit to Miami was designed to encroach on some of Trump's turf, even swinging through Little Havana, a typically conservative area known for its staunch opposition to the communist government that Fidel Castro installed in Cuba.

He'll follow up with a trip later this week to Arizona, which hasn't backed a Democratic presidential candidate since 1996. Even Biden's former primary rival, Bernie Sanders, has resumed in-person campaigning for the first time since the coronavirus outbreak in March. The progressive Vermont senator held socially distanced rallies in the battlegrounds of New Hampshire and Michigan, proclaiming, "We need Joe Biden

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as our president.”

Sitting on a massive pile of campaign cash less than a month before Election Day, Biden is trying to put Trump on defense across the country and build an advantage in the Electoral College so large that the president might struggle to contest it. That’s especially important since Trump, who lost the popular vote in 2016, has said he may not accept the election results this year and has raised unfounded allegations that the increased use of mail-in voting amid the coronavirus pandemic could lead to fraud.

Biden is complementing the expanded campaign travel with a late-stage ad push, reserving more than \$6 million in television airtime in Texas — for decades deeply red — through the end of October, according to an Associated Press analysis of CMAG data. He also plans to spend \$4 million on advertising in Georgia, another Republican-leaning state that Democrats are feeling bullish about.

Trump, meanwhile, has scaled back advertising in both states and has begun doing the same in Ohio, which he also won in 2016.

“2020 is not 2016. The ‘Dems in disarray,’ fretting that we’re going to go too far, that’s not the reality this time,” said Kelly Dietrich, founder of the National Democratic Training Committee, which has worked with around 1,500 of the party’s candidates for offices nationwide this cycle. “They are running a solid race focused on the swing states we need to win but now have excess resources to expand the map.”

As Election Day nears, Democrats are still stung by the 2016 campaign, when Hillary Clinton focused on Republican-leaning states like North Carolina and Arizona in the final weeks, only to lose ones that long supported Democrats, including Michigan, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania.

Democratic strategist Brad Bannon said, “It would be a mistake for Biden to take his foot off the pedal,” but added, “I wouldn’t want Biden to make the same mistake Clinton did.”

“I’d be careful, if I was Biden, about expanding the map too much,” Bannon said.

Biden’s advisers say they have been confident for months they can expand the electoral map while never wavering from their promise to have their candidate travel only when local health guidelines allowed for it. Adhering to that plan has allowed them to expand into other parts of the country at the most critical of moments.

Speaking Monday in Little Havana, Biden was careful to continue to wish Trump a speedy recovery but also criticized his administration’s response to the pandemic.

“I was glad to see the president speaking and recording videos over the weekend,” Biden said. “Now that’s he’s busy tweeting campaign messages, I’d encourage him to do this: Listen to the scientists.”

Biden also diverted from his usual campaign speech about rebuilding the economy after the pandemic to add, “The richness and beauty of Miami is built with the connections of family, culture, values that we share with our friends throughout the Caribbean and Latin America.”

Trump left the hospital Monday night. Although it’s not clear when he’ll be well enough for a full travel schedule, he’s already thinking about one.

“Will be back on the Campaign Trail soon!!!” the president tweeted.

Biden advisers say they never considered dialing back his campaigning even while the president was hospitalized, especially with Vice President Mike Pence having taken on a larger role, including at Wednesday’s debate with Biden’s running mate, Kamala Harris, in Salt Lake City, Utah.

“The Trump campaign continues to run their presidential campaign, and we are going to continue to run our presidential campaign,” said Biden campaign senior strategist Anita Dunn. “Clearly, both campaigns are continuing to move forward.”

Still, Biden faces lingering questions about whether he was exposed to the virus. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends quarantining for two weeks after a person’s exposure to the virus. Biden shared a stage with the president for 90 minutes during last week’s first presidential primary debate.

Biden says he’s since been tested three times, all with negative results. His campaign has promised he will be tested regularly and has committed to releasing all results, but they’ve refused to comment on whether quarantine was considered after the debate and they haven’t said how often Biden will undergo tests.

During an MSNBC town hall later Monday evening, Biden said presidents should be transparent about their health, though he also “can understand that, in certain circumstances related to national security,

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where every detail would not be made available in the middle of a particular crisis.”

But Biden said withholding such information was only appropriately rarely and for short periods of time, saying it should be done “only on the margins and only for the moment.”

Since the president tested positive for the virus, Biden’s campaign has been even more disciplined about minimizing its candidate’s risk. The former vice president has begun keeping on his face mask even when giving speeches. And when he stopped to answer questions before boarding his plane to Miami, Biden’s wife, Jill, physically pulled him back to prevent him from moving too close to reporters, despite everyone wearing masks.

“We are not going to put people’s health at risk for a political campaign,” Dunn said, “but we are going to campaign as vigorously as we can.”

Weissert reported from Washington.

## As Harris pitches to Black voters, some want to hear more

By KATHLEEN RONAYNE AND KAT STAFFORD Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — Standing before Sen. Kamala Harris at a campaign event near a Raleigh barber-shop, Marcus Bass asked the Democratic vice presidential nominee a pointed question: How would she and Joe Biden convince young Black voters their ticket isn’t simply the lesser of two evils?

“I appreciate your question and the point,” Harris replied. “Nobody is supposed to vote for us — we need to earn it.”

That’s what Harris, the first Black woman to appear on a major party’s presidential ticket, is trying to do in swing states like North Carolina, as the presidential contest enters its final weeks. In conversations at barbershops and historically Black colleges and universities, through ads on popular websites and live Instagram interviews, Harris is pitching herself and Biden as a team that can make meaningful progress on issues that matter to Black Americans, like police reform, ending the new coronavirus pandemic and creating a more equitable economy.

She’ll have the chance to pitch to her biggest audience yet on Wednesday, when she is expected to debate Vice President Mike Pence. Harris is likely to deliver a message that’s particularly resonant for Black Americans, including the disproportionate toll the coronavirus has taken on their communities and the vital need for access to health care.

The theme takes on a new significance after President Donald Trump was hospitalized with the virus, reviving criticism of the administration’s handling of the pandemic.

The intensifying focus on the vice presidential debate offers Harris an important chance to address doubts about the Democratic ticket.

Biden’s history-making selection of Harris as his running mate has energized and excited many Black voters, particularly women, who are among the Democratic Party’s most reliable voters. Harris attended Howard University, an HBCU, and was a member of the Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority. Members donning the sorority’s green and pink colors can often be spotted outside her events.

But she’s still facing skepticism about her past as a prosecutor, and some young Black voters say they’re looking for something more than a politician who looks like them. They’re not yet convinced Biden and Harris are committed or able to execute meaningful change.

“I do think they have a lot more work to do,” said John Ray, a 32-year-old Black man who works with youth in Detroit. “We know that grandparents and certain age demographics are already going to vote. So, should a lot of energy be spent there, or should we be trying to really activate those populations that historically don’t vote? Some are saying, ‘What are you going to do beyond campaign promises to actually make things better for me in my community?’”

Harris has appealed to Black voters during recent visits to Michigan and North Carolina, including those who couldn’t or didn’t vote in 2016 and those whom Trump is courting, particularly Black men. Despite Trump’s efforts, Black voters nationally support Biden by a wide margin, polling shows. She’s also cam-

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paigned in Milwaukee and Philadelphia, two cities with large Black populations in swing states.

Her message in Detroit, the nation's largest Black city, was clear: I see you.

"There's so much that is about Detroit, as not only a measure of our country and its excellence but also as a matter of the challenges that we face as a nation," Harris said, recognizing the unique challenges facing the city, which was devastated by COVID-19 and the economic fallout.

She chose Shaw University, an HBCU in Raleigh with a history in the civil rights movement, as the site of her first North Carolina visit, where she delivered a speech on the Supreme Court.

Biance Wilburn, a senior at Shaw University, learned through her work with an advocacy group last year that many of her peers thought voting didn't matter, a perception that she's worked to change. Wilburn, who is 21, called Harris' visit to campus a "wow" moment before the California senator greeted students and grooved to a drumline performance.

"It means a lot to be a Black woman and just Black in America, period," she said.

But Tory Jackson, a 36-year-old mental health worker from Raleigh who is Black, said many of his friends are resigned to another Trump win and may opt out of voting. He likened it to staying in a bad relationship instead of gambling on a new one.

"We've dealt with him for four years. We've already seen what he can and can't do. We already know his antics," said Jackson, who plans to vote but not for Trump.

Nicole Small, of Detroit, said early momentum from Harris' selection has fizzled out.

"Now, some of those who were really excited, they're now gravely concerned. Some are traditional Democrats who are saying, 'We see no visibility in our community.' You really need to get out here, and you need to show that you understand that you have a fight on your hands. They act as if they have it made," said Small, a Detroit Charter Commission member.

Harris can rattle off with ease a lengthy list of policies aimed at improving the lives of Black Americans; one of her challenges is making sure those policies break through. They include investing \$70 billion in HBCUs and working to reduce racial gaps in home and business ownership through tax credits for first-time home buyers and ensuring access to capital for Black small-business owners.

On health care, Harris draws a direct connection between the pandemic and health care access for Black people, who are dying at disproportionate rates from the virus. The Supreme Court, meanwhile, is set to hear a case just after the Nov. 3 election that could overturn the Affordable Care Act, which protects access to insurance for people with preexisting conditions.

"The perspective that Joe and I share is to, one, acknowledge these racial disparities, and then address them," she said. "By the way, Donald Trump has no plan."

Police reform, meanwhile, is heavy on the minds of many voters after a summer of several police shootings or killings of Black people. It's an issue Harris is well versed in as a former prosecutor, and she talks about it with more fluency and nuance than Biden, who largely glossed over the reform proposals in his first debate. Their proposals include a national registry for police misconduct and a national use-of-force standard that's stricter than what most states use, as well as banning tactics like chokeholds and no-knock warrants.

It was those policies that Harris turned to in response to Bass' lesser-of-two-evils question. The community organizer said that he appreciated her detailed answer but that Democrats, including Harris, have more work to do to energize Black voters.

"When I hear young people saying they're not going to vote, I don't think that is a static message," he said. "I think that's a challenge."

Stafford reported from Detroit.

## Oilers say McDavid tests positive for COVID-19

EDMONTON, Alberta (AP) — Edmonton Oilers star Connor McDavid has tested positive for COVID-19. McDavid, a 23-year-old forward, is self-quarantining at home and experiencing mild symptoms, according to the Oilers.

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"He will continue to be monitored and will follow all associated health protocols," the team said Monday night in a statement.

McDavid, the No. 1 overall pick in the 2015 draft, is widely considered the best player in the NHL. The captain of the Oilers had 34 goals and 63 assists in 64 games during the pandemic-shortened season.

The NHL made it through its postseason in bubbles in Toronto and Edmonton without one positive test in August and September. McDavid's Oilers were eliminated in the opening round of the postseason in Edmonton in early August.

The league did have players test positive before the postseason. The NHL said 30 players tested positive during voluntary training in Phase 2 of its return-to-play plan earlier in the summer, while another 13 had the virus outside the Phase 2 protocol.

Two more positive tests were reported during training camp, which was considered Phase 3.

Six members of the Ottawa Senators organization tested positive for COVID-19 after the team made a trip through hard-hit California just before the league suspended its season in March.

