

# Groton Daily Independent

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Leola-Frederick defeated Groton Area in volleyball last night, 3-0. The Titans also won the JV match, 2-1.

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## 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

## Friday, Oct. 9, 2020

Faculty In-Service

10 a.m.: Lake Region Marching Festival In Groton  
Junior High Volleyball With Roncalli Is Cancelled  
Volleyball Hosts Aberdeen Roncalli (C Match At 4 p.m., JV At 5 p.m. With Varsity To Follow)

# Thank You!

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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## Conde National League

**Team Standings:** Cubs 10, Braves 10, Pirates 9, Giants 7, Mets 6, Tigers 6

**Men's High Games:** Collin Cady 200, 199; Lance Frohling 196, 183; John Lowery 166; Tim Olson 166

**Men's High Series:** Collin Cady 556, Lance Frohling 536, Larry Frohling 449

**Wodmen's High Games:** Sam Bahr 235, 193, 191; Tanah Messevou 177; Vickie Kramp 169

**Women's High Series:** Sam Bahr 619, Vickie Kramp 455, Mary Larson 448

25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

*Celebration!*

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items

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Door Prizes

Treats

25% off  
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**PHAR****MACY**  
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## #226 in a series

### Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

It's Tuesday, so we have our usual post-weekend rebound in numbers. I don't think the increases we're seeing today are indicative of anything beyond that. There were 46,200 new cases reported today, a 0.6% increase to 7,526,600 cases in the US. We have now crossed the seven-and-a-half million point. We hit seven million on September 24, which was 12 days ago. At this rate, we'd be looking at eight million around the 18th. Alaska reported a new record number of new-case reports yesterday; the state is in a streak of bad days; Monday was just the worst of them. South Dakota showed the highest test positivity rate of any state with 23.64% of tests positive; the recommended level is 5% at a minimum and ideally 3%. Just four states are showing downward trends in new cases compared to last week; they are Hawaii, Kansas, Missouri, and South Carolina. We have now recorded 210,669 deaths. There were 695 reported today, a 0.3% increase. The number of deaths has stayed below 1000 daily for nearly two weeks.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases, warned today that the death toll could reach 300,000 to 400,000 by winter's end if we do not get serious about following guidance to mitigate spread. You know what he's talking about; he's been saying this for months now: masks, social distancing, hand washing, avoiding indoor spaces, especially when crowded. He said, "So instead of going into the fall and the winter on a sharp decline down to a low baseline, we're actually going into the fall and the winter with some parts of the country ticking up, which will ultimately lead to not only more infections, but more hospitalizations and then community spread, which will ultimately lead to morbidity and mortality."

The FDA has finally received administration approval for the new emergency use authorization (EUA) standards for vaccine. This is the first detailed document describing just what needs to be included in EUA applications. We had a preview a few weeks ago; these are the ones that should build public confidence in the safety and efficacy of whatever vaccines are eventually authorized in the early going. These new standards are more rigorous than those used when the EUA for hydroxychloroquine was issued, a move which, in retrospect, turned out to be a mistake because the drug was both less safe and less effective (actually not at all effective) than had appeared at the time the EUA was issued.

These guidelines say that participants in vaccine trials must be followed for a median of at least two months from the final dose. They also set a minimum of at least five severe cases in the placebo group and some cases in older people before application for the EUA is made. This addresses the concern we discussed a while back that, under the old rules, a vaccine that didn't prevent severe cases at all could be authorized, which would be a fairly serious problem. It was also pointed out that the FDA had already finalized a plan to apply these guidelines; the announcement was quite explicit that the point of publishing them was simply to reassure the public. I will say I, for one, do feel reassured.

Also on the subject of vaccine trials, Dr. Moncef Slaoui, chief adviser to the federal vaccine development program, said today the first indications whether candidates currently in trials are safe and effective won't be available until November or December. He expects the RNA vaccines' data on that time frame (Moderna and Pfizer/BioNTech), the non-replicating vectors vaccines (Johnson & Johnson and AstraZeneca/Oxford) in January or February, and then protein platform vaccines in March or April. (If you weren't with us when we talked about the various vaccine platforms available to developers or need a refresher, check out my Update #124 posted June 26 at <https://www.facebook.com/marie.schwabmiller/posts/3717649208251458>)

I was pointed by a reader to the use of povidone-iodine as a mouthwash/throat spray to reduce the viral load in an infected patient, thus protecting those in dental offices from transmission. I read three papers on the topic, and there appears to be relatively solid evidence, although sample sizes were small, that this is a beneficial practice. The rinse does reduce viral counts in mouth secretions so that aerosol-generating procedures are considerably less likely to result in aerosolization of live virus that could then infect dental workers or others in the room. Given the inherent risk of dental procedures in that patients cannot receive dental care while masked, this is good news not only for the professionals in the room, but also for patients who come in later in the day.

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Bea Lumpkin wasn't worried about voting by mail; she was confident the Postal Service would deliver her ballot in plenty of time to be counted. "I didn't feel it was a risk at all to mail it. The postal workers have assured us that our ballots will be delivered, and I think they'll go beyond the call of duty to guarantee these ballots get delivered." And she was right, at least in her case; she has received confirmation her ballot was received.

Good thing too, because Lumpkin has voted in every election since 1940, and she wasn't about to miss out on this one. You see, she is 102 years old, and her family insists she "take every precaution not to catch this covid-19." Her grandson designed a hazmat-style hood that covers her entire head and has a fan and a filter to process incoming air. He really is taking no chances with his grandmother; clearly, he wants her safe from this virus. He also provided her with a large supply of reusable gloves. The family is doing everything they can to protect their matriarch: "[My grandson] wants me to—and I do—put on all of that gear just to take the garbage out." She has advice for us all on the pandemic: "I'm tired of being cooped up because of this virus. We're never going to get rid of it unless we do what science tells us to do." You know I'm on board with that message; as a fellow old person (although nothing like as old as Ms. Lumpkin). I applaud all efforts that give us the opportunity to once again move freely in this newly-hazardous world.

A retired Chicago teacher who was a steelworker before going into teaching, Lumpkin is still a union activist; she made an ad encouraging steelworkers to get out and vote. She explained, "We need to not only vote ourselves but to urge all of our relatives to vote, our neighbors." A photo of her trip to the mailbox in her PPE has gotten her a lot of attention; it probably helps that several governors are tweeting out the image, one including the following message: "Bea has been consistently voting since 1940, . . . Be like Bea and VOTE! Make sure your voice is heard." Lumpkin says she hopes the photo encourages others to take precautions to slow transmission of the virus and to vote. She also professes surprise at all the attention she is getting and adds, "But if it helps encourage people to vote, I'm glad, because it is so important."

I think I'll add my voice to that of those governors and also say, be like Bea. Vote. If you're early voting or voting by mail, time's a wasting. Register if you haven't; your state's deadline is likely coming close. Figure out whether it is safe for you to vote on Election Day, and if you can do it safely, do that. If you cannot vote that day or cannot safely go to the polls, consider early voting; crowding is likely to be far less, and you can be in and out fairly quickly. And if you need to vote by mail, get your application in; there is a deadline for this in most states and, and of course, the sooner you have your ballot, the sooner you can send it on its way back to be counted. Whoever you plan to mark on your ballot, find a way to take care of it. Less than a month to go.

Stay healthy. We'll talk again.

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## Area COVID-19 Cases

	Oct. 7
Minnesota	105,740
Nebraska	48,757
Montana	15,347
Colorado	74,191
Wyoming	5,751
North Dakota	24,364
South Dakota	24,876
United States	7,501,847
US Deaths	210,918

Minnesota	+941
Nebraska	+950
Montana	+500
Colorado	+654
Wyoming	+91
North Dakota	+502
South Dakota	+278
United States	+48,018
US Deaths	+791

	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 6th COVID-19 UPDATE

### Groton Daily Independent from State Health Lab Reports

No deaths in South Dakota, three in North Dakota. Positivity rate in South Dakota is 9.8 percent today. There were 95 more recoveries than positive numbers in South Dakota.

Those in double digits were Brown with 17, Codington 13, Davison 11, Lawrence 12, Lincoln 18, Minnehaha 55, Pennington 44, and Todd 11.

Locally, Brown had 17 positive and 21 recoveries with 225 active cases. Day had 3 recoveries leaving 29 active. Edmunds 3 recovered leaving 6 active. Marshall 1 recovered leaving 12 active. McPherson no change with 10 active. Spink 6 positive, 4 recovered, leaving 28 active.

#### **Brown County:**

Total Positive: +17 (1,380) Positivity Rate: 7.9%

Total Tests: +216 (11,869)

Recovered: +21 (1,151)

Active Cases: -4 (225)

Ever Hospitalized: +0 (56)

Deaths: +0 (4)

Percent Recovered: 83.4

#### **South Dakota:**

Positive: +278 (24,876 total) Positivity Rates: 9.8%

Total Tests: 2,838 (294,607 total)

Hospitalized: +28 (1,670 total). 250 currently hospitalized +9)

Deaths: +0 (248 total)

Recovered: +373 (20,449 total)

Active Cases: -95 (4,179)

Percent Recovered: 82.2%

Staffed Hospital Bed Capacity: 10% Covid, 43% Non-Covid, 46% Available

ICU Bed Capacity: 20% Covid, 53% Non-Covid, 27% Available

Ventilator Capacity: 5% Covid, 15% Non-Covid, 80% 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: +4 positive, +2 recovered (26 active cases)

Beadle (10): +8 positive, +9 recovered (85 active cases)

Bennett (3): +0 positive, +1 recovered (13 active cases)

Bon Homme (1): +1 positive, +3 recovered (38 active cases)

Brookings (2): +3 positive, +12 recovered (89 active cases)

Brown (4): +17 positive, +21 recovered (225 active cases)

Brule (1): +5 positive, +4 recovered (32 active cases)

Buffalo (3): +0 positive, +3 recovered (12 active cases)

Butte (3): +4 positive, +4 recovered (41 active cases)

Campbell: +0 positive, +0 recovered (19 active cases)

Charles Mix: +8 positive, +1 recovered (72 active cases)

Clark: +2 positive, +1 recovered (14 active cases)

Clay (7) +3 positive, +2 recovered (47 active cases)

Codington (7): +13 positive, +19 recovered (192 active cases)

Corson (1): +1 positive, +1 recovered (9 active cases)

Custer (3): +2 positive, +0 recovered (31 active case)

Davison (2): +11 positive, +14 recovered (163 active cases)

Day: +0 positive, +3 recovered (29 active cases)

Deuel: +0 positive, +4 recovered (14 active cases)

Dewey: +4 positive, +4 recovered (67 active cases)

Douglas (1): +0 positive, +1 recovered (32 active cases)

Edmunds: +0 positive, +3 recovered (6 active cases)

Fall River (5): +1 positive, +2 recovered (13 active cases)

Faulk (1): +1 positive, +2 recovered (8 active cases)

Grant (1): +3 positive, +4 recovered (71 active cases)

Gregory (4): +0 positive, +5 recovered (31 active cases)

Haakon (1): +0 positive, +1 recovered (7 active case)

Hamlin: +1 positive, +4 recovered (16 active cases)

Hand (1): +1 positive, +2 recovered (22 active cases)

Hanson (1): +0 positive, +1 recovered (15 active cases)

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Harding: +0 positive, +0 recovered (2 active cases)  
 Hughes (5): +4 positive, +9 recovered (164 active cases)  
 Hutchinson (2): +4 positive, +3 recovered (49 active cases)  
 Hyde: Fully Recovered  
 Jackson (1): +0 positive, +0 recovered (8 active cases)  
 Jerauld (3): +1 positive, +10 recovered (17 active cases)  
 Jones: +0 positive, +0 recovered (4 active cases)  
 Kingsbury: +1 positive, +3 recovered (15 active cases)  
 Lake (7): +1 positive, +3 recovered (26 active cases)  
 Lawrence (5): +12 positive, +8 recovered (104 active cases)  
 Lincoln (3): +18 positive, +26 recovered (284 active cases)  
 Lyman (3): +2 positive, +8 recovered (28 active cases)  
 Marshall: +0 positive, +1 recovered (12 active cases)  
 McCook (1): +5 positive, +2 recovered (44 active cases)  
 McPherson: +0 positive, +0 recovery (10 active case)  
 Meade (5): +6 positive, +16 recovered (116 active cases)

Mellette: +0 positive (9 active cases)  
 Miner: +0 positive, +1 recovered (8 active cases)  
 Minnehaha (84): +55 positive, +59 recovered (800 active cases)  
 Moody: +1 positive, +1 recovered (31 active cases)  
 Oglala Lakota (4): +1 positive, +14 recovered (86 active cases)  
 Pennington (37): +44 positive, +43 recovered (443 active cases)  
 Perkins: +0 positive, +0 recovered (7 active cases)  
 Potter: +2 positive, +1 recovered (11 active cases)  
 Roberts (1): +1 positive, +7 recovered (46 active cases)  
 Sanborn: +0 positive, +0 recovered (15 active cases)  
 Spink: +6 positive, +4 recovered (28 active cases)  
 Stanley: +1 positive, +0 recovery (7 active cases)  
 Sully: +1 positive, +0 recovered (6 active cases)  
 Todd (5): +11 positive, +1 recovered (55 active cases)  
 Tripp (1): +2 positive, +6 recovered (49 active cases)  
 Turner (4): +1 positive, +3 recovered (34 active cases)  
 Union (9): +4 positive, +3 recovered (79 active cases)  
 Walworth (1): +0 positive, +5 recovered (32 active cases)  
 Yankton (4): +4 positive, +3 recovered (108 active cases)  
 Ziebach (1): +1 positive (9 active case)

North Dakota Dept. of Health Report  
 COVID-19 Daily Report, October 6:

- 7.3% rolling 14-day positivity
- 8.7% daily positivity
- 503 new positives
- 5,788 susceptible test encounters
- 116 currently hospitalized (+4)
- 3,692 active cases (-1)

Total Deaths: +3 (280)

## AGE GROUP OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Age Range	# of Cases	# of Deaths
0-9 years	793	0
10-19 years	2790	0
20-29 years	5636	2
30-39 years	4264	7
40-49 years	3381	10
50-59 years	3394	22
60-69 years	2467	38
70-79 years	1234	48
80+ years	917	121

## SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths
Female	12999	110
Male	11877	138



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County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Persons	Deceased	Community Spread
Aurora	77	51	582	0	Substantial
Beadle	858	763	2962	10	Substantial
Bennett	77	61	797	3	Moderate
Bon Homme	115	76	1242	1	Substantial
Brookings	849	758	5003	2	Substantial
Brown	1380	1151	7525	4	Substantial
Brule	152	119	1244	1	Substantial
Buffalo	153	138	796	3	Substantial
Butte	136	92	1689	3	Substantial
Campbell	41	22	161	0	Substantial
Charles Mix	225	153	2451	0	Substantial
Clark	47	37	578	0	Moderate
Clay	589	535	2697	7	Substantial
Codington	1014	815	5265	7	Substantial
Corson	95	85	748	1	Moderate
Custer	198	166	1394	3	Substantial
Davison	434	269	3695	2	Substantial
Day	101	72	985	0	Substantial
Deuel	97	83	661	0	Substantial
Dewey	183	116	2984	0	Substantial
Douglas	103	70	582	1	Substantial
Edmunds	104	98	637	0	Substantial
Fall River	106	88	1506	5	Moderate
Faulk	79	70	323	1	Moderate
Grant	188	116	1242	1	Substantial
Gregory	149	114	683	4	Substantial
Haakon	33	25	388	1	Moderate
Hamlin	110	94	1042	0	Substantial
Hand	61	38	498	1	Substantial
Hanson	49	33	358	1	Moderate
Harding	5	3	92	0	Minimal
Hughes	570	401	3090	5	Substantial
Hutchinson	133	82	1290	2	Substantial

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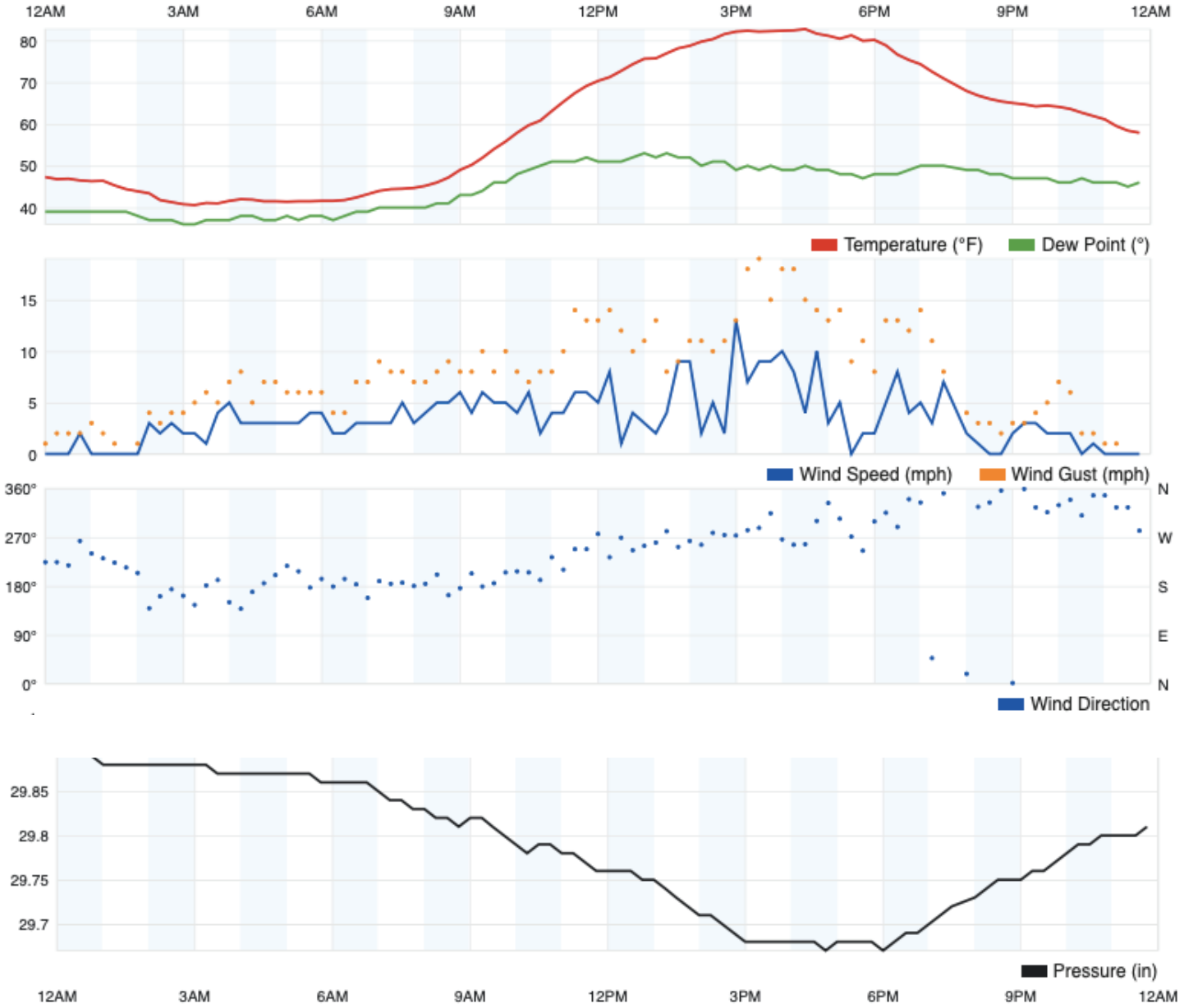
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Hyde	20	20	225	0	Minimal
Jackson	38	29	651	1	Moderate
Jerauld	102	82	346	3	Substantial
Jones	19	15	106	0	Moderate
Kingsbury	69	54	843	0	Substantial
Lake	220	187	1495	7	Substantial
Lawrence	487	378	4391	5	Substantial
Lincoln	1585	1298	11098	3	Substantial
Lyman	186	155	1290	3	Substantial
Marshall	48	36	674	0	Moderate
McCook	132	87	939	1	Substantial
McPherson	42	32	341	0	Moderate
Meade	638	517	3963	5	Substantial
Mellette	38	29	510	0	Moderate
Miner	30	22	361	0	Moderate
Minnehaha	7274	6390	43407	84	Substantial
Moody	115	84	907	0	Substantial
Oglala Lakota	341	251	4626	4	Substantial
Pennington	2667	2187	19131	37	Substantial
Perkins	44	37	375	0	Moderate
Potter	56	45	494	0	Moderate
Roberts	237	190	2802	1	Substantial
Sanborn	40	25	346	0	Moderate
Spink	159	131	1516	0	Substantial
Stanley	48	41	458	0	Moderate
Sully	18	12	140	0	Moderate
Todd	172	112	2971	5	Substantial
Tripp	190	140	971	1	Substantial
Turner	188	150	1448	4	Substantial
Union	462	374	3211	9	Substantial
Walworth	146	113	1186	1	Substantial
Yankton	486	374	5011	4	Substantial
Ziebach	68	58	526	1	Minimal
Unassigned	0	0	4652	0	

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



Mostly Sunny

Tonight



Mostly Clear

Thursday



Sunny then  
Mostly Sunny  
and Breezy

Thursday  
Night



Partly Cloudy

Friday



Sunny

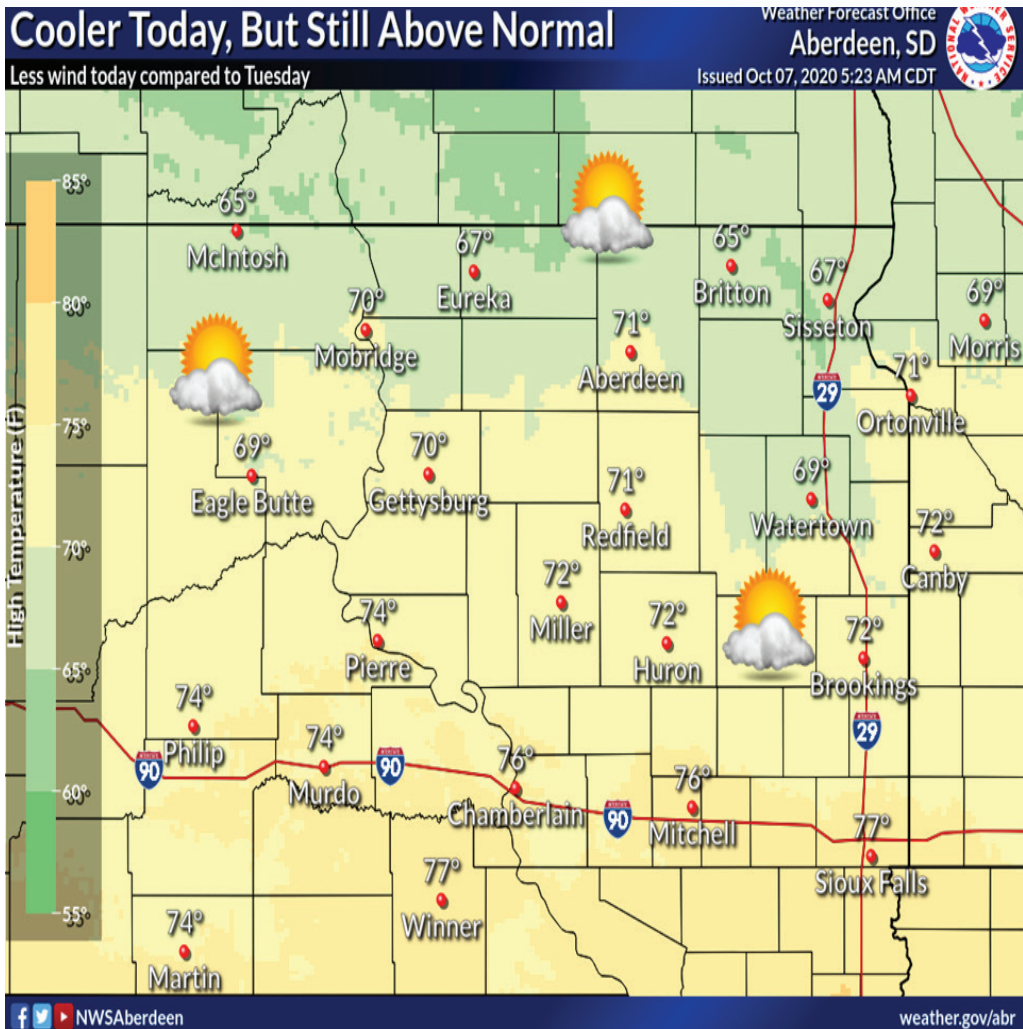
High: 70 °F

Low: 38 °F

High: 75 °F

Low: 49 °F

High: 79 °F



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## Today in Weather History

October 7, 1970: On October 7th through the 10th, 1970, a record-breaking early season snowstorm hit parts of southern South Dakota. Snowfall of 5 to 9 inches was typical across the southwest and south-central on the 7th. Late on October 8th and into the 9th of 1970, the state's southeast portion was hit. The 5 inches that fell in Sioux Falls is the earliest significant snow on record for the area.

The heavy snows also affected portions of Kansas, Nebraska, western Iowa, and western Minnesota. Amounts of up to 7 inches were recorded in northwest Iowa. The heavy, wet snow snapped many tree branches and downed power lines. Sioux City recorded their heaviest snow for so early in the season. The snow was very wet and heavy but melted quickly over the next several days.

1825: Raging forest fires in the Miramichi region of New Brunswick, Canada, destroy over 3 million acres of forest. As many as 500 people were killed. The blaze has been partly attributed to unusually hot weather in the fall and summer of 1825, coupled with outdoor fires by settlers and loggers.

1849: High winds swept the passengers of the St. John out to sea. This resulted in a loss of 143 people.

1959: The Soviet spacecraft, Luna 3, captured the first images of the far side of the Moon. The first image was taken at 3:30 UTC on the 7th of October.

2016: Hurricane Matthew was off the northeast coast of Florida. Matthew brought intense rainfall to the Carolinas on the 8th and 9th.

2017: A tornado touched down near Jenner in Alberta, Canada.

2018: Only 8 hours after becoming a depression, the National Hurricane Center upgraded the system to Tropical Storm Michael. Tropical storm force winds and torrential downpours were affecting portions of the coastal east-central Yucatan Peninsula.

