

# Groton Daily Independent

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Chicken Soup  
for the Soul

“CREATIVITY  
INVOLVES  
BREAKING OUT OF  
EXPECTED  
PATTERNS IN  
ORDER TO LOOK AT  
THINGS IN A  
DIFFERENT WAY.”

-EDWARD DE BONO

## 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)



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.

## Your Community's Pivot toward Thriving



 **DAKOTA  
RESOURCES**

**Paula Jensen**  
**Vice President of**  
**Advancement**

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When I started marching band as a sixth grader in my rural public school, the most difficult thing I had to learn was to pivot. The instructions went something like this -- on beat two of the third measure, you will pivot on your right foot and turn toward the left. By the next downbeat, you will have turned ninety degrees to the left, with the left foot out and ready to make the step off on one. If I overstepped or pivoted too soon, then the entire column of musicians behind me would be off and everything could fall apart. I know this because it happened. Panic ensued. But thankfully, someone was looking ahead, saw the error and picked up the pace to right the wrong.

During the pandemic, people are using the word pivot as a reference to how we must change the direction of our day-to-day activities to manage our new ways of living. Communities are also needing to pivot due to economic shifts, remote work, school and business closures, increased demand for housing and more. To thrive rather than just survive, our communities must plan to pivot and claim their own success.

These efforts to pivot and create a thriving community can be accomplished by gathering a small group of engaged residents that are guided by this four step process: 1) start by assessing the current community conditions 2) create a purpose with three to five pivot strategies 3) layout an implementation plan 4) celebrate, evaluate, then repeat the steps every three years, or so.

The first step of assessment is a general one—carry out a preliminary investigation of the current community condition to help in the selection of the pivot strategies. Start by gathering some numerical facts and demographics that provide a snapshot of the community. A core group of local leaders should also capture people's perceptions and priorities for the community over the next two or three years through conversations. A good question to begin with is, "What would our community look like if it were thriving?"

The second step after analyzing the assessment (and taking a good look at the community's strengths), is to write a one-sentence purpose statement that will guide the work. Next, choose three to five pivot strategies that align with the purpose and the assessment. Choose pivot strategies that satisfy both of the following conditions:

- The strategy addresses a major community problem, and
- The community has some available assets to make substantial progress on this strategy. (For example, a main street rich with impressive buildings ready for rehab, a passionate group wanting to start a local foods co-op, a thriving culture of microbusinesses ripe for development, or an empty lot available for new housing)

During step three, gather a group of passionate community shareholders. Ask the group to narrow down the pivot strategies to one or two. Then work collaboratively to layout an implementation plan. This plan can be broken down into 90-day increments laying out the actions, deliverables, expected outcomes, responsible parties, budget, and deadlines needed to accomplish the prioritized strategies over the next 12 months.

Step four recognizes that learning along the way is essential and conditions are constantly changing. So first and foremost, celebrate your successes as they happen. Then, evaluate and improve on the implementation plan making sure to monitor your outcomes and inform the community of your progress.

This work requires tenacity and a foundation of sustained leadership, strong partnerships, and resident engagement. By involving a multitude of people in this process—the community will claim its own success and pivot toward thriving.

Having a passion for community leadership and development is what drives Paula Jensen's personal

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and professional life. Paula resides in her hometown of Langford, South Dakota, population 318+. She serves as a Strategic Doing practitioner, grant writer and community coach with Dakota Resources based in Renner, South Dakota. Dakota Resources is a mission-driven 501c3 Community Development Financial Institution working to connect capital and capacity to empower rural communities. Contact her at paula@dakotaresources.org.

25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

*Celebration!*

25¢  
items

October 7-8-9, 2020  
Door Prizes  
Treats

25% off  
gifts  
(some exclusions)

Take a trivia quiz and receive a chance  
to win a \$25 gift certificate

*Please come and celebrate with us!*

**LORI'S**  
**PHARMACY**  
(605) 397-2363 1205 N 1st St., Groton





## Parts of tower have arrived

Some parts of the new water tower have arrived at the site. Reports have it that a crane may show up next week and that the tower may be erected this fall. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



# Omaha Steaks Daily Independent

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TENDER &  
GUARANTEED DELICIOUS**



GET THE OMAHA STEAKS CLASSIC  
**INTRODUCTORY PRICE: \$129<sup>99</sup>**

- 4 (5 oz.) Butcher's Cut Filet Mignons
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## #227 in a series

### Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

Well. This is not what I was wanting to report today. We're back over 50,000 new cases today, over 0.7% increase. We're at 7,579,500 cases reported in the US. And we're at 211,693 reported deaths. There were 1024 deaths reported today, a 0.5% increase. This puts us over 1000 daily new cases after almost two weeks below that mark. None of this looks great.