The NHL stopped releasing the names or teams for positive tests earlier this year. However, Toronto Maple Leafs star Auston Matthews confirmed he had COVID-19 in the aftermath of published reports.

More AP NHL coverage: <https://apnews.com/NHL>

## **Trump, still infectious, back at White House — without mask**

By ZEKE MILLER, JILL COLVIN and AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

BETHESDA, Md. (AP) — President Donald Trump staged a dramatic return to the White House Monday night after leaving the military hospital where he was receiving an unprecedented level of care for COVID-19. He immediately ignited a new controversy by declaring that despite his illness the nation should not fear the virus that has killed more than 210,000 Americans — and then he entered the White House without a protective mask.

Trump's message alarmed infectious disease experts and suggested the president's own illness had not caused him to rethink his often-cavalier attitude toward the disease, which has also infected the first lady and several White House aides, including new cases revealed Monday.

Landing at the White House on Marine One, Trump gingerly climbed the South Portico steps, removed his mask and declared, "I feel good." He gave a double thumbs-up to the departing helicopter from the portico terrace, where aides had arranged American flags for the sunset occasion. He entered the White House, where aides were visible milling about the Blue Room, without wearing a face covering.

The president left Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, where his doctor, Navy Cmdr. Sean Conley, said earlier Monday that the president remains contagious and would not be fully "out of the woods" for another week but that Trump had met or exceeded standards for discharge from the hospital. Trump is expected to continue his recovery at the White House, where the reach of the outbreak that has infected the highest levels of the U.S. government is still being uncovered.

Still, just a month before the election and anxious to project strength, Trump tweeted before leaving the hospital, "Will be back on the Campaign Trail soon!!!" And in case anyone missed his don't-worry message earlier, he rushed out a new video from the White House.

"Don't be afraid of it," Trump said of the virus. "You're going to beat it. We have the best medical equipment, we have the best medicines." His remarks were strong, but he was taking deeper breaths than usual as he delivered them.

Trump's nonchalant message about not fearing the virus comes as his own administration has encouraged Americans to be very careful and take precautions to avoid contracting and spreading the disease as cases continue to spike across the country. For more than eight months, Trump's efforts to play down the threat of the virus in hopes of propping up the economy ahead of the election have drawn bipartisan criticism.

"We have to be realistic in this: COVID is a complete threat to the American population," Dr. David Nace of the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, said of Trump's comment.

"Most of the people aren't so lucky as the president," with an in-house medical unit and access to ex-



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perimental treatments, added Nace, an expert on infections in older adults.

"It's an unconscionable message," agreed Dr. Sadiya Khan of Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. "I would go so far as to say that it may precipitate or worsen spread."

Likewise, Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden, who spent more than 90 minutes on the debate stage with Trump last week, said during an NBC town hall Monday night that he was glad Trump seemed to be recovering well, "but there's a lot to be concerned about -- 210,000 people have died. I hope no one walks away with the message that it's not a problem." Biden tested negative for the virus on Sunday.

There was pushback from a prominent Trump political supporter as well.

Republican Sen. John Cornyn of Texas told the Houston Chronicle editorial board that Trump had "let his guard down" in his effort to show that the country was moving beyond the virus and had created "confusion" about how to stay safe.

Conley said that because of Trump's unusual level of treatment so early after discovery of his illness he was in "uncharted territory." But the doctor also was upbeat at an afternoon briefing and said the president could resume his normal schedule once "there is no evidence of live virus still present."

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, those with mild to moderate symptoms of COVID-19 can be contagious for as many as — and should isolate for at least — 10 days.

Trump's arrival back at the White House raised new questions about how the administration was going to protect other officials from a disease that remains rampant in the president's body. Press secretary Kayleigh McEnany announced she had tested positive for the virus Monday morning and was entering quarantine.

There were also lingering questions about potential long-term effects to the president — and even when he first came down with the virus.

Conley repeatedly declined to share results of medical scans of Trump's lungs, saying he was not at liberty to discuss the information because Trump did not waive doctor-patient confidentiality on the subject. COVID-19 has been known to cause significant damage to the lungs of some patients. Conley also declined to share the date of Trump's most recent negative test for the virus — a critical point for contact tracing and understanding where Trump was in the course of the disease.

Only a day earlier, Trump suggested he had finally grasped the true nature of the virus, saying in a video, "I get it." But on Sunday afternoon, he ventured out of the hospital while contagious to salute cheering supporters by motorcade — an outing that disregarded precautions meant to contain the virus.

At the hospital, doctors revealed that his blood oxygen level had dropped suddenly twice in recent days and that they gave him a steroid typically only recommended for the very sick.

Trump's experience with the disease has been dramatically different from most Americans, who do not have access to the same kind of monitoring and care. While most must cope with their symptoms — and fear of whether they'll take a turn for the worse — at home and alone, Trump has been staying in the presidential suite of one of the nation's best hospitals and has been given experimental drugs not readily available to the public. He returns to the White House, where there is a team of doctors on call with 24-hour monitoring.

Trump was leaving the hospital after receiving a fourth dose of the antiviral drug remdesivir Monday evening, Conley said. He will receive the fifth and final dose Tuesday at the White House.

Vice President Mike Pence returned to the campaign trail moments after Trump announced he would soon leave the hospital. The vice president boarded Air Force Two to fly to Salt Lake City, where he is to face off against Democratic vice presidential nominee Sen. Kamala Harris on Wednesday.

Trump, in his new video, defended his decision to repeatedly flout his own administration's guidelines to slow the spread of the virus, including by holding rallies with thousands of mostly maskless supporters.

Apparently referring to any potential danger to himself rather than others, he said: "I stood out front. I led. Nobody that's a leader would not do what I did." He added: "And I know there's a risk, there's a danger. But that's OK. And now I'm better. And maybe I'm immune, I don't know."

Even before Trump's motorcade outing Sunday, some Secret Service agents had expressed concern about the lackadaisical attitude toward masks and social distancing inside the White House, but there isn't

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much they can do, according to agents and officials who spoke to The Associated Press.

Trump's aggressive course of treatment included the steroid dexamethasone and the single dose he was given Friday of an experimental drug from Regeneron Pharmaceuticals Inc. that supplies antibodies to help the immune system fight the virus. Trump on Friday also began a five-day course of remdesivir, a Gilead Sciences drug currently used for moderately and severely ill patients. The drugs work in different ways — the antibodies help the immune system rid the body of virus, and remdesivir curbs the virus's ability to multiply.

Miller and Colvin reported from Washington. Associated Press writers Lauran Neergaard and Jonathan Lemire in Washington, and Bill Barrow in Wilmington, Delaware, contributed to this report.

## Infected senator vows 'moon suit' to vote Trump's court pick

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — Shuttered by COVID-19 infections, the Republican-led Senate is refusing to delay confirmation of President Donald Trump's pick for the Supreme Court. They are even willing to make special arrangements so sick senators can vote for Judge Amy Coney Barrett, and Democrats appear powerless to stop them.

Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Wis., said Monday that he'll go to the Capitol "in a moon suit" to vote if he's still testing positive for the coronavirus, which has killed more than 209,000 Americans and infected millions.

The push to put conservative Judge Amy Coney Barrett on the high court before Nov. 3 is like nothing seen in U.S. history so close to a presidential election. Trump's nomination of Barrett in a Rose Garden ceremony apparently became ground zero for the infections now gripping the president, his White House and its Senate allies. Three GOP senators, including Johnson, have now tested positive for the virus and several more are quarantined at home — denying Republicans a functioning majority.

Sen. Lindsey Graham, chair of the Judiciary Committee, said after talking by phone Monday with Trump that the president is "very excited" about Barrett being confirmed to the Supreme Court.

The rush to confirm Trump's third court nominee is as much about securing a conservative court for a generation to come as it is about giving Republicans what they see as their best chances at reelection. With Trump trailing Democrat Joe Biden in polls and their own Senate majority at risk, Republicans hope a Supreme Court vote in the week before Election Day will save their jobs.

Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer said Monday that the Republican leadership "has truly lost touch with reality if it's contemplating marching COVID-stricken members to the Senate to rush through a Supreme Court nominee."

As the COVID-19 crisis envelops the Capitol, Graham announced that hearings are set to begin in one week on Barrett's nomination. There is still no mandatory, routine, on-site testing protocol for lawmakers and staff, drawing a near revolt from staff in some offices worried about the health risks to them and the cooks, cleaners and others who keep the complex running. The Judiciary Committee is planning four days of hearings ahead of a final Senate vote by Oct. 29.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell shut the chamber to legislating through Oct. 19 over the COVID-19 infections, but said the court hearings will go on as scheduled. "This body will not cease to function," he said Monday, noting he was pushing ahead even though his home state, Kentucky, recently recorded its highest single-day count of new COVID infections.

Over the weekend, one senator suggested they can vote from sickbeds if need be. There's a long tradition of ill senators "being wheeled in to cast critical votes," Sen. Tom Cotton, R-Ark., said on Fox News Channel. "Where there is a will, there's a way," Johnson said on KHOW-630 radio.

Senators on the Judiciary Committee will have the option of connecting virtually, which will be needed as two of the panel's Republicans, Sen. Mike Lee of Utah and Sen. Thom Tillis of North Carolina, are among those diagnosed with COVID-19.

Tillis' office said Monday the senator feels "great" and has regained his sense of taste and smell after

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announcing late Friday he tested positive for the virus. His spokesman said so far, staff who had contact with the senator are being tested and have come back negative.

Johnson mentioned that his chief of staff was dealing with the virus; an aide clarified the staff member was infected last month separately from the senator. Lee's spokesman said no one else in his office has tested positive.

Many House and Senate panels have been operating in a hybrid capacity during the pandemic.

Voting, however, is a different matter.

The Senate requires a presence from a majority on the Judiciary Committee when it comes time to vote to send the Barrett nomination to the full Senate for confirmation — meaning all 12 GOP senators on the panel would need to be in Washington, presuming Democrats on the committee all vote against Barrett. However, McConnell could have the full Senate vote to force the committee to discharge the nomination to the floor for final voting.

The full Senate floor votes on Barrett's confirmation, expected the week of Oct. 26, provide another hurdle. McConnell has a slim margin, 53-47, meaning with three GOP senators now infected with COVID-19, and others home isolating, he would need to rely on Vice President Mike Pence to break a tie vote.

Advisers to Republicans suggest any sick senators can simply vote from upstairs in the galleries overlooking the Senate floor.

Outside groups are mobilizing alongside Democrats to protest the unusual process that's about to unfold.

Democrats and their allies point to the ways Republicans refused in February 2016 to consider then-President Barack Obama's nominee, claiming it was too close to the presidential election that year. Democrats led by Biden say the winner of the presidential election, Trump or Biden, should choose the nominee.

"They held a seat open for nine months. Certainly they can wait," said Eli Zupnick, a spokesperson for Fix Our Senate, which advocates for rules changes including an end to the filibuster.

Zupnick said the Senate that is rushing to confirm Barrett is "the Senate that's on the ballot" this fall.

The Democratic-led House put proxy voting procedures in place early on so lawmakers don't need to trek to Washington to work. The Senate has resisted those options, except on committees.

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Associated Press writer Mary Clare Jalonick in Washington contributed to this report.