1970 - Widespread flooding took place across Puerto Rico. Rainfall amounts for the day ranged up to seventeen inches at Aibonito. A slow moving tropical depression was responsible for six days of torrential rains across the island. Totals in the Eastern Interior Division averaged thirty inches, with 38.4 inches at Jayuya. Flooding claimed eighteen lives, and resulted in 62 million dollars damage. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1981 - Seattle, WA, received four inches of rain in 24 hours, a record for the city. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - It was another hot day in the southwestern U.S. Tucson, AZ, hit 101 degrees for the second day in a row to again equal their record for the month of October. Phoenix AZ reported a record high of 103 degrees, and Blythe CA and Yuma AZ tied for honors as the hot spot in the nation with afternoon highs of 108 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Morning fog in the central U.S. reduced the visibility to near zero at some locations. Morning lows of 28 degrees at Rockford IL and 24 degrees at Waterloo IA were records for the date. Afternoon highs of 92 degrees at Hollywood FL and Miami FL were records for the date. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Morning thunderstorms in central Texas drenched San Antonio with 3.10 inches of rain in six hours causing local flooding in northeastern sections of the city. Temperatures dipped below the freezing mark from the Northern Rockies to the Upper Mississippi Valley. (The National Weather Summary)

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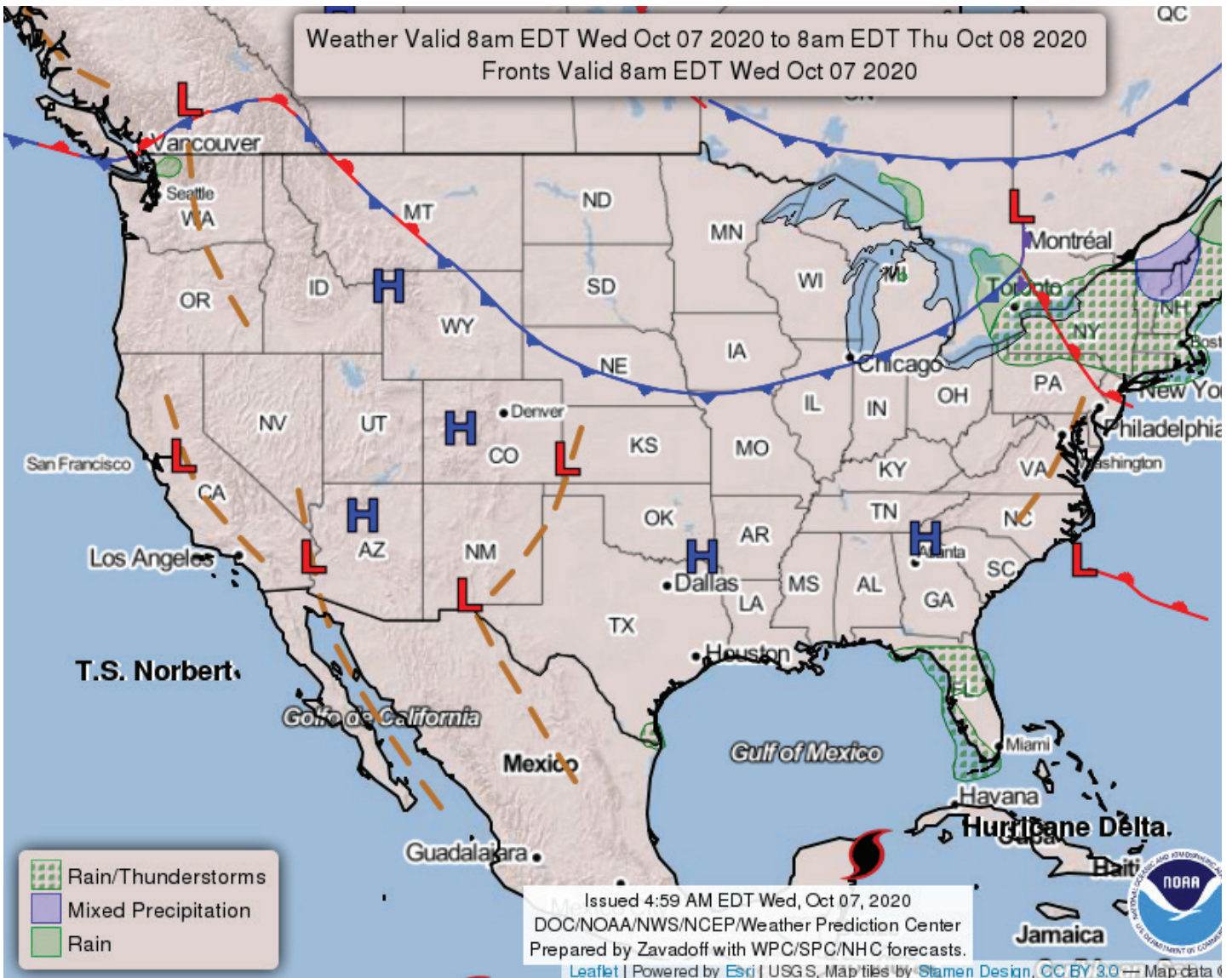
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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 83 °F at 4:33 PM**  
**Low Temp: 40 °F at 3:12 AM**  
**Wind: 19 mph at 3:23 PM**  
**Precip: .00**

## Today's Info

**Record High: 91° in 1909**  
**Record Low: 14° in 1952. 2012**  
**Average High: 62°F**  
**Average Low: 36°F**  
**Average Precip in Oct.: 0.47**  
**Precip to date in Oct.: 0.00**  
**Average Precip to date: 18.95**  
**Precip Year to Date: 15.15**  
**Sunset Tonight: 7:02 p.m.**  
**Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:42 a.m.**



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## FACING THE ENEMY

Some time ago, the DENVER POST reported a most unusual incident. A rancher, Ms. Lexy of Montana, was losing many of her lambs to coyotes that roamed her pastures. She tried every suggestion that her friends and fellow ranchers made, but nothing solved the problem. Everything she tried failed. She was unable to protect her lambs.

One day, quite by accident, she read an article that described llamas as "afraid-of-nothing" animals. The article reported that "when the llamas see something, they put up their heads and walk straight toward it." She decided to purchase some and place them in her pastures.

And it worked! When the llamas saw the coyotes, they walked straight toward them, heads held high, and frightened them so much that they ran away.

Is there a lesson here for the Christian? It seems that there is.

What would happen in this sin-hardened world if, when we Christians recognized someone or something that was destroying lives or the very fabric of society, we would face it bravely, walk into it confidently, and with God's power expose its dangers? Sadly, we have surrendered our convictions to "being politically correct" and fearful of "offending" the enemy and expecting politicians to do God's work. We have retreated hastily because we no longer choose "to resist the evil" in the world that destroys God's "lambs."

Prayer: Convict us, Lord, for being weak and fearful in the face of the enemy. Empower us with Your Holy Spirit and the strength of Your Word to battle evil. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. James 4:7

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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
- 10/30/2020 Groton United Methodist Trunk or Treat, 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m., church parking lot
- **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

### SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Mega Millions

15-16-18-39-59, Mega Ball: 17, Megaplier: 3

(fifteen, sixteen, eighteen, thirty-nine, fifty-nine; Mega Ball: seventeen; Megaplier: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$50 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$52 million

### Tuesday's Scores

By The Associated Press

PREP VOLLEYBALL=

Avon def. Burke, 25-22, 20-25, 29-27, 14-25, 21-19

Baltic def. Alcester-Hudson, 18-25, 25-21, 25-15, 25-21

Brandon Valley def. Harrisburg, 26-24, 25-16, 25-21

Castlewood def. Florence/Henry, 26-24, 25-19, 23-25, 25-16

Centerville def. Hanson, 15-25, 26-24, 21-25, 25-23, 15-12

Chadron, Neb. def. Rapid City Christian, 25-18, 25-17, 25-13

Chester def. Tri-Valley, 25-11, 25-22, 25-14

Clark/Willow Lake def. Great Plains Lutheran, 25-13, 25-21, 25-18

DeSmet def. Lake Preston, 25-18, 25-9, 25-13

Deubrook def. Miller, 25-7, 25-16, 25-11

Edgemont def. Bennett County, 25-13, 25-20, 25-13

Elk Point-Jefferson def. Viborg-Hurley, 25-19, 25-18, 25-22

Ethan def. Wessington Springs, 22-25, 26-28, 25-9, 25-10, 15-9

Faith def. Belle Fourche, 25-22, 25-22, 25-9

Flandreau def. Beresford, 25-18, 14-25, 25-8, 25-19

Freeman def. Bon Homme, 25-7, 25-23, 25-20

Gayville-Volin def. Irene-Wakonda, 25-13, 25-12, 25-8

Hamlin def. Sioux Valley, 25-12, 26-24, 25-21

Herreid/Selby Area def. Potter County, 25-18, 25-22, 24-26, 25-18

Highmore-Harrold def. Sully Buttes, 25-12, 25-15, 25-20

Ipswich def. Faulkton, 25-22, 28-26, 25-20

James Valley Christian def. Oldham-Ramona/Rutland, 25-23, 25-18, 21-25, 25-13

Kadoka Area def. Lyman, 25-14, 25-13, 25-7

Kimball/White Lake def. Chamberlain, 25-21, 23-25, 25-17, 25-18

Leola/Frederick def. Groton Area, 25-18, 25-14, 25-11

McCook Central/Montrose def. Howard, 25-17, 25-15, 21-25, 25-21

Menno def. Canistota, 25-12, 10-25, 25-22, 19-25, 16-14

Mitchell def. Brookings, 22-25, 25-16, 28-26, 25-23

Newell def. Dupree, 25-13, 25-16, 25-15

Northwestern def. Aberdeen Christian, 25-10, 25-11, 25-9

Parker def. Lennox, 25-20, 25-21, 25-20

Parkston def. Platte-Geddes, 29-27, 25-21, 24-26, 25-20

Rapid City Central def. Douglas, 25-17, 25-11, 25-12

Sioux Falls Christian def. Canton, 25-11, 25-13, 25-11  
Sisseton def. Tiospa Zina Tribal, 25-22, 22-25, 25-23, 25-19  
Spearfish def. Sturgis Brown, 24-26, 25-17, 25-19, 25-22  
St. Thomas More def. Philip, 25-22, 25-11, 25-20  
Sunshine Bible Academy def. Sanborn Central/Woonsocket, 25-11, 25-18, 25-18  
Warner def. Hitchcock-Tulare, 25-16, 25-20, 25-14  
Watertown def. Pierre, 25-20, 25-16, 25-10  
Waubay/Summit def. Britton-Hecla, 25-17, 25-23, 25-13  
Waverly-South Shore def. Estelline/Hendricks, 21-25, 26-24, 25-19, 14-25, 15-7  
Winner def. Gregory, 25-16, 25-19, 25-15  
Wolsey-Wessington def. Iroquois, 25-7, 25-13, 25-19

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

## The Latest: Sri Lanka bans gatherings amid virus cluster

By The Associated Press undefined

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka — Authorities in Sri Lanka have banned all public gatherings as a new cluster of coronavirus infections expands in the Indian Ocean island nation.

Health authorities said early Wednesday that the outbreak centered at a garment factory has risen to 830 confirmed cases while more than 1,000 people have been asked to quarantine at their homes.

The health ministry ordered a halt to gatherings such as exhibitions, parties, conferences, indoor or outdoor events, carnivals, musical shows and processions. Officials already imposed a curfew in two suburbs of Colombo where many of the patients live, closed schools and restrictws public transport.

The cluster emerged Monday, a day after Sri Lanka reported its first community infection in two months. The country has reported 3,733 cases during the pandemic, with 13 deaths.

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

- Pentagon says top military leaders are under self-quarantine
- How do I politely ask someone to wear a mask? If in store or restaurant, have a manager make the request
- Virginia Gov. Northam has mild symptoms 2 weeks after virus diagnosis
- Despite decades of warnings about the fragile supply lines bringing protective gear from overseas factories to America's health care workers, the U.S. was unprepared for the coronavirus pandemic.
- Hospitals and staff are stretched to their limits again in Madrid, where the surging number of COVID-19 patients in September forced an expansion of critical care beds into gymnasiums.
- Service workers in New Orleans who were laid off because of the coronavirus's impact on the economy are earning a living by helping others survive during the pandemic.
- Follow AP's pandemic coverage at <http://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

### HERE'S WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING:

SEOUL, South Korea — South Korea has reported 114 new cases of the coronavirus, its first daily jump of over 100 in a week.

Health officials had raised concerns that infections will rise because of increased travel during the five-day Chuseok harvest holiday that ended Sunday.

The figures released by health officials Wednesday brought South Korea's case total to 24,353 for the pandemic, including 425 deaths.

Ninety-two of the newly confirmed cases were in the Seoul metropolitan area, which has been at the center of a viral resurgence since mid-August. Health officials have been struggling to track transmissions

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linked to various places, including hospitals, churches, restaurants and an army unit in Pocheon, north of Seoul, where 37 soldiers so far have tested positive.

**ALBANY, N.Y.** — New York's governor says the state will reinstate restrictions on businesses, houses of worship and schools in and around areas where coronavirus cases are spiking.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo said Tuesday that the severity of shutdowns would vary by proximity to hot spots.

The rules will take effect no later than Friday in parts of New York City's Brooklyn and Queens boroughs, sections of Orange and Rockland counties north of the city, and an area within the upstate city of Binghamton near the Pennsylvania border.

The planned restrictions include shutdowns of schools and nonessential businesses in some areas. Others would set limits on gatherings and in restaurants.

**RENO, Nev.** — Nevada Gov. Steve Sisolak will be tested for the coronavirus and work out of his Las Vegas office indefinitely after a positive test was confirmed for a staff member working at the governor's office in the state Capitol in Carson City.

Communications director Meghin Delaney said Tuesday that the staffer has not had in-person contact with the governor since mid-September. She says Sisolak departed northern Nevada on Sept. 17 and has been working from Las Vegas since then.

The governor had been scheduled to return to Carson City next week but his travel is on hold until officials get test results for all staffers there.

**TALLAHASSEE, Fla.** -- The president of Florida State University has become the latest high-profile figure linked to the school to test positive for the coronavirus, and he is isolating at home with his wife, who also has tested positive.

The university said John Thrasher received his test result Tuesday after his wife, Jean, was tested due to unrelated medical treatment. The statement said both are feeling well.

The announcement came one day after word that Hall of Fame former Florida State football coach Bobby Bowden tested positive for the virus. Current coach Mike Norvell sat out from the season at least 10 days last month while isolating at home after testing positive.

The university had a surge of cases in late August and early September.

**LANSING, Mich.** -- The director of Michigan's state health department has issued more orders reinstating coronavirus restrictions negated by a state Supreme Court ruling, saying he has "broad" legal authority to deal with the pandemic.

Robert Gordon said Tuesday that he has reimposed rules for nursing homes and other such care facilities. He told local health departments to inform K-12 schools within 24 hours of learning of a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19.

The steps came a day after Gordon ordered the wearing of masks and limits on gathering sizes following the court decision that declared unconstitutional a law that Gov. Gretchen Whitmer had used to extend an emergency order on virus-related restrictions.

Opponents of the orders could file lawsuits.

**ATLANTIC CITY, N.J.** — Two highly regarded restaurants in Atlantic City will remain closed permanently, victims of the coronavirus and the restrictions that came with it.

Philadelphia restaurateur Stephen Starr told The Associated Press on Tuesday that Buddakan and The Continental will not reopen. They have been closed since mid-March.

Both were inside the former Playground Pier, which Caesars Entertainment recently repurchased. The pier has had extremely low levels of foot traffic and a majority of its stores have been empty for more than a year.

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The two restaurants employed more than 100 people, who were notified late Monday that the businesses would not reopen.

Starr said that "it was a nice run, but we had to say goodbye." He operates high-profile restaurants in Philadelphia, New York, Washington and Paris that remain in business.

OKLAHOMA CITY, Okla. — Oklahoma's two largest universities are both delaying the start of their spring semester and canceling spring break because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Oklahoma State University and the University of Oklahoma each announced the delays Tuesday, with OSU beginning spring classes Jan. 19 and OU starting Jan. 25., one week later than previously scheduled. OU also said that all classes will be held online following the Thanksgiving holiday.

Also, the governor of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribe, Reggie Wassana, announced Monday that he tested positive for the virus. Wassana said he had a mild headache and runny nose, but no fever.

The state health department on Tuesday reported 1,364 new confirmed cases and 11 more deaths from COVID-19, raising the overall totals to 93,346 cases and 1,066 deaths.

SALEM, Ore. - Gov. Kate Brown says the state's COVID-19 testing capacity is expanding to 80,000 tests per week.

Coronavirus cases in Oregon have been climbing during the past few weeks.

Health officials said that with Oregon's jump in testing capacity, they recommend people who have symptoms of COVID-19 not only be tested but also people who have been in close contact with an infected person, regardless of whether they show symptoms.

The rapid antigen tests, which are being provided by the federal government each week through the end of 2020, can diagnose COVID-19 in 15 minutes.

BOSTON — Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston and the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard are teaming up for a six-month study of 10,000 people to help them better understand the prevalence of COVID-19 in the area and to help identify potential surges during the fall and winter.

The study, called TestBoston, will provide monthly at-home kits for both the virus and antibodies against it, the organizers said Tuesday.

Participants, selected from Brigham and Women's patients and reflecting the demographics of greater Boston, will also complete routine symptom surveys and will be able to seek additional testing should they develop symptoms.

Study results may reveal critical clues and warning signs about how COVID-19 cases are changing in the area, while helping investigators establish a model for at-home sample collection, the statement said.

The study will also help clinicians learn more about whether prior infection provides any protection against subsequent re-infection.

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. — South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem has no plans to get tested for the coronavirus before heading back to the president's campaign trail this week, even though she attended a fundraiser with the president shortly before he tested positive.

Noem's spokesman, Ian Fury, said Tuesday she has "no plans to get tested in the immediate future" because she has not been in close contact with anyone who tested positive for the coronavirus.

The Republican governor tested negative for the virus on Sept. 29, a day before the Trump fundraiser in Minnesota. But she did not get close enough or spend enough time with the president to become a close contact, as defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, according to Fury.

South Dakota has seen a surge in cases and hospitalizations in recent weeks. But Noem has not stopped traveling for the campaign or holding events. She spoke to South Dakota legislators gathered for a special session on Monday, and she will next head to Florida for a Trump rally. She is also slated to speak Friday at the American Priority Conference, a gathering of the president's supporters, at Trump National Doral

hotel in Miami.

**NEW YORK** — The United States was unprepared for the coronavirus pandemic and failed to react quickly, despite decades of warnings about diminishing medical supplies and protective equipment.

That's according to a seven-month Associated Press and "FRONTLINE" investigation that examines the deadly consequences of a fragmented worldwide medical supply chain.

Nurse Sandra Oldfield in Fresno, California, was among the first to become sick with COVID-19 after caring for an infected patient. She had asked for more protection but was only provided a flimsy surgical mask. Oldfield is one of more than 1,700 health care workers who have died from COVID-19, according to a National Nurses United study released in September.

**TUCSON** — A new study indicates mask mandates and other measures helped beat back Arizona's surge in coronavirus infections.

The CDC released the report, authored by a team of Arizona health officials.

The report noted the average number of daily cases skyrocketed in the state in early June, after a stay-at-home order lifted. But they leveled off and then dropped dramatically after local officials began implementing and enforcing rules about mask wearing, closures of certain businesses and other measures.

The study didn't prove the measures caused the decline, but the researchers say there was a clear correlation and communities should take such steps against spread of the virus.

**MADISON, Wis.** — Wisconsin Gov. Tony Evers issued a new order limiting the size of public indoor gatherings in his state, which has become a hotspot for the coronavirus.

The state ranked third nationwide this week in the number of new cases per capita with 548, according to Johns Hopkins University.

The order from state Department of Health Services Secretary Andrea Palm limits public indoor gatherings to 25% of a room or building capacity. Gatherings in indoor spaces without an occupancy limit will be limited to 10 people. The order doesn't apply to colleges, schools, churches, polling locations, political rallies and outdoor venues.

The limits take effect on Friday and run through Nov. 6.

"We're in a crisis right now and need to immediately change our behavior to save lives," Evers said in a statement.

**LONDON** — Britain has recorded 14,542 confirmed cases of coronavirus, an increase of nearly 2,000 in the past day.

The U.K. also recorded 76 more deaths Tuesday, a large uptick from 19 the previous day.

Large parts of northern England are under tough coronavirus restrictions as infection rates in that region have spiked.

The latest figures show the official coronavirus death toll in the U.K. has reached 42,445. However, that number only includes people who died within 28 days of testing positive.

The total is more than 58,000 if the death toll included cases where coronavirus was suspected.

## Trump administration faulted over breaks for oil companies

By MATTHEW BROWN Associated Press

**BILLINGS, Mont. (AP)** — A U.S. government watchdog agency faulted the Trump administration Tuesday for its handling of a COVID-19 relief effort that awarded energy companies breaks on payments for oil and gas extracted from public lands in more than 500 cases.

The Government Accountability Office, a nonpartisan arm of Congress, said haphazard rules for the program left the administration unable to say how much relief was given or if it would ultimately benefit taxpayers, as was intended.

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The Bureau of Land Management gave breaks on royalty payments from companies in at least five Western states because of workforce problems or other issues after the pandemic shut down much of the economy and helped drive a collapse in oil prices.

The Trump administration also gave breaks to companies that extract oil in the Gulf of Mexico, but it has released scant details of that effort.

Offering royalty relief to companies had been done before the pandemic and is intended to boost the profitability of oil and gas wells so they can still be profitable. The idea is to protect against companies being forced to shut down uneconomical wells permanently, meaning they would never again generate government revenue.

But it's unknown if that's what happened after the Trump administration approved at least 581 relief requests during its scrambled early response to the pandemic. Most of the approvals were in Wyoming, with cases also approved in Utah, Colorado and by a bureau office that covers Montana, North Dakota and South Dakota.

GAO natural resources branch director Frank Rusco described the program as "poorly designed and executed" during testimony on the report Tuesday before the House Natural Resources Committee.

The bureau did not know if the relief granted achieved the intended goal of conserving oil and gas for future recovery, nor if the government was getting a fair return for letting companies use public resources, Rusco said.

"The problem was caused primarily by (the land bureau) not following its directives for granting royalty relief," he said.

Critics including Democratic lawmakers and conservationists have characterized the royalty relief as an unnecessary industry handout. In some cases, the breaks benefited companies with histories of environmental violations or past failures to pay royalties.

Industry representatives and their Republican allies in Congress contend the energy industry is being unfairly singled out amid the numerous sectors of the economy that received coronavirus relief.

Rusco estimated lost revenues of about \$4.5 million from the land bureau program, but said that was a conservative figure and doesn't include all forgone revenues. Revenue from oil and gas production is collected by the federal government and later split with the state where the fuel was extracted.

The relief program cut royalty rates for companies from the normal 12.5 percent to less than one percent on average for a 60-day period, Rusco said.

Administration officials were asked for comment by Rusco's agency, but they declined to say if they agreed with its recommendations to evaluate the costs and effectiveness of the relief program.

Bureau of Land Management spokesman Derrick Henry told The Associated Press that the GAO "did not work with the department in good faith."

"No special circumstances were granted to anyone," Henry said in an emailed statement. "The (Bureau of Land Management) State Offices only approved suspension of operations and royalty rate reduction applications for up to 60 days when it was legally permissible, in the best interest of the United States, and when it would encourage the greatest ultimate recovery of our natural resources."

Representatives of the land bureau and its parent agency, the Department of Interior, declined an invitation to testify Tuesday before the U.S. House Natural Resources Committee when it reviewed the GAO findings.

Rep. Alan Lowenthal, a California Democrat and chair of the Natural Resources subcommittee on energy and minerals, said the findings underscore the Trump administration's pursuit of "legally questionable rules" to benefit energy companies.

"They said they were doing this to protect taxpayers but it turns out that wasn't telling the truth," Lowenthal said. "The Trump administration acted for the benefit of fossil fuel companies that regularly exploit public lands, not in the interest of taxpayers."

Kathleen Sgamma with the Western Energy Alliance, an industry lobbying group, said the criticism was "pennywise and pound foolish" because the temporary royalty relief meant some companies were able to avoid shutting down wells and can keep operating them into the future.

Follow Matthew Brown on Twitter: @matthewbrownap

## South Dakota's COVID-19 hospitalizations rise, cases decline

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota health officials reported Tuesday that the number of hospitalizations increased while active cases statewide have decreased.

The Department of Health recorded 278 new infections of coronavirus, while 373 people have made full recoveries, meaning that 4,179 people statewide have active infections. The state has recorded the nation's second-highest number of new cases per capita over the last two weeks. There were 649 new cases per 100,000 people, according to Johns Hopkins researchers.

The number of hospitalizations has continued to climb, reaching 250. Those COVID-19 patients are occupying 10% of the state's hospital beds and 20% of Intensive Care Units. About 46% of hospital beds and 27% of Intensive Care Units are available.

Over the course of the pandemic, 24,876 people have tested positive for the virus in South Dakota. About 82% of them have fully recovered, but 248 have died. No new deaths were reported Tuesday.

## Aide: Noem has no plans to get tested despite Trump event

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem has no plans to get tested for the coronavirus before heading back to the president's campaign trail this week, even though she attended a fundraiser with the president shortly before he tested positive.

President Donald Trump's announcement last week that he tested positive led to a flurry of testing by other politicians, including from three Minnesota congressmen and a U.S. Senate candidate who had flown on Air Force One. The Minneapolis steakhouse that catered Trump's fundraiser last Wednesday also announced that its event staff would quarantine and be tested, even though none had come into close contact with Trump.

Noem's spokesman, Ian Fury, said she has "no plans to get tested in the immediate future" because she has not been in close contact with anyone who tested positive for the coronavirus.

As Trump returned to the White House after being hospitalized, he downplayed the deadly threat of the virus, which has also infected the first lady and several White House aides. It's a sentiment that Noem has echoed as she has carved out a national following among conservatives for renouncing lockdowns and casting doubt on the usefulness of masks.

Noem tested negative for the virus on Sept. 29, a day before the Trump fundraiser in Minnesota. But she did not get close enough or spend enough time with the president to become a close contact, as defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, according to Fury.

The CDC defines close contact as spending at least 15 minutes within six feet (1.8 meters) of someone who has an infection.

Fury said that as more White House staff and others in Trump's orbit have announced positive tests for the virus, the governor's team checks if Noem had close contact with them. They are relying on Noem's recollection. At Trump campaign events, Noem does not wear a mask but regularly poses for photos with her arms wrapped around people.

"We've taken the health concerns of #COVID19 very seriously," Noem tweeted Tuesday.

Noem has defended her hands-off approach to managing the pandemic, but COVID-19 is surging in South Dakota, which on Tuesday had the highest positivity rate of any state over the past 14 days, at 23.64%, according to The COVID Tracking Project. By comparison, the national average rate over the 14 days that ended Monday was 4.7%.

The surge led Republican Sen. Mike Rounds, who is seeking reelection, to postpone large campaign events and to limit contact among staff, according to his chief of staff, Rob Skjonsberg. Rounds' wife, Jean Rounds, was treated for cancer this year.

"Mike tested negative on July 3, he hasn't been to any recent White House events and we're not aware

of any exposure," Skjonsberg said.

Republican Sen. John Thune's staff declined to comment on when he was last tested for the virus. He is not known to have come into contact with White House staff in the last week.

South Dakota's surge in cases and hospitalizations, and the news of Trump's infection, have not stopped Noem from traveling or holding events. She spoke to South Dakota legislators gathered for a special session on Monday, and she will next head to Florida for a Trump rally. She is also slated to speak Friday at the American Priority Conference, a gathering of the president's supporters, at Trump National Doral hotel in Miami.

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/>

## Editorial Roundup: Excerpts from South Dakota editorials

By The Associated Press undefined

Sioux Falls Argus Leader, Sioux Falls, Oct. 2

It's time for mask mandate in South Dakota

As news broke that President Trump and First Lady Melania Trump had tested positive for COVID-19, the world received another glaring reminder of the serious nature of the pandemic and the importance of basic safety precautions.

Has South Dakota gotten the message? Good question.

We have waited six months for Gov. Kristi Noem to provide leadership during the pandemic by protecting and serving South Dakotans rather than parroting patriotic platitudes. She has surpassed even Trump in undermining, rather than emphasizing, the use of masks despite clear guidance from infectious disease experts that face coverings can reduce the spread of the virus.

Noem, who has been campaigning for Trump and was reportedly at the same Minneapolis fundraiser as the president, has become a standard-bearer for those who believe the COVID-19 threat is overblown. She has talked of personal responsibility and the wonders of wide-open spaces while South Dakota once again becomes a national hot spot, with record highs announced Friday in active cases (3,987) and current hospitalizations (220), with total deaths at 237.

On a per capita basis, no state has more people currently hospitalized due to COVID-19 than South Dakota, dashing any hopes that the virus would simply fade away this fall as we donned our "positive pants" and were "working really hard" at social distancing, or at least harder than those in power.

To put it bluntly, the governor is a lost cause on this issue. So who else is going to step up?

Short of a vaccine, which will take time to be approved and implemented, there is no miracle solution to this historic public health crisis. But there is a simple and practical way to address South Dakota's surge and potentially set the stage more "normalcy" down the road: The wearing of masks.

It's time for Sioux Falls Mayor Paul TenHaken and the city council to take another look at a mask mandate for both public and private indoor spaces to ensure that we are all on the same page when it comes to protecting ourselves and our community.

Though many citizens are showing responsibility by wearing face coverings when appropriate, many others are not. It doesn't help that the state's chief executive has refused to wear a mask in public and has at times questioned their effectiveness.

So it's up to city and county officials to be the adults in the room. TenHaken considered a stay-at-home order back in April but then backed off after encountering friction and political pressure. He noted in August that a mask mandate could be in the cards if cases and hospitalizations continue to rise, as they have. What is his reason for not taking steps toward a mask mandate right now?

If the mayor gets squeamish again at taking a strong stand, the city council should refuse to let him off the hook. Remember when we had city councilors who challenged the mayor and provided a vision for the city rather engaging in petty ethics squabbles and the rubber-stamping of liquor licenses?



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One model that might prove useful is Lincoln, Neb., where the mayor defied the wishes of a conservative governor to enact a mask mandate for public spaces July 20. Masks must be worn when people are indoors in a place that is open to the general public and when a 6-foot distance cannot be maintained between all patrons at all times. Exceptions apply to people who are outdoors, exercising, seeking government services, speaking in public or eating and drinking at a bar or restaurant.

Lancaster County, which includes the Lincoln metro area, saw three straight weeks of declining cases after the mandate went into effect. It has been extended through at least Oct. 31.

Despite Noem's urging in a fundraising message that families send their kids to school without masks, there is encouraging news out of the Sioux Falls School District, where face coverings are "expected" but not mandatory.