Utah is averaging more than 1000 new cases daily over the past week, the highest it's been since the pandemic began. Viral spread spiked as summer ended. Alaska is showing record numbers of cases with the highest test positivity it's seen yet; we should note, however that their positivity is still not super scary at just 4.2%. Montana set a new record for new cases and new hospitalizations this week. South Dakota recorded its second biggest day ever in terms of new cases and its third biggest ever for deaths; hospitalizations set a record today. And in case you were thinking these days were in the rear-view mirror, Wisconsin is activating a field hospital next week; their hospitalizations are out of control and at their highest level of the pandemic. Then there's North Dakota, the state with the highest per capita new-case count for a few weeks running. Hospitalizations have peaked there as well, forcing patients to be sent to faraway hospitals, even in other states. Resources are particularly stretched in rural areas where there are no large hospitals at all nearby. And we still have just four states showing declines in new cases over the past week.

That tired old comparison between Covid-19 and influenza is rearing its ugly head again along with the spurious claims that Covid-19 is really no worse, maybe even better, than the flu. This really is the story that just will not die even though it really, really deserves to. We have had that conversation several times before; the most complete discussion was probably at my Update #68 posted on May 2 at <https://www.facebook.com/marie.schwabmiller/posts/3557028290980218>. Short version: reported deaths for influenza (which are actually combined pneumonia and influenza deaths) cannot directly be compared to reported deaths for Covid-19, which are not bundled with deaths from other causes; even despite this, reported annual influenza deaths are far less than reported deaths from Covid over less than nine months; Covid-19 is more easily transmitted, largely because it has a longer incubation period during which it is transmissible; Covid-19's R0 of 2-3 is far larger than influenza's R0 of 1.28; and we do not have a vaccine against Covid-19, whereas we do have effective vaccines against influenza. Can we put this one to rest?

I've been seeing information for a few weeks on this next topic, but over the weekend, a friend pointed me in the direction of a more comprehensive explanation of the phenomenon. Something that has been puzzling during this pandemic is the fact that populations can be so very different in their transmission and rates. We've looked at R0 and Re, versions of the reproduction number for the virus, which is the number of others, on average, to whom one infected person transmits it. But we've been seeing plenty of evidence that individual cases of Covid-19 are wildly different in their efficiency as transmitters, that this average can obscure that wide variation. We've also talked about superspreader events—the single person at a choir practice or a church service or a bar who infects numerous others—and that 20 percent of cases appear to be responsible for 80% of spread.

So let's talk about another measure epidemiologists use, and that is dispersion number. This number refers to whether the virus spreads evenly and steadily—like when each case infects 1-3 people and the average represented by Re is pretty close to what we see with each individual—or it spreads sort of in bursts—where several people don't infect anyone else and another spreads virus to 10 or 20 (or more) others. An overdispersed pathogen is one that spreads in clusters, and when that happens, the average represented by Re loses some of its usefulness.

The example of how averages can mislead that I saw in my reading draws a picture of this for us: Suppose you have a bar with 100 people in it. So if Jeff Bezos walks into the bar, the average wealth of the people in the bar suddenly exceeds \$1 billion. But if I walk into the bar, the average wealth probably doesn't get much of a bump in either direction. When everyone's pretty much within hollering distance of everyone else in terms of personal wealth, adding or taking away any one person doesn't change much;

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but when someone is wildly different from everyone else, then averaging just pretends the differences among them don't matter when, of course, they really do. Many infections like influenza are more like me walking into the bar; Covid-19 is more like Bezos.

So if you put one guy with Covid-19 in that same bar and the ventilation is bad and they're all speaking loudly and leaning in so they can hear their conversational partners over the din, then before you know it, you could have a superspreader event. Nearly everyone in the bar could become infected. That's dispersion. We still don't understand whether some folks just shed virus better than others or the entire cluster effect comes from the circumstances. Maybe if the infected guy in the bar is not a good shedder, then everyone goes home healthy at the end of the night. OR maybe any time you get an infected guy in this scenario you're going to have trouble. We're just not sure about that part yet.

Even so, understanding the way overdispersed pathogens transmit gives us opportunities to apply that understanding to our mitigation efforts. For starters, it probably makes sense to do more backward contact tracing instead of (or in addition to, if we have the resources) forward contact tracing. Here's the principle: If you're infected, chances are you're not a superspreader. How do I know this when I don't even know you? Because only a small percentage of infected people are superspreaders, so odds are you're not among them. On the other hand, there's a pretty good chance you got the virus from a superspreader. How do I know that? Same way: Most infections come from a superspreader, so odds are that's where yours came from. That means we should be more interested in where your infection came from—so we can identify and trace contacts from that superspreader—than in who you're giving it to—which is most likely going to be no one or maybe one person. Most transmission chains die out on their own; the ones of most interest are the ones which don't do that, the superspreader ones.