## **Biden aims to expand map as Trump recovers from coronavirus**

By WILL WEISSERT and BILL BARROW Associated Press

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He'll follow up with a trip later this week to Arizona, which hasn't backed a Democratic presidential candidate since 1996. Even Biden's former primary rival, Bernie Sanders, has resumed in-person campaigning for the first time since the coronavirus outbreak in March. The progressive Vermont senator held socially distanced rallies in the battlegrounds of New Hampshire and Michigan, proclaiming, "We need Joe Biden as our president."

Sitting on a massive pile of campaign cash less than a month before Election Day, Biden is trying to put Trump on defense across the country and build an advantage in the Electoral College so large that the president might struggle to contest it. That's especially important since Trump, who lost the popular vote in 2016, has said he may not accept the election results this year and has raised unfounded allegations that the increased use of mail-in voting amid the coronavirus pandemic could lead to fraud.

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\$6 million in television airtime in Texas — for decades deeply red — through the end of October, according to an Associated Press analysis of CMAG data. He also plans to spend \$4 million on advertising in Georgia, another Republican-leaning state that Democrats are feeling bullish about.

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"The Trump campaign continues to run their presidential campaign, and we are going to continue to run our presidential campaign," said Biden campaign senior strategist Anita Dunn. "Clearly, both campaigns are continuing to move forward."

Still, Biden faces lingering questions about whether he was exposed to the virus. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends quarantining for two weeks after a person's exposure to the virus. Biden shared a stage with the president for 90 minutes during last week's first presidential primary debate.

Biden says he's since been tested three times, all with negative results. His campaign has promised he will be tested regularly and has committed to releasing all results, but they've refused to comment on whether quarantine was considered after the debate and they haven't said how often Biden will undergo tests.

During an MSNBC town hall later Monday evening, Biden said presidents should be transparent about their health, though he also "can understand that, in certain circumstances related to national security, where every detail would not be made available in the middle of a particular crisis."

But Biden said withholding such information was only appropriately rarely and for short periods of time, saying it should be done "only on the margins and only for the moment."

Since the president tested positive for the virus, Biden's campaign has been even more disciplined about minimizing its candidate's risk. The former vice president has begun keeping on his face mask even when giving speeches. And when he stopped to answer questions before boarding his plane to Miami, Biden's

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wife, Jill, physically pulled him back to prevent him from moving too close to reporters, despite everyone wearing masks.

"We are not going to put people's health at risk for a political campaign," Dunn said, "but we are going to campaign as vigorously as we can."

Weissert reported from Washington.

## Armenia and Azerbaijan clash as Iran works on peace plan

By AVET DEMOURIAN Associated Press

YEREVAN, Armenia (AP) — Armenia accused Azerbaijan of firing missiles into the capital of the separatist territory of Nagorno-Karabakh on Monday, while Azerbaijan said several of its towns and its second-largest city were attacked.

Iran, which borders both countries, said it was working on a peace plan for the decades-old conflict, which reignited last month and has killed scores of people on both sides.

The region of Nagorno-Karabakh lies inside Azerbaijan but has been under the control of ethnic Armenian forces backed by Armenia since the end of a separatist war in 1994.

Armenian military officials reported missile strikes in the territorial capital of Stepanakert, which came under intense attacks all weekend. Residents told the Russian state RIA Novosti news agency that parts of the city were suffering shortages of electricity and gas after the strikes.

The Azerbaijani Defense Ministry, in turn, accused Armenian forces of shelling the towns of Tartar, Barda and Beylagan. Ganja, the country's second-largest city far outside the conflict zone, also was "under fire," officials said.

Hikmet Hajiyev, aide to Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, tweeted that Armenian forces attacked "densely populated civilian areas" in Ganja, Barda, Beylagan and other towns "with missiles and rockets."

Armenia's Foreign Ministry dismissed allegations of attacks being launched from Armenia's territory as a "disinformation campaign" by Azerbaijan. Nagorno-Karabakh officials didn't comment on the accusations, but warned on both Sunday and Monday that the territory's forces would target military facilities in Azerbaijani cities in response to strikes on Stepanakert.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres condemned the escalating violence and again urged an immediate halt to hostilities, stressing that there is no military solution to the conflict, his spokesman said.

The U.N. chief "is gravely concerned by reports of the extension of hostilities, including the targeting of populated areas," spokesman Stephane Dujarric said. He urges a return to negotiations led by Russia, France and the United States — co-chairs of the so-called Minsk Group, which was set up by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in 1992 to resolve the conflict.

The fighting erupted Sept. 27 and has killed dozens, marking the biggest escalation in the conflict. Both sides have accused each other of expanding the hostilities beyond Nagorno-Karabakh.

According to Nagorno-Karabakh officials, about 220 servicemen on their side have died in the clashes since then. The state-run Armenian Unified Infocenter said that 21 civilians have been killed in the region and 82 others wounded.

Azerbaijani authorities haven't given details about military casualties, but said 25 civilians were killed and 127 wounded.

Both sides have repeatedly accused each other of targeting civilians and have reported damage to nonmilitary infrastructure.

Azerbaijani President Aliyev said his troops "liberated" several more villages in the Jabrayil region. A similar report about the town of Jabrayil and its surrounding villages on Sunday was denied by Nagorno-Karabakh officials.

Nagorno-Karabakh was a designated autonomous region within Azerbaijan during the Soviet era. It claimed independence from Azerbaijan in 1991, about three months before the Soviet Union's collapse. A full-scale war that broke out in 1992 killed an estimated 30,000 people.

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By the time the war ended in 1994, Armenian forces not only held Nagorno-Karabakh itself but also substantial areas outside the territory borders, like the Jabrayil region where Azerbaijan claimed to have taken a town and several villages.

Aliyev has repeatedly said Armenia's withdrawal from Nagorno-Karabakh is the sole condition to end the fighting.

Armenian officials allege Turkey is involved in the conflict on the side of Azerbaijan and is sending fighters from Syria to the region. Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinian said "a cease-fire can be established only if Turkey is removed from the South Caucasus."

Turkey, a NATO member, has denied sending arms or foreign fighters, while publicly siding with Azerbaijan. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan reiterated that Turkey will stand with its ally Azerbaijan until it reaches "victory." He also maintained that it was the international community's silence in the face of what he called past Armenian aggression that encouraged it to attack Azerbaijani territory.

After talks with Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu in Ankara, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg told reporters that the military alliance is "deeply concerned by the escalation of hostilities," and urged Turkey to "use its considerable influence to calm tensions."

Cavusoglu repeated calls for Armenia to withdraw from the region "in line with international laws, U.N. Security Council resolutions and Azerbaijan's territorial and border integrity."

The Foreign Ministry of Iran, which has nearly 760 kilometers (470 miles) of border with Azerbaijan and a short border with Armenia, said it is working on a peace plan.

Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh did not elaborate but said Iran is talking to all related parties. "Iran has prepared a plan with a specific framework containing details after consultations with both sides of the dispute, Azerbaijan and Armenia, as well as regional states and neighbors, and will pursue this plan," he said.

Khatibzadeh also warned both sides against expanding the hostilities into Iranian territory.

"Any aggression against the borders of the Islamic Republic, even inadvertently, is a very serious red line for the Islamic Republic that should not be crossed," he said.

Since the beginning of the conflict, stray mortar shells have injured a child and damaged some buildings in rural areas in northern Iran, near the border with Azerbaijan.

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Associated Press writers Aida Sultanova in Baku, Azerbaijan; Daria Litvinova in Moscow; Nasser Karimi in Tehran; Lorne Cook in Brussels; and Suzan Fraser in Ankara, Turkey, contributed.

## 200K in US have died from virus. Now Trump says he 'gets it'

By JONATHAN LEMIRE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Now that he has contracted COVID-19, President Donald Trump says he does "get it." That revelation, seven months into the pandemic and after almost 210,000 American deaths, is not the first time he has relied on personal experience to shape his views.

He said he now "understands" the virus. But because of his own experience, as a patient at one of the nation's finest medical facilities with treatment options available to very few, the president also reinforced that he has struggled to relate with everyday Americans, millions of whom have lost their jobs because of the coronavirus.

Instead, as he has in relationships with other countries, he has prioritized his own personal experience over that of experts. He has been reluctant, for instance, to call out Russian President Vladimir Putin over interference in American elections in the face of clear evidence from the U.S. intelligence community that it has occurred.

He has also drawn frequently on his experience with the business world or his own family to set the White House agenda. He cited his business acumen as helping him land a deal for the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem, and he said he understands the airline industry because of his time running the failed Trump Shuttle.

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Despite months of briefings from the nation's leading infectious disease experts, it was the onset of his own symptoms, as he was brought low by a lethal virus, that he said gave him a greater understanding.

That understanding, however, seemed very much in conflict with expert public health guidance about how the virus behaves and the precautions that people infected, particularly those in a higher risk group like the president, need to take.

"It's been a very interesting journey," Trump said in a video released Sunday night. "I learned a lot about COVID. I learned it by really going to school. This is the real school. And I get it, and I understand it, and it's a very interesting thing, and I'm going to be letting you know about it."

But it soon became clear that he did not, in fact, get it.

Trump took a surprise ride in a motorcade to pay tribute to his supporters, potentially exposing the Secret Service agents who rode in the vehicle with him. The next day, when announcing that he would be returning to the White House, he took a tone that suggested he was out of touch with suffering Americans who could not receive the same level of presidential care.

"Don't be afraid of Covid. Don't let it dominate your life," Trump tweeted. "We have developed, under the Trump Administration, some really great drugs & knowledge. I feel better than I did 20 years ago!"

At no point since he tested positive for the virus has Trump acknowledged others afflicted with the deadly disease. His general election foe, Democrat Joe Biden, on Monday urged him to fundamentally change how he manages the pandemic.

"I was glad to see the president speaking and recording videos over the weekend," Biden said in Miami. "Now that he's busy tweeting campaign messages, I would ask him to do this: Listen to the scientists, support masks."

Even when the virus struck longtime friends, like Stanley Chera, a New Jersey developer who died of the disease in April, Trump did not change his approach and continued to talk about the virus as though it would soon be a thing of the past.

"We've always said that he has no capacity for empathy. His sense of self-regard is so overwhelming, he views everything that passes through the world through the lens of what it does for him," said Eddie Glaude, chair of the department of African American Studies at Princeton University.

"Even though more than 200,000 Americans are dead, the nature of the crisis doesn't come home unless it actually touches him," Glaude said. "Could he ever represent anyone other than himself?"

Trump has said he could deal with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un because he had established a personal rapport with the authoritarian figure in ways that his predecessors could not.

"I was being really tough and so was he. And then we would go back and forth," Trump said at a 2018 rally. "And then we fell in love. No really. He wrote me beautiful letters."

Since Trump has in effect declared his battle with the disease successful — an assessment that available medical evidence suggests is premature — it remains doubtful that Trump would take his personal experience battling COVID-19 and rethink his administration's policies or attitudes toward the pandemic, especially given the competing imperative of continuing his presidential campaign.

Trump often has had difficulty embracing a central role of the American presidency: consoling people dealing with intense grief, regardless of their political affiliation or support for the White House's agenda. It's a quality rarely debated or analyzed during a campaign, yet one that can shape the way people view the success of their president.