Superintendent Jane Stavem revealed this week that of the district's more than 25,000 students, only 0.11 percent have tested positive in the first month of the school year, while .37 percent of staff have tested positive. That data led the school board to ease quarantine rules that required close contacts of positive cases to stay home and do remote learning for 14 days.

Only those who wear masks will be part of the relaxed restrictions, offering an incentive for students to follow established federal guidelines rather than the ideological leanings of the state's governor.

Thirty-three states, representing the vast majority of the nation's population, currently require people to wear face coverings in public to curb the spread of COVID-19. They have acted on the knowledge that voluntary mask usage leaves too many opportunities for the virus to spread.

"Cloth face coverings are one of the most powerful weapons we have to slow and stop the spread of the virus – particularly when used universally within a community setting," CDC director Robert Redfield said.

Another powerful weapon is reliable information, which is also not a South Dakota strength. The Sioux Falls School District should be more forthcoming about the number of cases in its various public schools, and the state health department should not reduce press briefings to just once a week at a time when citizens have as many questions as ever about the state's pandemic response.

With rising numbers and the fact that the President of the United States is now among those who have fallen ill, simply saying "trust us" is not going to cut it anymore.

Madison Daily Leader, Madison, Sept. 29

Learning lessons from western wildfires

At first glance, the wildfires burning in forests and vineyards in California would seem to have nothing to do with us in eastern South Dakota.

We don't have forests or vineyards, and we don't have the topography that causes extra high winds to tunnel down valleys to fuel the flames.

But we do have wildfires, wind, occasional droughts and uninhabited places where a fire might get started and unattended for awhile as it grows. So we're looking to the experience in California to see if there are any lessons for us on the plains.

We see the critical issues as prevention and detection.

There are stories that one of the fires in California was caused by fireworks at an expecting couple's party. Other reports indicate campfires or other human-set fires were either left unattended or got out of control before help arrived.

In eastern South Dakota, we've seen grass fires caused by intentional burnings that got out of control, which seem completely preventable. It certainly makes sense to burn only on windless days, but the best measure is to call the fire department in advance. Someone there can help establish the best procedure, and in some cases, supervise the burn.

Early detection can keep a small fire from growing large. For those of us who drive through in rural areas and see a fire, it makes sense to get closer to see if it's supervised. If it isn't, a quick phone call could cause someone to check it out further. It's better to call in a false alarm than to let a real fire get out of control.

We empathize with Californians who have lost so much, and hope we can prevent even small disasters

from occurring here.

## Supreme Court hears case against Pierre, fire department

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Supreme Court will decide whether the city of Pierre and its fire department are liable for a traffic crash that caused permanent damages to a motorcycle driver and a passenger.

Fire department volunteer Gerrit Tronvold was driving to a training session in 2016 when he ran a stop sign north of Pierre and collided with a motorcycle ridden by Randall Jurgens and Lisa Tammen. Both suffered life-threatening injuries and had to have their left legs amputated.

Jurgens and Tammen say the city should be held responsible because Tronvold was on his way to a fire department meeting. He was not injured in the crash.

In dispute is whether the training session was mandatory. The high court is hearing the case this week and will rule at a later date, KELO-TV reported.

## With COVID-19 Hampering Court-Mandated Alcohol Monitoring, Two South Dakota Counties Turn to Automated Kiosks to Conduct Twice Daily Testing

MINNEAPOLIS--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Oct 6, 2020--

Minneapolis-based Precision Kiosk Technologies today announced that Codington and Minnehaha counties in South Dakota will become the first counties in the State to coordinate and conduct court-mandated alcohol monitoring using the autonomous AB Kiosk® system. Risks of COVID-19 transmission have hampered alcohol monitoring by many South Dakota's sheriff's offices and corrections facilities that had been relying on hand-held devices to conduct portable breathalyzer tests (PBTs). The AB Kiosk solves this problem and by automating the entire alcohol monitoring process, including twice-daily test coordination, breathalyzer administration, record keeping, and immediate staff notifications of failed tests.

This press release features multimedia. View the full release here: <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20201006005025/en/>

When used for alcohol monitoring the AB Kiosk system eliminates face-to-face interaction between staff and clients, thereby reducing the risk of COVID-19 transmission. (Photo: Business Wire)

Codington and Minnehaha Counties participate in South Dakota's 24/7 Sobriety Program, which requires that each participating client to refrain from the use of alcohol as a condition of their pre-trial release, probation, parole, or diversion program. To carry out this directive, sheriff's offices have traditionally screened their clients twice a day using handheld breathalyzers – a process that elevates the risk of COVID transmission between clients and staff. The AB Kiosk system automates the entire process, frees up staff for higher-value work, lowers administrative costs, and reduces transmission of the virus by eliminating face-to-face interaction between clients and staff.

On October 2 the Minnehaha County Sheriff's Office installed three AB Kiosks in the lobby of its jail, and will soon begin screening more than 100 people twice a day. Similarly, the Codington County Sheriff's Office has installed one AB Kiosk in its Detention Center, and will initially screen 40 to 50 people twice a day. To learn more about the AB Kiosk system and view a video of the alcohol-monitoring process, please visit [www.abkiosk.com/video](http://www.abkiosk.com/video).

"The AB Kiosk system greatly increases the safety and efficiency of 24/7 alcohol monitoring programs and enables counties to maintain a strong alcohol-screening process throughout the COVID pandemic and beyond," says Patrick McKinney, general manager of Precision Kiosk Technologies. "In addition, the system reduces the administrative burden of alcohol monitoring and makes it easier for clients to meet the conditions of their release with less disruption to their work and family life."

The AB Kiosk system leverages two highly integrated and secure components – an interactive stand-

alone kiosk and an easy-to-use client-management software program. The Kiosk uses biometric fingerprint authentication to verify the identity of the individual, captures still images and video as it administers each breathalyzer screening, and automatically uploads the client data. The Kiosk can test up to 30 individuals per hour without any direct supervision by jurisdiction staff. The client-management software simplifies new-client onboarding, and enables regular and random test scheduling. Supervisors can access the client-management program from any computer, smartphone or tablet, and use it to quickly generate test reports on any segment of their client population. Nationwide, the AB Kiosk system has achieved a 99.9% testing compliance rate across six states and 28 jurisdictions.

About Precision Kiosk Technologies

Minneapolis-based Precision Kiosk Technologies (PKT) leads the electronic monitoring industry in providing high-volume autonomous breathalyzer testing to law enforcement jurisdictions. The company's AB Kiosk simplifies and reduces the administrative burden of alcohol screening and other court-mandated offender programs, including probation check-ins, work-release monitoring, and pre- and post-trial services.

## Hurricane Delta makes landfall in Mexico as a Category 2

By LUIS ANDRÉS HENAO Associated Press

CANCUN, Mexico (AP) —

Hurricane Delta made landfall Wednesday near Puerto Morelos along the northeastern coast of Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula, the National Hurricane Center in Miami said.

Satellite imagery, radar data from Cuba, and surface observations in Mexico indicate that the center of Delta came ashore around 5:30 a.m. local time as a Category 2 hurricane, sustaining top winds of 110 mph (175 kmh).

THIS IS A BREAKING NEWS UPDATE. AP's earlier story follows below.

CANCUN, Mexico (AP) — Hurricane Delta, a slightly weakened but still dangerous Category 3 storm, barreled toward Mexico's Yucatan peninsula with winds of 115 mph (185 kph) for an expected landfall south of the Cancun resort before dawn Wednesday.

Quintana Roo Gov. Carlos Joaquín said the state government had prepared, but warned residents and tourists that "it is a strong, powerful hurricane." He considered it a good sign that Delta had weakened a bit late Tuesday, but said the area hadn't seen a storm like it since Hurricane Wilma in 2005.

Delta increased in strength by 80 mph in just 24 hours, more than doubling from a 60 mph storm at 2 p.m. EDT Monday to 140 mph at 2 p.m. EDT Tuesday. Its top winds peaked at 145 mph (230 kph) before weakening slightly late Tuesday as it closed in on Yucatan.

Forecasters warned it was still an extremely dangerous storm nevertheless, with a life-threatening storm surge that could raise water levels 9 to 13 feet (2.7 to 4 meters), along with large and dangerous waves and flash flooding inland.

Delta was centered about 35 miles (55 kilometers) east-northeast of Cozumel early Wednesday and moving northwest at 17 mph (28 kph).

Thousands of Quintana Roo residents and tourists hunkered down in dozens of government shelters, waiting for landfall. Everyone had been ordered off the streets by 7 p.m.

Throughout Tuesday, the evacuations of low lying areas, islands and the coastline expanded as Delta exploded over the warm Caribbean waters offshore. Much of Cancun's hotel zone was cleared out as guests were bused to inland shelters. In Cancun alone, the government opened 160 shelters.

Some 300 guests and nearly 200 staff from the Fiesta Americana Condesa hotel were taken to the Technological Institute of Cancun campus. All wearing masks, they spread out on thin mattresses in a classroom building and tried to get comfortable as workers boarded up the building's windows in a light rain. Some played cards or watched videos on their phones, while others called relatives.

"The hotel has done a good job of making sure that we were provided for and that we're going to be safe here in this place, so we don't have any concerns at all," said Shawn Sims, a tourist from Dallas sheltering

with his wife, Rashonda Cooper, and their sons, 7-year-old Liam and 4-year-old Easton.

"This is my first (hurricane) experience, but I see that these guys have a plan and they know what they're doing," Sims said.

State tourism officials said more than 40,000 tourists were in Quintana Roo, a fraction of what would normally be there. Delta's damage comes on top of months of pandemic-induced lockdown that has devastated the state's tourism industry.

At the Cancun Convention Center, 400 tourists from hotels and rental properties bunked for the night.

"We hope that in this place we are surely much safer," Quintana Roo Tourism Secretary Marisol Vanegas said. "This is a structure that has withstood other hurricanes."

Delta was forecast to spend several hours lashing the Yucatan Peninsula before moving into the Gulf of Mexico and growing into a "considerably larger" storm before striking the U.S. Gulf coast. People in Louisiana or Mississippi should prepare now for hurricane-force winds to begin hitting their coastlines on Friday, the hurricane center advised.

Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards said Delta was expected to make landfall there Friday night or Saturday morning and the entire state is in the storm's possible path. State and local officials in coastal areas were shoring up levees, sandbagging and taking other protections measures, he said.

Louisiana is still recovering from Hurricane Laura, which ravaged the southwestern region as it roared ashore as a Category 4 storm in August. More than 6,600 Laura evacuees remain in hotels around the state, mainly in New Orleans, because their homes are too heavily damaged to return.

Mexico put the commander of its navy in charge of the federal response. President Andrés Manuel López Obrador said Tuesday that 5,000 federal troops and emergency personnel were being made available in Quintana Roo to aid in storm efforts.

Local and state officials urged residents to move to shelters.

Juan Carlos Avila arrived at the Technological Institute of Cancun shelter with his seven-months pregnant wife, Joselyn, and their 3-year-old-son, Alexander. He said the staff had made them comfortable and seemed well prepared.

The family, which lives in Miami, had been in Cancun a week and already went through Tropical Storm Gamma, which soaked the area over the weekend.

"We've practically lived in storms during our stay here in Cancun," Avila said.

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Associated Press writers Gabriel Alcocer in Cancun and Melinda Deslatte in Baton Rouge, La. contributed to this report.

## 2 scientists win Nobel chemistry prize for 'gene scissors'

By DAVID KEYTON, CHRISTINA LARSON and FRANK JORDANS Associated Press

STOCKHOLM (AP) — Two scientists won the Nobel Prize in chemistry Wednesday for developing a method of genome editing likened to "molecular scissors" that offer the promise of one day curing inherited diseases and even cancer.

Working on opposite sides of the Atlantic, Frenchwoman Emmanuelle Charpentier and American Jennifer A. Doudna developed a method known as CRISPR/Cas9 that can be used to change the DNA of animals, plants and microorganisms with extremely high precision.

"There is enormous power in this genetic tool, which affects us all," said Claes Gustafsson, chair of the Nobel Committee for Chemistry. "It has not only revolutionized basic science, but also resulted in innovative crops and will lead to groundbreaking new medical treatments."

Gustafsson said that, as a result, any genome can now be edited "to fix genetic damage," adding that the tool "will provide humankind with great opportunities."

But he cautioned that the "enormous power of this technology means we have to use it with great care."

It has already raised serious ethical questions in the scientific community. Most of the world became more aware of CRISPR in 2018, when Chinese scientist Dr. He Jiankui revealed he had helped make the

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world's first gene-edited babies, to try to engineer resistance to future infection with the AIDS virus. His work was denounced worldwide as unsafe human experimentation because of the risk of causing unintended changes that can pass to future generations, and he's currently in prison.

In September, an international panel of experts issued a report saying it's still too soon to try to make genetically edited babies because the science isn't advanced enough to ensure safety, but they mapped a pathway for any countries that want to consider it.

"I was very emotional, I have to say," Charpentier, 51, told reporters by phone from Berlin after hearing of the award, announced Wednesday in Stockholm by the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences.

Asked about the fact that it was the first time that two women have won the chemistry Nobel together, Charpentier said that while she considers herself first and foremost a scientist, she hoped it would encourage others.

"I wish that this will provide a positive message to young girls who would like to follow the path of science," she said.

Doudna told The Associated Press about her surprise at receiving the early morning call.

"I literally just found out, I'm in shock," she said. "I was sound asleep."

"My greatest hope is that it's used for good, to uncover new mysteries in biology and to benefit humankind," Doudna said.

The Broad Institute at Harvard and MIT have been in a long court fight over patents on CRISPR technology, and many other scientists did important work on it, but Doudna and Charpentier have been most consistently honored with prizes for turning it into an easily usable tool.

The prestigious award comes with a gold medal and prize money of 10 million kronor (more than \$1.1 million), courtesy of a bequest left more than a century 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. Tuesday's prize for physics went to Roger Penrose of Britain, Reinhard Genzel of Germany, and Andrea Ghez of the United States for their breakthroughs in understanding the mysteries of cosmic black holes.

The other prizes are for outstanding work in the fields of literature, peace and economics.

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Larson reported from Washington, and Jordans from Berlin. AP Chief Medical Writer Marilyn Marchione contributed from Milwaukee.

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

## Viewer's Guide: Virus response on stage with Pence, Harris

By MICHELLE L. PRICE Associated Press

Mike Pence and Kamala Harris do not have a tough act to follow.

The vice presidential debate set for Wednesday night follows the disorderly prime-time spectacle last week that had viewers of President Donald Trump and Democratic rival Joe Biden's matchup bemoaning the moderator's inability to shut off a candidate's microphone.

As vice president Pence has worked to level Trump's roughshod style and steer his response to the coronavirus pandemic. He will face a U.S. senator known for sharp questioning who has made it clear she wants to invoke her prosecutorial chops on the debate stage.

The handling of the pandemic and the contraction of COVID-19 by the president, along with several others in the White House, will almost literally be center stage. Pence and Harris are expected to be separated by a plexiglass shield to reduce the risk of virus transmission.

The debate starting at 9 p.m. EDT at the University of Utah is the only matchup scheduled between

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Pence and Harris.

What to watch:

COVID-19

Expect Pence and Harris to have starkly different assessments of the way the Trump administration has responded to the virus that's killed more than 210,000 Americans. Pence has led the White House's coronavirus task force, taking a high-profile spot at White House briefings, projecting an aura of calm and empathy rarely made by his boss. Harris, the former California attorney general, is likely to cross-examine Pence on the early response to the virus, the Trump campaign's decision to resume holding large rallies and the president's frequently cavalier attitude toward the disease.

RACE

Before Harris became the first Black woman to appear on a major party's presidential ticket, she had one of her most striking moments in the Democratic presidential primary when she questioned Biden for once opposing the federally mandated busing of students to desegregated schools. As she faces off with Pence, who is white, expect her to address Trump's comments at the last debate where he demurred when was asked to condemn white supremacy, along with his remark that there were "very fine people" on both sides of a 2017 protest by white supremacists in Charlottesville, Virginia, in which a counterprotester was killed.

SUPREME COURT FALLOUT

The GOP's push to quickly fill a Supreme Court seat once held by the late Ruth Bader Ginsberg could energize voters who see abortion, health care and other major issues on the line. Pence has emphasized his conservative Christian beliefs and anti-abortion stance on the campaign trail and portrayed Democrats as a threat to religious freedom. Harris, a member of the powerful Senate Judiciary Committee, set to hold a hearing on Trump's nominee, has been a staunch defender of abortion rights. A statement this week from two conservative justices raised new criticism of the court's 2015 ruling legalizing same-sex marriage and suggested the court needs to revisit the decision. The move underlines liberals' fears and conservatives' excitement about the potential reshaping of the court. Harris has been a staunch defender of same-sex marriage. Pence, as Indiana governor in 2015, drew national attention for signing a law that allowed business owners to deny service to gay people for religious reasons.

FUTURE PROSPECTS

Pence is considered a potential successor to Trump and a likely 2024 presidential candidate. He brings executive experience as Indiana governor and vice president and would instantly be a leading contender if he jumps into the GOP race. Harris has only elevated her profile since joining the Biden ticket and is expected to mount another run for the presidency in the future. That could come as soon as 2024 as Biden hasn't committed to running for a second term if he wins this year. Look for whether Pence and Harris set the stage for their own political ambitions.

GENDER DYNAMICS

Unlike the last debate, with two men and a male moderator, Wednesday's debate features Harris, the fourth woman to ever appear on a major party's presidential ticket, and a female moderator in Susan Page, the Washington bureau chief of USA Today. The Trump-Pence campaign is working to make inroads with female voters and suburban women in particular. Harris has made her own appeal on the campaign trail, telling voters that a Supreme Court challenge to the national health care law could end insurance coverage for birth control and enable insurers to treat pregnancy as a preexisting condition.

SAFETY MEASURES

Though Pence has not tested positive for COVID-19, his recent exposure to people who have led the Biden-Harris campaign to request a see-through barrier separating the candidates as a precaution against possible transmission. They will also be stationed more than 12 feet apart. Don't expect them to wear masks or shake hands. As with the previous debate, they're expected to have a limited in-person audience.

TRUMP

Though the president won't be on the debate stage, he's resumed his frequent Twitter habit since returning to the White House on Monday after spending three days in a military hospital for COVID-19 treatment. The president, an avid cable TV news viewer, may chime in via tweet as the debate unfolds.

## HOW TO WATCH:

The 90-minute debate will be divided into nine 10-minute segments without commercial breaks. It will be aired on major networks and cable news channels, including ABC, CBS, CNN, Fox, Fox News Channel, Fox Business Network, PBS, NBC, MSNBC and C-SPAN. Most of the networks will offer a way to watch the debate live online, through their apps and accounts on YouTube and other social media channels.

## **Voter beware: US tells public how to avoid election mischief**

By ERIC TUCKER and BEN FOX Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The FBI and the Department of Homeland Security's cybersecurity agency have issued a series of advisories in recent weeks aimed at warning voters about problems that could surface in the election — as well as steps Americans can take to counter the foreign interference threat.

The issues identified in the public service announcements run the gamut from the spread of online disinformation about the electoral process to cyberattacks targeting election infrastructure. Taken together, the advisories make clear that American agencies are tracking a broad range of potential threats that they believe voters should know about — not just for transparency's sake but also so voters can be prepared.

The warnings come even though U.S. officials as recently as Tuesday expressed confidence in the integrity of the vote despite repeated efforts by President Donald Trump to denigrate it.

Some of the announcements from the FBI and Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency:  
**DISINFORMATION THROUGH BOGUS INTERNET DOMAINS AND EMAIL ACCOUNTS**

It's not hard to set up a fake, or spoofed, email account or website to closely resemble a legitimate one. That's precisely what the FBI and CISA are warning may take place to trick Americans during the election.

Cyber criminals routinely forge websites with slight misspellings or other barely perceptively alterations to dupe internet users.

In the context of an election, for instance, a bogus website ending in ".com" versus ".gov" that purports to have legitimate voting information or results could trick people who visit the page into thinking that what they're reading is an authentic, trustworthy government source.

Besides spreading false information, officials say, such spoofed websites and email accounts can gather personally identifiable information and spread malicious software.

One precaution voters can take is to verify the spelling of websites and email addresses that may look legitimate but are actually not.

**DISINFORMATION THROUGH ONLINE JOURNALS**

Foreign intelligence services could use websites like pseudo-academic online journals to cause confusion around the election and undermine confidence in the legitimacy of its results.

That could include promoting claims of voter suppression and ballot fraud, denigrating individual political candidates, disseminating information about cyberattacks — both real and alleged — and spreading otherwise misleading or unsubstantiated assertions to manipulate public opinion and discredit the election process.

U.S. officials are encouraging voters to rely on trustworthy sources of information, including state and local election officials, and to verify through credible channels reports about problems with voting before recirculating them online.

**FALSE CLAIMS OF HACKED VOTER INFORMATION**

How someone voted is private. But information about who is eligible to vote, how often a person votes and for which party is publicly available through a variety of sources.

That's why authorities said there was nothing to be concerned about last month when Russian media reported that some U.S. voter registration information was available on a hacker's forum.

The FBI and CISA issued a reminder not long after that unnamed "foreign actors" and cyber criminals are spreading false information intended to discredit the American electoral process, including by falsely claiming to have hacked and leaked voter information.

Even if those foreign actors or cyber criminals had such information, it wouldn't do anything to stop an

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American from casting a ballot or provide a way to manipulate the vote. The U.S. agencies say they have no information that any attack targeting election infrastructure has compromised the integrity of election results or the accuracy of voter registration information, or prevented an election from occurring.

## CYBER THREATS TO VOTING SYSTEMS

The advisories describe possible threats to election infrastructure that they say may slow voting, or impede access to voting information, but that should not compromise the integrity of the results.

One concern relates to so-called distributed denial-of-service, or DDoS, attacks in which a server gets knocked at least temporarily offline by a flood requests, which could leave election-related websites inaccessible or slow access to voting information or results.

Even in such attacks, though, the underlying voting data should not be affected, according to federal officials who say they've been working with their local election counterparts to make sure they can minimize the impact and recover quickly from such a disruption.

The FBI and CISA say in another of the recently issued warnings that cyber actors are continuing to try to break into voter registration and vote reporting systems. But the agencies say they haven't identified any incidents that could prevent Americans from voting or that could change vote tallies.

In 2016, Russia searched for vulnerabilities in state elections systems across the U.S. and also breached the Illinois voter registration system, probing for access to voting machines, internal networks, voter registration systems, electronic pollbooks and vote reporting websites. But there is no evidence that any votes were changed, or that the Russian activity affected the outcome.

This year, the agencies say they believe it would be difficult to manipulate votes in a way that could affect the election, and that election officials have developed safeguards like provisional ballots, paper backups and backup pollbooks.

## Audit likely gave congressional staff glimpse of Trump taxes

By ANDREW TAYLOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — It's one of the most obscure functions of Congress, little known or understood even by most lawmakers. But it may have once put staffers in possession of one of the most enduring mysteries of the Donald Trump era: his tax data, which The New York Times revealed to the world.

The Times report last month included a series of bombshell revelations about Trump's finances, including that he paid only \$750 in federal income taxes in 2016 and 2017 and that he carries \$421 million in debt. Trump has long refused to release his tax returns, blaming an IRS audit.

That's where Congress comes in. The audit of Trump's taxes, the Times reported, has been held up for more than four years by staffers for the Joint Committee on Taxation, which has 30 days to review individual refunds and tax credits over \$2 million. When JCT staffers disagree with the IRS on a decision, the review is typically kept open until the matter is resolved.

The upshot is that information on Trump's taxes, which Democrats are now suing to see, has almost certainly passed through the JCT's hands, putting it tantalizingly close to lawmakers.

Key members of the tax-writing House Ways and Means Committee defended the JCT after the Times report and were emphatic that the panel does not have copies of tax forms pertaining to Trump.

"They are not sitting at JCT," said House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Richard Neal, D-Mass. "I see no evidence that they're sitting on those forms."

But lawmakers did not say whether the JCT has reviewed any tax refund involving the president. Neal and top House Republican tax expert Kevin Brady of Texas said the panel typically completes its reviews in a month or two, at most.

"The vast majority of JCT refund reviews are processed quickly and very rarely does JCT express concerns with the IRS audit findings," said Brady, who has previously chaired the panel. "Contrary to the Times' reporting, I think the longest time JCT has ever had a case pending is one year. I think we should focus on the facts as much as possible."

Lawmakers on Joint Tax are provided summary information on the categories of cases handled and how



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long it takes to process them, but the information is not made public. Even acknowledging that Trump's taxes were before the panel is verboten.

"That gets too close to talking about potential tax return information, which is protected under the internal revenue code," Joint Tax chief of staff Thomas Barthold said in declining to comment about the Times' Trump story.

Representatives for the Trump Organization did not respond to messages seeking comment and confirmation that the Joint Tax Committee had reviewed Trump's taxes.

How the process works: When an individual refund or credit over \$2 million is approved, the IRS is statutorily required to notify Congress. A designated team at the IRS prepares a report for the JCT on each individual case that contains taxpayer information, spreadsheets and technical data and analysis. Trump should have been sent a letter disclosing that his case was sent to the JCT for review.

Even when the JCT was sifting through Trump's tax information, it should have remained beyond the grasp of the five Democrats and five Republicans on the committee. The reviews are performed by the panel's tax experts and attorneys, typically working in dedicated space in an IRS facility. Lawmakers don't participate.

"It is held quite tightly in the hands of just a few lawyers in the staff who are dedicated to doing this work. And they know not to communicate any of it to outsiders," said George Yin, an emeritus University of Virginia law professor who was JCT chief of staff from 2003 to 2005.

Former JCT staffers would not comment on whether they remembered the dispute with Trump, citing confidentiality rules. Unauthorized release of tax return information can mean a felony conviction and a prison sentence of up to five years.

Kenneth Kies, a tax attorney who served as chief of staff on the committee from 1994 to 1998, said the committee typically handled a "couple hundred" cases year. And usually the JCT — which includes former IRS staffers — ratifies the IRS's decision.

"A lot of them were fairly straightforward. Those were no drama," Kies said. "Only occasionally we would get one where there was an interpretation of the law we didn't agree with."

While the Joint Committee rarely makes headlines, it plays a crucial role in policymaking, delivering cost estimates that can be make-or-break for proposed tax legislation. It was instrumental during the creation of both the Obama administration health care law and the GOP tax overhaul in 2017.

The office is overseen by chief of staff Barthold, a Harvard Ph.D. economist who has worked on the panel for more than 30 years. As the JCT's top staffer since 2009, he is among the very few who might know whether Trump's audit was reviewed. But he is legally barred from disclosing most information related to the committee's audit work.

Left unresolved is a full accounting of Trump's finances, which Democrats predict will illustrate numerous conflicts of interest between his businesses and his presidency. They point to Trump's reported \$421 million in debt, which ethics experts say raises serious national security concerns.

Neal, the lead force behind a Democratic lawsuit to expose Trump's taxes, said the Times' reporting is proof that the documents should be given to Congress. The existence of the audit also strengthens their legal case, he said, since the Democratic investigation is focused on that very issue.

"That's what this case has been about — have the IRS tell us how auditing is done," Neal said. "That's always been our case."

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Associated Press writer Brian Slodysko contributed to this report.

## The Latest: Czech Republic adds record 4,400 new cases

By The Associated Press undefined

PRAGUE — Coronavirus infections in the Czech Republic have hit a record high, surpassing 4,000 cases in one day for the first time.

The Health Ministry said 4,457 people tested positive on Tuesday, almost 700 more than the previous

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record on Friday.

Most infected still have no or mild symptoms but the recent steep day-to-day increase is followed by an increase of people hospitalized and those who have died.

Of the total of 90,022 cases in the Czech Republic, 1,387 needed hospital treatment on Monday, according to government figures, with 326 in serious condition. That was up from 825 hospitalized at the beginning of last week with 187 in intensive care. Of the 794 people who have died of COVID-19 in the country, 169 were since Sept 28.

The government has declared a state of emergency and is strictly limiting public gatherings indoors and outdoors, limiting opening hours and number of people in bars and restaurants and closing some schools.

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

— Trump is said to be getting better but spends the day out of sight as top military leaders enter quarantine and a top aide test positive

— Trump halts negotiations over more COVID-19 relief, delaying action until after election despite ominous economic warnings

— Pence and Harris are poised to meet for a VP debate that will offer starkly different visions for a country confronting escalating crises

— Catastrophic collapse of medical supply chain was one of the most consequential failures of US outbreak, and people died

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

## HERE'S WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING:

**BRATISLAVA, Slovakia** — Slovakia has reported another record daily increase in coronavirus infections, reaching nearly 900.

The Health Ministry says 877 new COVID-19 cases were confirmed on Tuesday, up from the previous record of 818 on Saturday.