We can also use those cheap rapid tests in this scenario, even though they miss some infections. Let's say you're infected and we collect 20 names of contacts from you. If we give them rapid tests, maybe we'll miss someone who's really infected. But if you are a superspreader and there's a cluster there, then enough of those folks are likely to be infected that we're going to turn up some transmissions. And if we do, then we can get more serious about the possibility of a cluster; if no one turns up infected, then chances are there's no cluster to find.

When we're still short of the resources we need to address this pandemic on all fronts, it seems to me to be wise to deploy those we have in the most efficient manner possible. Considering and working from an understanding of dispersion may give us the opportunity to do so. And at this point, the way things have been going, I think the smart money's on considering all of the possible solutions. No one wants to do this a whole lot longer than absolutely necessary.

Here's a low-tech way to reduce aerosolized virus in the air: a pair of box fans with HEPA (high efficiency particulate air) filters taped to their fronts. Then you set them up with one blowing on yourself and the other blowing away so that air coming to you is filtered to protect you, and air coming from you is filtered to protect others. An infectious disease aerobiologist and a professor of mechanical engineering at the University of Maryland built and tested just that sort of set-up. Their findings, when working with a group of choir members, were that this crude sort of arrangement reduced the concentration of particles in the room by 50%. The researchers have reached out to the presidential debate commission with the recommendation this sort of technique be employed during this year's debates. No word on any response.

There's a new device being prepared for field trials in schools across the nation intended to detect coughs, sneezes, and fevers in a classroom, alerting the teacher when a predetermined number of parameters come together to indicate a problem in the classroom. The device has a microphone connected to a processor which sorts out classroom sounds, identifying coughs and sneezes, and a sensor for unusual body temperatures. Because it cannot detect asymptotically-infected individuals, this is no silver bullet, but it could be another tool in the arsenal. The developers are currently looking for 100 schools to participate in trials. We'll keep an eye out for further news.

I have a quick update on a story we discussed just about a month ago, a story about Rodney Smith, Jr., who started a public service movement for youth. He's been mowing lawns for seniors, people with



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disabilities, veterans, and single mothers for some time, and I reported here about his completion of his goal to mow a lawn in each state. I thought I'd mention that his youth program, Raising Men Lawn Care Service has added something. They've always accepted girls into their ranks, but numbers of girls were small—maybe something about wearing a t-shirt that says "Raising Men" on it. At any rate, Smith noticed his oversight and added Raising Women to the name so that now girls get Raising Women t-shirts. He added this comment to the announcement of this change: "Anything he can mow, she can mow better," a nod to an old Irving Berlin tune. The web site keeps a running count of their achievements: To date, 700 kids with the support of 100,000 supporters have mowed 15,000 lawns. Oh, my! And Smith himself, since he finished the 50-lawn tour I reported to you in September, embarked on another one. This time around, he's done 48 lawns in 20 days with just Hawaii and Alaska left to go. He's waiting for October 15, when travel restrictions are lightened, to hit Hawaii, and then he's heading to Alaska. Since he also moves snow as needed, he says if it's snowing in Alaska by the time he arrives, he'll just grab a shovel and go to work. Quite a guy.

Rina Liou is a real estate agent. She was on her way to an open house one day on a tight schedule when she stopped to pick up light bulbs for one of the rooms she wanted to show to its fullest advantage. At the checkout, she realized she'd left her wallet at home. She couldn't pay for the light bulbs, didn't have time to go home for her wallet, couldn't figure out her Apple Pay, couldn't turn on all the lights without the light bulbs. She says, "I didn't know what to do."

No worries: The checker Rita Jackson Burns said, "I'm a little short on funds because I have only \$20 in my checking account, but I'll go ahead and pay for this for you." She pulled out her personal debit card and ponied up \$12,41. She said, "I was a little embarrassed that I only had \$20 in the bank because I'd just paid my bills;" but she thought Liou looked like she really needed some help, so she pitched in. Liou promised to stop later in the day to pay her back.

She did. She came back with \$45 to repay the \$12,41. Proper gratitude, if you ask me. Burns said, "She was so generous, I wanted to cry." But that's not all. Liou also posted about the interaction on her local Nextdoor page. Now, I know Nextdoor can be a cesspool of ill will and nosy-parkers, but apparently, in the right hands, it can also be a force for good. Burns has worked at the store for 38 years, so she is a known quantity in the community and is widely appreciated. Turns out Burns has dropped a dollar into the till here and there for customers who found themselves short of resources many times over the years, and they remember this fondly. A GoFundMe campaign called "Gratitude for Ms. Rita" got underway with this tagline, "Until . . . our country pays our essential workers more, let's step up to make sure Ms. Rita has more than \$20 in her account." And so they did—to the tune of over \$11,000 more.