But in 2020, it has become a central issue. The president has rarely mentioned the toll of the virus on the nation, instead focusing on an economic recovery or a rise in the stock market.

He has largely eschewed wearing a mask and mocked those who have. And he has ignored his own federal government's guidelines when holding rallies and large-scale White House events.

Trump may draw lessons from his own experiences but will rarely ever acknowledge a misstep, said former campaign adviser Sam Nunberg.

"He once said, 'It is what it is' about the impact of COVID. His video (Sunday night) was better than that, it was probably the closest he is going to get to an apology," said Nunberg. "That's not who he is."

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The White House sees it differently.  
"He has experience now fighting the coronavirus as an individual," said Erin Perrine, a campaign spokeswoman. "Joe Biden doesn't have that."

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## Epic scale of California wildfires continues to grow

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — The staggering scale of California's wildfires reached another milestone Monday: A single fire surpassed 1 million acres.

The new mark for the August Complex in the Coast Range between San Francisco and the Oregon border came a day after the total area of land burned by California wildfires this year passed 4 million acres, more than double the previous record.

Gov. Gavin Newsom said the amount of land scorched by the August Complex is larger than all of the recorded fires in California between 1932 and 1999.

"If that's not proof point, testament, to climate change, then I don't know what is," Newsom said.

The August Complex began as dozens of fires ignited by lightning in the Mendocino National Forest in mid-August and became California's largest fire on record in September. As of Monday, it covered nearly 1,566 square miles (4,055 square kilometers).

Since the beginning of the year, more than 8,200 California wildfires have scorched "well over 4 million acres" or 6,250 square miles, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection said Sunday in a statement. There have been 31 deaths and nearly 8,700 buildings have been destroyed, the governor said.

Numerous studies have linked bigger wildfires in America to climate change from the burning of coal, oil and gas. Scientists say climate change has made California much drier, meaning trees and other plants are more flammable.

Mike Flannigan, who directs the Canadian Partnership for Wildland Fire Science at Canada's University of Alberta, says the escalation of fires in California and the U.S. West is "largely, not solely, due to human-caused climate change."

The August Complex has destroyed 242 structures and damaged a half dozen. One firefighter has died and one has been injured. Containment was estimated at 54% on Monday.

A fire burning in Northern California wine country has burned more than 102 square miles (264 square kilometers) and destroyed more than 1,200 buildings since it started Sept. 27.

California remains largely warm and dry but fierce winds that fanned infernos a week ago were gone. Cooling at the coast was expected to expand into the interior and a Pacific storm system remained in the forecast for Northern California by next weekend.

But authorities in wine country said there it likely would not be enough rain to halt additional fires. Cal Fire meteorologist Tom Bird said the North Bay has just around a 25% chance of a quarter-inch of rain, the Santa Rosa Press-Democrat reported.

"Whereas we may see some rain on the fire this weekend, I do not believe it will be significant enough to be a season-ending event," he said.

Authorities on Monday made public more information about the Sept. 17 death of Charles Morton, 39, a squad boss for the Big Bear Interagency Hotshot Crew battling the El Dorado Fire in the San Bernardino National Forest east of Los Angeles.

The U.S. Forest Service's two-paragraph report released by the interagency Wildland Fire Lesson Learned Center states that "it appears he was burned over by the fire and passed away."

The report dated Sept. 24 said a review team was conducting interviews with personnel "to learn from this tragic event." It did not elaborate on the circumstances that claimed the life of the 14-year veteran.

The El Dorado Fire was ignited Sept. 5 by a pyrotechnic device a couple used for an event revealing the gender of their baby, authorities have said.



## **CDC says coronavirus can spread indoors in updated guidance**

By MIKE STOBBE AP Medical Writer  
NEW YORK (AP) —

The top U.S. public health agency said Monday that the coronavirus can spread more than 6 feet through the air, especially in poorly ventilated and enclosed spaces. But agency officials maintained that such spread is uncommon and current social distancing guidelines still make sense.

However, several experts faulted the updated Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidance. They said the virus can spread more easily than the CDC seems to be indicating, and suggested that the public should wear masks even in prolonged outdoor gatherings when they are more than 6 feet apart.

The virus "is traveling through the air and there is no bright line. You're not safe beyond 6 feet. You can't take your mask off at 6 feet," said Dr. Donald Milton of the University of Maryland School of Public Health.

For months, the CDC has said that the virus spreads mainly through small airborne droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Most CDC guidance about social distancing is built around that idea, saying that 6 feet is a safe buffer between people who are not wearing masks.

In interviews, CDC officials have also acknowledged growing evidence that the virus can sometimes spread on even smaller particles called aerosols that spread over a wider area.

In the update posted on its website, the agency again acknowledged recent research showing people with COVID-19 infected others who were more than 6 feet away or shortly after an infected person left an area. CDC officials called those "limited, uncommon circumstances."

In those cases, spread occurred in poorly ventilated and enclosed spaces where people were doing activities that caused heavier breathing, like singing or exercise, CDC officials said.

People can protect themselves by staying at least 6 feet away from others, wearing a mask, washing their hands, cleaning touched surfaces and staying home when sick.

Last month, the CDC ignited controversy among experts when it quietly posted an update that seemed to suggest the agency's position had changed, and then within days took it down again.

The short-lived post said the virus can remain suspended in the air and drift more than 6 feet, and officials emphasized the importance of indoor ventilation. It also added singing and breathing to the ways the virus can go airborne.

Federal health officials later said the post was a mistake and that it had been released before full editing and clearance was completed. They said there was no major change in the agency's position, but they would finalize a post to clarify the CDC's thinking. That's what was posted Monday.

A small group of researchers — including Milton — on Monday published a letter in the journal *Science* that called for clearer public health guidance about how coronavirus spreads in the air.

They said health officials need to use clearer language in talking about the size of airborne particles and droplets that can spread the disease, and be more straightforward about the role that viruses in small aerosols can play in infecting people.

Masks and good ventilation are crucial indoors. But they can be important outdoors too, said Linsey Marr of Virginia Tech.

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## **Hundreds of Regal, Cineworld movie theaters to close**

By DANICA KIRKA and LINDSEY BAHR Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — In the latest blow to the beleaguered film industry, the second-largest movie theater chain in the U.S. is temporarily shuttering its locations Thursday due to a lack of blockbusters on the calendar and major domestic markets like New York remaining closed.

Cineworld Group Plc said Monday that it would close 536 Regal cinemas in the U.S. and 127 Cineworld and Picturehouse venues in the U.K. this week, affecting some 45,000 employees.

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"This is not a decision we made lightly," said Cineworld CEO Mooky Greidinger.

In the past few days, the already decimated 2020 release calendar lost another big film in the James Bond pic "No Time to Die." It is at least partly due to the fact that one of the country's biggest markets, New York, has not committed to a plan or a date for reopening cinemas in the state.

Cineworld has high debts and is, like the wider industry, struggling with the effects of the pandemic. The absence of the biggest North American markets and a consistent, solid release schedule from Hollywood studios have been devastating to their business.

"We never argued the fact that we needed to be closed until we saw that similar activities to us started to open," Greidinger said, citing indoor dining. "We cannot be in a situation where we lose more cash when we are open than we lose when we are closed."

Last week groups representing theater owners, movie studios and directors issued a plea to U.S. lawmakers to provide relief to ailing movie theaters. The letter, signed by the likes of Steven Spielberg, Christopher Nolan, Patty Jenkins, Clint Eastwood and Martin Scorsese, said that if the status quo continues, nearly 70% of small to mid-size movie theaters could be forced to close permanently.

Efforts to slow the spread of the virus resulted in closure of most cinemas for nearly six months. Many started tentatively reopening in late August, anticipating the release of money-making blockbusters, like Nolan's "Tenet," the Bond pic "No Time to Die" and Marvel's "Black Widow." Exhibitors also poured resources into enhanced safety and sanitization protocols, including limited capacity theaters, social distanced seating, cashless transactions and staggered showtimes.

But ticket sales for Warner Bros.' "Tenet," the first major film out of the gates, were not as strong in the U.S. as hoped, likely a combination of audience reluctance to return to theaters and the effects of big markets like New York and Los Angeles remaining closed. While some analysts stress that films need to play the "long game" at the box office in this current environment, studios responded by delaying most other major films that had been set for the fall and winter.

Some merely moved back 2020 openings as late as possible, like "Death on the Nile" (Dec. 18) and "Wonder Woman 1984," which is now set for Christmas.

But others abandoned the year entirely, including Marvel's "Black Widow," Spielberg's "West Side Story" and Universal's "Candyman," all of which were pushed to 2021 in recent weeks.

Although there are a handful of major films still set for 2020, like Pixar's "Soul," as well as a consistent calendar of independents and art house films, Friday's announcement that "No Time To Die" was being delayed to 2021 came as a final blow.

Without the big releases, Cineworld said it can't give customers "the breadth of strong commercial films necessary for them to consider coming back to theaters against the backdrop of COVID-19."

"We did everything in our power to support safe and sustainable reopenings in all of our markets — including meeting, and often exceeding, local health and safety guidelines in our theaters and working constructively with regulators and industry bodies to restore public confidence in our industry," said Greidinger. "We cannot be in the situation where every week we are getting another delay and another delay."

Cineworld shares fell as low as 15.64 pounds in London and were down 31% at 27.41 in morning trading.

The industry had been rocked by the pandemic — first being closed for months and then operating at a fraction of previous capacity, said David Madden, analyst at CMC Markets. Cineworld had also been highly leveraged, having largely funded its acquisition of Regal Entertainment in 2018 through debt.

"Today the company confirmed they will be assessing their liquidity options, and it plans to update the market on the resumption of business in due course," he said. "It seems that Cineworld is hunkering down and they are holding onto their current liquidity position, with the view to probably having a reduced service when they re-open."

Greidinger doesn't regret reopening in August — at the time there was a solid release schedule and he believed that New York would have eased restrictions sooner.

Now there is, "Not much to do but to wait," Greidinger said. And he hopes New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo will give "the greenlight soon."

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The business, he said, needs a set blockbuster calendar extending six to eight weeks in the future in order to reopen. Greidinger hopes that that might be settled before Christmas, in time for "Wonder Woman 1984."

"I will be the happiest man to open the cinemas for 'Wonder Woman,' he said. "But we will also need to look beyond 'Wonder Woman' to January and February."

## **New Jersey governor: Trump fundraiser 'put lives at risk'**

By MIKE CATALINI and MARYCLAIRE DALE Associated Press

TRENTON, N.J. (AP) — President Donald Trump's fundraiser at his Bedminster golf club hours before he announced he had contracted the coronavirus was wrong and "put lives at risk," New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy said Monday.

Murphy called the trip the "wrong decision at every level" and said it should have been canceled. He said the state is trying to keep tabs on the 206 attendees and 19 workers in an effort to thwart a potential outbreak stemming from the gathering Thursday.

Guests at that event said it included a photo opportunity with Trump and an indoor roundtable with him that one attendee said lasted 45 minutes or more.

"The actions leading up to and following this event have put lives at risk," Murphy said at an afternoon news conference. "This is very much a race against the clock."

Murphy, a Democrat, made several television appearances Monday, saying state and federal officials were still working on contact tracing and had reached most of the guests. He urged anyone at the club while the president was there to quarantine for two weeks.