Prime Minister Igor Matovic says he hopes new restrictive measures imposed by the government last week will slow the surge by the end of this week.

Slovakia has reported a total of 14,689 cases, including 55 deaths, which is still low compared with other European countries.

**LONDON** — Pharma giant Roche says problems at a U.K. warehouse are delaying shipments of testing products to clinics and hospitals, triggering concerns the issue may curb COVID-19 testing at a time when infection rates are rising around Britain.

Roche informed doctors about the problem at distribution center in Sussex in a letter that advised customers to "prioritize essential services only." Britain's National Health Service needs the materials to conduct blood tests and screening for diseases like diabetes and cancer.

Roche issued a statement saying, "we are prioritizing the dispatch of Covid-19 PCR and antibody tests and doing everything we can to ensure there is no impact on the supply of these to the NHS."

**NEW DELHI** — India has registered 72,049 new coronavirus cases in the past 24 hours, driving the country's total to 6.75 million.

The Health Ministry on Wednesday also reported 986 deaths in the past 24 hours, taking the toll to 104,555.

Almost 50% of the deaths due to COVID-19 in India are concentrated in 25 districts in eight states and nearly 10 states account for 77% of the total active cases in the country, according to the ministry.

India's recovery rate stands at more than 84%. The government has cited that figure as a reason for further opening the economy by allowing movie theatres to partially reopen from Oct. 15 with 50% capacity.

The health ministry on Tuesday also issued guidelines for large gatherings during upcoming religious

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festivals and barred people from touching idols and holy books at such events to prevent the spread of the virus.

**CANBERRA, Australia** — Australia's economic leader says the country's conservative prime minister and its health minister would not liken coronavirus to influenza as President Donald Trump had done.

Asked about Trump's messages that people should not be afraid of COVID-19, Treasurer Josh Frydenberg told the National Press Club: "What I will say is that we take COVID-19 very seriously. It's a deadly virus."

Frydenberg was then asked whether Trump's social media posts that liken COVID-19 to influenza were irresponsible.

"Well, you won't see (Prime Minister) Scott Morrison putting out those sort of messages. What Scott Morrison, what (Health Minister) Greg Hunt, what myself and others have always said is that this virus is deadly and it is creating a massive health and economic challenge for us," Frydenberg said.

"We put the health of all Australians first and that is what we have done and the result is that as a nation we have been able to suppress the virus very successfully to date," he added.

Frydenberg on Tuesday had announced a raft of pandemic-relief measures in the budget that would create a record \$153 billion deficit in the current fiscal year.

**WELLINGTON, New Zealand** — New Zealand has again eliminated COVID-19 in the community as life is about to return normal in its largest city, Auckland.

From midnight Wednesday, limits on public gatherings and activities in the city will be lifted, though social distancing is advised.

The Ministry of Health said the last six active cases associated with a minor outbreak in Auckland have recovered, an announcement that Health Minister Chris Hipkins described as a big milestone.

"New Zealanders have once again through their collective actions squashed the virus," Hipkins said.

New Zealand went 102 days without a case of community transmission before the Auckland outbreak, which concluded with 186 cases between Aug. 11 and Sept. 25.

Three new cases were reported Wednesday in people quarantined after traveling overseas, bringing the number of cases in managed isolation or quarantine facilities to 37.

**COLOMBO, Sri Lanka** — Authorities in Sri Lanka have banned all public gatherings as a new cluster of coronavirus infections expands in the Indian Ocean island nation.

Health authorities said early Wednesday that the outbreak centered at a garment factory has risen to 830 confirmed cases while more than 1,000 people have been asked to quarantine at their homes.

The health ministry ordered a halt to gatherings such as exhibitions, parties, conferences, indoor or outdoor events, carnivals, musical shows and processions. Officials already imposed a curfew in two suburbs of Colombo where many of the patients live, closed schools and restricted public transport.

The cluster emerged Monday, a day after Sri Lanka reported its first community infection in two months. The country has reported 3,733 cases during the pandemic, with 13 deaths.

**SEOUL, South Korea** — South Korea has reported 114 new cases of the coronavirus, its first daily jump of over 100 in a week.

Health officials had raised concerns that infections will rise because of increased travel during the five-day Chuseok harvest holiday that ended Sunday.

The figures released by health officials Wednesday brought South Korea's case total to 24,353 for the pandemic, including 425 deaths.

Ninety-two of the newly confirmed cases were in the Seoul metropolitan area, which has been at the center of a viral resurgence since mid-August. Health officials have been struggling to track transmissions linked to various places, including an army unit in Pocheon, north of Seoul, where 37 soldiers so far have tested positive.

## Lakers top Heat 102-96, take 3-1 lead in NBA Finals

By TIM REYNOLDS AP Basketball Writer

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. (AP) — LeBron James woke up from his gameday nap Tuesday and decided it was time to send his Los Angeles Lakers teammates a message.

He grabbed his phone and told the Lakers they were facing a must-win game.

"I felt that vibe. I felt that pressure," James said. "I felt like, for me personally, this was one of the biggest games of my career."

Message delivered.

James and the Lakers are back in control of these NBA Finals, one win away from the franchise's 17th championship. James finished with 28 points, 12 rebounds and eight assists, Anthony Davis' 3-pointer with 39.5 seconds left finally settled matters and the Lakers beat the Miami Heat 102-96 in Game 4.

The Lakers lead 3-1 and can win the title when the series resumes Friday.

"Big-time play. Big-time moment," James said of Davis' 3-pointer. "Not only for A.D., but for our ballclub and for our franchise."

Davis finished with 22 points, Kentavious Caldwell-Pope scored 15 and Danny Green added 10 for the Lakers, who didn't trail at any point in the final 20-plus minutes. The Lakers are now 56-0 this season when leading going into the fourth quarter.

Jimmy Butler scored 22 points for Miami, which got 21 from Tyler Herro, 17 from Duncan Robinson and 15 from Bam Adebayo — who returned after missing two games with a neck injury.

"I just loved seeing our guys compete. I love how they respond in between those four lines," Heat coach Erik Spoelstra said. "This was a throwback game and there were some moments of truth there at the end, and probably the bottom line is they won those moments of truth."

He's right. Whenever Miami had something going, the Lakers snuffed it out.

James' 3-pointer with 8:18 left in the third put the Lakers up 55-54 and set the tone for the way the rest of the night was going to go; L.A. leading, Miami chasing.

"Like I always say, they're a really, really, really good team and we've got to play damn near perfect to beat them," Butler said. "We didn't do that tonight. ... We'll watch this, learn from it, but we can't lose another one."

The Lakers were up by seven with 2:27 left in the third after a 3-pointer by Davis; Miami scored the next six to get within one. Herro made a 3 early in the fourth to get Miami within one again; the Heat promptly fouled Markieff Morris on a 3-point try, and he made all three shots.

Butler scored inside to tie the game with 6:27 left; James scored the next five points himself, including a three-point play where he ended up flat on his back after spinning the ball perfectly off the glass for a score on a drive while taking contact.

"You have to credit our guys' competitive spirit," Lakers coach Frank Vogel said. "They were flying around and just competing at an extremely high level that end of the floor."

A bounce here, a bounce there. Those were the differences late, and the Lakers made their own breaks.

Butler had a corner 3 that would have given Miami the lead rim out with 3:05 left; Caldwell-Pope made a corner 3 at the other end seven seconds later and the Lakers were up 93-88. Miami then turned the ball over on a shot-clock violation; Caldwell-Pope scored on a drive for a seven-point lead.

James said the job isn't done. But he knows the Lakers are on the brink.

"I love what we did tonight," James said.

TIP-INS

Lakers: Dwight Howard nearly collided with NBA Commissioner Adam Silver while leading the Lakers out of the locker room for pregame warmups. ... The Lakers were 14 for 39 on 3-pointers, making them 59 for 166 in the series. Before this year, the Lakers' record for 3s in a finals were 43 made and 125 attempts — both of which were surpassed this year in the first three games.

Heat: Point guard Goran Dragic (torn left plantar fascia) went through an on-court workout before the

game with hopes of being able to play for the first time since the first half of Game 1, but was ruled out again shortly afterward. ... Robinson's first 3-pointer Tuesday was his 50th of the playoffs, meaning he and Jae Crowder are the first duo in Heat history with 50 postseason 3s apiece. They're the fourth teammates in NBA history to pull off that feat.

## 3-1 LEADS

This is the 36th time that a team has held a 3-1 lead in the NBA Finals. Of the previous 35, the team with the lead has gone on to win the title 34 times — James and the Cleveland Cavaliers in 2016 becoming the exception when they won three straight games to defeat Golden State.

In the 3-1 Finals situation, the series has ended in five games 51.4% of the time (18 instances), in six games 40% of the time (14 instances) and in seven games 8.6% of the time (three instances).

## RARE HALF

The Lakers led 49-47 at halftime. It was just the third time in the last 26 NBA Finals games that neither team reached 50 points in the first 24 minutes. Tuesday's was the 1,140th game played this season and just the 35th occurrence of both teams scoring 49 or less by the break, which works out to 3.1% of the time.

More AP NBA: <https://apnews.com/NBA> and [https://twitter.com/AP\\_Sports](https://twitter.com/AP_Sports)

## Ethicists say Trump special treatment raises fairness issues

By MARILYNN MARCHIONE AP Chief Medical Writer

The special treatment President Donald Trump received to access an experimental COVID-19 drug raises fairness issues that start with the flawed health care system many Americans endure and end with the public's right to know more about his condition, ethics and medical experts say.

Regeneron Pharmaceuticals Inc. revealed on Tuesday how rare it was for anyone to get the drug it gave Trump outside of studies testing its safety and effectiveness. The drug, which supplies antibodies to help the immune system clear the coronavirus, is widely viewed as very promising.

Trump also received the antiviral remdesivir and the steroid dexamethasone, and it's impossible to know whether any of these drugs did him any good.

"He deserves special treatment by virtue of his office," said George Annas, who heads Boston University's center for law and health ethics. "The question is whether it's good treatment."

These drugs are unproven for mild illness and have not been tested in combination. The steroid seems at odds with medical guidelines based on what doctors have said about the severity of his illness.

"The public is getting mixed messages about his condition and that's a problem," Annas said, adding that there's a right to know anything that could affect Trump's ability to do his job.

## HOW HE GOT THE DRUG

Trump's doctors asked for the Regeneron drug under "compassionate use" rules, which allow a patient with a life-threatening disease to get an experimental medicine if they can't enroll in a study testing it and there's no good alternative.

Trump was given the drug at the White House on Friday before he was taken to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. Walter Reed is not a site where the drug is being tested, so he may have met that criterion on technical grounds. Had he enrolled in a study, he would have risked being randomly assigned to a comparison group getting usual care rather than getting the drug.

Compassionate use requests are decided on a case-by-case basis, and both the drug company and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration must agree. An FDA spokeswoman refused comment on the FDA's decision or to say how many others have asked for the drug.

## HOW SPECIAL WAS THIS?

Fewer than 10 of these requests have been granted, said Regeneron spokeswoman Alexandra Bowie. The drug is in limited supply, the priority is using it for the ongoing studies, and emergency access is granted "only in rare and exceptional circumstances," she wrote in an email.

Regeneron also contacted Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden's campaign "to make them aware

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of the compassionate use mechanism, should they need to apply" if Biden becomes infected, Bowie wrote. "There was no promise of access to the medicine," she added.

Alison Bateman-House, an ethicist at NYU Langone Health, said Regeneron's overture to Biden raises concern.

"That crosses lines of appearing to promote a potentially unapproved product" in violation of FDA rules, she said. Rather than directing people to enroll in studies, it suggests "just call us up and we'll cut the line for you," she said.

As for Trump, "it's not clear to me that this was an emergency situation," said Dr. Steven Joffe, medical ethics chief at the University of Pennsylvania.

"I think there is something wrong with the privileged, the president, getting special treatment that's not available to the rest of us," he said. "There's so much injustice in our health care system, with so many people not even having access to the basics," that the favoritism shown Trump is "a symptom of a much larger problem."

Trump spent three nights at a military hospital with a team of doctors watching him around the clock there and at the White House.

## HOW SICK IS HE?

Trump's doctor has dodged some questions about details of Trump's illness and cited health privacy rules. He has repeatedly portrayed Trump's symptoms as mild, and said that oxygen was given to him on two occasions but that he was not short of breath. The steroid Trump was given is only recommended for hospitalized patients who need extra oxygen -- studies suggest it can be harmful in less sick patients.

"We're certainly getting a very confusing picture. There are aspects of the story that don't seem to fit together," Joffe said.

"The White House has an obligation to provide the American people with a clear picture of the health of the commander in chief during a health crisis," even if it withholds specific details such as his moment-to-moment vital signs, perhaps at Trump's request, he said.

Trump's medical team "has not met their moral responsibility to the American public" to be honest and forthcoming on his health, Bateman-House said. "You forgo much of your privacy when you become president."

Finally, some are dismayed that Trump received special care while flaunting public health advice about wearing a mask and other steps to curb the spread of the virus.

"He has an obligation to follow the rules of the United States and he has an obligation to set a good example," she said. "We have problems on both of those counts."

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Marilynn Marchione can be followed on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/MMarchioneAP>

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

## Pence-Harris debate to unfold as Trump recovers from virus

By STEVE PEOPLES, KATHLEEN RONAYNE and JILL COLVIN Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — Vice President Mike Pence and his Democratic challenger, California Sen. Kamala Harris, are poised to meet for a debate that will offer starkly different visions for a country confronting escalating crises.

The faceoff Wednesday night in Salt Lake City is the most highly anticipated vice presidential debate in recent memory. It will unfold while President Donald Trump recovers at the White House after testing positive last week for the coronavirus and spending several days in the hospital, a serious setback for his campaign that adds pressure on Pence to defend the administration's handling of the pandemic.

For Harris, the debate is her highest-profile opportunity to vocalize how the Democratic presidential nominee, Joe Biden, would stabilize the U.S., especially when it comes to resolving the pandemic and ad-

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dressing racial injustice. She will be able to explain her views on law enforcement, an area in which she's viewed warily by some progressives, given her past as a prosecutor.

Ultimately, the debate is a chance for voters to decide whether Pence and Harris are in a position to step into the presidency at a moment's notice. It's hardly a theoretical question as the 74-year-old Trump combats the virus, and Biden, at 77, would become the oldest person to become president if he's elected.

While the debate will likely cover a range of topics, the virus will be at the forefront.

Pence and Harris will appear on stage exactly 12.25 feet (3.7 meters) apart separated by plexiglass barriers. Anyone in the small audience who refuses to wear a mask will be asked to leave.

Pence, who was with Trump and others last week who have since tested positive, has faced questions about whether he should be at the debate at all. The vice president has repeatedly tested negative for the virus, and his staff and doctors insist he does not need to quarantine under Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines.

The CDC defines risky "close contact" as being within 6 feet (1.8 meters) of an infected person for at least 15 minutes starting from two days before the onset of symptoms or a positive test.

Pence's team objected to Harris' request for plexiglass barriers, arguing it was medically unnecessary. But the Commission on Presidential Debates had already agreed to the barriers, and Pence's aides said their presence wouldn't dissuade him from attending the event.

Pence's chief of staff, Marc Short, said there is "zero risk" of the vice president pulling out of the debate over the plexiglass spat. He said Pence "will be there" because it's "too important for the American people." "The hesitancy seems to be on other side," he added.

Sabrina Singh, a spokesperson for Harris, said the senator "will be at the debate, respecting the protections that the Cleveland Clinic has put in place to promote safety for all concerned." The Cleveland Clinic serves as a health adviser to the Commission on Presidential Debates.

Despite the early sparring, the debate is unlikely to be a repeat of the chaotic debate between Trump and Biden last week.

Pence is eager to seize on Harris and Biden's liberal policies, but it may be difficult to shift the conversation away from the Republican administration's uneven handling of the pandemic. Pence serves as chair of the president's coronavirus task force, which has failed to implement a comprehensive national strategy even as Trump himself recovers from the disease and the national death toll surges past 210,000 with no clear end in sight.

Biden has raised questions about whether he will participate in his next scheduled debate with Trump, telling reporters on Tuesday: "I think if he still has COVID, then we shouldn't have a debate."

The vice president is a 61-year-old former Indiana governor and ex-radio host, an evangelical Christian known for his folksy charm and unwavering loyalty to Trump.

Harris is a 55-year-old California senator, the daughter of a Jamaican father and an Indian mother. She is also a former prosecutor whose pointed questioning of Trump's appointees and court nominees and cool charm on the campaign trail made her a Democratic star.

She will make history as the first Black woman to appear in a vice presidential debate. Democrats hope the historic nature of her candidacy will help energize key groups of likely Democratic voters — African Americans and young people, in particular — who have shown less excitement for Biden.

It's unclear how aggressive the candidates will be with each other.

Both have adopted a cautious approach on the trail, keeping in line with past running mates who, above all, are tasked with not hurting their party's ticket.

Some Harris allies fear that a conservative approach will prevent her from shining.

"Overly scripting Kamala Harris is tantamount to removing five bullets out of her gun before you walk into a gun fight," said Nathan Barankin, who served as Harris' chief of staff in the Senate and when she was California attorney general.

While some Democrats have set high expectations for the debate, Harris and her allies have been trying to keep them low. Last month, when California's state Senate president told Harris on a Zoom call that

home state fans were excited to watch her debate, Harris quickly interjected.

"He's a good debater," she said, laughing. "I'm just, I'm so concerned, like I can only disappoint."

Gender will likely play a role in the debate, Hillary Clinton, the first woman to lead a presidential ticket, said during a recent fundraiser.

She suggested Pence would try to paint Harris as "the inexperienced woman candidate." Harris will have to be mindful of the double standard for women in politics as she responds, Clinton said.

"She's got to be firm and effective in rebutting any implication that comes from the other side, but to do it in a way that doesn't, you know, scare or alienate voters," Clinton said.

Harris has been preparing for the debate in Salt Lake City since Saturday. Karen Dunn, a Washington lawyer who helped prepare Clinton for her 2016 debates against Trump, is leading Harris' debate preparations.

Harris plans to focus on failures of leadership by the Trump-Pence administration but avoid personal attacks against Trump, as Biden has done since the president was hospitalized for the virus, according to a campaign aide who wasn't authorized to discuss debate planning publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Pence's team has been reluctant to discuss his strategy in debate preparations except to note that he is "thorough" in everything he does.

Pence has spent the last four years defending the president on a near-daily basis and mastered the art of turning Trump's chaotic rhetoric into more palatable, middle-of-the-road commentary.

Aides note that Pence's criticism has focused almost exclusively on Biden and his record instead of Harris. It's likely to stay that way Wednesday, but he has not completely ignored Harris.

In an interview with a conservative talk show host in Iowa last week, the vice president cast the California senator as a left-wing extremist. Pence also said he was "counting the days to the debate."

"In Kamala Harris, you have someone who actually was the most liberal member of the United States Senate in 2019," Pence said.

"While I'm going to go there and make our case to the American people, and I'm going to take the fight to Joe Biden and his agenda, we're also going to make sure people know the record of his running mate, and the positions that she's taken."

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Peoples reported from New York. Colvin reported from Washington.

## Feisty Tasmanian devils roaming Australian mainland again

VICTORIA MILKO AP Science Writer

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — Tasmanian devils, the carnivorous marsupials whose feisty, frenzied eating habits won the animals cartoon fame, have returned to mainland Australia for the first time in some 3,000 years.

"Seeing those devils released into a wild landscape — it's a really emotional moment," said Liz Gabriel, director of conservation group Aussie Ark, which led the release effort in partnership with other conservation groups.

The 11 most recently released devils began exploring their new home once they were freed from round, white cages at the nearly 1,000-acre Barrington Tops wildlife refuge in New South Wales state, about 190 kilometers (120 miles) north of Sydney.

Tasmanian devils, which were once called *Sarcophilus satanicus* or "Satanic flesh-lover," went extinct in mainland Australia before the arrival of Europeans. Scientists believe the introduction of carnivorous dingoes, a surge in the indigenous human population, and a devastating dry season cause by a prolonged El Nino caused the devil to migrate to present-day Tasmania, said University of Tasmania ecologist Menna Jones.

"I think any one of those three factors alone probably wouldn't have caused extinction — but the three of them together likely caused the devil to become extinct on the mainland," she said.

Devils have been protected in Australia since 1941, and conservationists have worked to bolster their populations for years, citing their importance as top predators who can suppress invasive species — like foxes and feral cats — and in turn protect smaller species and biodiversity.



One of the biggest blows to conservation efforts came in the 1990s when a communicable cancer called devil facial tumor disease — which passes between devils through their bites while mating and causes large tumors that prevent them from eating — reduced the population from some 140,000 to as few as 20,000.

In response, researchers established an insurance population of cancer-free devils in wild-type enclosures in Australia's island state of Tasmania. But the releases in July and September are the first time the squat mammals — all of which have tested negative for the contagious cancer — have been released on the mainland in a protected wild landscape.

Gabriel said Aussie Ark aims for devils eventually to live in non-protected areas in mainland Australia, with the hope the devils will contribute to keeping cat and fox populations under control.

Some experts question whether the introduction would have that hoped-for level of impact.

Nick Mooney, an Australia conservationist who has worked with Tasmanian devils for some 40 years, said feral felines are likely to return to hunting for a food source rather than relying on carrion in competition with the devils.

"There is an argument that by putting devils into a situation where you stop the other carnivores scavenging is that those animals, like cats and foxes, will simply start hunting. You could actually make a conservation problem where it didn't exist before," said Mooney.

There's also a matter of reputation. While devils tend to feed on small mammals they're also known to eat the carcasses of cattle and sheep, potentially making them a nuisance to farmers.

"When you do big interventions like this, there needs to be buy-in from the community, particularly those who are affected in the community," said Jones. "There needs to be consultation."

For now, the devils released this year and those expected to be released in coming years won't go into the wild just yet. Instead they will receive supplementary feedings and be monitored by remote cameras, with some devils tagged with GPS trackers to learn more about how they adjust in their new environment, said Gabriel.

"We dream of many more sanctuaries with devils in them and really growing the numbers of the species to protect that species, but also the animals in the environment around them," she said. "This is just the beginning."

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

## Trump reports 'no symptoms,' returns to downplaying virus

By ZEKE MILLER, JILL COLVIN and AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump, said to be making progress in his recovery from COVID-19, tweeted his eagerness to return to the campaign trail even as the outbreak that has killed more than 210,000 Americans reached ever more widely into the upper echelons of the U.S. government.

As Trump convalesced out of sight in the White House on Tuesday, the administration defended the protections it has put in place to protect the staff working there to treat and support him. Trump again publicly played down the virus on Twitter after his return from a three-day hospitalization, though even more aides tested positive, including one of his closest advisers, Stephen Miller.

In one significant national coronavirus action, Trump declared there would be no action before the election on economic-stimulus legislation — an announcement that came not long after the Federal Reserve chairman said such help was essential for recovery with the nation reeling from the human and economic cost of the pandemic. Stocks fell on the White House news.

As for Trump's own recovery, his doctor, Navy Cmdr. Sean Conley, said in a letter that the president had a "restful" Monday night at the White House and "reports no symptoms."

Meanwhile, Trump was grappling with next political steps exactly four weeks from Election Day. Anxious to project strength, Trump, who is still contagious with the virus, tweeted Tuesday that he was planning to attend next week's debate with Democrat Joe Biden in Miami and "It will be great!"

Biden, for his part, said he and Trump "shouldn't have a debate" as long as the president remains COVID

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positive.

Biden told reporters in Pennsylvania that he was "looking forward to being able to debate him" but said "we're going to have to follow very strict guidelines."

Elsewhere in the government, the scope of the outbreak was still being uncovered. On Tuesday, the nation's top military leaders including the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Mark Milley, and the vice chairman, Gen. John Hyten, were in quarantine after exposure to Adm. Charles W. Ray, the vice commandant of the Coast Guard.

It was not known how Ray contracted the virus, but he attended an event for military families at the White House on Sept. 27. The Coast Guard said in a statement that Ray felt mild symptoms over the weekend and was tested on Monday.

Also testing positive Tuesday was Miller, a top policy adviser and Trump speechwriter, who has been an architect of the president's restrictive immigration measures." Miller's wife, Katie Miller, who serves as communications director to Vice President Mike Pence, had the virus earlier this year. She had been in Salt Lake City with Pence where he is preparing to debate Democratic vice presidential nominee Kamala Harris, but she left as soon as she found out about her husband's diagnosis, officials said. She tested negative on Tuesday.

Trump on Monday made clear that he has little intention of abiding by best containment practices when he removed his mask before entering the White House after his discharge from Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. Waiting aides were visible when he entered the Blue Room without a face covering.

Trump's attitude alarmed infectious disease experts. And it suggested his own illness had not caused him to rethink his often-cavalier attitude toward the disease, which has also infected the first lady and more than a dozen White House aides and associates.

Republican Sen. Susan Collins said Tuesday, "When I saw him on the balcony of the White House, taking off his mask, I couldn't help but think that he sent the wrong signal, given that he's infected with COVID-19 and that there are many people in his immediate circle who have the virus,"

Trump, for his part, falsely suggested that the virus was akin to the seasonal flu.

"Many people every year, sometimes over 100,000, and despite the vaccine, die from the flu," he tweeted. "Are we going to close down our Country? No, we have learned to live with it, just like we are learning to live with Covid, in most populations far less lethal!!!"

In fact, COVID-19 has already proven to be a more potent killer, particularly among older populations, than seasonal flu, and has shown indications of having long-term impacts on the health of younger people it infects. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that influenza has resulted in far fewer yearly deaths than Trump said — between 12,000 and 61,000 annually since 2010.

Trump was working out of makeshift office space on the ground floor of the White House residence, in close proximity to the White House Medical Unit's office suite, with only a few aides granted a face-to-face audience. The West Wing was largely vacant, as a number of Trump's aides were either sick or quarantining after exposure to people infected with the virus, or otherwise working remotely as a precaution.

First lady Melania Trump was isolating upstairs in the White House. On Tuesday, her office released a memo outlining extensive health and safety precautions that have been put in place in the executive residence, including adopting hospital-grade disinfection policies, encouraging "maximum teleworking" and installing additional sanitization and filtration systems. Residence staff in direct contact with the first family are tested daily and support staff are tested every 48 hours. And since the president and Mrs. Trump tested positive, staff have been wearing "full PPE."

Despite Trump's upbeat talk about the disease, his own treatment has been far from typical, as his doctors rushed him onto experimental antiviral drugs and prescribed an aggressive course of steroids that would be unavailable to the average patient. On Tuesday he was to receive his final dose of the antiviral drug remdesivir. It was not known whether he was still being administered the powerful steroid dexamethasone, which was prescribed Saturday after he suffered a second drop in his blood oxygen levels in as many days.

Dr. Conley said Monday that because of Trump's unusual level of treatment so early after discovery of

his illness he was in “uncharted territory,” adding that Trump would not be fully “out of the woods” for another week.

The coronavirus can be unpredictable, and Conley has noted it can become more dangerous as the body responds. Days seven through ten can be “the most critical in determining the likely course of this illness,” he said over the weekend.

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

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

## Trump campaign’s next steps unclear after White House return

By JONATHAN LEMIRE, ZEKE MILLER and BILL BARROW Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump’s return to the White House is poised to reshape the campaign’s final four weeks as aides debated how to move past an extraordinary setback while grappling with how to send an infected president back on the road.

A race that had remained steady throughout the tumult of 2020 now threatens to slip away from the president after he spent 72 hours hospitalized with COVID-19, the very disease that has fundamentally altered the country he leads and the campaign he wanted to run. And as Democrat Joe Biden stood on one of the nation’s most hallowed grounds Tuesday to call for national unity, the president, in his first full day back in the executive mansion, plunged Washington into further chaos by abruptly ending coronavirus relief talks.

Trump had stage-managed his dramatic, if reckless, reentry to the White House — tearing off his mask before stepping back inside Monday — and was pushing aides to return to the campaign trail as soon as possible, including to next week’s second debate against Biden. But as the president remained contagious, his health under careful watch, a division emerged between aides over how to manage the fallout.

Some believed the moment could act as a late reset, allowing the president to draw from his own experiences to at last show empathy for those affected by a pandemic that has killed more than 210,000 Americans, left millions unemployed and sent his poll numbers tumbling.

But others believed that abruptly changing course after seven months of projecting strength over the virus wouldn’t work and instead advocated for intensifying the message as a means to further fire up the president’s supporters to turn out.

Trump made clear what he wanted.

“I am looking forward to the debate on the evening of Thursday, October 15th in Miami. It will be great!” he tweeted Tuesday, after previously posting an erroneous comparison between the dangers posed by COVID-19 and the flu.