Burns is pretty blown away by the response. "My customers tell me they love me all the time, and I love them, too; but this is just incredible. I'm so very grateful. I'm going to save some of the money for a rainy day, but I'd like to donate a portion of it to help children in some way and show them what can happen when you help others." A laudable goal: Let's all find ways to show children—and adults—what can happen when you help others. I already know the answer to that; what can happen is a much nicer world for all of us to share.

Be well. I'll be back tomorrow.

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## Area COVID-19 Cases

	Oct. 7	
Minnesota	105,740	106,651
Nebraska	48,757	49,396
Montana	15,347	16,063
Colorado	74,191	74,922
Wyoming	5,751	5,866
North Dakota	24,364	24,857
South Dakota	24,876	25,433
United States	7,501,847	7,551,257
US Deaths	210,918	211,844

Minnesota	+941	+911
Nebraska	+950	+639
Montana	+500	+716
Colorado	+654	+731
Wyoming	+91	+115
North Dakota	+502	+493
South Dakota	+278	+557
United States	+48,018	+49,410
US Deaths	+791	+926

	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 7th COVID-19 UPDATE

### Groton Daily Independent from State Health Lab Reports

Ten more deaths in South Dakota. Three female and seven males. Three in each the 60s and the 80+ age group and four in the 70s. Codington and Pennington county each had two while Beadle, Lake, Lincoln, Meade, Turner and Union each had one. There were 24 deaths recorded in North Dakota.

There were 609 positive cases today. If that sounds like a lot, we will get to the point where that number will be 1,000+ - I'm only guessing on that, but based on trends, don't be shocked when it does.

Those seeing double digit increases were Aurora 36, Beadle 33, Brookings 14, Brown 35, Clay 14, Codington 17, Corson 12, Davison 26, Faulk 29, Hanson 13, Hughes 15, Jerauld 42, Kingsbury 11, Lawrence 26, Lincoln 63, Meade 21, Miner 14, Minnehaha 139, Pennington 197, Sanborn 10, Todd 23, Turner 47, and Union 23.

#### **Brown County:**

Total Positive: +32 (1,415) Positivity Rate: 3.4%

Total Tests: +949 (12,818)

Recovered: +41 (1,192)

Active Cases: -6 (219)

Ever Hospitalized: +0 (56)

Deaths: +0 (4)

Percent Recovered: 84.2

#### **South Dakota:**

Positive: +609 (25,433 total) Positivity Rates: 3.9%

Total Tests: 15,234 (309,841 total)

Hospitalized: +28 (1,697 total). 273 currently hospitalized +23)

Deaths: +10 (258 total)

Recovered: +277 (21,137 total)

Active Cases: +332 (4,511)

Percent Recovered: 81.5%

Staffed Hospital Bed Capacity: 11% Covid, 49% Non-Covid, 39% Available

ICU Bed Capacity: 18% Covid, 61% Non-Covid, 21% Available

Ventilator Capacity: 6% Covid, 13% Non-Covid, 81% Available

The following is the breakdown by all counties. The number in parenthesis right after the county name represents the number of deaths in that county.

Aurora: +36 positive, +13 recovered (49 active cases)  
Beadle (10): +33 positive, +21 recovered (96 active cases)

Bennett (3): +5 positive, +2 recovered (16 active cases)

Bon Homme (1): +8 positive, +4 recovered (42 active

cases)

Brookings (2): +14 positive, +13 recovered (90 active cases)

Brown (4): +35 positive, +41 recovered (219 active cases)

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

Buffalo (3): +6 positive, +3 recovered (15 active cases)

Butte (3): +8 positive, +7 recovered (42 active cases)

Campbell: +2 positive, +5 recovered (16 active cases)

Charles Mix: +9 positive, +5 recovered (76 active cases)

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

Clay (7): +14 positive, +8 recovered (53 active cases)

Codington (9): +17 positive, +38 recovered (169 active cases)

Corson (1): +12 positive, +7 recovered (14 active cases)

Custer (3): +4 positive, +3 recovered (32 active case)

Davison (2): +26 positive, +20 recovered (169 active cases)

Day: +6 positive, +4 recovered (31 active cases)

Deuel: +5 positive, +2 recovered (17 active cases)

Dewey: +7 positive, +0 recovered (74 active cases)

Douglas (1): +8 positive, +3 recovered (37 active cases)

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

Fall River (5): +7 positive, +0 recovered (20 active cases)

Faulk (1): +29 positive, +16 recovered (22 active cases)

Grant (1): +6 positive, +16 recovered (64 active cases)

Gregory (4): +1 positive, +2 recovered (30 active cases)

Haakon (1): +4 positive, +1 recovered (10 active case)