"If you think you've been in touch or in the midst of someone who is COVID positive you've got to take yourself off the field," he said. "This borders on reckless in terms of exposing people."

The president attended a campaign fundraiser at his Trump National Golf Course on Thursday afternoon after disclosing that a close aide tested positive for the virus. Murphy said the gathering may have violated state rules on large gatherings during the pandemic.

However, White House spokesman Judd Deere said the president didn't have any contact with donors or staff that would be considered close, based on the CDC guidelines of longer than 15 minutes and within 6 feet.

But Dr. Rich Roberts, a pharmaceutical executive from New Jersey who made a video describing the event, said he sat a seat away from Trump during the indoor roundtable.

Rich said the event involved about 19 people and lasted perhaps 45 minutes. Roberts did not return messages Sunday seeking comment about the video, which was posted on a local news site, The Lakewood Scoop.

John Sette, the former Republican chairman of Morris County, said he felt the event was safely run. Sette, 73, attended only the outdoor portion of the event, when the president spoke to supporters at a distance from a patio.

Sette feels fine, but saw his doctor and plans to be tested Wednesday "just for my own satisfaction." He said he was happy to be contacted by tracers, because it shows the system is working.

"It was very well run, If I didn't think it was safe, I wouldn't have stayed," said Sette, who said he wore a mask and has not seen many people, including his grandchildren in Florida, since February.

"Millions of people have it," said Sette, noting the related hospitalization of former Gov. Chris Christie, a friend. "It's a terrible, terrible thing. Hopefully, we'll get through it."

Of the 206 guests at the event, Murphy said, 184 have been contacted by health officials in New Jersey. Many people reacted positively to the outreach, but some questioned where the state got their contact information from and were "not so positive," said Health Commissioner Judy Persichilli.

"We are overwhelmingly in need of more federal support," Murphy said.

## Some Orthodox Jews bristle at NYC's response to virus surge

By DAVID CRARY and MARIAM FAM Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Amid a new surge of COVID-19 in New York's Orthodox Jewish communities, many members are reviving health measures that some had abandoned over the summer — social distancing, wearing masks. For many, there's also a return of anger: They feel the city is singling them out for criticism.

The latest blow: an order Monday from Gov. Andrew Cuomo temporarily closing public and private schools in several areas with large Orthodox populations. It will take effect Tuesday.

"People are very turned off and very burned out," said Yosef Hershkop, a Hasidic Jew from Brooklyn who works for a chain of urgent-care centers. "It's not like we're the only people in New York getting COVID."

Over the past few weeks, top government officials, including Cuomo and Mayor Bill de Blasio, have sounded the alarm about localized upticks in COVID-19 after several months in which the state had one of the nation's lowest infection rates. Officials say the worst-hit ZIP codes overlap with large Orthodox Jewish communities in the boroughs of Brooklyn and Queens and in a couple of nearby counties.

The goal is to head off a feared second wave of infections months after the city beat back an outbreak that killed more than 24,000 New Yorkers.

Under the shutdown plan submitted to Cuomo by the mayor, 100 public schools and 200 private ones would be closed in nine areas that are home to close to 500,000 people. Those areas represent 7% of the city's population but have been responsible for about 1,850 new cases in the past four weeks — more than 20% of all new infections in the city during that span.

De Blasio had proposed the shutdown on Sunday, the second day of the Jewish holiday Sukkot, when Orthodox Jews would not be using telephones or computers and thus wouldn't have heard the news until sundown.

"Announcing this in the middle of a Jewish holiday shows City Hall's incompetence and lack of sensitivity towards the Jewish Community," tweeted Daniel Rosenthal, a state Assembly member from Queens.

De Blasio said he was aware of the holiday but felt obligated to announce the plan as soon as it was developed.

The emphasis on the Orthodox communities rankled many of their members, even as civic and religious leaders acknowledged the dangers posed by the new outbreak and urged compliance with guidelines. Many say they are already straining to balance rituals and traditions centered on communal gatherings with health rules.

Last week, Agudath Israel of America, an Orthodox Jewish umbrella organization, worked with the Boro Park Jewish Community Council to distribute 400,000 masks. Fern Sidman, a journalist with the newspaper The Jewish Voice, said many families are canceling bar mitzvahs or planning to sharply reduce attendance.

The Jewish Voice is urging compliance with health guidelines such as mask wearing and social distancing. However, its publisher, David Ben Hooren, said many Orthodox Jews in Brooklyn and Queens believe they have been unfairly targeted with stringent restrictions that aren't being enforced elsewhere.

"The Jewish community feels they're being singled out and there's some element of anti-Semitism," he said Monday. "Not that I agree with it, but that's the sentiment in the street. Tensions are running high."

Rabbi Avi Shafran, director of public affairs for Agudath Israel of America, said a majority of the Orthodox Jewish community "is determined to do what is necessary" to combat the coronavirus, and adherence to health guidelines has become "much more common."

He said his organization is discouraging family outings and gatherings this week as Sukkot continues. "People must comply with any governmental directives that are aimed at curbing spread of the virus," he said.

Cuomo, at a news conference Monday, displayed images of large gatherings of Orthodox Jews and warned that he might close some religious institutions if their leaders did not abide by restrictions. He and de Blasio also are considering ordering the closing of some nonessential businesses in the hot-spot areas.

The latest developments have rekindled friction that surfaced in March and April, when some Orthodox neighborhoods in and around New York City were hit hard by the coronavirus. Hundreds of people died or were hospitalized, and lockdowns closed many Jewish schools and businesses.

In April, de Blasio oversaw the dispersal of a big Hasidic funeral in Brooklyn and took heat over a tweet

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warning “the Jewish community, and all communities” against large gatherings. Some community members accused him of a double standard because of his support for gatherings linked to the Black Lives Matter movement.

Why the upsurge? Some residents cited the return of Orthodox families from summer getaways at the shore or in the Catskill Mountains, and the recent reopening of some Jewish schools. Shafran said some community members, after the springtime outbreak subsided, lowered their guard with less wearing of masks and social distancing, and resumed exchanging of hugs with extended family.

Motti Seligson, media relations director for the Hasidic movement Chabad-Lubavitch, said friction between New York’s Hasidic communities and the city Health Department had been simmering for years.

One long-running dispute involved the city’s efforts to restrict a specific circumcision procedure used by some Orthodox communities, claiming that it posed a health risk.

In 2018 and 2019, measles cases spread in Orthodox communities in New York as well as other regions. As ripples of anti-Semitism surfaced, some Orthodox leaders felt the Health Department should have focused more on working with the affected communities and less on scolding them.

“There’s a lot of trust that has been eroded over a decade,” Seligson said. “You need much greater integration with these communities — flood them with outreach, speak to every synagogue, every doctor.”

Asked about such criticisms, the Health Department issued a statement from Health Commissioner Dave Chokshi saying: “Wherever we have gone, we have worked hand-in-hand with the community and we will always work to build trusted partnerships so that everyone knows how to protect themselves.”

Sarah Horowitz, a Hasidic resident of Brooklyn’s Midwood neighborhood, was angered by the possibility of new restrictions and what she felt was the heightened scrutiny of her community.

Already, she said, she has been struggling to find the right balance of work and parenthood now that her 9-year-old daughter’s private school has been shut down because of the virus.

“Everyone is frustrated,” she said after de Blasio’s announcement. “We all feel targeted by the mayor. We just want our lives to get back to normal. ... It’s like we are living under a black cloud.”

To an extent, the friction in New York mirrors developments in Israel, where the ultra Orthodox have been criticized for ignoring safety rules and crowding into synagogues even as the country battles a new COVID-19 outbreak. Israel’s coronavirus czar says the ultra Orthodox, who are about 10% of the population, account for around 40% of the new cases.

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Fam reported from Winter Park, Florida. AP investigative researcher Randy Herschaft in New York and AP writer Josef Federman in Jerusalem contributed to this report.

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## Prosecutor says ‘Hotel Rwanda’ man to be tried with rebels

By IGNATIUS SSUUNA Associated Press

KIGALI, Rwanda (AP) —

Rwanda’s prosecution on Monday said it intends to hold a joint trial of Paul Rusesabagina, whose story inspired the film “Hotel Rwanda,” together with 16 prisoners alleged to be rebel fighters.

Rusesabagina, 66, is a founder of the Rwanda Movement for Democratic Change, a coalition of opposition groups, which has an armed wing known as the National Liberation Front. The government accuses the rebel group of killing Rwandans in the country’s north.

In court last month, Rusesabagina admitted his ties to the rebels but said the group was never meant to kill Rwandans.

Rwandan authorities said the rebel fighters to stand trial with Rusesabagina include two former spokesmen, now in detention in Kigali.

“Prosecution intends to submit a joint indictment of these 16 defendants together with Paul Rusesaba-

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gina. A full list of 16 fighters will be provided," Prosecutor General Aimable Havugiyaremye told a press conference in the capital, Kigali.

Rusesabagina has been charged with 13 offenses that also include financing terrorism, complicity in murder, recruiting child soldiers, and forming a rebel group. He faces a maximum of 25 years in prison if he is convicted. He has been denied bail pending the trial, the date of which has not yet been set.

Rusesabagina's family and supporters have described the upcoming trial as a sham, calling on the Rwandan leadership to first explain the circumstances under which Rusesabagina was brought to the country. His family says that he was pressured to say that he had ties with the rebels.

"Rusesabagina is a Belgian citizen who was kidnapped and brought to Rwanda illegally. Before anything else happens in his trial, he should be allowed to talk to his independent lawyers that have been hired for him, not the lawyers the government has enforced on him," Rusesabagina's daughter Carine Kanimba told The Associated Press on Monday.

Rusesabagina cannot speak freely while in Rwandan custody, said Kanimba, speaking on the phone from Belgium.

President Paul Kagame has indicated that Rusesabagina may have been tricked into boarding a private plane in Dubai that took him to Rwanda.

Human Rights Watch has asserted that Rusesabagina had been "forcibly disappeared," saying that the lack of lawful extradition proceedings suggests that Rwandan authorities don't believe their evidence would stand up to independent scrutiny.

Rusesabagina has not lived in Rwanda since 1996 and has U.S. permanent residence as well as Belgian citizenship and has been a prominent critic of the Kagame government.

Rusesabagina had asked to be released on bail, citing poor health that has caused him to be taken to a hospital three times since he first appeared in handcuffs in Rwanda on Aug. 31. He looked frail during his court appearances.

Rusesabagina is reported to have saved more than 1,000 lives during Rwanda's 1994 genocide that killed some 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus. For his efforts, he was awarded the U.S. Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2005.

But Rusesabagina has faced growing criticism from Rwandan authorities in the years since he began alleging that human rights are being committed by Kagame's government.

## **WHO: 10% of world's people may have been infected with virus**

By JAMEY KEATEN Associated Press

GENEVA (AP) — The head of emergencies at the World Health Organization said Monday the agency's "best estimates" indicate roughly 1 in 10 people worldwide may have been infected by the coronavirus — more than 20 times the number of confirmed cases — and warned of a difficult period ahead.