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

For months, the president had tried to make the race a choice election between himself and Biden, but his diagnosis ensured, again, that his two safe harbors, the economy and the Supreme Court, were cast off the stage.

Trump added to that Tuesday by suddenly announcing that he was pulling out White House representatives from congressional COVID-19 relief negotiations, blasting House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and seeming to accept the politically damaging responsibility for ending talks that were already on life support. Almost immediately, the stock market fell.

The virus cast a long shadow over the White House, where more positive cases among staff were reported Tuesday and rooms in the residence were being converted into workspaces for the president. Aides have noticed that while Trump was receiving wishes for his recovery, including from Democrats, there was

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little sympathy amid a sense that he had brought the virus on himself.

Trump has again played solely to his base, being the driving force behind a quick trip outside the hospital Sunday afternoon to greet fans from his armored SUV — a sojourn that energized supporters but unnecessarily jeopardized the health of the Secret Service agents guarding him. Likewise, Trump was intimately involved in the planning for his evening return to the White House, turning it into a made-for-TV moment that dominated evening newscasts.

Trump was eager to return to the campaign trail, telling aides that he wanted a series of mega rallies in Republican-friendly areas in battleground states to mark his recovery. But it remained to be seen when Trump would be cleared to set foot on Air Force One again.

The president was still contagious, and the White House doctor, Navy Cmdr. Sean Conley, said they were regularly testing Trump to determine whether he still posed a risk to others. And even once he's no longer actively shedding the virus, Trump could still test positive for some time, putting his participation in next week's debate in doubt despite his avowed plans to attend.

Biden said Tuesday that he and Trump "shouldn't have a debate" as long as the president remains positive for the coronavirus.

The long-term effects of the virus on Trump's health were not clear — White House doctors have not discussed them with the public. Nor was it clear when Trump might feel up to resuming a fuller campaign schedule. He appeared to be breathing heavily Monday evening after climbing stairs on his return to the White House.

But his aides feel that he can't afford to be off the campaign trail for long.

"If he had his druthers, I don't know if he would have ever gotten off the trail," said campaign spokesperson Hogan Gidley. "He's back, and when he's well enough, he'll be back on the campaign trail."

The president has faced steady deficits in the national polls and — while smaller — in the battleground states. Aides have grown concerned about a slide in support after last week's debate, one marked by Trump repeatedly interrupting and hectoring Biden while not offering a robust condemnation of white supremacists.

Although his campaign had felt confident about his standing in Florida, Arizona and North Carolina, he has faced stubborn deficits in Michigan and Wisconsin, putting an extraordinary emphasis on Pennsylvania, which was emerging as the potential tipping point state to give Biden or Trump the needed 270 electoral votes.

And it was in Pennsylvania where Biden on Tuesday delivered a sweeping speech, one that mentioned Trump not once but that marked the beginning of the divisive campaign's stretch run with a call for the nation to heal.

He spoke in Gettysburg, site of the Civil War's bloodiest battle and Abraham Lincoln's most powerful call for unity, laying out plainly his belief that the purpose of the presidency was to bring the nation together.

"Duty and history call for presidents to provide for the common good, and I will. It won't be easy," Biden said. "Our divisions today are long-standing. Economic and racial inequities have shaped us for generations, but I give you my word, if I'm elected president, I will marshal the ingenuity and goodwill of this nation to turn division into unity."

Biden had pulled down negative ads after Trump's diagnosis but, after Trump's return to the White House, began promoting an image of the two side by side, the Democrat wearing a mask and the Republican tearing his off.

But other Democrats have not been so reticent to go after the president. In a video released by the Biden campaign Tuesday, Michelle Obama issued a scathing rebuke of Trump's handling of the coronavirus pandemic, accusing him of being "missing in action."

"Seven months later, he still won't wear a mask consistently and encourage others to do the same — even when those simple actions could save countless lives," the former first lady said. "Instead, he continues to gaslight the American people by acting like this pandemic is not a real threat."

Barrow reported from Gettysburg, Pa. Associated Press writer Alexandra Jaffe in Washington contributed to this report.

## Google, Oracle meet in copyright clash at Supreme Court

By JESSICA GRESKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Tech giants Google and Oracle are clashing at the Supreme Court in a copyright dispute that's worth billions and important to the future of software development.

The case before the justices Wednesday has to do with Google's creation of the Android operating system now used on the vast majority of smartphones worldwide. Google says that to create Android, which was released in 2007, it wrote millions of lines of new computer code. But it also used 11,330 lines of code and an organization that's part of Oracle's Java platform.

Google has defended its actions, saying what it did is long-settled, common practice in the industry, a practice that has been good for technical progress. But Oracle says Google "committed an egregious act of plagiarism" and sued, seeking more than \$8 billion.

The case has been going on for a decade. Google won the first round when a trial court rejected Oracle's copyright claim, but that ruling was overturned on appeal. A jury then sided with Google, calling its copying "fair use," but an appeals court disagreed.

Because of the death of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, only eight justices are hearing the case, and they're doing so by phone because of the coronavirus pandemic. The questions for the court are whether the 1976 Copyright Act protects what Google copied, and, even if it does, whether what Google did is still permitted.

Oracle, for its part, says the case is simple.

"This case is about theft," Oracle's chief Washington lobbyist, Ken Glueck, said in a telephone interview ahead of argument. He compared what Google did to plagiarizing from someone else's speech. When you plagiarize one line from a speech, he said: "That's a plagiarized speech. Nobody says, 'Oh, well, it was just one line.'"

But Google's Kent Walker, the company's chief legal officer, said in an interview that Google wrote "every line of code we possibly could ourselves."

"No one's ever claimed copyright over software interfaces, but that's what Oracle is claiming now," Walker said.

Microsoft, IBM and major internet and tech industry lobbying groups have weighed in — in favor of Google.

The Trump administration, the Motion Picture Association and the Recording Industry Association of America are among those supporting Oracle.

The case is Google LLC v. Oracle America Inc., 18-956.

## Florida governor extends voter registration after site crash

By BRENDAN FARRINGTON, BOBBY CAINA CALVAN and TERRY SPENCER Associated Press

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) — Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis extended the state's voter registration deadline Tuesday after he said heavy traffic crashed the state's online system and potentially prevented thousands of enrolling to cast ballots in next month's presidential election. Several progressive groups are suing for an additional extension.

DeSantis extended the deadline that expired Monday until 7 p.m. Tuesday. In addition to online registration, DeSantis ordered elections, motor vehicle and tax collectors offices to stay open until that hour for anyone who wanted to register in person. He also said any forms postmarked by Tuesday would be accepted.

Voting and minority rights groups responded with a federal lawsuit, saying the confusion required more time, but DeSantis disagreed, saying the seven-hour outage required a comparable extension. The problems began about 5 p.m. Monday and continued until the midnight deadline.

"You can have the best site in the world, but sometimes there are hiccups," DeSantis said during a press conference at The Villages, a large retirement community in central Florida. "If 500,000 people descend

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at the same time, it creates a bottleneck.”

Dream Defenders, New Florida Majority, Organize Florida, LatinoJustice PRLDEF and others filed their lawsuit in Tallahassee, saying at least two additional days were needed to give those denied access enough time to learn of the extension and respond. They said that anything less would be voter suppression.

“No voter should be denied their right to vote during a global health pandemic because Florida did not have a functioning online voter registration system,” said Jorge Vasquez, power and democracy director at Advancement Project National Office, one of the suing groups. No hearing was immediately set.

There were no immediate reports of major glitches during the additional period through Tuesday evening that potentially allowed thousands more people to register in Florida’s 67 counties. In Leon County, for example, there were nearly 2,000 additional transactions — including new or updated registrations — by late-afternoon, county Elections Supervisor Mark Earley said.

Florida Secretary of State Laurel Lee, who oversees the voting system, said that at times on Monday the online registration system “was accessed by an unprecedented 1.1 million requests per hour.” Officials said many of the requests were likely repeated attempts by those who failed to get into the system, which went online in 2017. There were complaints before the 2018 registration deadline that the system was sluggish.

Lee’s office is investigating the overload.

“At this time, we have not identified any evidence of interference or malicious activity impacting the site,” she said in a statement Tuesday night. “We will continue to monitor the situation and provide any additional information as it develops.”

CEO Matthew Prince of Cloudflare, the internet infrastructure company that protects Florida’s elections website, tweeted that he has seen no indication that any voter registration systems it protects had been hit by a cyberattack. The company declined further comment.

The FBI and the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency warned elections officials nationwide last week that cyberattacks could disrupt their systems during the run-up to the election. They particularly noted “distributed denial-of-service” attacks, which inundate a computer system with requests, potentially clogging up servers until the system becomes inaccessible to legitimate users.

The volume of requests that overwhelmed the Florida registration site Monday was not consistent with denial-of-service attacks, which typically render websites unavailable with barrages of several hundred million requests per second.

The potential for outside meddling is an especially sensitive issue in Florida, a key battleground state in November’s election between President Donald Trump and his Democratic challenger, former Vice President Joe Biden. The state has lingering questions about Russian hacking during the election four years ago.

Biden tweeted Tuesday that the Republican governor’s decision to extend the deadline “is a win for our democracy.”

Whatever caused the disruption, it threw up a roadblock for those trying to register. Sarah Dinkins, a Florida State University student, tried to help her younger sister register Monday night. They began trying about 9 p.m. and by 10:30 p.m. had not been successful.

“I feel very frustrated,” she said. “If the voting website doesn’t work, fewer people potentially Democratic voters will be able to vote.”

The outage impacted many Florida felons, who just received the right to vote in a 2018 state referendum that passed overwhelmingly — if they have completed probation and don’t have any outstanding fines or fees. Murderers and sex offenders are still banned.

Desmond Meade, executive director of The Florida Rights Restoration Coalition, said the group heard from dozens of felons who couldn’t register.

This is not the first major computer shutdown to affect the state government this year. For weeks in the spring, tens of thousands of Floridians who lost their jobs because of the coronavirus pandemic couldn’t file for unemployment benefits because of repeated crashes by that overwhelmed computer system, delaying their payments. DeSantis replaced the director overseeing that system but blamed the problems on his predecessor, fellow Republican Rick Scott, who is now a U.S. senator.

Democrats jumped on the latest issue, saying it and the unemployment fiasco showed that the DeSantis administration is inept and accused it of trying to stop people from voting.

"The utter incompetence of Gov. Ron DeSantis in allowing the state's voter registration website to crash on the very last day to register for the upcoming November election is, sadly, completely believable," U.S. Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz said. "His administrative buffoonery in operating the state's unemployment system telegraphed today's executive ineptitude. However, this particular blunder intimates a continuing pattern of voter suppression that the governor has become notorious for."

This story has been corrected to accurately refer to Leon County Elections Supervisor Mark Earley.

Spencer reported from Fort Lauderdale. AP writers Adriana Gomez Licon in Miami, Christina Almeida Cassidy in Atlanta and Frank Bajak in Boston contributed to this report.

## US medical supply chains failed, and COVID deaths followed

By JULIET LINDERMAN and MARTHA MENDOZA Associated Press

Nurse Sandra Oldfield's patient didn't have the usual symptoms of COVID-19 — yet. But then he tested positive for the virus, and it was clear that Oldfield — a veteran, 53-year-old caregiver — had been exposed.

She was sent home by Kaiser Permanente officials with instructions to keep careful notes on her condition. And she did.

"Temperature 97.1," she wrote on March 26, her first log entry. Normal.

She and her colleagues said they had felt unsafe at work and had raised concerns with their managers. They needed N95 masks, powerful protection against contracting COVID-19. Kaiser Permanente had none for Oldfield. Instead, she was issued a less effective surgical mask, leaving her vulnerable to the deadly virus.

Many others were similarly vulnerable, and not just at this 169-bed hospital in Fresno. From the very moment the pandemic reached America's shores, the country was unprepared. Hospitals, nursing homes and other health care facilities didn't have the masks and equipment needed to protect their workers. Some got sick and spread the virus. Some died.

EDITOR'S NOTE — This story is part of an ongoing investigation by The Associated Press, the PBS series "FRONTLINE," and the Global Reporting Centre that examines the deadly consequences of the fragmented worldwide medical supply chain and includes the film "America's Medical Supply Crisis," premiering on PBS and online Oct. 6 at 10 p.m. EST/9 p.m. CST.

The Associated Press and "FRONTLINE" launched a seven-month investigation -- filing Freedom of Information Act requests, testing medical masks, interviewing dozens of experts from hard-hit hospitals to the White House -- to understand what was behind these critical shortages.

Medical supply chains that span oceans and continents are the fragile lifelines between raw materials and manufacturers overseas, and health care workers on COVID-19 front lines in the U.S. As link after link broke, the system fell apart.

This catastrophic collapse was one of the country's most consequential failures to control the virus. And it wasn't unexpected: For decades, politicians and corporate officials ignored warnings about the risks associated with America's overdependence on foreign manufacturing, and a lack of adequate preparation at home, the AP and "FRONTLINE" found.

As the pandemic rolled into the U.S., Asian factories shut down, halting exports of medical supplies. Meanwhile, government stockpiles were depleted from a flu outbreak a decade earlier, and there was no way to rapidly restock. The federal government dangerously advised people not to wear masks, looking to preserve the supply for health care workers. Counterfeits flooded the market.

Now, with more than 210,000 Americans dead and the president himself infected with the virus, the U.S.

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grieves the consequences. And nurses are still being told to reuse masks designed to be thrown away after each patient.

At home with her aged dog Freckles at her side, Sandra Oldfield recognized the symptoms as she recorded them in her log over 11 days:

"Chills"

"Weakness"

"Dizziness"

She lost her appetite. Her handwriting grew shaky. Someone called an ambulance. Others came for her pets.

Although it will take years for researchers to understand why the pandemic was disproportionately worse in the U.S., early studies that compare different countries' responses are finding that shortages of masks, gloves, gowns, shields, testing kits and other medical supplies indeed cost lives.

The lack of early testing was a major stumble. First, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's tests were faulty. Then there weren't enough. The Food and Drug Administration raced to approve more tests, but without access to cheap, disposable swabs -- made almost entirely in Italy and now in very short supply -- they were useless. U.S. public health departments' worst fears were quickly realized.

Chrissie Juliano, executive director of the Big Cities Health Coalition, a forum of the largest public health departments, said the lack of available information about the actual burden of the virus "set our country's response back by an order of magnitude we will never know."

Meanwhile, studies in nursing homes -- in China, Washington state and across the U.S. -- found that COVID-19 cases were significantly higher in places with shortages of personal protective equipment, or PPE. Harvard Medical School professor Dr. Andrew T. Chan and colleagues found health care workers who didn't have adequate PPE had a 30% greater chance of infection than colleagues with enough supplies. Black, Hispanic and Asian staffers had the highest risk of catching COVID-19, they found.

A University of California, Berkeley study estimated that at least 35% of health care and other essential workers in California who tested positive for COVID-19 were infected at work, amid shortages.

"And these are unacceptable deaths, each of which could have been prevented if we had had adequate supply chains in place in advance of the pandemic," said UC Berkeley Professor William Dow.

Dow and his colleagues say there would be massive savings, in lives and tax dollars, if the government invested more in buying and storing stockpiles of supplies.

"This is a case where no individual health care organization is large enough to move the market and induce suppliers to invest in those types of supply chains," said Dow. "So the government needs to be able to go in and guarantee a certain amount of purchases so that it will be in the self-interest of each one of these manufacturers to be willing to put in the investments into that supply chain."

In 2005, newly appointed secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services Mike Leavitt began ringing pandemic alarm bells after a disturbing briefing from the CDC about a potentially lethal virus.

"Their concern was that it would begin to mutate in a way that would allow it to go from animal to person and then person to person. And once it achieved that capacity, it was a pandemic virus," said Leavitt.

He went to the White House and told President George W. Bush, who rolled out a \$7.1 billion pandemic preparedness plan. Leavitt, a Republican, spent the next three years traveling to all 50 states, warning health officials to get ready by stockpiling six to eight weeks of masks, gloves and other supplies.

If America's supply chains were crippled or compromised, he cautioned, it would exacerbate the devastation of a pandemic.

In meetings, panels, even commencement addresses, Leavitt advised public officials to come up with back up plans. But they didn't.

"Over time, when the snake is not at your ankle, you're worried about other things that are dangerous. And this is not just a function of our generation. This has been the case in virtually every pandemic in



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human history," said Leavitt.

The AP and "FRONTLINE" spoke with members of the Clinton, Bush, Obama and Trump administrations who were responsible for pandemic preparedness. All said they had worried and warned about inadequate supply chains. But solutions were expensive, and neither Congress nor the White House made this a priority.

"We learned during Ebola that speed matters. Outbreaks grow exponentially. You pay a tremendous penalty for inaction," said Christopher Kirchoff, an Obama advisor who wrote the National Security Council's "lessons learned study" for the White House after the 2014-16 outbreak.

Among his 26 specific findings: The U.S. government needed to buy and stock protective equipment during an emergency, in the event that traditional supply chains failed.

During the Obama-Trump transition period, a group of newly appointed Trump aides gathered for an exercise in disaster preparedness hosted by top members of the Obama administration, including Nicole Lurie, a medical doctor who'd served as assistant secretary for preparedness and response. They discussed the supply chain, and the importance of securing necessary PPE in case of a pandemic.

"There was not a lot of traction on the part of most of the people participating," Lurie said. "One didn't have the sense coming in that this was going to be high on the priority list."

In 2019, the Trump administration conducted an exercise dubbed "Crimson Contagion," a pandemic flu simulation exercise involving 12 federal agencies, 74 local health departments and 87 hospitals across 12 states.

Their key takeaways foreshadowed exactly what would happen less than a year later: In a pandemic, the U.S. would not have enough "on-hand stock of antiviral medications, needles, syringes, N95 respirators, ventilators, and other ancillary medical supplies." Countries that make those supplies were going to keep them for their own citizens. And there wasn't enough domestic manufacturing to fill that gap.

As the U.S. outbreak started, Lurie said she repeatedly reached out to Trump administration officials to raise concerns and offer help, but was rebuffed.

"So many thousands of people have died needlessly, and it didn't need to be this way," she said. "But I think if I reflect on what's going on here, this is an administration that had policies, procedures, tools, plans, checklists, advance warning, all of those things, and it appears to have used almost none of it."

The Trump administration has blamed China, and its entry into the World Trade Organization in 2001, for the country's dominance over America's medical supplies. But the lure of cheap labor and lower production costs started drawing U.S. companies overseas in the 1970s.

By 2020, almost all medical protection supplies in the U.S. were made in other countries.

"Dear Mr. President, The purpose of this letter is to make your office aware of a little-known national security threat."

The year was 2010. The president was Barack Obama. The letter writer was Mike Bowen, a Fort Worth, Texas, medical mask maker on the verge of bankruptcy after rapidly ramping up his factory to supply enough masks for the H1N1 flu just a year before.

"The people that we'd hired, these hundreds of people that step in to save the United States, to save America. They were rewarded by getting in an unemployment line. I lost everything that I owned. Literally hocked the farm," said Bowen's business partner, Dan Reese. His retirement account had just \$72, he said.

The story of their company, Prestige Ameritech, explains why the U.S. has failed to maintain a robust domestic medical supply manufacturing base.

Bowen and Reese had worked for the mask maker Technol, which until the 1990s made 87% of the surgical masks in the U.S. In 1997, Kimberly Clark bought Technol, and moved manufacturing to Mexico. Around the same time, other American mask makers shuttered their U.S. factories, moving mostly to China. Reese and Bowen bought the now-vacant Texas factory. But within 10 years, 90% of U.S. medical masks were being made overseas.

Every year, Prestige Ameritech asked the Defense Department to buy their masks, citing the Berry Amendment that dictates the military buy U.S.-made apparel. In response, the Defense Department told

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them their masks aren't apparel.

"Year after year after year after year after year, up to and including the last bid. It was unbelievable," said Reese.

In 2014, a confidential presentation obtained by the AP and "FRONTLINE" from HHS warned that the U.S. supply of medical masks was "nearly exhausted" and that 5.3 billion would be needed in a pandemic.

In February 2017, more than two years before the pandemic, Prestige Ameritech tried again: "Dear President Trump: 90% of the United States protective mask supply is currently FOREIGN MADE!"

Again, Prestige Ameritech was ignored. And as the pandemic rolled in, shipments of testing swabs, surgical gowns, protective masks and hand sanitizer plummeted just as demand was soaring. Countries that did make PPE required manufacturers to sell all or part of their production internally, and U.S. governors found themselves in a bidding war for what was left.

In March, the Prestige Ameritech founders were furious to see the CDC advise health care providers to use homemade masks, like bandanas or scarves, for care of patients with COVID-19 as a last resort.

"I felt that the government was intentionally misleading the people because they had not prepared as they should have, and the products are not available," said Reese.

Flooded with calls, Prestige Ameritech shut down its internet sales page -- orders had jumped from two to three a month to thousands a day. They hired new staff and bought raw materials, speeding up production.

Over eight months this year, domestic manufacturing around the U.S. of medical supplies has accelerated. Hospitals and labs, even public libraries, have used 3D printers to make swabs. Needle and syringe factories are working overtime. Apparel companies are now making gowns. Alcohol distillers produce hand sanitizer.

But Chinese and Asian manufacturing has ramped up even more quickly, continuing to flood U.S. markets with less expensive alternatives. There were more than 2,000 shipments of N95s from Asia over the past month, up from 20 shipments during the same period a year ago, according to Panjiva Inc., a service that independently tracks global trade.

Experts agree that one solution is a massive investment in U.S. manufacturing that not only allows existing companies to expand, but guarantees a long-term market for medical supplies that are more expensive than those made by Asian competitors. There is no sign that this is going to happen.

"The challenge really is that China has 50% of the world's production capacity, particularly for masks. So are we going to move an entire supply chain over?" said Cameron Johnson, a Shanghai-based trade consultant. "It's just not going to happen. Manufacturing, as we know it, is never going to return."

In Fort Worth, Prestige Ameritech is focused on the moment, bracing for more mask demand as people return to school, work and indoor events. But the future looks grim.

"The bottom line is China can sell masks into the U.S. market in my territory for cheaper than my raw material costs," said Reese. "People can stand up and wave the flag, and we all do, but the truth is, there has to be a fundamental change to make all that happen."

Even as she grew sicker, Sandra Oldfield worried about mask shortages. This spring, as paramedics raced to her home, her thoughts were with the EMTs. Would they have the face masks they need, or would they be exposed to infection, as she was?

"Let them know that I'm positive so they can be as protected as they can," she told her sister.

UC San Francisco Medical Director Dr. Josh Adler was similarly concerned. The more his staff needed personal protective gear, the harder it was to find. They sorted through counterfeits, off-brands and outside donations. Medical students were running PPE drives.

"At some point I had the thought, how is it that we can't get more? Like, why? Why?" he said. "In life, when you run out, you just get more."

Months earlier, a Jan. 27, 2020, email obtained through a Freedom of Information Act request makes it clear that some in the federal government were well aware medical-grade masks were going to be needed.

"We are likely to see person-to-person spread of the virus in the U.S. in the near future; CDC will begin

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to gently articulate this message into their public posture," said a Department of Homeland Security memo.

At the same time, across the world in China, factories that make most of America's medical supplies were shuttered as the country locked down to try to control its own outbreak. When they did start up again, those lifesaving supplies were kept for the Chinese market, leaving U.S. hospitals understocked and desperate as cases of COVID-19 shot up.

It would be many weeks before China's exports resumed. Meanwhile, the U.S. needed billions of N95 masks that simply weren't available.

Despite early warnings from inside the White House, the federal government failed to substantially mobilize domestic manufacturers until April, three months after the virus began spreading exponentially across the U.S.

The impact of the virus varies greatly from country to country. But it is now clear that those with well-managed, diverse and flexible supply chains were able to protect against the deadly spread in ways the U.S. failed.

Amid the chaos, AP and "FRONTLINE" found counterfeit masks flooded the market, tracking some back to a factory in China. Dr. Philip Clapp at the University of North Carolina tested a handful of different masks collected by the AP, including ones imported by a non-profit relief organization, others donated to frontline workers by major tech firms, and masks AP had handed out to its own staff.

"All of it was counterfeit, as defined by OSHA's definition of counterfeit or fraudulently labeled," said Clapp. Every mask. Some were less than 50% effective, about the same as a cotton T-shirt.

AP sent new masks to staff who had received counterfeits.

The warnings of looming and potentially deadly supply shortages from the White House began confidentially in February when White House trade adviser Peter Navarro wrote to the COVID-19 task force, urging the administration to halt exports and ramp up production of N95 masks.

The U.S. "faces the real prospect of a severe mask shortage!" he wrote on Feb. 9.

In addition to halting exports and prohibiting the sale of N95 factory equipment to China, Navarro pleaded that the U.S. government must provide "immediate purchase guarantees for all U.S. supplies at maximum production capacity."

President Donald Trump initially rebuffed calls from states, medical workers, Congressional Democrats and domestic manufacturers to invoke the Defense Production Act, which allows the federal government to boost manufacturing. He said it wasn't necessary, but then abruptly reversed course in the spring, giving a few U.S. factories support they needed to expand production of N95s and the raw materials used to make them. But even now, those manufacturers haven't received long-term purchase guarantees.

And according to health care workers, the Government Accountability Office and even the FDA, N95 masks continue to be in short supply. The White House denies this.

Rear Admiral John Polowczyk, supply chain task force lead at the Federal Emergency Management Agency, said they were diverting N95s originally ordered for the Strategic National Stockpile to hospitals, which should have plenty by now.

"Why any individual hospital would choose to have a nurse or doctor reuse a mask today ... I can't reconcile that for you," he said.

Navarro also insisted that medical supply chains have now stabilized, but stressed the dangers of relying so heavily on Chinese goods.

"We cannot forget the lesson, the key lesson, which is we need to bring our pharma home and our equipment home," Navarro told AP and "FRONTLINE."

Reshoring has become a rallying cry for both Republicans and Democrats in the run-up to the 2020 presidential election.

At the Republican National Convention in August, Trump stood before the White House and declared, "Over the next four years, we will make America into the manufacturing superpower of the world. We will ... bring home our medical supply chains, and we will end our reliance on China once and for all."

Similarly, Democratic nominee Joe Biden rolled out a plan to invest \$700 billion to bolster U.S. manufac-

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turing and purchase domestically made goods.

Heading into winter, the government now needs hundreds of millions of needles and syringes to vaccinate the nation, items Navarro warned earlier this year were in short supply.

"We may find ourselves in a situation where we have enough vaccine but no way to deliver all of it," he said in a February memo to the White House coronavirus task force.

Now the Trump administration says needles and syringes are on order, but details of the contracts are shrouded in secrecy. AP and "FRONTLINE" learned that the largest has gone to a company making a device that has not yet been cleared by the FDA, according to its own website. Another firm only incorporated in May, and has never before had a government contract nor imported needles and syringes. A third contractor in August reported disruptions in its overseas supply chain.

Last week, the department of Health and Human Services refused to say if — or how many — needles and syringes have been delivered, claiming that information is "business sensitive." Several contractors said the government has forbidden them from disclosing any information, even if they want to.

Each week the CDC receives forecasts of national COVID-19 deaths for the coming month from about 40 different expert modeling groups. The agency uses those to create a national ensemble forecast. To date, the predictions of total deaths keep going up, each dot on the graph a life, a family, a community.

How Sandra Oldfield, the Fresno nurse, came to be a dot on that graph can be debated. Kaiser Permanente says it has followed state and federal guidelines and is "prudently managing PPE supplies."

For weeks, as Oldfield fought for her life in the intensive care unit, her family sat outside in the hospital parking lot, praying and growing ever more despondent and terrified. When her dog Freckles died, they didn't tell her.

"They're going to put me on a ventilator," Oldfield told her sister, Lori Rodriguez, in a phone call.

Rodriguez had known this was coming. "We're going to be right here when you open your eyes," she said.

Two months after Oldfield fell ill, Rodriguez knew she needed to let sister her go. A nurse held the phone to Oldfield's ear.

"I told her that it was OK, that she didn't have to hold on anymore, that we were going to be OK. And we would see her again," Rodriguez said. "And that's when she took her last breath."

Oldfield's friends and family say there's plenty of blame to go around: The hospital should have protected her. And if the government hadn't failed in its obligation to maintain supply chains for essential equipment, she might not have wound up fighting for her life, in the same hospital where she helped save so many others.

Hundreds wanted to come to Oldfield's graveside ceremony -- colleagues, family, friends -- but COVID-19 limited the service to 10. In her casket, her family placed an urn, the ashes of Freckles.