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Hamlin: +5 positive, +7 recovered (14 active cases)  
 Hand (1): +1 positive, +3 recovered (20 active cases)  
 Hanson (1): +13 positive, +0 recovered (28 active cases)  
 Harding: +0 positive, +1 recovered (1 active cases)  
 Hughes (5): +15 positive, +33 recovered (146 active cases)  
 Hutchinson (2): +2 positive, +3 recovered (48 active cases)  
 Hyde: +4 positive (4 active cases)  
 Jackson (1): +6 positive, +5 recovered (9 active cases)  
 Jerauld (3): +42 positive, +32 recovered (27 active cases)  
 Jones: +1 positive, +1 recovered (4 active cases)  
 Kingsbury: +11 positive, +8 recovered (18 active cases)  
 Lake (8): +3 positive, +2 recovered (26 active cases)  
 Lawrence (5): +26 positive, +24 recovered (106 active cases)  
 Lincoln (4): +63 positive, +30 recovered (316 active cases)  
 Lyman (3): +7 positive, +4 recovered (32 active cases)  
 Marshall: +0 positive, +0 recovered (12 active cases)

McCook (1): +5 positive, +2 recovered (47 active cases)  
 McPherson: +0 positive, +1 recovery (9 active case)  
 Meade (6): +21 positive, +11 recovered (125 active cases)  
 Mellette: +2 positive, +1 recovered (10 active cases)  
 Miner: +14 positive, +6 recovered (16 active cases)  
 Minnehaha (84): +139 positive, +58 recovered (881 active cases)  
 Moody: +5 positive, +1 recovered (35 active cases)  
 Oglala Lakota (4): +9 positive, +13 recovered (82 active cases)  
 Pennington (39): +197 positive, +111 recovered (527 active cases)  
 Perkins: +4 positive, +1 recovered (10 active cases)  
 Potter: +7 positive, +1 recovered (17 active cases)  
 Roberts (1): +6 positive, +9 recovered (43 active cases)  
 Sanborn: +10 positive, +7 recovered (18 active cases)  
 Spink: +4 positive, +1 recovered (31 active cases)  
 Stanley: +0 positive, +1 recovery (6 active cases)  
 Sully: +1 positive, +1 recovered (6 active cases)  
 Todd (5): +23 positive, +7 recovered (71 active cases)  
 Tripp (1): +5 positive, +9 recovered (45 active cases)  
 Turner (5): +47 positive, +28 recovered (52 active cases)  
 Union (10): +23 positive, +17 recovered (84 active cases)  
 Walworth (1): +4 positive, +0 recovered (36 active cases)  
 Yankton (4): +7 positive, +12 recovered (103 active cases)  
 Ziebach (1): +1 positive, +1 recovered (9 active case)

North Dakota Dept. of Health Report  
 COVID-19 Daily Report, October 7:

- 7.4% rolling 14-day positivity
- 7.9% daily positivity
- 495 new positives
- 6,260 susceptible test encounters
- 116 currently hospitalized (+0)
- 3,706 active cases (+14)

Total Deaths: +24 (304)

## AGE GROUP OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Age Range	# of Cases	# of Deaths
0-9 years	819	0
10-19 years	2918	0
20-29 years	5799	2
30-39 years	4424	7
40-49 years	3541	10
50-59 years	3536	22
60-69 years	2595	41
70-79 years	1313	52
80+ years	961	124

## SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths
Female	13579	113
Male	12327	145

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County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Persons	Deceased	Community Spread	% RT-PCR Test Positivity
Aurora	113	64	627	0	Substantial	17.33%
Beadle	891	784	3122	11	Substantial	8.33%
Bennett	82	63	815	3	Moderate	9.45%
Bon Homme	123	80	1270	1	Substantial	10.82%
Brookings	863	771	5151	2	Substantial	13.45%
Brown	1415	1192	7719	4	Substantial	14.83%
Brule	156	123	1270	1	Substantial	8.41%
Buffalo	159	141	800	3	Substantial	10.19%
Butte	144	99	1809	3	Substantial	13.04%
Campbell	43	27	163	0	Substantial	17.91%
Charles Mix	234	158	2544	0	Substantial	9.34%
Clark	48	38	593	0	Moderate	15.63%
Clay	603	543	2762	7	Substantial	7.33%
Codington	1031	853	5442	9	Substantial	17.45%
Corson	107	92	750	1	Moderate	5.88%
Custer	202	169	1456	3	Substantial	8.67%
Davison	460	289	3812	2	Substantial	17.08%
Day	107	76	1014	0	Substantial	24.75%
Deuel	102	85	678	0	Substantial	15.38%
Dewey	190	116	3000	0	Substantial	11.67%
Douglas	111	73	611	1	Substantial	14.49%
Edmunds	104	98	656	0	Substantial	5.29%
Fall River	113	88	1557	5	Moderate	7.53%
Faulk	108	86	469	1	Substantial	12.00%
Grant	194	129	1294	1	Substantial	14.20%
Gregory	150	116	692	4	Substantial	18.38%
Haakon	37	26	396	1	Moderate	3.64%
Hamlin	115	101	1067	0	Substantial	4.76%
Hand	62	41	511	1	Substantial	14.48%
Hanson	50	33	372	1	Moderate	16.67%
Harding	5	4	97	0	Minimal	14.29%
Hughes	585	434	3123	5	Substantial	17.32%
Hutchinson	135	85	1341	2	Substantial	9.29%