Dr. Michael Ryan, speaking to a special session of the WHO's 34-member executive board focusing on COVID-19, said the figures vary from urban to rural areas, and between different groups, but that ultimately it means "the vast majority of the world remains at risk." He said the pandemic would continue to evolve, but that tools exist to suppress transmission and save lives.

"Many deaths have been averted and many more lives can be protected," Ryan said. He was flanked by his boss, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, who minutes earlier led a moment of silence to honor victims, as well as a round of applause for the health workers who have strived to save them.

Ryan said southeast Asia faced a surge in cases, Europe and the eastern Mediterranean were seeing an increase, while the situations in Africa and the Western Pacific were "rather more positive." Overall, though, he said the world was "heading into a difficult period."

"The disease continues to spread. It is on the rise in many parts of the world," Ryan told attendees from governments who make up the executive board and provide much of the WHO's funding. "Our current best estimates tell us that about 10 percent of the global population may have been infected by this virus."

The estimate — which would amount to more than 760 million people based on a current world popula-

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tion of about 7.6 billion — far outstrips the number of confirmed cases as tallied by both the WHO and Johns Hopkins University, now more than 35 million worldwide. Experts have long said that the number of confirmed cases greatly undershoots the true figure.

Ryan did not elaborate on the estimate. Dr. Margaret Harris, a WHO spokeswoman, said it was based on an average of antibody studies conducted around the world. She said the estimated 90 percent of people remaining without infection means the virus has “opportunity” to spread further “if we don’t take action to stop it” such as by contact-tracing and tracking of cases by health officials.

Tedros, during his remarks, said: “What we have learned in every region of the world is that with strong leadership, clear and comprehensive strategies, consistent communication, and engaged, empowered and enabled population, it’s never too late ... Every situation can be turned around — and hard-won gains can be easily lost.”

“The pandemic underlines the fundamental importance of investing in public health and primary health care,” said Tedros, wearing a stylish black, red and yellow mask. Tedros had not worn a mask during scores of COVID-19 press conferences he led at WHO headquarters this year.

The comments came during a special session of the executive board to consider the follow-up to its previous meeting, in May, that passed a resolution to look into the world’s — and WHO’s — response to the pandemic, among other things.

The two-day meeting is the first by the executive board since the Trump administration set off a one-year countdown this summer toward pulling the United States out of the WHO next July. President Donald Trump, who himself has been infected by COVID-19, has repeatedly accused the WHO of being too accepting of China’s explanations of its handling of the outbreak in Wuhan late last year.

On a far more conciliatory tone, Assistant Secretary of Health Brett Giroir, the U.S. representative on the board, told the meeting by videoconference that the United States “looks forward to working together to defeat this pandemic and move our people and economics back to normalcy.”

Giroir also pressed WHO — albeit gently — to clear up its relationship with the Chinese government. He said a “key mandate” from the resolution in May was its call for a joint mission involving the WHO, the World Organization for Animal Health, and the U.N.’s Food and Agricultural Organization to look into the animal origins of the virus and its transmission to humans.

A two-person advance team for that mission has visited China, but a fuller mission isn’t ready. Giroir said it was “critical” that WHO member states receive regular and timely updates about the mission and its “terms of reference” — an allusion to working guidelines that detail just how much access the mission’s members will have in China.

Chinese board member Zhang Yang, speaking by videoconference, said China has been “transparent and responsible” and has been fulfilling its responsibilities under the resolution. She said it had been communicating regularly with the WHO and keeping up its financial commitments to the U.N. agency.

Board member Clemens Auer of Austria lamented a “political weakening” of the WHO, citing the “potential withdrawal of a strong WHO member state” — an allusion to the U.S. He appealed for a “retreat session” for board members, saying it should be an “active” body — not a “ceremonial” one. U.S. representative Giroir expressed support for that idea.

## 3 win Nobel medicine prize for discovering hepatitis C virus

By MARILYNN MARCHIONE, MARIA CHENG and DAVID KEYTON Associated Press

STOCKHOLM (AP) — Three scientists won the Nobel Prize in medicine Monday for discovering the liver-ravaging hepatitis C virus, a breakthrough that led to cures for the deadly disease and tests to keep the scourge out of the blood supply.

Americans Harvey J. Alter and Charles M. Rice and British-born scientist Michael Houghton were honored for their work over several decades on an illness that still plagues more than 70 million worldwide and kills over 400,000 each year.

“For the first time in history, the disease can now be cured, raising hopes of eradicating hepatitis C virus

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from the world," the Nobel Committee said in announcing the prize in Stockholm.

The challenge now is to make these still-expensive drugs more widely available and to stem the spread of the disease among drug users, whose sharing of needles has led to spikes in cases.

"What we need is the political will to eradicate it" and to make the drugs affordable enough to do it, Alter said.

Scientists had long known of the hepatitis A and B viruses, spread largely through contaminated food or water and blood, respectively, but were "toiling in the wilderness" to try to explain many other cases of liver disease until the blood-borne hepatitis C virus was identified in 1989, said Dr. Raymond Chung, liver disease chief at Massachusetts General Hospital.

Now, it's the only chronic viral infection that can be cured in almost all cases within a few months, using one of roughly half a dozen drugs, Chung said. Without such treatment, the virus can lead to permanent scarring of the liver, liver cancer or the need for a transplant.

In an interview with The Associated Press, Rice said he is most proud that the group's work quickly led to a test to screen donors and make the blood supply safer.

"We take it for granted that if you get a transfusion, you're not going to get sick from that transfusion. That was not the case before but is certainly the case now," Rice said.

Dr. Jesse Goodman, a former blood safety expert at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration now at Georgetown University, said that before testing was available, about 1 in 10 blood transfusions carried the risk of passing the virus.

"Now it's 1 in a million," Goodman said.

Rice, 68, worked on hepatitis at Washington University in St. Louis and now is at Rockefeller University in New York. Alter, 85, worked for decades at the U.S. National Institutes of Health and remains active there. Houghton, 69, was born in Britain and worked on hepatitis at the Chiron Corp. in California before moving to the University of Alberta in Canada.

Alter first discovered that blood from patients who did not have hepatitis B could still cause liver inflammation and disease, but for years the cause was unknown. A breakthrough came in 1989, when Houghton and others at Chiron cloned the virus, making its genetic identity known and allowing further research on it, said Nobel Committee member Gunilla Karlsson-Hedestam.

Later, Rice developed lab tools and methods that confirmed the hepatitis C virus could cause liver disease in chimpanzees and humans, directly contributing knowledge that led to tests and treatments.

"We have not seen any more cases since 1997" of hepatitis from a transfusion, Alter said. "Currently we can cure virtually anybody who's identified. With that, it's possible to maybe even eradicate this disease over the next decade," as the World Health Organization hopes to do.

Nobel Committee member Patrik Ernfors drew a parallel between this year's prize and the rush by millions of scientists around the world to find a vaccine to combat the coronavirus pandemic.

"The first thing you need to do is to identify the causing virus," he said. "And once that has been done, that is, in itself, the starting point for development of drugs to treat the disease and also to develop vaccines against the disorder."

Alter and Rice are now working on coronavirus research, while Houghton is trying to develop a hepatitis C vaccine. Houghton said manufacturing delays have been a problem but he expects clinical trials to begin next year in many countries, including the U.S., Germany and Italy.

"To control an epidemic, you need to have a vaccine," Houghton said. For "diseases like gonorrhea, syphilis, chlamydia, we've had cheap drugs available for decades, and yet we still have big epidemics of those diseases."

John McLauchlan, a professor of viral hepatitis at the University of Glasgow, said the three laureates' discovery has made the global elimination of the disease possible — "the first time we might possibly control a viral infection using only drugs."

Hepatitis C drugs were around \$40,000 when they first came out less than a decade ago. They have come down to roughly a quarter of that but are still out of reach for much of the world.



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India, Eastern Europe, Egypt and parts of Asia, including Mongolia, remain the areas hardest hit. Monday's medicine award is the first of six prizes this year being announced through Oct. 12. The others are for work in physics, chemistry, literature, peace and economics.

The Nobel Committee often recognizes basic science that laid the foundations for practical applications in common use today.

"It takes time before it's fully apparent how beneficial a discovery is," said Thomas Perlmann, secretary-general of the Nobel Committee.

The Nobel comes with a gold medal and 10 million Swedish kronor (over \$1.1 million), courtesy of a bequest left 124 years ago by the prize's creator, Swedish inventor Alfred Nobel.

Marchione reported from Milwaukee and Cheng from London. Frank Jordans in Berlin contributed to this report.

Read more stories about Nobel Prizes past and present by The Associated Press at <https://www.apnews.com/NobelPrizes>

## Vision 2020: Can a voter fix a problem on a mail-in ballot?

By The Associated Press undefined

WASHINGTON (AP) — If a ballot is tossed because of some issue — maybe a missing signature or it got damaged — will the voter be notified that the ballot's been invalidated? And can the voter cast a new ballot?

This is a tough one — because the rules vary from state to state. The National Conference of State Legislatures has a state-by-state rundown, but that list isn't comprehensive so voters should check with their local elections officials to understand their options.

Voter advocacy groups worry that those unaccustomed to voting by mail will make some kind of error that could invalidate their vote. A study by the U.S. Election Assistance Commission estimates that 1% of mail-in ballots were rejected in the 2016 presidential election. Experts say the main reason was because ballots did not arrive in time.

States that allow so-called "ballot curing" require elections officials to notify voters when something's wrong with a ballot, such as a missing signature or if their signature doesn't match the one on file. The voter will be given a chance to correct it.

Other states have adopted temporary rules on voting by mail — or absentee voting — because of the high interest spawned by the coronavirus pandemic.

Depending on the state, the voter could be notified by mail, email or phone. The deadlines for officials to notify voters again varies by state, and so does the time that a voter has to correct the discrepancy.

Some states allow voters to track their absentee ballots.

The easiest way to cure a ballot, of course, is an ounce of prevention: read voting instructions carefully and double-check that the proper signatures are in place. If you registered when renewing your driver's license, be sure your signature resembles the one on it.

Vision 2020 is a new series from the AP dedicated to answering commonly asked questions from our audience about the 2020 U.S. presidential election. Submit your questions at: [Vision2020@AP.org](mailto:Vision2020@AP.org). AP's Advance Voting guide brings you the facts about voting early, by mail or absentee from each state: <https://interactives.ap.org/advance-voting-2020/>

## Poll: Many Americans blame virus crisis on US government

By MATTHEW LEE AP Diplomatic Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — More Americans blame the U.S. government instead of foreign nations for the coronavirus crisis in the United States, a rebuke to the Trump administration's contention that China or other countries are most at fault, a new poll shows.

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The poll by The University of Chicago Harris School of Public Policy and The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research was conducted before President Donald Trump tested positive for the virus Friday and was hospitalized. Trump has downplayed the severity and impact of the pandemic in recent months.

Although many see plenty of blame to go around and there's a wide bipartisan divide over who is responsible, 56% of Americans say the U.S. government has substantial responsibility for the situation. That compares with 47% who place that much blame on the governments of other countries and only 39% who say the same about the World Health Organization.

"It reflects a general lack of confidence in the way the government has handled the situation," said Austin Wright of the Harris School for Public Policy.

More than 1 million people worldwide, including more than 200,000 Americans, have died of COVID-19 in the outbreak. Trump has squarely blamed the virus' spread on China, where it originated, and an inadequate response from the WHO.