Contributors to this story included AP writers Candice Choi in New York, Matthew Perrone in Washington, D.C., and Allen G. Breed in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and Global Reporting Centre executive director Peter Klein in Vancouver, Canada, and "FRONTLINE" co-producer Kate McCormick in Stamford, Connecticut.

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## Dangerous Hurricane Delta closing in on Mexico's Yucatan

By LUIS ANDRÉS HENAO and GABRIEL ALCOCER Associated Press

CANCUN, Mexico (AP) — Hurricane Delta rapidly intensified into a dangerous Category 4 storm Tuesday while on a course to hammer Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula and then continue on to the U.S. Gulf Coast later in the week.

The worst of the immediate impact was expected along the resort-studded northeastern tip of Yucatan, where landfall was expected early Wednesday. The storm's maximum sustained winds were clocked at

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130 mph (215 kph) late Tuesday, slightly weakened from a peak of 145 mph (230 kph) a few hours earlier, but forecasters warned it remained a dangerously powerful storm.

From Tulum to Cancun, tourism-dependent communities still soaked by the remnants of Tropical Storm Gamma could bear the brunt of Delta.

In Cancun, long lines snaked from supermarkets, lumber yards and gas stations as people scrambled for provisions under mostly sunny skies. Officials warned that residents should have several days of water and food on hand. Boat owners lined up at public ramps to pull their craft out of the water.

Mexico evacuated thousands of tourists and residents from coastal areas along its Riviera Maya. Some 160 shelters were opened in Cancun alone.

Quintana Roo Gov. Carlos Joaquín said Tuesday night that the government had made preparations, but "it is a strong, powerful hurricane." He said the area hadn't seen one like it since Hurricane Wilma in 2005.

Some hotels that had exemptions because their structures were rated for major hurricanes planned to shelter their guests in place and testing their emergency systems.

When the alarm blared at the Fiesta Americana Condesa hotel, Lizeth Elena Garza Hernandez rushed out of her room carrying her 10-month-old daughter, Hannah. She had arrived Sunday from the northern Mexican border city of Reynosa with her husband, 4-year-old daughter and her parents-in-law.

"I'm scared because we don't know how it could impact here, because we've never been in a situation like it," she said.

Joseph Potts, a deputy sheriff from Denver, Colorado, took care of his 3-year-old son near a kiddie pool while his wife attended an emergency information session about the hurricane. The hotel offered to shelter guests in a ballroom, but a short time later after the storm intensified the hotel told them they would all be moved to a university in Cancun.

"The hurricane kind of popped up overnight and we just want to get it over with and go back to the beach," Potts said.

The official definition of rapid intensification of a hurricane is 35 mph in 24 hours. Delta increased in strength 80 mph, more than doubling from a 60 mph storm at 2 pm EDT Monday to 140 mph at 2 pm EDT Tuesday.

State Tourism Minister Marisol Vanegas said there were 40,900 tourists in all of Quintana Roo, far below normal numbers due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The area's economy was devastated by months of pandemic-caused lockdown.

At the Moon Palace resort just south of Cancun, hundreds of guests from Moon Palace hotels on Cozumel, Isla Mujeres and beachfront rooms were being moved into a hurricane shelter at the resort's large exposition center. Bedding, food and entertainment were being provided, said Cessie Cerrato, the vice president of public relations for Palace Resorts.

"It's massive," Cerrato said of the convention hall. "It's super safe and further away from the water." Given the coronavirus pandemic, the hall will allow safe distancing, and face masks will be required for guests.

The state ordered people off the streets by 7 p.m. and landfall was expected between Puerto Morelos and Playa del Carmen just south of Cancun early Wednesday.

Just south of Puerto Morelos in Playa del Carmen, Zena Koudsi from Charlotte, North Carolina was taking a final walk along the beach before Delta hit.

"Never been to a hurricane area," Koudsi said. "Never been to Mexico. I was expecting maybe more sun, less waves, but, you know, we're trying to make the best of it."

Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador said Tuesday that 5,000 federal troops and emergency personnel were being made available in Quintana Roo to aid in storm efforts.

"I honestly don't see much that will stop it until it reaches Yucatan, due to low vertical wind shear, high deep-layer moisture, and the very warm and deep waters of the northwestern Caribbean," said Eric Blake, a forecaster at the National Hurricane Center.

Delta was predicted to arrive with an extremely dangerous storm surge raising water levels by as much as 9 to 13 feet (2.7 to 4 meters), accompanied by large and dangerous waves and flash flooding inland.

The storm was centered about 135 miles (220 kilometers) east-southeast of Cozumel, Mexico, on Tuesday evening and it was moving west-northwest at 16 mph (26 kph).

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Once Delta moves on from Mexico, it is expected to regain Category 4 strength over the Gulf of Mexico as it approaches the U.S. coast, where landfall around Friday would be followed by heavy rainfall across the southeastern United States.

"While there is large uncertainty in the track and intensity forecasts, there is a significant risk of dangerous storm surge, wind, and rainfall hazards along the coast from Louisiana to the western Florida Panhandle beginning Thursday night or Friday," the Hurricane Center said.

Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey and Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards decreed states of emergency for their states Tuesday, allowing officials to seek federal aid more quickly if needed later.

Beach communities on the Alabama coast were still clearing away the damage from Hurricane Sally, which made landfall at Gulf Shores on Sept. 16.

In Cancun, Mexican tourists Stephanie Vazquez and husband Fernando Castillo took one last dip in the pool at the Fiesta Americana hotel with their 2-year-old son, Leonardo.

Vazquez said she was "nervous, worried," about Delta, "because it is the first time I've come here with my son."

"I feel there is a certain safety that the hotel has provided up to now, I know that we will be well protected, but you never can be 100% sure, because it is nature, and you don't know what will happen," she said.

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Associated Press writers Seth Borenstein in Washington, Jay Reeves in Birmingham, Ala., Melinda Deslatte in Baton Rouge, La., David Koenig in Dallas, Tomas Stargardt in Playa del Carmen, Mexico, and Mark Stevenson in Mexico City contributed to this report.

## Trump halts COVID-19 relief talks until after election

By ANDREW TAYLOR and AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump on Tuesday called an abrupt end to negotiations with Democrats over additional COVID-19 relief, delaying action until after the election despite ominous warnings from his own Federal Reserve chairman about the deteriorating conditions in the economy.

Trump tweeted that House Speaker Nancy Pelosi was "not negotiating in good faith" and said he's asked Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell to direct all his focus before the election into confirming his U.S. Supreme Court nominee, Amy Coney Barrett.

"I have instructed my representatives to stop negotiating until after the election when, immediately after I win, we will pass a major Stimulus Bill that focuses on hardworking Americans and Small Business," Trump tweeted.

Hours later, Trump appeared to edge back a bit from his call to end negotiations. He took to Twitter again and called on Congress to send him a "Stand Alone Bill for Stimulus Checks (\$1,200)" — a reference to a pre-election batch of direct payments to most Americans that had been a central piece of negotiations between Pelosi and the White House. Pelosi has generally rejected taking a piecemeal approach to COVID relief.

"I am ready to sign right now. Are you listening Nancy?" Trump said in a flurry of tweets Tuesday evening. He also called on Congress to immediately approve \$25 billion for airlines and \$135 billion the Paycheck Protection Program to help small businesses.

The unexpected turn could be a blow to Trump's reelection prospects and comes as his administration and campaign are in turmoil. Trump is quarantining in the White House with a case of COVID, and the latest batch of opinion polls shows him significantly behind former Vice President Joe Biden with the election four weeks away.

The collapse means that Trump and down-ballot Republicans will face reelection without delivering aid to voters — such as the \$1,200 direct payments, or "Trump checks," to most individuals — even as the national jobless rate is about 8% with millions facing the threat of eviction. One endangered Republican, Maine Sen. Susan Collins, said "waiting until after the election to reach an agreement on the next Covid-19 relief package is a huge mistake."

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Former Vice President Joe Biden slammed Trump's move.

"Make no mistake: if you are out of work, if your business is closed, if your child's school is shut down, if you are seeing layoffs in your community, Donald Trump decided today that none of that — none of it — matters to him," Biden said in a statement released by his campaign.

Trump's move came immediately after he spoke with the top GOP leaders in Congress, who had been warily watching talks between Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and Pelosi. Many Senate Republicans had signaled they would not be willing to go along with any stimulus legislation that topped \$1 trillion, and GOP aides had been privately dismissive of the prospects for a deal.

Just on Saturday, tweeting from Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, Trump said, "OUR GREAT USA WANTS & NEEDS STIMULUS. WORK TOGETHER AND GET IT DONE." But any Pelosi-sponsored agreement of close to \$2 trillion raised the potential of a GOP revolt if it came to a vote.

Last week, the White House said it was backing a \$400 per week pandemic jobless benefit and dangled the possibility of a COVID-19 relief bill of \$1.6 trillion. But that offer was rejected by Pelosi, who continued to take a hard line in the talks, including insisting on repeal of a \$254 billion GOP business tax break passed in the March package as a way to finance additional relief.

Pelosi had spoken with Mnuchin earlier Tuesday. After Trump's tweets spiking the negotiations, Pelosi said Trump was "unwilling to crush the virus" and "refuses to give real help to poor children, the unemployed, and America's hard working families."

Trump broke off talks after Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell warned earlier Tuesday that the economic recovery remains fragile seven months into coronavirus pandemic without further economic stimulus.

Stocks dropped suddenly on Wall Street after Trump ordered a stop to negotiations. The Dow Jones Industrial Average swung instantly from a gain of about 200 points to a loss of about 300 points.

Powell, in remarks before the National Association for Business Economics, made clear that too little support "would lead to a weak recovery, creating unnecessary hardship for households and businesses."

Trump cited Pelosi's demands for state and local governments as a key reason for pulling out of the talks. Pelosi and Mnuchin were far apart on that issue — with Trump offering \$250 billion while Pelosi was holding out for more than \$400 billion. And Pelosi was asking for a higher weekly jobless benefit and refundable tax credits for the working poor, among other provisions.

Early rounds of COVID relief passed by overwhelming margins as the economy went into lockdown in March. After that, Trump and many of his GOP allies focused more on loosening social and economic restrictions as the key to recovery instead of more taxpayer-funded aid.

Still, the decision to halt negotiations could be politically risky with just four weeks to go before Election Day. While the stock market has clawed much of its way back after cratering in the early weeks of the crisis, unemployment stands at 7.9%, and the nearly 10 million jobs that remain lost since the start of the pandemic exceed the number that the nation shed during the entire 2008-09 Great Recession.

White House officials did not immediately respond to a request for further explanation of the timing of the president's decision to halt negotiations.

Tim Murtaugh, a Trump campaign spokesman, pushed back against the notion that breaking off negotiations could hurt the president at the ballot box.

"Nancy Pelosi, Chuck Schumer, and Congressional Democrats have not been honest brokers," Murtaugh said. "They would rather have a political issue to help Joe Biden than act to help Americans. It's despicable."

McConnell told reporters on Capitol Hill he supported Trump's decision.

While Trump said he'll immediately restart talks in November if he wins reelection, a Biden victory could mean the economy would go without further stimulus until February.

The economy has recovered more quickly than most economists had expected, so far, largely because of the stimulus Congress approved in a \$2 trillion package in March. The \$1,200 stimulus checks, supplemental \$600 unemployment benefits each week, and aid to small businesses boosted household incomes and enabled many low-income Americans to pay bills and rent and maintain their overall spending, according

to data from Opportunity Insights.

But the recovery has slowed and certain sectors such as restaurants, hotels, theaters and airlines remain in bad shape, shedding jobs and risking permanent realignment. Without more stimulus, economists expect growth will slow significantly in the final three months of the year.

"You're going to see quite a significant drag on growth," said Gregory Daco, chief U.S. economist at Oxford Economics, a consulting firm. It "would really risk a double-dip recession."

AP Economics Writer Christopher Rugaber contributed.

## Trump reports 'no symptoms,' returns to downplaying virus

By ZEKE MILLER, JILL COLVIN and AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump, said to be making progress in his recovery from COVID-19, tweeted his eagerness to return to the campaign trail Tuesday even as the outbreak that has killed more than 210,000 Americans reached ever more widely into the upper echelons of the U.S. government.

As Trump convalesced out of sight in the White House, the administration defended the protections it has put in place to protect the staff working there to treat and support him. Trump again publicly played down the virus on Twitter after his return from a three-day hospitalization, though even more aides tested positive, including one of his closest advisers, Stephen Miller.

In one significant national coronavirus action, Trump declared there would be no action before the election on economic-stimulus legislation — an announcement that came not long after the Federal Reserve chairman said such help was essential for recovery with the nation reeling from the human and economic cost of the pandemic. Stocks fell on the White House news.

As for Trump's own recovery, his doctor, Navy Cmdr. Sean Conley, said in a letter that the president had a "restful" Monday night at the White House and "reports no symptoms."

Meanwhile, Trump was grappling with next political steps exactly four weeks from Election Day. Anxious to project strength, Trump, who is still contagious with the virus, tweeted Tuesday that he was planning to attend next week's debate with Democrat Joe Biden in Miami and "It will be great!"

Biden, for his part, said he and Trump "shouldn't have a debate" as long as the president remains COVID positive.

Biden told reporters in Pennsylvania that he was "looking forward to being able to debate him" but said "we're going to have to follow very strict guidelines."

Elsewhere in the government, the scope of the outbreak was still being uncovered. On Tuesday, the nation's top military leaders including the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Mark Milley, and the vice chairman, Gen. John Hyten, were in quarantine after exposure to Adm. Charles W. Ray, the vice commandant of the Coast Guard.

It was not known how Ray contracted the virus, but he attended an event for military families at the White House on Sept. 27. The Coast Guard said in a statement that Ray felt mild symptoms over the weekend and was tested on Monday.

Also testing positive Tuesday was Miller, a top policy adviser and Trump speechwriter, who has been an architect of the president's restrictive immigration measures. Miller's wife, Katie Miller, who serves as communications director to Vice President Mike Pence, had the virus earlier this year. She had been in Salt Lake City with Pence where he is preparing to debate Democratic vice presidential nominee Kamala Harris, but she left as soon as she found out about her husband's diagnosis, officials said. She tested negative on Tuesday.

Trump on Monday made clear that he has little intention of abiding by best containment practices when he removed his mask before entering the White House after his discharge from Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. Waiting aides were visible when he entered the Blue Room without a face covering.

Trump's attitude alarmed infectious disease experts. And it suggested his own illness had not caused him to rethink his often-cavalier attitude toward the disease, which has also infected the first lady and



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more than a dozen White House aides and associates.

Republican Sen. Susan Collins said Tuesday, "When I saw him on the balcony of the White House, taking off his mask, I couldn't help but think that he sent the wrong signal, given that he's infected with COVID-19 and that there are many people in his immediate circle who have the virus."

Trump, for his part, falsely suggested that the virus was akin to the seasonal flu.

"Many people every year, sometimes over 100,000, and despite the vaccine, die from the flu," he tweeted. "Are we going to close down our country? No, we have learned to live with it, just like we are learning to live with Covid, in most populations far less lethal!!!"

In fact, COVID-19 has already proven to be a more potent killer, particularly among older populations, than seasonal flu, and has shown indications of having long-term impacts on the health of younger people it infects. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that influenza has resulted in far fewer yearly deaths than Trump said — between 12,000 and 61,000 annually since 2010.

Trump was working out of makeshift office space on the ground floor of the White House residence, in close proximity to the White House Medical Unit's office suite, with only a few aides granted a face-to-face audience. The West Wing was largely vacant, as a number of Trump's aides were either sick or quarantining after exposure to people infected with the virus, or otherwise working remotely as a precaution.

First lady Melania Trump was isolating upstairs in the White House. On Tuesday, her office released a memo outlining extensive health and safety precautions that have been put in place in the executive residence, including adopting hospital-grade disinfection policies, encouraging "maximum teleworking" and installing additional sanitization and filtration systems. Residence staff in direct contact with the first family are tested daily and support staff are tested every 48 hours. And since the president and Mrs. Trump tested positive, staff have been wearing "full PPE."

Despite Trump's upbeat talk about the disease, his own treatment has been far from typical, as his doctors rushed him onto experimental antiviral drugs and prescribed an aggressive course of steroids that would be unavailable to the average patient. On Tuesday he was to receive his final dose of the antiviral drug remdesivir. It was not known whether he was still being administered the powerful steroid dexamethasone, which was prescribed Saturday after he suffered a second drop in his blood oxygen levels in as many days.

Dr. Conley said Monday that because of Trump's unusual level of treatment so early after discovery of his illness he was in "uncharted territory," adding that Trump would not be fully "out of the woods" for another week.

The coronavirus can be unpredictable, and Conley has noted it can become more dangerous as the body responds. Days seven through ten can be "the most critical in determining the likely course of this illness," he said over the weekend.

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

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Associated Press writers Luran Neergaard and Jonathan Lemire in Washington, and Bill Barrow in Wilmington, Delaware, contributed to this report.

## **Pence-Harris debate to unfold as Trump recovers from virus**

By STEVE PEOPLES, KATHLEEN RONAYNE and JILL COLVIN Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — Vice President Mike Pence and his Democratic challenger, California Sen. Kamala Harris, are poised to meet Wednesday for a debate that will offer starkly different visions for a country confronting escalating crises.

The faceoff in Salt Lake City is the most highly anticipated vice presidential debate in recent memory. It will unfold while President Donald Trump recovers at the White House after testing positive last week for the coronavirus and spending several days in the hospital, a serious setback for his campaign that adds

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pressure on Pence to defend the administration's handling of the pandemic.

For Harris, the debate is her highest-profile opportunity to vocalize how the Democratic presidential nominee, Joe Biden, would stabilize the U.S., especially when it comes to resolving the pandemic and addressing racial injustice. She will be able to explain her views on law enforcement, an area in which she's viewed warily by some progressives, given her past as a prosecutor.

Ultimately, the debate is a chance for voters to decide whether Pence and Harris are in a position to step into the presidency at a moment's notice. It's hardly a theoretical question as the 74-year-old Trump combats the virus, and Biden, at 77, would become the oldest person to become president if he's elected.

While the debate will likely cover a range of topics, the virus will be at the forefront.

Pence and Harris will appear on stage exactly 12.25 feet (3.7 meters) apart separated by plexiglass barriers. Anyone in the small audience who refuses to wear a mask will be asked to leave.

Pence, who was with Trump and others last week who have since tested positive, has faced questions about whether he should be at the debate at all. The vice president has repeatedly tested negative for the virus, and his staff and doctors insist he does not need to quarantine under Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines.

The CDC defines risky "close contact" as being within 6 feet (1.8 meters) of an infected person for at least 15 minutes starting from two days before the onset of symptoms or a positive test.

Pence's team objected to Harris' request for plexiglass barriers, arguing it was medically unnecessary. But the Commission on Presidential Debates had already agreed to the barriers, and Pence's aides said their presence wouldn't dissuade him from attending the event.

Pence's chief of staff, Marc Short, said there is "zero risk" of the vice president pulling out of the debate over the plexiglass spat. He said Pence "will be there" because it's "too important for the American people." "The hesitancy seems to be on other side," he added.

Sabrina Singh, a spokesperson for Harris, said the senator "will be at the debate, respecting the protections that the Cleveland Clinic has put in place to promote safety for all concerned." The Cleveland Clinic serves as a health adviser to the Commission on Presidential Debates.

Despite the early sparring, the debate is unlikely to be a repeat of the chaotic debate between Trump and Biden last week.

Pence is eager to seize on Harris and Biden's liberal policies, but it may be difficult to shift the conversation away from the Republican administration's uneven handling of the pandemic. Pence serves as chair of the president's coronavirus task force, which has failed to implement a comprehensive national strategy even as Trump himself recovers from the disease and the national death toll surges past 210,000 with no clear end in sight.

Biden has raised questions about whether he will participate in his next scheduled debate with Trump, telling reporters on Tuesday: "I think if he still has COVID, then we shouldn't have a debate."

The vice president is a 61-year-old former Indiana governor and ex-radio host, an evangelical Christian known for his folksy charm and unwavering loyalty to Trump.

Harris is a 55-year-old California senator, the daughter of a Jamaican father and an Indian mother. She is also a former prosecutor whose pointed questioning of Trump's appointees and court nominees and cool charm on the campaign trail made her a Democratic star.

She will make history as the first Black woman to appear in a vice presidential debate. Democrats hope the historic nature of her candidacy will help energize key groups of likely Democratic voters — African Americans and young people, in particular — who have shown less excitement for Biden.

It's unclear how aggressive the candidates will be with each other.

Both have adopted a cautious approach on the trail, keeping in line with past running mates who, above all, are tasked with not hurting their party's ticket.

Some Harris allies fear that a conservative approach will prevent her from shining.

"Overly scripting Kamala Harris is tantamount to removing five bullets out of her gun before you walk into a gun fight," said Nathan Barankin, who served as Harris' chief of staff in the Senate and when she was California attorney general.

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While some Democrats have set high expectations for the debate, Harris and her allies have been trying to keep them low. Last month, when California's state Senate president told Harris on a Zoom call that home state fans were excited to watch her debate, Harris quickly interjected.

"He's a good debater," she said, laughing. "I'm just, I'm so concerned, like I can only disappoint."

Gender will likely play a role in the debate, Hillary Clinton, the first woman to lead a presidential ticket, said during a recent fundraiser.

She suggested Pence would try to paint Harris as "the inexperienced woman candidate." Harris will have to be mindful of the double standard for women in politics as she responds, Clinton said.

"She's got to be firm and effective in rebutting any implication that comes from the other side, but to do it in a way that doesn't, you know, scare or alienate voters," Clinton said.

Harris has been preparing for the debate in Salt Lake City since Saturday. Karen Dunn, a Washington lawyer who helped prepare Clinton for her 2016 debates against Trump, is leading Harris' debate preparations.

Harris plans to focus on failures of leadership by the Trump-Pence administration but avoid personal attacks against Trump, as Biden has done since the president was hospitalized for the virus, according to a campaign aide who wasn't authorized to discuss debate planning publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Pence's team has been reluctant to discuss his strategy in debate preparations except to note that he is "thorough" in everything he does.

Pence has spent the last four years defending the president on a near-daily basis and mastered the art of turning Trump's chaotic rhetoric into more palatable, middle-of-the-road commentary.

Aides note that Pence's criticism has focused almost exclusively on Biden and his record instead of Harris. It's likely to stay that way Wednesday, but he has not completely ignored Harris.

In an interview with a conservative talk show host in Iowa last week, the vice president cast the California senator as a left-wing extremist. Pence also said he was "counting the days to the debate."

"In Kamala Harris, you have someone who actually was the most liberal member of the United States Senate in 2019," Pence said.

"While I'm going to go there and make our case to the American people, and I'm going to take the fight to Joe Biden and his agenda, we're also going to make sure people know the record of his running mate, and the positions that she's taken."

Peoples reported from New York. Colvin reported from Washington.

## Guitar rock legend Eddie Van Halen dies of cancer at 65

By MARK KENNEDY AP Entertainment Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Eddie Van Halen, the guitar virtuoso whose blinding speed, control and innovation propelled his band Van Halen into one of hard rock's biggest groups and became elevated to the status of rock god, has died. He was 65.

A person close to Van Halen's family confirmed the rocker died Tuesday due to cancer. The person was not authorized to publicly release details in advance of an official announcement.

"He was the best father I could ask for," Van Halen's son Wolfgang wrote in a social media post. "Every moment I've shared with him on and off stage was a gift."

With his distinct solos, Eddie Van Halen fueled the ultimate California party band and helped knock disco off the charts starting in the late 1970s with his band's self-titled debut album and then with the blockbuster record "1984," which contains the classics "Jump," "Panama" and "Hot for Teacher."

Van Halen is among the top 20 best-selling artists of all time, and the band was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2007. Rolling Stone magazine put Eddie Van Halen at No. 8 in its list of the 100 greatest guitarists.

Eddie Van Halen was something of a musical contradiction. He was an autodidact who could play almost any instrument, but he couldn't read music. He was a classically trained pianist who also created some

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of the most distinctive guitar riffs in rock history. He was a Dutch immigrant who was considered one of the greatest American guitarists of his generation.

Honors came from the music world, from Lenny Kravitz to Kenny Chesney. "You changed our world. You were the Mozart of rock guitar. Travel safe, rockstar," Motley Crue's Nikki Sixx said on Twitter. Added Lenny Kravitz: "Heaven will be electric tonight."

The members of Van Halen — the two Van Halen brothers, Eddie and Alex; vocalist David Lee Roth; and bassist Michael Anthony — formed in 1974 in Pasadena, California. They were members of rival high school bands and then attended Pasadena City College together. They combined to form the band Mammoth, but then changed to Van Halen after discovering there was another band called Mammoth.

Their 1978 release "Van Halen" opened with a blistering "Runnin' With the Devil" and then Eddie Van Halen showed off his astonishing skills in the next song, "Eruption," a furious 1:42 minute guitar solo that swoops and soars like a deranged bird. The album also contained a cover of the Kinks' "You Really Got Me" and "Ain't Talkin' 'Bout Love."

Van Halen released albums on a yearly timetable — "Van Halen II" (1979), "Women and Children First" (1980), "Fair Warning" (1981) and "Diver Down" (1982) — until the monumental "1984," which hit No. 2 on the Billboard 200 album charts (only behind Michael Jackson's "Thriller"). Rolling Stone ranked "1984" No. 81 on its list of the 100 Greatest Albums of the 1980s.

"Eddie put the smile back in rock guitar, at a time when it was all getting a bit brooding. He also scared the hell out of a million guitarists around the world, because he was so damn good. And original," Joe Satriani, a fellow virtuoso, told Billboard in 2015.

Van Halen also played guitar on one of the biggest singles of the 1980s: Jackson's "Beat It." His solo lasted all of 20 seconds and took only a half an hour to record. He did it as a favor to producer Quincy Jones, while the rest of his Van Halen bandmates were out of town.

Van Halen received no compensation or credit for the work, even though he rearranged the section he played on. "It was 20 minutes of my life. I didn't want anything for doing that," he told Billboard in 2015. "I literally thought to myself, 'Who is possibly going to know if I play on this kid's record?'" Rolling Stone ranked "Beat It" No. 344 on its list of the 500 Greatest Songs of All Time. Jackson's melding of hard rock and R&B preceded the meeting of Run-DMC and Aerosmith by four years.

But strains between Roth and the band erupted after their 1984 world tour and Roth left. The group then recruited Sammy Hagar as lead singer — some critics called the new formulation "Van Hagar" — and the band went on to score its first No. 1 album with "5150." More studio albums followed, including "OU812," "For Unlawful Carnal Knowledge" and "Balance." Hit singles included "Why Can't This Be Love" and "When It's Love."

Hagar was ousted in 1996 and former Extreme singer Gary Cherone stepped in for the album "Van Halen III," a stumble that didn't lead to another album and the quick departure of Cherone. Roth would eventually return in 2007 and team up with the Van Halen brothers and Wolfgang Van Halen on bass for a tour, the album "A Different Kind of Truth" and the 2015 album "Tokyo Dome Live in Concert."

Van Halen's music has appeared in films as varied as "Superbad," "Minions" and "Sing" as well as TV shows like "Glee" and "It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia." Video games such as "Gran Turismo 4" and "Guitar Hero" have used his riffs. Their song "Jamie's Cryin'" was sampled by rapper Tone Loc in his hit "Wild Thing."

For much of his career, Eddie Van Halen wrote and experimented with sounds while drunk or high or both. He revealed that he would stay in his hotel room drinking vodka and snorting cocaine while playing into a tape recorder. (Hagar's 2011 autobiography "Red: My Uncensored Life in Rock" portrays Eddie as a violent, booze-addled vampire, living inside a garbage-strewn house.)

"I didn't drink to party," Van Halen told Billboard. "Alcohol and cocaine were private things to me. I would use them for work. The blow keeps you awake and the alcohol lowers your inhibitions. I'm sure there were musical things I would not have attempted were I not in that mental state."

Eddie Van Halen was born in Amsterdam and his family immigrated to California in 1962 when he was 7. His father was a big band clarinetist who rarely found work after coming to the U.S., and their mother was

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a maid who had dreams of her sons being classical pianists. The Van Halens shared a house with three other families. Eddie and Alex had only each other, a tight relationship that flowed through their music.

"We showed up here with the equivalent of \$50 and a piano," Eddie Van Halen told The Associated Press in 2015. "We came halfway around the world without money, without a set job, no place to live and couldn't even speak the language."

He said his earliest memories of music were banging pots and pans together, marching to John Philip Sousa marches. At one point, Eddie got a drum set, which his older brother coveted.