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Hyde	24	20	274	0	Minimal	3.70%
Jackson	44	34	657	1	Moderate	4.44%
Jerauld	146	114	350	3	Substantial	19.23%
Jones	20	16	107	0	Moderate	21.43%
Kingsbury	80	62	884	0	Substantial	11.21%
Lake	223	189	1574	8	Substantial	12.90%
Lawrence	513	402	4682	5	Substantial	11.28%
Lincoln	1648	1328	11367	4	Substantial	15.45%
Lyman	193	159	1306	3	Substantial	13.91%
Marshall	48	36	679	0	Moderate	22.73%
McCook	137	89	979	1	Substantial	12.82%
McPherson	42	33	348	0	Moderate	9.28%
Meade	659	528	4202	6	Substantial	13.08%
Mellette	40	30	522	0	Moderate	14.00%
Miner	44	28	386	0	Moderate	15.22%
Minnehaha	7413	6448	44458	84	Substantial	8.91%
Moody	120	85	928	0	Substantial	21.92%
Oglala Lakota	350	264	4724	4	Substantial	8.18%
Pennington	2864	2298	20742	39	Substantial	10.31%
Perkins	48	38	379	0	Moderate	15.91%
Potter	63	46	527	0	Substantial	8.60%
Roberts	243	199	2822	1	Substantial	11.51%
Sanborn	50	32	368	0	Substantial	19.61%
Spink	163	132	1531	0	Substantial	5.90%
Stanley	48	42	460	0	Moderate	8.33%
Sully	19	13	142	0	Moderate	31.58%
Todd	195	119	2993	5	Substantial	12.50%
Tripp	195	149	995	1	Substantial	18.67%
Turner	235	178	1610	5	Substantial	7.79%
Union	485	391	3269	10	Substantial	16.22%
Walworth	150	113	1205	1	Substantial	9.02%
Yankton	493	386	5083	4	Substantial	5.54%
Ziebach	69	59	534	1	Moderate	13.33%
Unassigned	0	0	4804	0		



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## South Dakota

New Total Cases Today	New Confirmed Cases	New Probable Cases
609	562	47
Currently Hospitalized	Active Cases	Recovered Cases
273	4,511	21,137
Total Cases	Total Confirmed Cases	Total Probable Cases
25,906	25,433	473
Ever Hospitalized	Total Persons Tested	Total Tests
1,697	208,780	309,841
Deaths	% Progress (September Goal: 44,233 Tests)	% Progress (October Goal: 44,233 Tests)
258	216%	45%

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## Brown County

New Total Cases Today	New Confirmed Cases	New Probable Cases
32	32	(Blank)
Currently Hospitalized	Active Cases	Recovered Cases
273	219	1,192
Total Cases	Total Confirmed Cases	Total Probable Cases
1,415	1,412	3
Ever Hospitalized	Total Persons Tested	Total Tests
56	9,134	12,818
Deaths	% Progress (September Goal: 44,233 Tests)	% Progress (October Goal: 44,233 Tests)
4	216%	45%