As he faces a rough reelection contest in November, Trump has steadily ramped up criticism of China for the virus and announced the U.S. would halt funding for and withdraw from the international health agency over alleged Chinese interference in its work. Critics, including public health experts, have said China bears some responsibility but have also harshly criticized Trump's response.

The poll shows Democrats are especially likely to say the U.S. government is responsible for the situation, while many Republicans are likely to place the blame elsewhere. Among Democrats, 79% say the U.S. government has a great deal of responsibility, while 37% say that about other countries' governments and 27% about the WHO. Among Republicans, 38% say the U.S. government is responsible, compared with 60% for the governments of other countries and 55% the WHO.

Self-described conservative Republican Ralph Martinez, a 67-year-old grocery store manager from the Fort Worth, Texas area, said he wasn't sure that any government could have handled it better and dismissed criticism that Trump had downplayed the matter.

"It's an open question, honestly," he said. "I don't care who's in office, I think they're going to do their best for everyone. But how much can they do?"

Martinez, who said he had to throw a customer out of his store for not wearing a mask recently, lauded Trump for not wanting to create panic in the early stages of the outbreak in the U.S. He also recalled unprecedented runs on items such as toilet paper and paper towels when people realized the virus was not a momentary phenomenon.

"You would not believe how crazy these people got," he said. "I can't imagine how bad it would have been if the government had come out and said this is the end of the world."

Nathan O'Neil, a 38-year-old Democrat who lives in Virginia, said he thought the country was on track now but that the government had bungled its early response.

"I think they should have taken it more seriously earlier," he said. "Granted they were hamstrung by lack of information from China and the WHO, but I think they should have been pro-mask a lot sooner."

"They should have told us early on how serious this was," said O'Neil, who said he knows at least one person who contracted the virus but recovered. "Instead they said it's going to be fine, it's not going to affect us. That's really going to hit their credibility."

The poll also showed that most think the U.S. should play a major role in the development of a coronavirus vaccine, but many also think other countries should play a role, including both European countries and China.

But if the U.S. develops a vaccine first, about 6 in 10 say it should be kept for Americans first, even if it means fewer people around the world get vaccinated. This view is especially common among Republicans, with about 7 in 10 saying a U.S.-developed vaccine should be saved for Americans first, but about half of Democrats also agree with that assessment.

That's true even though about half of Republicans say they don't intend to get a vaccine. Overall, 65% of those who do intend to get a vaccine say a U.S.-made vaccine should go to Americans first, but so do

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56% of those who don't intend to get one.

For Wright, that was a surprising finding. "One piece that's really striking that shockingly few people in the U.S. would be willing to take (a vaccine) ... and the open hostility toward providing the vaccine to other countries. And, that's strongest among Republicans, despite the fact that more Republicans say they won't take the vaccine themselves."

About 8 in 10 Americans — Democrats and Republicans alike — say the U.S. should play a major role in the development of a vaccine. At least half say the same about the WHO (57%), European countries (55%) and China (51%).

But there's a partisan divide on the role of those outside the US. Seventy-five percent of Democrats and just 39% of Republicans see a major role for the WHO. Sixty-two percent of Democrats and 41% of Republicans see a major role for China. The divide is smaller on the role of European countries, with 64% of Democrats and 50% of Republicans saying they should play a major role.

The AP-NORC poll of 1,053 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 4.1 percentage points.

Online:

AP-NORC Center: <http://www.apnorc.org/>.

## 2020 Watch: How long will Trump be quarantined?

By STEVE PEOPLES AP National Political Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Presidential politics move fast. What we're watching heading into a new week on the 2020 campaign:

Days to general election: 29

Days to next presidential debate: 8

### THE NARRATIVE

President Donald Trump spent the weekend in the hospital after testing positive for COVID-19, a development that added a new layer of chaos to an already turbulent 2020 contest just one month before Election Day. No first-term president has suffered such a serious health setback so close to an election.

Trump's hospitalization has refocused the election right where Democrat Joe Biden wants it: on Trump's uneven leadership throughout the pandemic. The Republican president has struggled to manage the nation's response to the health crisis. After ignoring his own health experts' recommendations for several months, now he and several senior Republicans, not to mention first lady Melania Trump, are infected.

The revelation came days after an ugly debate performance that already had Trump's allies on the defensive. While things certainly seem to be trending in Biden's direction, 29 days is plenty of time for another October surprise. Or three.

### THE BIG QUESTIONS

How long will Trump be quarantined?

There is nothing more important to the Trump campaign than having its principal healthy and back on the campaign trail. For now, no one knows when that might happen.

A best-case scenario might allow Trump to emerge just before the next presidential debate, scheduled for Oct. 15. (The CDC says infected people can see others 10 days after symptoms first appear at the earliest, so long as symptoms are improving.) Trump could leave the hospital on Monday at the earliest, his doctors said Sunday, but his health remains in flux.

This is a moment that transcends politics, yet millions of people are already voting and Election Day looms in less than a month. Campaign manager Bill Stepien, who's also infected, described Trump as the

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campaign's "best asset" over the weekend. Republicans want him back ASAP.

What does the Trump campaign do now?

Trump's team over the weekend announced plans to aggressively dispatch Vice President Mike Pence and Trump's family to key swing states after Wednesday's vice presidential debate to help the campaign regain momentum. It's unclear, however, how the plan dubbed "Operation MAGA" differs from the campaign's previous strategy. The president's top surrogates have been active on the campaign trail for months.

It may be too late to adjust the campaign's message, but after trying to downplay the pandemic for months, Republicans now have no choice but to take seriously the deadly disease and the its mounting death toll.

Is the VP debate suddenly a much bigger deal?

Pence and Sen. Kamala Harris are set to face off Wednesday night in Utah for the only vice presidential debate. Trump's health status makes the typically lower-profile affair more consequential.

Vice presidential candidates are typically quite cautious when in the spotlight, aware that their principal responsibility is to do no harm to the top of the ticket. The burden to get them to answer difficult questions falls to the moderator, Susan Page, the Washington bureau chief of USA Today.

Pence may be particularly vulnerable given his role as the head of the White House's coronavirus task force. By most standard measures, America has fared far worse than other developed countries in controlling the virus.

Can Biden keep his party focused?

This is a delicate moment for Democrats.

We saw Republicans seize on a handful of ugly social media attacks from low-profile liberals who wished the president ill — or worse — in the immediate aftermath of his diagnosis. Such comments have largely faded away, which is good for everyone involved.

Biden needs to ensure his is the dominant voice for his party through Trump's health crisis. The Democrat has been delivering an optimistic message of unity since the very beginning of his campaign, a message that meets this moment as well. He was roundly praised for pulling attack ads off the air after Trump's hospitalization, and his surrogates on Sunday largely kept up the positive tone.

The nation's attention is focused on Trump's inability to manage a crisis in public health that includes his own. His campaign desperately wants to shift the focus. And misplaced resentment or pettiness at a moment like this would help them do it.

## THE FINAL THOUGHT

We're seeing in real time the effects of Trump's well-documented, often casual association with facts. In a genuine moment of national crisis, many people don't know what to believe about the health of their leader.

Trump's medical team and advisers offered conflicting information and refused to answer key questions about his health throughout the weekend. Even before the latest round misinformation, 7 in 10 Americans did not believe what Trump says about the coronavirus, according to a recent ABC News/Ipsos poll.

At moments like these, a nation needs to be able to trust its leaders. Right now, it doesn't.

2020 Watch runs every Monday and provides a look at the week ahead in the 2020 election.

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

## Cities declare racism a health crisis, but some doubt impact

By SOPHIA TAREEN Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Christy DeGallerie noticed a startling trend in her online group for coronavirus survivors: White patients got medications she'd never heard of, were offered X-rays and their doctors listened to their concerns.

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That wasn't her experience. When the 29-year-old Black woman sought a COVID-19 test at a New York emergency room, a nurse said she didn't have a fever. DeGallerie appealed to a doctor of color, who told the nurse to check again. It registered 101 degrees.

"We know our pain is questioned and our pain is not real to them," said DeGallerie, who later started a group for Black COVID-19 survivors. "Getting medical help shouldn't be discouraging for anyone. It is a discouraging place for Black people."

Addressing experiences like DeGallerie's has become a priority for a growing number of local governments, many responding to a pandemic that's amplified racial disparities and the call for racial justice after the police killing of George Floyd and other Black Americans. Since last year, about 70 cities, roughly three dozen counties and three states have declared racism a public health crisis, according to the American Public Health Association.

Local leaders say formally acknowledging the role racism plays not just in health care but in housing, the environment, policing and food access is a bold step, especially when it wasn't always a common notion among public health experts. But what the declarations do to address systemic inequalities vary widely, with skeptics saying they are merely symbolic.

Kansas City, Missouri, and Indianapolis used their declarations to calculate how to dispense public funding. The mayor of Holyoke, Massachusetts, a mostly white community of roughly 40,000, used a declaration to make Juneteenth a paid city employee holiday. The Minnesota House passed a resolution vowing to "actively participate in the dismantling of racism." Wisconsin's governor made a verbal commitment, while governors in Nevada and Michigan signed public documents.

"It is only after we have fully defined the injustice that we can begin to take steps to replace it with a greater system of justice that enables all Michiganders to pursue their fullest dreams and potential," Michigan Lt. Gov. Garlin Gilchrist II said in a statement.

Wisconsin's Milwaukee County takes credit for being the first with its May 2019 order. It acted because of sobering health disparities in Wisconsin's most populous county, where nearly 70% of the state's Black residents live. It's the only county with a significantly higher poverty rate than the state average, 17.5% compared with 10.8% statewide, according to a University of Wisconsin-Madison report.

County officials developed a "racial equity budget tool," requiring departments to explain plans to hire and retain a diverse workforce and how budgets affect disadvantaged communities.

"The framing helped accelerate the conversation, not only stakeholders could actually grasp and understand," said Jeff Roman, head of the county's Office on African American Affairs.

Kansas City was another early adopter in August 2019. Councilwoman Melissa Robinson called it a new decision-making lens.

For instance, when the city approved a \$2 million pandemic relief plan, more money went to areas with more Black residents, who have been hit disproportionately hard by the virus, instead of being divided equally among ZIP codes.

"Let's look at where our communities are hurting the most to lift them up," she said.

Officials in Indianapolis approved a resolution in June, and departments proposing budgets now must answer questions like: "How does compensation and level of authority compare between white and minority employees?"

"We needed to say it and put it out there so all the decisions we make in this realm are not made in a vacuum," said Vop Osili, president of the Indianapolis City-County Council.

To some, the efforts fall short.

Some clergy called the Indianapolis resolution "meaningless."

The head of the Chicago Hispanic Health Coalition said Cook County's 2019 resolution does nothing to help those lacking health insurance, often because of low-paying jobs. Nearly 20% of Hispanic people under 65 are uninsured, compared with 11% of Black people and 8% of white people, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation.

"We cannot take advantage of people to pay low wages and pay no attention to their health care," coalition director Esther Sciammarella said.

Efuru Flowers, co-founder of Black Women Rally for Action, called Los Angeles' 2019 declaration problematic.

The city offers guidelines, including equality training for city employees. While it notes disparities, like Black residents making up 8% of Los Angeles County but 42% of the homeless population, the solutions don't specifically mention Black people.