"I never wanted to play guitar," he confessed at a talk at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History in 2015. But his brother was good at the drums, so Eddie gave into his brother's wishes: "I said, 'Go ahead, take my drums. I'll play your damn guitar.'"

He was a relentless experimenter who would solder different parts from different guitar-makers, including Gibson and Fender. He created his own graphic design for his guitars by adding tape to the instruments and then spray-painting them. He said his influences were Eric Clapton, and Jimi Hendrix.

Van Halen, sober since 2008, lost one-third of his tongue to a cancer that eventually drifted into his esophagus. In 1999, he had a hip replacement. He was married twice, to actress Valerie Bertinelli from 1981 to 2007 and then to stuntwoman-turned-publicist Janie Liszewski, whom he wed in 2009.

"I'm so grateful Wolfie and I were able to hold you in your last moments," Bertinelli wrote on Instagram, showing an image of their baby son. "I will see you in our next life."

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AP Music Editor Mesfin Fekadu contributed to this report.

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Mark Kennedy is at <http://twitter.com/KennedyTwits>

## 5 takeaways: AP/FRONTLINE investigate medical supply chains

By MARTHA MENDOZA and JULIET LINDERMAN Associated Press

From the very moment the coronavirus pandemic reached America's shores, the country was unprepared. Health care facilities didn't have the masks and equipment needed to protect their workers. The Associated Press and "FRONTLINE" launched a seven-month investigation to understand what was behind these critical shortages.

Medical supply chains are the fragile lifelines between raw materials and manufacturers overseas, and health care workers on COVID-19 front lines in the U.S. Their catastrophic collapse was one of the country's most consequential failures to control the virus.

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EDITOR'S NOTE — This story is part of an ongoing investigation by The Associated Press, the PBS series "FRONTLINE," and the Global Reporting Centre that examines the deadly consequences of the fragmented worldwide medical supply chain and includes the film "America's Medical Supply Crisis," premiering on PBS and online Oct. 6 at 10 p.m. EST/9 p.m. CST.

Full Coverage: Deadly Shortages

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Key takeaways from the AP and "FRONTLINE"/PBS investigation:

—The Trump administration knew in January that the COVID-19 virus spread person-to-person, and that demand for masks, gowns and gloves would help protect health care workers. Yet officials did not immediately stop exports or ramp up production in ways that could have eased impending critical medical supply shortages. But that didn't happen. Instead, U.S. companies continued to export critical materials to Asia, Europe and even Canada, whose governments signed contracts with American manufacturers.

—For more than a decade the U.S. government had clear, in-person and written warnings that there would not be enough medical supplies if a global pandemic hit, and there would be deadly consequences. One reason was that the country remained dependent on factories in other countries, which immediately shifted supplies to their own citizens when COVID-19 hit. Rather than make the effort and financial commitment to diversify the supply chain and bring some production home, U.S. officials largely ignored the

warnings and even allowed emergency stockpiles to become depleted.

—Months into the pandemic, there remains a major disconnect between the White House, which insists there is now plenty of personal protective equipment, or PPE, for anyone who needs it, and the doctors, nurses and first-line responders who say they still don't have enough masks, gloves, gowns and other medical supplies. That's partly because the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in response to early shortages, revised its guidance to allow health care workers to reuse protective equipment against the advice of manufacturers.

—Counterfeit medical supplies that are less protective have poured into the U.S. The AP and "FRONT-LINE" sent a box full of imported medical masks to the University of North Carolina to be tested. They all were counterfeit, and some were about as effective for protecting wearers as a piece of fabric. Two different federal agencies — the Department of Homeland Security and the Justice Department — have two different initiatives to halt widespread fraud, but fake COVID-19 tests, fake N95s, even fake cures are readily available online today.

— As of today, it's unclear if there are enough needles and syringes stockpiled to inject everyone in the U.S. if a COVID-19 vaccine became immediately available. The Trump administration says needles and syringes are on order, but details of the contracts are shrouded in secrecy. Several contractors said the government has forbidden them from disclosing any information, even if they want to.

## Democrats call for Congress to rein in, break up Big Tech

By MARCY GORDON AP Business Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Democratic lawmakers are calling for Congress to rein in Big Tech, possibly forcing Facebook, Google, Amazon and Apple to break up their businesses, while making it harder for them to acquire others and imposing new rules to safeguard competition.

The proposals in a report issued Tuesday follow a 15-month investigation by a House Judiciary Committee panel into the companies' market dominance.

Those kinds of forced breakups through a legislative overhaul would be a radical step for Congress to take toward a powerful industry. The tech giants for decades have enjoyed light-touch regulation and star status in Washington, but have come under intensifying scrutiny and derision over issues of competition, consumer privacy and hate speech.

The 450-page report offers Congress a possible roadmap for action, potentially with a new balance of political power in Congress and a new president next year. Democratic presidential contender Joe Biden has said that company breakups should be considered. If such steps were mandated, they could bring the biggest changes to the tech industry since the federal government's landmark case against Microsoft almost 20 years ago.

The investigation found, for example, that Google has monopoly power in the market for search, while Facebook has monopoly power in the social networking market. The report said Amazon and Apple have "significant and durable market power" in the U.S. online retail market, and in mobile operating systems and mobile app stores, respectively.

Some critics of the companies have singled out Facebook's Instagram and WhatsApp services and Google's YouTube and Android cellphone operating system as among the businesses that should be considered for divestiture.

The report said the four companies have abused their market power by charging excessive fees, imposing tough contract terms and extracting valuable data from individuals and businesses that rely on them.

"Each platform now serves as a gatekeeper over a key channel of distribution," the report says. "By controlling access to markets, these giants can pick winners and losers throughout our economy."

In addition to proposing separations of some dominant tech platforms from the companies' other businesses, the report also calls for the platforms to be required to offer equal terms for equal products and services for all users. It proposes laws be changed to impose a higher bar for approving future tech industry mergers and acquisitions.

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And it asks Congress to boost the enforcement powers of antitrust regulators, such as the Federal Trade Commission, and to increase the budgets of the FTC and the Justice Department's antitrust division.

Although the Judiciary antitrust subcommittee's investigation was bipartisan, Republican lawmakers on the panel didn't sign on to most of the recommendations.

Republicans issued their own report Tuesday titled "A Third Way to Take on Big Tech." Authored by Rep. Ken Buck of Colorado, it called for "targeted" enforcement of existing antitrust laws rather than "onerous and burdensome regulation that kills industry innovation."

Google took issue with both reports, saying they contain "outdated and inaccurate allegations from commercial rivals" about Google's search engine and other services.

"Americans simply don't want Congress to break Google's products or harm the free services they use every day," the company said in a statement. "The goal of antitrust law is to protect consumers, not help commercial rivals. Many of the proposals bandied about ... would cause real harm to consumers, America's technology leadership and the U.S. economy — all for no clear gain."

Facebook said acquisitions "are part of every industry, and just one way we innovate new technologies to deliver more value to people."

"Instagram and WhatsApp have reached new heights of success because Facebook has invested billions in those businesses," the company's statement said. "A strongly competitive landscape existed at the time of both acquisitions and exists today. Regulators thoroughly reviewed each deal and rightly did not see any reason to stop them at the time."

In a blog post Tuesday, Amazon warned that "fringe notions on antitrust would destroy small businesses and hurt consumers," without mentioning by name the report or the House antitrust subcommittee. It decried "misguided interventions in the free market."

Spokespeople for Apple didn't immediately return a request for comment.

In its investigation over the past 15 months, the antitrust panel heard testimony from mid-level executives of the four companies as well as from competitors and legal experts. It held a highly charged hearing in July to question the CEOs of the Silicon Valley behemoths. Its staff pored over more than a million internal documents from the companies.

The effort aimed to answer a key question: whether existing competition policies and century-old anti-trust laws are adequate for overseeing the tech giants, or if new legislation and enforcement powers for regulators are needed.

Both Republicans and Democrats have accelerated their criticism of Big Tech in recent months, though sometimes for different reasons. The Trump Justice Department is moving toward antitrust action against Google, focusing on the company's dominance in online search and whether it is used to stifle competition and hurt consumers. A bipartisan coalition of 50 U.S. states and territories, led by Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton, also has been investigating Google's business practices. They have cited "potential monopolistic behavior."

Google has argued that although its businesses are large, they are useful and beneficial to consumers. It maintains that its services face ample competition and have unleashed innovations that help people manage their lives. Most of its services are offered for free in exchange for personal information that helps Google sell ads.

Facebook, Amazon and Apple also have been targets of sweeping antitrust investigations by the Justice Department and the Federal Trade Commission.

## Trump campaign's next steps unclear after White House return

By JONATHAN LEMIRE, ZEKE MILLER and BILL BARROW Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's return to the White House is poised to reshape the campaign's final four weeks as aides debated Tuesday how to move past an extraordinary setback while grappling with how to send an infected president back on the road.

A race that had remained steady throughout the tumult of 2020 now threatens to slip away from the president after he spent 72 hours hospitalized with COVID-19, the very disease that has fundamentally

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altered the country he leads and the campaign he wanted to run. And as Democrat Joe Biden stood on one of the nation's most hallowed grounds to call for national unity, the president, in his first full day back in the executive mansion, plunged Washington into further chaos by abruptly ending coronavirus relief talks.

Trump had stage-managed his dramatic, if reckless, reentry to the White House — tearing off his mask before stepping back inside Monday — and was pushing aides to return to the campaign trail as soon as possible, including to next week's second debate against Biden. But as the president remained contagious, his health under careful watch, a division emerged between aides over how to manage the fallout.

Some believed the moment could act as a late reset, allowing the president to draw from his own experiences to at last show empathy for those affected by a pandemic that has killed more than 210,000 Americans, left millions unemployed and sent his poll numbers tumbling.

But others believed that abruptly changing course after seven months of projecting strength over the virus wouldn't work and instead advocated for intensifying the message as a means to further fire up the president's supporters to turn out.

Trump made clear what he wanted.

"I am looking forward to the debate on the evening of Thursday, October 15th in Miami. It will be great!" he tweeted Tuesday, after previously posting an erroneous comparison between the dangers posed by COVID-19 and the flu.

"Will be back on the Campaign Trail soon!!!" Trump tweeted.

For months, the president had tried to make the race a choice election between himself and Biden, but his diagnosis ensured, again, that his two safe harbors, the economy and the Supreme Court, were cast off the stage.

Trump added to that Tuesday by suddenly announcing that he was pulling out White House representatives from congressional COVID-19 relief negotiations, blasting House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and seeming to accept the politically damaging responsibility for ending talks that were already on life support. Almost immediately, the stock market fell.

The virus cast a long shadow over the White House, where more positive cases among staff were reported Tuesday and rooms in the residence were being converted into workspaces for the president. Aides have noticed that while Trump was receiving wishes for his recovery, including from Democrats, there was little sympathy amid a sense that he had brought the virus on himself.

Trump has again played solely to his base, being the driving force behind a quick trip outside the hospital Sunday afternoon to greet fans from his armored SUV — a sojourn that energized supporters but unnecessarily jeopardized the health of the Secret Service agents guarding him. Likewise, Trump was intimately involved in the planning for his evening return to the White House, turning it into a made-for-TV moment that dominated evening newscasts.

Trump was eager to return to the campaign trail, telling aides that he wanted a series of mega rallies in Republican-friendly areas in battleground states to mark his recovery. But it remained to be seen when Trump would be cleared to set foot on Air Force One again.

The president was still contagious, and the White House doctor, Navy Cmdr. Sean Conley, said they were regularly testing Trump to determine whether he still posed a risk to others. And even once he's no longer actively shedding the virus, Trump could still test positive for some time, putting his participation in next week's debate in doubt despite his avowed plans to attend.

Biden said Tuesday that he and Trump "shouldn't have a debate" as long as the president remains positive for the coronavirus.

The long-term effects of the virus on Trump's health were not clear — White House doctors have not discussed them with the public. Nor was it clear when Trump might feel up to resuming a fuller campaign schedule. He appeared to be breathing heavily Monday evening after climbing stairs on his return to the White House.

But his aides feel that he can't afford to be off the campaign trail for long.

"If he had his druthers, I don't know if he would have ever gotten off the trail," said campaign spokesperson Hogan Gidley. "He's back, and when he's well enough, he'll be back on the campaign trail."



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The president has faced steady deficits in the national polls and — while smaller — in the battleground states. Aides have grown concerned about a slide in support after last week's debate, one marked by Trump repeatedly interrupting and hectoring Biden while not offering a robust condemnation of white supremacists.

Although his campaign had felt confident about his standing in Florida, Arizona and North Carolina, he has faced stubborn deficits in Michigan and Wisconsin, putting an extraordinary emphasis on Pennsylvania, which was emerging as the potential tipping point state to give Biden or Trump the needed 270 electoral votes.

And it was in Pennsylvania where Biden on Tuesday delivered a sweeping speech, one that mentioned Trump not once but that marked the beginning of the divisive campaign's stretch run with a call for the nation to heal.

He spoke in Gettysburg, site of the Civil War's bloodiest battle and Abraham Lincoln's most powerful call for unity, laying out plainly his belief that the purpose of the presidency was to bring the nation together.

"Duty and history call for presidents to provide for the common good, and I will. It won't be easy," Biden said. "Our divisions today are long-standing. Economic and racial inequities have shaped us for generations, but I give you my word, if I'm elected president, I will marshal the ingenuity and goodwill of this nation to turn division into unity."

Biden had pulled down negative ads after Trump's diagnosis but, after Trump's return to the White House, began promoting an image of the two side by side, the Democrat wearing a mask and the Republican tearing his off.

But other Democrats have not been so reticent to go after the president. In a video released by the Biden campaign Tuesday, Michelle Obama issued a scathing rebuke of Trump's handling of the coronavirus pandemic, accusing him of being "missing in action."

"Seven months later, he still won't wear a mask consistently and encourage others to do the same — even when those simple actions could save countless lives," the former first lady said. "Instead, he continues to gaslight the American people by acting like this pandemic is not a real threat."

Barrow reported from Gettysburg, Pa. Associated Press writer Alexandra Jaffe in Washington contributed to this report.

## The Latest: Top Trump aide Stephen Miller tests positive

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Latest on President Donald Trump's health after his COVID-19 diagnosis, and that of other White House aides, officials (all times local):

7:05 p.m.

Stephen Miller, President Donald Trump's senior adviser and speechwriter, tested positive for the coronavirus Tuesday.

A senior administration official said Miller had previously tested negative as White House officials have tried to contain an outbreak on the complex that has infected Trump, the first lady and more than a dozen other aides and associates.

Miller is an architect of the president's "America First" foreign policy and restrictive immigration measures. His wife, Katie Miller, who serves as communications director to Vice President Mike Pence, previously had the virus and tested negative after the last time she saw him. Katie Miller had been in Salt Lake City with Pence, where he is preparing to debate Democratic vice presidential nominee Kamala Harris, but she left as soon as she found out about her husband's diagnosis.

3:45 p.m.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi says President Donald Trump is "putting himself first at the expense of the country" by halting negotiations over a new coronavirus aid package from Congress.

Pelosi said Tuesday that Trump "showed his true colors" in stopping the talks between congressional

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leaders and the White House that have been aimed at bringing some \$2 trillion in new aid to fight the coronavirus.

The Democratic leader says by "walking away," Trump is "unwilling to crush the virus" and is abandoning the needs of children and other Americans.

Trump announced the move less than 24 hours after he returned to the White House from a three-day hospital stay while fighting his own bout with the coronavirus.

Pelosi says the White House is clearly in "disarray."

The speaker has been in talks with Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin trying to revive a massive new round of COVID-19 aid.

3:25 p.m.

President Donald Trump says he has instructed aides to stop negotiating on a coronavirus aid plan until after the election, roiling stock markets hoping for an economic boost for hard-hit industries such as the airlines.

Trump, who has the coronavirus himself, tweeted Tuesday that House Speaker Nancy Pelosi was not negotiating in good faith. He says, "I have instructed my representatives to stop negotiating until after the election when, immediately after I win, we will pass a major Stimulus Bill that focuses on hardworking Americans and Small Business."

Trump's tweet comes the same day that Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell warned that a tentative recovery from the pandemic recession could falter unless the federal government supplies additional economic support.

The Democratic-led House passed a \$2.2 trillion relief bill last week. The White House said at the time that it had raised the price tag on its own proposal to \$1.6 trillion. But bridging that difference has proved difficult.

1:30 p.m.

Sen. Kamala Harris tested negative for the coronavirus on Monday, two days before her debate with Vice President Mike Pence.

A campaign aide shared the results on Tuesday. The campaign did not respond to questions about if and when she would be tested again ahead of Wednesday's debate.

Harris, the Democratic vice presidential nominee, and Pence will participate in a 90-minute debate at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City. A plexiglass shield will be between them as a precaution against possible virus transmission. They will not wear masks on stage, nor will the moderator.

The Commission on Presidential Debates requires everyone accessing the debate site to have tested negative. Both Harris and Pence are currently in Utah preparing.

1:10 p.m.

Vice President Mike Pence's doctor says Pence does not need to quarantine and has continued to test negative for COVID-19 as he prepares for Wednesday's vice presidential debate.

White House physician Dr. Jesse Taylor Schonau says in a memo released Tuesday that Pence "has remained healthy, without any COVID-19 symptoms" and has continued daily tests, which have all come back negative.

The doctor said Pence is not considered to have had close contact with anyone who has tested positive this week, including President Donald Trump and some of his senior aides, according to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines.

The CDC defines close contact as having been within six feet of someone for 15 minutes or more.

The memo says Pence "is encouraged to go about his normal activities and does not need to quarantine."

12:55 p.m.

President Donald Trump's physician says the president is experiencing "no symptoms" of COVID-19 after

returning home from the hospital Monday night.

His physician, Navy Cmdr. Sean Conley, says in a new memo released by the White House that the president's medical team met with him in the residence Tuesday morning.

He says that Trump had a "restful first night at home" and that his vital signs remain stable, including his blood oxygen level.

The doctor did not provide any details on what medications the president is currently taking, including whether he has been administered additional steroids.

But he says, "Overall he continued to do extremely well."

## **AP FACT CHECK: Trump's faulty claims on flu and coronavirus**

By CALVIN WOODWARD Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump is back to making false comparisons between COVID-19 and the flu, contradicting science and even himself.

TRUMP: "Flu season is coming up! Many people every year, sometimes over 100,000, and despite the Vaccine, die from the Flu. Are we going to close down our Country? No, we have learned to live with it, just like we are learning to live with Covid, in most populations far less lethal!!!" — tweet Tuesday.

THE FACTS: First, he's overstating the U.S. death toll from the seasonal flu. The flu has killed 12,000 to 61,000 Americans annually since 2010, not 100,000, a benchmark rarely reached in U.S. history.

Second, health officials widely agree that the coronavirus seems to be at least several times more lethal than seasonal flu. At one point, Dr. Anthony Fauci of the National Institutes of Health told Congress it could be as much as 10 times more lethal.

Trump's tweet, which he sent even while grappling with his own COVID-19 infection, also flies in the face of what he told author Bob Woodward in February in an interview for the recent book "Rage."

He told Woodward on Feb. 7 that the virus was even more deadly than "your strenuous flus," even while suggesting publicly that the pandemic was akin to the flu season. "This is deadly stuff," he told the author.

For weeks after, though, the public heard soothing words from the president that he knew were not true. "This is a flu," he told a briefing Feb. 26. "This is like a flu."

As the death toll grew beyond anything seen most flu seasons, Trump pulled back on the increasingly untenable comparison. Now, tens of thousands of deaths later, it has returned.

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

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Find AP Fact Checks at <http://apnews.com/APFactCheck>

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## **AP FACT CHECK: False claims fly in Alabama U.S. Senate ads**

By KIM CHANDLER Associated Press

Misleading claims are flying in attack ads for the closely watched Alabama U.S. Senate race between Sen. Doug Jones, a Deep South Democrat, and his Republican opponent Tommy Tuberville, a former college football coach.

Tuberville, a political newcomer, is challenging Jones, who pulled off a close win during a special election three years ago. Republicans hope to win back the once reliably red Senate seat.

In a TV ad released last month, Tuberville falsely accused Jones of supporting extreme policies that would take firearms from gun owners and leave the U.S. border unguarded.

An ad out from Jones, meanwhile, twisted the details of business dealings gone awry for Tuberville, making it sound as though he is a con man — when it was Tuberville who investigators say was conned.

A look at the claims:

TUBERVILLE in ad: "He supports open borders and gun grabbers."

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THE FACTS: No, that's not true.

Jones, a self-described hunter and gun enthusiast, has called for limiting the ability of some people to get firearms but hasn't said he supports yanking weapons out of the hands of gun owners. Nor has he called on the government to open its borders to those crossing illegally.

Jones has called for universal background checks for gun purchases, a bump stock ban and raising the age for purchasing semi-automatic weapons to 21.

He used his maiden floor speech in 2018 to talk about gun violence, saying it is not "mutually exclusive" to support gun ownership while favoring tighter controls.

"We must acknowledge the deadly consequences that can follow when a gun is in the wrong hands, but also recognize and respect the freedom to own and enjoy guns by law-abiding citizens as guaranteed by the Second Amendment to the Constitution," Jones said at the time.

On the issue of border security, Jones opposed spending money on Trump's proposed border wall. But he has not pushed to end border protections, as the ad claims. For example, last year Jones joined a group of Republican senators to propose a new program that would hasten the return of migrants at the border who did not express fear of being in their home countries.

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Narrator in JONES ad: "Tommy Tuberville helped start a hedge fund that defrauded investors. An Alabama teacher, and parents saving for their children's education, lost everything."

THE FACTS: The ad leaves out that Tuberville was also viewed by investigators as a victim in the case. Tuberville wasn't prosecuted in the scheme that his business partner, John David Stroud, ran through the company the two launched together, TS Capital.

Stroud in 2013 pleaded guilty to investment fraud for misrepresenting the use of investor funds. The Alabama Security Commission said Stroud took investors' money and instead used it for personal expenses, unauthorized business and to pay returns to other investors.

The Alabama Securities Commission considered Tuberville one of Stroud's victims, said Joe Borg, the commission's director. Stroud was the one doing the trades and books, and the one considered criminally culpable by the regulators, Borg said.

"He got conned by Stroud, too," Borg said of Tuberville. "From what we could tell (Tuberville) was unwittingly used to bring folks in."

Borg did not know how much Tuberville lost, but said it was one of the larger sums.

The question of whether Tuberville should have been more clued into Stroud's wrongdoing was an issue for civil proceedings, Borg said.

Investors sued Stroud and Tuberville in 2012, arguing Tuberville as a partner in the firm violated his fiduciary duty to investors. One couple, a bookkeeper and a retired teacher, together invested more than \$800,000.

Tuberville, then a coach at Texas Tech, reached a settlement for an undisclosed sum in 2013.

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

## Countering Trump, US officials defend integrity of election

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Four weeks ahead of Election Day, senior national security officials provided fresh assurances about the integrity of the elections in a video message Tuesday, putting them at odds with President Donald Trump's efforts to discredit the vote.

"I'm here to tell you that my confidence in the security of your vote has never been higher," Chris Krebs, the director of the Department of Homeland Security's Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, said in the video message. "That's because of an all-of-nation, unprecedented election security effort over the last several years."

The video appeared to be aimed at soothing jangled nerves of voters ahead of an election made unique

by an expected surge in mail-in ballots because of the coronavirus pandemic. Though Trump was not mentioned during the nine-minute video, the message from the speakers served as a tacit counter to his repeated efforts, including in last week's presidential debate, to allege widespread fraud in the mail ballot process and to preemptively cast doubt on the legitimacy of the election.

The video was released as U.S. officials have revealed ongoing foreign efforts to interfere in the election, including Russian attempts to denigrate Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden. A recent blog post by Microsoft described election-related hacking attempts by Russian, Chinese and Iranian agents.

William Evanina, the U.S. government's chief counterintelligence official, said in Tuesday's video that foreign adversaries are spreading disinformation, engaging in influence operations, conducting cyber activities with the intent of gaining access to election infrastructure and trying to collect derogatory information on candidates, campaigns and prominent Americans.

"Despite these nefarious efforts, our election system remains resilient," said Evanina, director of the National Counterintelligence and Security Center. "To be clear, it would be very difficult for adversaries to interfere with or manipulate voting results at scale."

The officials conceded that the Nov. 3 election will be different than past ones because of the millions of Americans expected to vote by mail. But they offered no support for the idea that mail-balloting will be tainted by fraud or foreign interference as they detailed the steps their agencies are taking to safeguard the vote.

"No matter which method you choose, your voice is important," said FBI Director Chris Wray. "Rest assured that the security of the election, and safeguarding your vote is, and will continue to be one of our highest priorities," Wray said.

In an acknowledgment that the tallying of election results may be delayed not by fraud but for legitimate reasons, Krebs said the outcome of the vote may not be known on Nov. 3 — "and that's OK. But we're going to need your patience until official results are announced."

The four officials described the work of their respective agencies in countering foreign interference and influence operations, with Gen. Paul Nakasone, the head of the National Security Agency and commander of U.S. Cyber Command, describing efforts to "hunt" adversaries in cyberspace, attribute particular malicious software to individual culprits and impose costs for attacks.

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

## **Military leaders quarantined after official tests positive**

By LOLITA C. BALDOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The nation's top military leaders were under self-quarantine Tuesday after a senior Coast Guard official tested positive for the coronavirus, the Pentagon said. The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Mark Milley, and the vice chairman, Gen. John Hyten, were among those affected, U.S. officials said.

Military leaders who were in contact with Adm. Charles W. Ray, the vice commandant of the Coast Guard, were told Monday evening that he had tested positive, and they were all tested Tuesday morning, according to several U.S. officials. Pentagon spokesman Jonathan Hoffman said in a statement that none have exhibited symptoms or have so far tested positive.

Ray was in a meeting of the Joint Chiefs of Staff late Friday morning in what's called the Tank — the classified meeting room in the Pentagon. Officials said that is where most of the military leaders were exposed to him, but he also had other meetings with officials.

The news stunned officials at the Pentagon. Top leaders there have largely remained free of the virus, although there have been a number of outbreaks across the active-duty force and the reserves around the nation and overseas. Overall, more than 47,000 service members have tested positive for the virus, as of Monday, 625 have been hospitalized and eight have died.

It is not known how Ray contracted the virus. He attended an event for Gold Star military families at

the White House on Sept. 27 that was hosted by President Donald Trump and first lady Melania Trump. Several senior military leaders, including Milley, Defense Secretary Mark Esper, Army Gen. James McConville and Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy, also attended the event, which honored the families of service members who have died. A number of the military officials who were there got COVID-19 tests late last week after Trump and his wife both tested positive for the virus. According to officials, the military leaders were negative at that time, and they will continue to be tested in the coming days.

It's not clear if Ray contracted the virus at the White House event or elsewhere, officials said.

The Coast Guard said in a statement that Ray felt mild symptoms over the weekend and was tested Monday. It said he will quarantine from home, and other Guard personnel who were in close contact with him will also quarantine. The Coast Guard headquarters is not located in the Pentagon; it is in southeast Washington, D.C. It is the only military service that falls under the Department of Homeland Security rather than the Defense Department.

The Coast Guard is following established policies for COVID, per CDC guidelines, to include quarantine and contact tracing. According to CDC guidelines, any Coast Guard personnel that were in close contact will also quarantine.

In accordance with established Coast Guard COVID policies, Admiral Ray will be quarantining from home.

Since April, the Coast Guard has been following CDC, DoD and DHS guidelines for temperature testing, social distancing to the greatest extent possible, and the wearing of masks when social distancing is not possible. The Coast Guard remains ready to ensure our Nation's maritime safety, security and stewardship.

Hoffman said the quarantining of leaders won't affect "the operational readiness or mission capability of the U.S. Armed Forces." He added that, "senior military leaders are able to remain fully mission capable and perform their duties from an alternative work location."

Top military leaders have robust communication systems installed in their homes as a routine matter, and many have sporadically worked from home during the pandemic for a variety of reasons. Some stayed home after having been exposed to the virus and other military leaders have self-quarantined for a short time after returning from travel.

Hoffman's statement did not identify those affected, but multiple U.S. officials said that besides Milley, they included the chiefs of the Army, Navy, Air Force and National Guard, as well as the head of U.S. Cyber Command, Gen. Paul Nakasone. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss information not yet made public.

At least 14 military officials — including some staff members of the chiefs — are believed to have been potentially exposed to the virus after meetings last week with Ray. Hoffman said the military is conducting additional contact tracing to identify anyone who may have been exposed.

## Supporters mirror Trump's rosy projection of virus infection

By MICHELLE L. PRICE and FARNOUSH AMIRI Associated Press

CANTON, Ohio (AP) — As an infected President Donald Trump urged Americans not to fear the virus that has killed more than 1 million people worldwide, many of his supporters were already in sync with that message.