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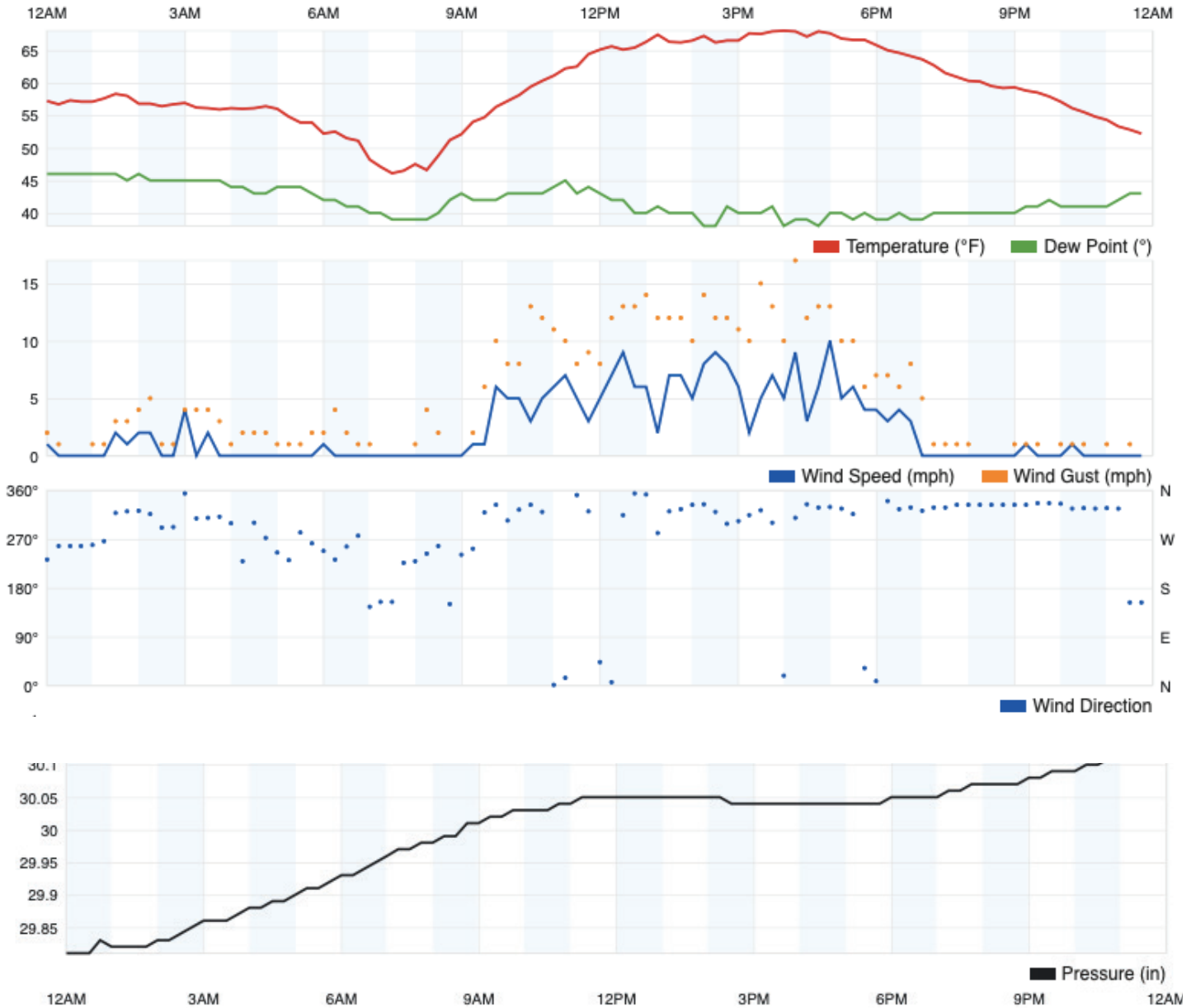
## Day County

New Total Cases Today 6	New Confirmed Cases 6	New Probable Cases (Blank)
Currently Hospitalized 273	Active Cases 31	Recovered Cases 76
Total Cases 107	Total Confirmed Cases 107	Total Probable Cases 0
Ever Hospitalized 13	Total Persons Tested 1,121	Total Tests 1,572
Deaths 0	% Progress (September Goal: 44,233 Tests) 216%	% Progress (October Goal: 44,233 Tests) 45%