"It does not promote the urgency of eliminating racism in all its forms," said Flowers, who started her Los Angeles County organization after a 2019 health report card revealed poor outcomes for Black women. "It doesn't promote or enlist citizens to join the effort."

Some are trying to change that.

A coalition of hospitals and community clinics took up the cause in Chicago, where a city study showed chronic disease and gun violence are top causes for the almost nine-year gap in life expectancy between Black and white residents.

The group published an open letter in June calling racism a "real threat to the health of our patients, families and communities."

Their goals include increasing access to care, even as one of Chicago's oldest hospitals that serves predominantly Black, Hispanic, elderly and low-income patients is set to close. The group aims to have specific commitments by year's end.

"The reality is that we helped create some of these structural barriers," said Brenda Battle, vice president of the University of Chicago Medicine's Urban Health Initiative. "We are the ones who have the ability to influence access to health care services. We have not effectively ensured that everybody has access."

DeGallerie is encouraged by such efforts but says she's never felt racial disparities so strongly. In her Black COVID-19 survivors' group, not being taken seriously by medical professionals is a common theme, as is getting substandard care.

She's skeptical of when she'll see change.

"I would only believe it when it comes from the mouths of patients who are Black," she said. "Those are the only people who would be able to tell you that something has changed."

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Sophia Tareen is a member of The Associated Press' Race and Ethnicity Team. Follow her on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/sophiatareen>

## Conservation success or pests? Seals spark passionate debate

By PATRICK WHITTLE and MICHAEL CASEY Associated Press

PORTLAND, Maine (AP) — Nick Muto has fished up and down the New England coast and there is nothing that gets his blood boiling more than the sight of a seal.

Muto, whose two boats fish for groundfish such as skate and monkfish as well as lobster, is among a growing group of anglers, beach goers and local officials who are quick to blame everything from disease to depleted fisheries to increased shark sightings on the exploding seal population.

"Areas that we used to traditionally fish that were as close to guarantees as you could get have been strip mined of fish, and the fish have been driven out of there by seals," Muto said. "They have eaten fish out of our nets. They have been caught in our nets. They are everywhere."

The debate over seals was reignited after the death in July of a swimmer killed by a great white off Harpswell, Maine. Seals are often shark prey, and experts believe Julie Dimperio Holowach may have been mistaken for a seal.

No one questions that seal and shark numbers are on the rise, mostly due to federal protections. It's estimated there are as many as 50,000 grey seals in New England waters plus a lesser number of harbor seals. The animals were almost eliminated through hunting and bounties decades ago.

But experts maintain there is not enough science to determine whether the current population is too big and little basis for culling the marine mammals. Even suggesting seals are destroying fisheries or are solely to blame for shark attacks is not supported by hard evidence. Experts say warming waters and other factors also could be playing a role. The Gulf of Maine, which stretches from Cape Cod to Nova Scotia,

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has been heating up faster than 99% of the world's oceans.

"We get into this question of how many grey seals there are. The next question is how many seals should there be, which is kind of where people are going to go next with that, which is a very challenging thing," said David Johnston, a marine ecologist at Duke University who has done grey seal population estimates using Google Earth and tagged seals to demonstrate how their feeding behavior changes due to sharks in the Northwest Atlantic.

Seal population rise has prompted the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to propose guidelines for deterring marine mammals, including physical barriers to keep seals away from fishing gear.

"Frustration by fishermen and property owners stemming from conflicts with marine mammals has increased," notes NOAA's proposal. The agency is taking comments until Oct. 30.

But Johnston and Stephanie Wood, a University of Massachusetts Boston seal biologist currently surveying seals in the Boston Harbor, said the public should view seals as a conservation success story, rather than a problem to be managed.

Hunted almost into extinction by the 1900s, seals were given federal protection in 1972 by the Marine Mammal Protection Act. Seals began returning to New England waters in the 1980s and 1990s from Nova Scotia and have thrived ever since — often raising pups on federally protected islands once home to hunting and fishing camps. They also disperse widely and have benefited from a wide-ranging diet, including fish, crustaceans and squid.

"Habitat opened up for seals, which is sort of the opposite story that we hear about a lot of other populations struggling to recover," said Wood, noting that other marine mammals such as whales and monk seals "haven't recovered in the same way."

Trying to reduce the numbers of seals is more complicated than opening up a hunt for an abundant species such as deer, said Kristina Cammen, a marine mammal scientist with University of Maine. Bounties on seals in the 20th century reduced their populations by as many as 135,000, and marine mammal protections are designed to prevent that kind of population loss again, Cammen said.

Learning to coexist with the growing seal population makes far more sense, even if it contributes to more shark sightings in coastal waters, she said. "A healthy ecosystem has sharks, seals and humans and they all have a place in that ecosystem."

Some species of sharks have rebounded because there are protections for them, not just because there are more seals to eat, said Andrea Bogomolni, chair of Northwest Atlantic Seal Research Consortium, based in Woods Hole, Massachusetts.

"Communicating that message of conservation success entails more than just a single species," Bogomolni said.

But seal critics call seals a public safety and ecological crisis and warn there will be more shark attacks if nothing is done. Tourism, too, will suffer, they said.

Some who are alarmed by the seal population burst are advocating culls while others are proposing some form of birth control. One group wants to amend the Marine Mammal Protection Act to allow delisting of species covered— similar to what's allowed under the Endangered Species Act. The first step, they argue, would be a study to determine what's a healthy population of seals for the region.

"Doing nothing is not acceptable to me and not acceptable to other residents of Cape Cod," Barnstable County Commissioner Ron Beaty said, adding that seals are the "core problem."

"The quality of life here and our ability to make a living and our economy will go down the toilet," he said. "I have respect for wildlife and respect for those that believe seals and sharks need to come back. But we have a right to survive and exist as well."

The shark attack in Maine that killed Holowach in July took place about 30 to 40 feet (9 to 12 meters) off the shore of Bailey Island. Kayakers took Holowach to shore, but not in time to save her.

Despite the attack, few people are blaming the seals. Longtime Maine whale watch guide Zack Klyver said the growth of seals has contributed to ecotourism.

"I'd prefer that we adapt and we not demand that everything adapt to us," Klyver said. "And there's a lot of interest in seals, in seeing them."

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Casey reported from Boston.

On Twitter follow Patrick Whittle: @pxwhittle and Michael Casey: @mcasey1

## Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, Oct. 6, the 280th day of 2020. There are 86 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Oct. 6, 1973, war erupted in the Middle East as Egypt and Syria launched a surprise attack on Israel during the Yom Kippur holiday. (Israel, initially caught off guard, managed to push back the Arab forces before a cease-fire finally took hold in the nearly three-week conflict.)

On this date:

In 1884, the Naval War College was established in Newport, Rhode Island.

In 1927, the era of talking pictures arrived with the opening of "The Jazz Singer" starring Al Jolson, a feature containing both silent and sound-synchronized sequences.

In 1928, Chiang Kai-shek became president of China.

In 1939, in a speech to the Reichstag, German Chancellor Adolf Hitler spoke of his plans to reorder the ethnic layout of Europe — a plan which would entail settling the "Jewish problem."

In 1949, President Harry S. Truman signed the Mutual Defense Assistance Act, providing \$1.3 billion in military aid to NATO countries.

In 1969, the New York Mets won the first-ever National League Championship Series, defeating the Atlanta Braves, 7-4, in Game 3; the Baltimore Orioles won the first-ever American League Championship Series, defeating the Minnesota Twins 11-2 in Game 3.

In 1976, President Gerald R. Ford, in his second presidential debate with Democrat Jimmy Carter, asserted that there was "no Soviet domination of eastern Europe." (Ford later conceded such was not the case.)

In 1979, Pope John Paul II, on a week-long U.S. tour, became the first pontiff to visit the White House, where he was received by President Jimmy Carter.

In 1981, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat was shot to death by extremists while reviewing a military parade.

In 2004, the top U.S. arms inspector in Iraq, Charles Duelfer (DEHL-fur), reported finding no evidence Saddam Hussein's regime had produced weapons of mass destruction after 1991.

In 2014, the Supreme Court unexpectedly cleared the way for a dramatic expansion of gay marriage in the United States as it rejected appeals from five states seeking to preserve their bans, effectively making such marriages legal in 30 states.

In 2018, in the narrowest Senate confirmation of a Supreme Court justice in nearly a century and a half, Brett Kavanaugh was confirmed by a 50-48 vote; he was sworn in hours later.

Ten years ago: A presidential commission said the Obama administration had blocked efforts by government scientists to tell the American public just how bad the Gulf oil spill could become and committed other missteps that raised questions about its competence and candor during the crisis. Roy Halladay pitched the second no-hitter in postseason history, leading the Philadelphia Phillies over the Cincinnati Reds 4-0 in Game 1 of the NL division series. Social networking app Instagram was launched by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger.

Five years ago: Gen. John F. Campbell, the top U.S. commander in Afghanistan, recommended before Congress that President Barack Obama revise his plan to cut the current U.S. force of 9,800 and keep more than 1,000 U.S. troops in the country beyond 2016. Takaaki Kajita of Japan and Arthur McDonald of Canada won the Nobel Prize in physics for key discoveries about neutrinos, a cosmic particle that whizzes through space at nearly the speed of light, passing easily through Earth and even people's bodies.



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Convicted killer Juan Martin Garcia was executed by Texas for fatally shooting another man in a robbery that yielded just \$8.

One year ago: The White House said U.S. forces in northeast Syria would move aside and clear the way for an expected Turkish assault, essentially abandoning Kurdish fighters who'd fought alongside American forces against Islamic State militants. (Turkey would launch the assault days later.) The FBI said California prison inmate Samuel Little, who claimed to have killed more than 90 women across the country, was considered to be the deadliest serial killer in U.S. history, and that all of his confessions appeared to be credible. Ginger Baker, the drummer who helped shatter boundaries of time, tempo and style in popular music during his work with Cream and other bands, died at the age of 80. Comedian Rip Taylor died in Beverly Hills, California, at the age of 88.

Today's Birthdays: Broadcaster and writer Melvyn Bragg is 81. Actor Britt Ekland is 78. The former leader of Sinn Fein (shin fayn), Gerry Adams, is 72. Singer-musician Thomas McClary is 71. Musician Sid McGinnis is 71. Rock singer Kevin Cronin (REO Speedwagon) is 69. Rock singer-musician David Hidalgo (Los Lobos) is 66. Pro Football Hall of Famer Tony Dungy is 65. Actor Elisabeth Shue is 57. Singer Matthew Sweet is 56. Actor Jacqueline Obradors is 54. Country singer Tim Rushlow is 54. Rock musician Tommy Stinson is 54. Actor Amy Jo Johnson is 50. Actor Emily Mortimer is 49. Actor Lamman (la-MAHN') Rucker is 49. Actor Ioan Gruffudd (YOH'-ihn GRIH'-fihth) is 47. Actor Jeremy Sisto is 46. Actor Brett Gelman is 44. Rhythm-and-blues singer Melinda Doolittle is 43. Actor Wes Ramsey is 43. Actor Karimah Westbrook is 42. Singer-musician Will Butler is 38. Actor Stefanie Martini is 30.