In interviews with Republican voters at Trump events and campaign offices, very few saw the president's illness as a cautionary tale. None said they would change their personal approach to masks or distancing, and many expressed a confidence that the disease was less dangerous than advertised.

In Ohio, a "Women for Trump" group gathered indoors — many maskless and not distanced — to pray for the president's recovery. In Nevada, a Reno businessman dismissed the threat of the pandemic as "overplayed." Nearby, another Trump backer shrugged off any second thoughts about having cheered at a Trump campaign event last week as part of a maskless crowd.

"I think most of us have reached the realization that, at some point, we're probably going catch it, and have to deal with it anyway," Ken Gray, a county commissioner from Dayton, Nevada, shortly before the president returned to the White House after three days of treatment for COVID-19 at Walter Reed National

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Military Medical Center.

Trump's "don't be afraid" takeaway is infuriating public health experts — who note that basic prevention measures do work contain the spread of the deadly virus. It's also angering family members of those who have died. But for many of Trump's supporters, the president was merely adopting an attitude they expect, and they themselves reflect, when it comes to the pandemic.

They view Trump's infection as almost inevitable. Some were amazed he'd made it this far before getting sick.

"It's October and he's just now getting it," said 18-year-old Taylor Adams, a first-time voter, at the women's meeting in Ohio. Adams even commended the president for not contracting the disease sooner. "I think that he's definitely going to pull through. But I'm not surprised that he did get it eventually."

The comments were a testament to the power of Trump's messaging, widely seen as misleading by public health experts. Throughout the pandemic, the president's public portrayal of the virus has been rosier than reality. He's routinely brushed off the severity of the outbreak and dismissed expert advice on mask wearing and social distancing. On Tuesday, he compared the virus to the seasonal flu, suggesting it was something that should be "learned to live with."

In fact, COVID-19 has proven to be a more potent killer than the flu, particularly among older people, and has shown indications of having long-term impacts on the health of younger people it infects.

Trump acknowledged to journalist Bob Woodward that he "wanted to always play it down" because he did not want to cause panic. Among many supporters, that appears to have worked. Trump voters interviewed this week were almost blase about their president's health scare, describing it as an unavoidable part of his work and travel schedule.

"I don't find it surprising. The president has spent much of the year around the country, with supporters, campaigning for another four years," said Ohio resident Brenda Parsons, 58.

As women supporting Trump gathered at an office building in Canton, a battleground area in the state's northeast, few wore masks.

They sat closer than the recommended six feet apart. They posed for photos with a life-size cutout of the president and a giant mural of a bald eagle wearing a "Make America Great Again" hat, and chanted "four more years!"

They prayed for the president and First Lady Melania Trump, who contracted the disease along with others in the White House.

"I pray and know the president's positive mindset combined with his faith in Jesus is what will help him pull through this," Parsons said.

It's unclear exactly how Trump got infected. He has traveled steadily for weeks for his reelection campaign, sometimes holding events indoors, where experts say the virus is more likely to spread. The White House required testing for anyone in close proximity to the president, but masks and social distancing practices were lax. Even now, masks at the White House are a matter of "personal choice" except for National Security Council staffers, who are required to wear them.

Trump's supporters don't view these practices as irresponsible and were largely quick to dismiss the level of risk involved.

Kathy Burke, a Reno retiree who dropped by her local Trump campaign office Monday afternoon to pick up more campaign signs, was wearing a Trump face mask, a precaution she said she already took before Trump's diagnosis. She too saw the president's infection as inevitable.

"Anybody could get it. I could get it," Burke said.

Rick Zirpolo, a Reno businessman who eschewed a mask outside, said he had no qualms with the way Trump has portrayed or confronted the deadly threat.

"From day one, I've thought the whole virus has been overplayed and used as a political tool," he said.

Zirpolo praised the president for briefly leaving the hospital over the weekend for a drive-by to wave to supporters, despite his infection. And he said Trump was right to leave the hospital Monday to return to the White House.

"I think it's outstanding because it shows his commitment to the nation," he said.

Across the country, in Newberry, South Carolina, Scott Gardner, a teacher and coach, felt differently. He didn't blame the president for having contracted COVID-19, given its pervasive nature and ease of transmission.

But the 50-year-old who supported Trump in 2016 and planned to again this year, hoped the president would change his behavior. The experience should serve as a "wakeup call" to employ more social distancing and masking, especially in a crowd.

"I guess it should be an eye opener," said Gardner. "But if you're going to get out of your basement, you're going to have a chance to catch it."

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This story has been corrected to show that Gray is from Dayton, Nevada, not Sparks, Nevada.

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Price reported from Las Vegas. Associated Press writers Meg Kinnard in Columbia, South Carolina, Scott Sonner in Reno, Nevada and Sam Metz in Carson City, Nevada contributed to this report.

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

By DAVID KEYTON, SETH BORENSTEIN and FRANK JORDANS Associated Press

STOCKHOLM (AP) — Three scientists won the Nobel Prize in physics Tuesday for establishing the all-too-weird reality of black holes — the straight-out-of-science-fiction cosmic monsters that suck up light and time and will eventually swallow us, too.

Roger Penrose of Britain, Reinhard Genzel of Germany and Andrea Ghez of the United States explained to the world these dead ends of the cosmos that are still not completely understood but are deeply connected, somehow, to the creation of galaxies.

Penrose, an 89-year-old at the University of Oxford, received half of the prize for proving with mathematics in 1964 that Einstein's general theory of relativity predicted the formation of black holes, even though Einstein himself didn't think they existed.

Genzel, who is at both the Max Planck Institute in Germany and the University of California, Berkeley, and Ghez, of the University of California, Los Angeles, received the other half of the prize for discovering in the 1990s a supermassive black hole at the center of our galaxy.

Black holes fascinate people because "the idea of some monster out there sucking everything up is a pretty weird thing," Penrose said in an interview with The Associated Press. He said our galaxy and the galaxies near us "will ultimately get swallowed by one utterly huge black hole. This is the fate ... but not for an awful long time, so it's not something to worry too much about."

Black holes are at the center of every galaxy, and smaller ones dot the universe. Just their existence is mind-bending. They are so massive that nothing, not even light, can escape their gravitational pull. They warp and twist light in a way that seems unreal and cause time to slow and stop.

"Black holes, because they are so hard to understand, is what makes them so appealing," Ghez, 55, said after becoming the fourth woman ever to win a Nobel in physics. "I really think of science as a big, giant puzzle."

While the three scientists showed the existence of black holes, it wasn't until last year that people could see one for themselves when another science team captured the first and only optical image of one. It looks like a flaming doughnut from hell but is in a galaxy 53 million light-years from Earth.

Penrose, a mathematical physicist who got the call from the Nobel Committee while in the shower, was surprised at his winning because his work is more theoretical than observational, and that's not usually what wins physics Nobels.

What fascinated Penrose more than the black hole was what was at the other end of it, something called the "singularity." It's something science still can't figure out.

"Singularity, that's a place where the densities and curvatures go to infinity. You expect the physics go crazy," he said from his home. "If you fall into a black hole, then you pretty well inevitably get squashed



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into this singularity at the end. And that's the end."

Penrose said he was walking to work with a colleague 56 years ago, thinking about "what it would be like to be in this situation where all this material is collapsing around you." He realized he had "some strange feeling of elation," and that was when things started coming together in his mind.

Martin Rees, the British astronomer royal, noted that Penrose triggered a "renaissance" in the study of relativity in the 1960s, and that, together with a young Stephen Hawking, he helped firm up evidence for the Big Bang and black holes.

"Penrose and Hawking are the two individuals who have done more than anyone else since Einstein to deepen our knowledge of gravity," Rees said. "Sadly, this award was too much delayed to allow Hawking to share the credit."

Hawking died in 2018, and Nobel Prizes are awarded only to the living.

New York University astrophysicist Glennys Farrar said: "There is no doubt that if this prize were awarded when Hawking was still alive, he would share it. He did overall more significant work on this subject than almost anyone."

Genzel, 68, and Ghez won because "they showed that black holes are not just theory — they're real, they're here, and there's a monster-size black hole in the center of our galaxy, the Milky Way," said Brian Greene, a theoretical physicist and mathematician at Columbia University.

In the 1990s, Genzel and Ghez, leading separate groups 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. It was "an extremely heavy, invisible object that pulls on the jumble of stars, causing them to rush around at dizzying speeds," according to the Nobel Committee.

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

The first image Ghez got was in 1995, using the Keck Telescope in Hawaii that had just gone online. A year later, another image seemed to indicate that the stars near the center of the Milky Way were circling something. A third image led Ghez and Genzel to think they were really on to something.

A fierce competition developed between Ghez and Genzel, whose team was using an array of telescopes at the European Southern Observatory in Chile.

"Their rivalry elevated them to greater scientific heights," said Harvard astronomer Avi Loeb.

Unlike with other achievements honored with Nobels, there is no practical application for these discoveries.

"Is there a practical application to Beethoven's Ninth Symphony?" Columbia's Greene asked. "But its existence, this type of spectacular knowledge, is part of what gives life meaning."

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

On Monday, the Nobel in medicine was awarded to Americans Harvey J. Alter and Charles M. Rice and British-born scientist Michael Houghton for discovering the liver-ravaging hepatitis C virus. The prizes for chemistry, literature, peace and economics will be announced in the coming days.

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Borenstein reported from Kensington, Maryland, Jordans from Berlin. AP Science Writer Christina Larson in Washington contributed to this report.

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

## Experts call Trump's rosy virus message misguided

By LINDSEY TANNER AP Medical Writer

Should people fear the coronavirus?

Public health experts say 1 million worldwide deaths are among reasons to be concerned, if not fearful, and to take everyday precautions despite rosy advice from the still-recovering president.

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"Don't let it dominate you. Don't be afraid of it. You're going to beat it," Donald Trump said in a White House video released after he left the hospital Monday.

In the United States alone, more than 210,000 people weren't able to beat it.

The seven-day rolling average for new U.S. cases has climbed over the past two weeks to almost 42,000 per day. The nation also sees more than 700 COVID-19 deaths each day.

COVID-19 also is deadlier than the flu, despite Trump's claim otherwise. Flu has killed 12,000 to 61,000 Americans annually since 2010, according to CDC estimates.

It is true that the vast majority of people who get COVID-19 develop only mild symptoms. But experts can't predict which patients will develop dangerous or deadly infections. And only a small percentage of Americans have been sickened by the coronavirus, meaning the vast majority are still at risk for infection.

It is true, as Trump said in the video, that medicines have been found that can treat the virus, reducing chances for severe illness and death. But there is still no cure for it and no definitive date for when an effective vaccine might become widely available.

Another reason for concern is uncertainty over which patients will develop lasting complications affecting the lungs, heart, kidneys and other organs. While these are more common in patients with severe infections, persistent symptoms lasting several months have occurred even in those with mild disease. Fatigue is among the most common.

Taking everyday precautions including wearing masks and social distancing to curb disease spread doesn't mean the virus is dominating people's lives, said Dr. Khalilah Gates, an assistant professor of medicine at Northwestern University in Chicago.

"There are things we need to do collectively to make sure we minimize the mortality," Gates said. "That's not domination. That's just being willing to make changes so we can all get through this in a much better and safer way."

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Follow AP Medical Writer Lindsey Tanner at @LindseyTanner.

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

## California wildfires are larger than ever, but not deadlier

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

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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. There have been 31 people killed in the fires. While those figures are terrible, the number of fatalities has been higher in previous years. Many of this year's biggest fires are burning on largely unpopulated federal land.

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.

Wildfires in 2018 destroyed more than 22,000 structures in the most devastating year on record. They included the Camp Fire, which was sparked by a Pacific Gas & Electric transmission line and nearly wiped out the town of Paradise, destroying almost 11,000 homes and killing 85 people. Another 15 people died in other blazes that year.

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. Utilities throughout the state also started implementing planned power outages amid hot, windy, dry weather to prevent their equipment from igniting fires.

Last year, PG&E for the first time cut electricity to millions of people throughout northern and central California in the largest preventive outage in state history. The company ordered more power outages this year.

"Paradise was definitely a wake-up call for us," said Craig Clements, director of the Wildfire Interdisciplinary Research Center at San Jose State University.

"We don't have hurricanes and tornadoes, fire is our severe weather, and Californians in risk areas need to get used to having the power out for a day. That's the new normal," he added.

## OVERWHELMED FIREFIGHTERS

When the scourge of fires sparked by thousands of lightning strikes hit in mid-August, 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."

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.

After months fighting the blazes, 17,000 firefighters working on two dozen major fires are getting a reprieve from the weather this week. While conditions continue to be hot and dry in some areas, temperatures were cooler Tuesday along Northern California's coast and forecasts say there is a chance of rain Thursday through Saturday.

The cooler temperatures have helped fire crews corral some of the most destructive blazes. The Glass Fire, burning in wine country, was 50% contained Tuesday. In the north end of the state, containment on the Zogg Fire burning in Shasta County grew to 82%.

## 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.

This story has been updated to correct that the lightning strikes hit in mid-August, not mid-September.

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

## Trump's top federal prosecutors are overwhelmingly white men

By JAKE BLEIBERG, AARON MORRISON and JIM MUSTIAN Associated Press

The nation's top federal prosecutors have become less diverse under President Donald Trump than under his three predecessors, leaving white men overwhelmingly in charge at a time of national demonstrations over racial inequality and the fairness of the criminal justice system.

The Associated Press analyzed government data from nearly three decades and found that a persistent lack of diversity in the ranks of U.S. attorneys has reached a nadir in the Trump administration. Eighty-five percent of his Senate-confirmed U.S. attorneys are white men, according to AP's analysis, compared with 58% in Democratic President Barack Obama's eight years, 73% during Republican George W. Bush's two terms and at most 63% under Democrat Bill Clinton.

White men lead 79 of the 93 U.S. attorney's offices in a country where they make up less than a third of the population. Nine current U.S. attorneys are women. Two are Black, and two Hispanic.

Federal prosecutors can have a profound effect on the criminal justice system and leadership holds an immense sway. Without a diverse group considering cases, bias can seep unnoticed into charging decisions and sentencing recommendations, undermine federal leadership with state and local law enforcement and chip away at the perceived legitimacy of the justice system.

The enduring imbalance leaves U.S. attorneys looking less like the people they serve, and is in stark contrast to the population of federal prisons, where a disproportionate share of those incarcerated are Black.

"When you take it in the aggregate, it becomes very evident that the department, as a whole, is simply not valuing diversity at its highest ranks of leadership and not making the most well-informed decisions when those voices are absent from the decision-making process," said Kenneth Polite Jr., who served as U.S. attorney in New Orleans during Obama's second term. "It would be silly for anyone to suggest the department couldn't do better."

The gap is especially relevant in an era when state and local law enforcement are repeatedly being taken to task over decisions not to prosecute police in the killings of Black people. U.S. prosecutors can serve as a backstop in those scenarios by bringing federal charges.

The Trump administration's inability to hire top prosecutors who reflect the nation has also deepened mistrust in communities frustrated by the Justice Department's shift away from investigating police practices and Attorney General William Barr's dismissal of the idea of systemic racism in law enforcement.

White House spokesman Judd Deere did not answer questions about the diversity of U.S. attorneys under Trump's watch, but said in a statement that the administration has "worked closely with U.S. Senators to identify the best candidates to serve as the chief law enforcement officer in their districts back home, and we are very proud of the work that they are doing to keep all Americans safe."

Former prosecutors say that even among qualified and well-meaning professionals, bias can skew prosecutorial decisions where there isn't a varied group considering cases. It's something Danny Williams Sr. saw a year after he became a U.S. attorney in Oklahoma in 2012.

Tulsa police had arrested two groups, one white and the other Black, in separate armed robberies, and the cases ended up before federal prosecutors. The facts were similar, so Williams said he was surprised that the proposed charges that reached his desk were different: The Black defendants were facing more potential prison time.

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Williams, who is Black, said he asked the assistant U.S. attorney who'd handled the cases what factual difference accounted for the disparity. The career prosecutor, who is white, responded that the white defendants were college students, Williams said.

"I don't want this story to come off as I thought the guy was racist. I just think that he didn't grasp, in the charging decision, the way he treated these two different groups differently," Williams said. "It's just an example of, this is why you need diversity."

The same charges were ultimately brought in both cases, according to Williams.

To be sure, the way bias plays out is complex and there is not a direct relationship between a prosecutor's race or sex and the decisions he or she makes. Though the U.S. attorney may be the public face of a prosecuting office, he or she is hardly the sole decision-maker, serving instead at the top of a career bureaucracy that relies on the judgment and informed recommendations of lower-level officials who often do the complicated investigative work.

After a white South Carolina police officer gunned down Walter Scott, who was Black, in 2015, the Justice Department secured a 20-year prison sentence for the officer.

Jared Fishman, the white former prosecutor who handled the case, "showed so much compassion and he took on my brother's case as if it was his own family," said Anthony Scott, Walter's older brother.

But other families have had their hopes dashed.

After New York prosecutors didn't bring criminal charges in the death of Eric Garner, the Obama administration launched a federal investigation that was left incomplete and handed off two years later to the Trump administration before Garner's family got word no charges would be filed. Garner died in 2014 after a police officer's chokehold.

And years before George Floyd's death under the knee of a white Minneapolis police officer set off protests around the country, Valerie Castile turned to the federal government after the Minnesota police officer who killed her son was found not to have committed a crime.

Castile described the Justice Department as "our last hope, when these little towns ... don't want to do what's right."

Former St. Anthony police Officer Jeronimo Yanez shot Philando Castile, a Black school cafeteria worker, in July 2016, within two minutes of approaching his car during a traffic stop in the Twin Cities suburb of Falcon Heights. A state court jury acquitted him of second-degree manslaughter the next summer.

After Castile's death, his mother and political leaders in Minnesota, where police killed at least 60 people between 2008 and 2015, according to state data, pressed for an outside investigation into the shooting and charges of racially biased policing in the region.

Local prosecutors got help in the case from the Minnesota U.S. Attorney's Office, but no independent federal probe was opened.

The Justice Department's Community Oriented Policing Services Office did, however, start a review of the St. Anthony Police Department. Castile testified at a community forum similar to ones the department held during its review of police practices in St. Louis County, Missouri, following the 2014 police shooting death of Michael Brown in Ferguson.

But before the office finished its findings, Trump's Justice Department, under the leadership of then-Attorney General Jeff Sessions, put a stop to all such assessments, according to an announcement of the changes and the office's former director, Ronald Davis.

Four years after her son's death, Castile is confused about what happened with the federal review of the department whose officer killed him. The spokesperson for Minnesota's U.S. Attorney's Office declined to discuss its investigation or to characterize its interactions with Valerie Castile.

But Castile knows "we'll never see my son reach his full potential, as a Black man" – a sentiment shared by protesters across the country who are convinced the justice system doesn't work for people like them.

"They want to tell you, 'Oh, it's not a federal case. We can't make a case,'" Castile said. "Yes, you can! You change things as you want to."

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A lack of diversity has long been an issue throughout the federal law enforcement and criminal justice systems. In some places it's grown more acute under Trump.

Then-FBI Director James Comey said in 2016 that the bureau's failure to recruit more minorities had become "a crisis." In the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, recent court filings show 8% of the agency's more than 4,000 special agents are Black while about 77% are white.

An AP analysis also found nearly 86% of the 206 federal judges confirmed to lifetime positions under Trump have been white — the highest rate of white judicial appointments since George H.W. Bush's presidency. Two-thirds of Trump's judicial appointees have been white men; fewer than a quarter have been women.

And at the top of the Justice Department, Trump's two attorneys general — Barr and Sessions — are also white. That compares with the past three administrations in which Black people, a Latino man and the first female attorney general served as the nation's top law officer.

"Oftentimes you go into court and the judge is white, the prosecutor is white, the defense attorney is white, the only person in the courtroom who's Black is the defendant," said Gregory Davis, who was a U.S. attorney in Mississippi during the Obama administration.

U.S. attorneys, who have wide power to bring cases within their districts and draw on the investigative prowess of federal law enforcement agencies, are chosen for Senate confirmation through an interplay of the White House, the Justice Department and political leaders from each state.

The path to a U.S. attorney's office begins with state political leaders, usually senators or governors, making suggestions to the president, who generally picks a new slate of top prosecutors after taking office. The White House then sends one to three candidates for each federal district to the Justice Department to be interviewed and vetted.

More than a dozen current U.S. attorneys, including four women, are serving in acting roles. An acting U.S. attorney can be appointed in a number of ways if an office becomes vacant and another person cannot quickly go through Senate confirmation.

If the Justice Department doesn't support a candidate, officials there have to negotiate with the White House for someone else. The state leaders sometimes insist on their picks and exercise significant power over confirmations, which traditionally require the assent of both senators from a prosecutor's home state.

In response to questions for this story the Justice Department provided a statement from Erin Nealy Cox, U.S. attorney in Dallas and chair of the Attorney General Advisory Committee, that did not address the demographic disparities among U.S. attorneys. She said the current group are among "the most dedicated public servants in America" and noted many have long been prosecutors.

AP Data Editor Meghan Hoyer in Washington contributed to this report.

## US trade deficit up to \$67.1 billion in August, 14-year high

By PAUL WISEMAN AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. trade deficit rose in August to the highest level in 14 years.

The Commerce Department reported Tuesday that the gap between the goods and services the United States sells and what it buys abroad climbed 5.9% in August to \$67.1 billion, highest since August 2006. Exports rose 2.2% to \$171.9 billion on a surge in shipments of soybeans, but imports rose more — up 3.2% to \$239 billion — led by purchases of crude oil, cars and auto parts.

The U.S. deficit with the rest of the world in the trade of goods such as airplanes and appliances set a record \$83.9 billion in August. The United States ran a surplus of \$16.8 billion in the trade of services such as banking and education, lowest since January 2012.

The politically sensitive deficit in the trade of goods with China fell 6.7% to \$26.4 billion.

So far this year, the United States has recorded a trade gap of \$421.8 billion, up 5.7% from January-August 2019.

Hammered by the coronavirus and its fallout on the world economy, total U.S. trade -- exports plus imports -- is down 15.1% so far this year to \$3.2 trillion.

"Overall, trade flows remain subdued and the outlook is uncertain given a muted global growth and demand backdrop," said Rubeela Farooqi, chief U.S. economist at High Frequency Economics.

President Donald Trump campaigned on a pledge to bring down America's persistent trade deficits. He imposed taxes on imports of steel, aluminum and most products from China, among other things; and renegotiated a North American trade pact in an effort to encourage more production in the United States.

But the trade deficit won't yield easily to changes in trade policy. As the U.S. economy recovers from springtime shutdowns, Americans are buying more imported goods while foreign demand for U.S. products remains weak.

In an unusual move, U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer issued a statement on the monthly trade deficit report Tuesday, defending the president's record. Lighthizer noted that the U.S. deficit in the trade of goods is down 2.4% so far this year and would have fallen more if it weren't for a surge in gold imports by investors using the precious metal to hedge against risks at a time of considerable uncertainty.

He also said: "The trade deficit increased in August because America's economy has recovered more quickly than our trade partners."

## 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 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

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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.

## Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, Oct. 7, the 281st day of 2020. There are 85 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Oct. 7, 1996, Fox News Channel made its debut.

On this date:

In 1910, a major wildfire devastated the northern Minnesota towns of Spooner and Baudette, charring at least 300,000 acres; some 40 people are believed to have died.

In 1916, in the most lopsided victory in college football history, Georgia Tech defeated Cumberland University 222-0 in Atlanta.

In 1954, Marian Anderson became the first Black singer hired by the Metropolitan Opera Company in New York.

In 1960, Democratic presidential candidate John F. Kennedy and Republican opponent Richard Nixon



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held their second televised debate, this one in Washington, D.C.

In 1982, the Andrew Lloyd Webber-Tim Rice musical "Cats" opened on Broadway. (The show closed Sept. 10, 2000, after a record 7,485 performances.)

In 1985, Palestinian gunmen hijacked the Italian cruise ship Achille Lauro (ah-KEE'-leh LOW'-roh) in the Mediterranean. (The hijackers shot and killed Leon Klinghoffer, a Jewish-American tourist in a wheelchair, and pushed him overboard, before surrendering on Oct. 9.)

In 1991, University of Oklahoma law professor Anita Hill publicly accused Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas of making sexually inappropriate comments when she worked for him; Thomas denied Hill's allegations.

In 1992, trade representatives of the United States, Canada and Mexico initialed the North American Free Trade Agreement during a ceremony in San Antonio, Texas, in the presence of President George H.W. Bush, Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney (muhl-ROO'-nee) and Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari.

In 1998, Matthew Shepard, a gay college student, was beaten and left tied to a wooden fencepost outside of Laramie, Wyoming; he died five days later. (Russell Henderson and Aaron McKinney are serving life sentences for Shepard's murder.)

In 2001, the war in Afghanistan started as the United States and Britain launched air attacks against military targets and Osama bin Laden's training camps in the wake of the September 11 attacks.

In 2003, California voters recalled Gov. Gray Davis and elected Arnold Schwarzenegger their new governor.

In 2004, President George W. Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney conceded that Saddam Hussein had no weapons of mass destruction as they tried to shift the Iraq war debate to a new issue, arguing that Saddam was abusing a U.N. oil-for-food program.

Ten years ago: New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie canceled construction of a decades-in-the-making train tunnel between New Jersey and Manhattan, citing cost overruns that had ballooned the price tag from \$5 billion to \$10 billion or more. A toxic red sludge that had burst out of a Hungarian factory's reservoir reached the mighty Danube after wreaking havoc on smaller rivers and creeks.

Five years ago: President Barack Obama apologized to Doctors Without Borders for the American air attack that killed 42 people at its hospital in Afghanistan, and said the U.S. would examine military procedures to look for better ways to prevent such incidents. The Congressional Budget Office estimated that the federal government ran a budget deficit of \$435 billion in the just-completed budget year, the smallest shortfall since 2007. Tomas Lindahl of Sweden, American Paul Modrich and Turkish-American scientist Aziz Sanca won the Nobel Prize in chemistry for showing how cells repaired damaged DNA — work that inspired the development of new cancer treatments.

One year ago: House Democrats issued subpoenas to Defense Secretary Mark Esper and acting White House budget director Russell Vought as part of the impeachment inquiry of President Donald Trump. First lady Melania Trump called on the makers of e-cigarettes to stop marketing them to children, saying that they are addictive and dangerous. The New York Yankees completed a sweep over the Minnesota Twins in the American League Division Series and advanced to meet the Houston Astros for the league championship; it was the Twins' 16th straight loss in postseason games, tying the North American major sports record held by the NHL's Chicago Blackhawks.

Today's Birthdays: Retired South African Archbishop and Nobel Peace laureate Desmond Tutu is 89. Author Thomas Keneally is 85. Comedian Joy Behar is 78. Former National Security Council aide Lt. Col. Oliver North (ret.) is 77. Rock musician Kevin Godley (10cc) is 75. Actor Jill Larson is 73. Country singer Kieran Kane is 71. Singer John Mellencamp is 69. Rock musician Ricky Phillips is 69. Russian President Vladimir Putin is 68. Actor Mary Badham (Film: "To Kill a Mockingbird") is 68. Rock musician Tico Torres (Bon Jovi) is 67. Actor Christopher Norris is 65. Cellist Yo-Yo Ma is 65. Gospel singer Michael W. Smith is 63. Olympic gold medal ice dancer Jayne Torvill is 63. Actor Dylan Baker is 62. Actor Judy Landers is 62. Recording executive and TV personality Simon Cowell is 61. Rock musician Charlie Marinkovich (formerly with Iron Butterfly) is 61. Actor Paula Newsome is 59. Country singer Dale Watson is 58. Pop singer Ann Curless (Expose) is 57. Rhythm-and-blues singer Toni Braxton is 53. Rock singer-musician Thom Yorke (Radiohead) is 52. Rock musician-dancer Leeroy Thornhill is 51. Actor Nicole Ari Parker is 50. Actor Allison

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Munn is 46. Rock singer-musician Damian Kulash (KOO'-lahsh) is 45. Singer Taylor Hicks is 44. Actor Omar Miller is 42. Neo-soul singer Nathaniel Rateliff (Nathaniel Rateliff & the Night Sweats) is 42. Actor Shawn Ashmore is 41. Actor Jake McLaughlin is 38. Electronic musician Flying Lotus (AKA Steve Ellison) is 37. MLB player Evan Longoria is 35. Actor Holland Roden is 34. Actor Amber Stevens is 34. MLB outfielder Mookie Betts is 28. Actor Lulu Wilson is 15.