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs





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Today



Sunny then  
Mostly Sunny  
and Breezy

High: 76 °F

Tonight



Partly Cloudy

Low: 47 °F

Friday



Sunny

High: 86 °F

Friday  
Night



Mostly Clear

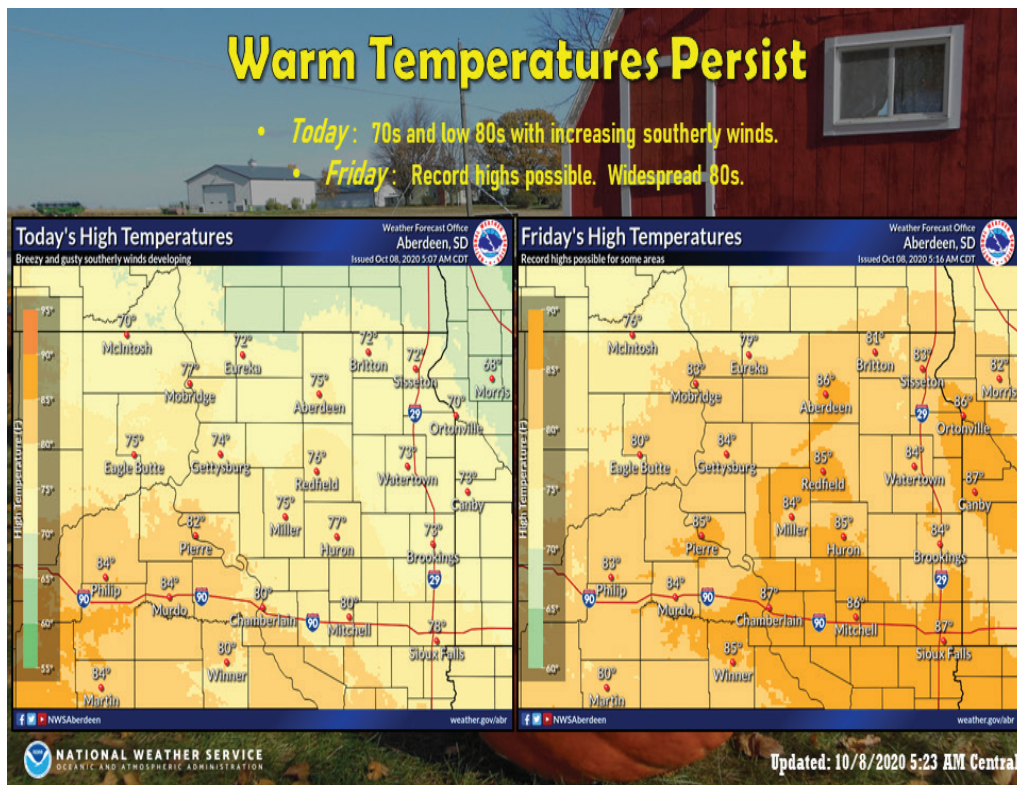
Low: 42 °F

Saturday



Sunny

High: 71 °F



As surface high pressure moves east of the area today, increasing southerly winds and warming temperatures will move in. The next couple days will feature highs in the 70s and 80s, with very warm temperatures expected on Friday as most locations soar well into the 80s. A few record highs are possible on Friday. Keep in mind that fire danger will also remain high to very high over the next few days. No precipitation is in the forecast until Sunday into Sunday evening.

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## Today in Weather History

October 8, 1982: October 8th and 9th, 1982, a record-breaking snowstorm (at that time) for so early in the Fall paralyzed the northern Black Hills with three to six feet of heavy, wet snow and 40 to 70 miles an hour. Some snowfall amounts included 41 inches at Galena, 36 inches at Lead, and 23 inches at Deadwood. Five to six feet of snow was typical in the higher elevations. The heavy wet snow caused numerous problems. The roof of a clothing store in Lead collapsed under the snow's weight, and several other businesses were damaged.

The roofs of at least three trailer homes also collapsed. The combination of high winds and heavy snow broke tree branches (causing extensive timber damage), power lines, and telephone poles. The damage was done to 40 miles of power lines, including 30 broken power poles. Some residents were without power for five days. The city of Deadwood was without electricity and water for at least three days

1871: The Great Chicago Fire burns much of the city to the ground, fanned by strong southwest winds. An estimated 250 were killed. On the same night, forest fires swept through Peshtigo, Wisconsin. An estimated 1,500 to possibly as many as 2,500 dies as gale-force winds push flames across town. Severe drought blamed for tinder-dry conditions.

1871 - Prolonged drought and desiccating winds led to the great Chicago fire, the Peshtigo horror, and the Michigan fire holocaust. Fire destroyed more than seventeen thousand buildings killing more than 200 persons in the city of Chicago, while a fire consumed the town of Peshtigo WI killing more than 1100 persons. In Wisconsin, a million acres of land were burned, and in Michigan, 2.5 million acres were burned killing 200 persons. "Tornadoes of fire" generated by intense heat caused houses to explode in fire, and burned to death scores of persons seeking refuge in open fields. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1878: An estimated F3 tornado struck Monticello, Iowa, around 5:30 pm. The Catholic Church was demolished, along with several homes. The business portion of the town was comparatively uninjured. While no lives were lost, 11 people were injured. The German Church in Richland township was destroyed, along with other buildings in the surrounding county. A wind and hail storm occurred during the evening hours in Sigourney, Iowa, causing considerable damage. Fences and shade trees were blown down, and much glass was broken by hail, which fell in large stones.

1901 - A deluge at Galveston, TX, produced nearly twelve inches of rain in about a six hour period. The rains came precisely thirteen months after the day of the famous Galveston hurricane disaster. (David Ludlum)

1919: An intense tornado moved through the town of Hoisington, 11 miles north of Great Bend, Kansas. It damaged or destroyed 60 homes which resulted in \$200,000 in damages. Business papers and canceled checks were found at Lincoln, 55 miles to the northeast.

1946: A minimal Category 1 hurricane made landfall over Bradenton, Florida, before tracking north-northeast across Tampa Bay. The storm was the last hurricane to make direct landfall in the Tampa Bay area.

1982 - An unusually early snowstorm hit the northern Black Hills of Wyoming and South Dakota. The storm produced up to 54 inches of snow, and winds as high as 70 mph. The snowfall was very much dependent upon topography. Rapid City, 20 miles away, received just a trace of snow. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Unseasonably cold weather prevailed from the Upper Mississippi Valley to the southeastern U.S. Thirty cities reported record low temperatures for the date, including Madison WI with a reading of 22 degrees. The low of 28 degrees at Evansville IN was the coolest of record for so early in the season. Hot weather continued in the southwestern U.S. Phoenix AZ reported a record high of 104 degrees and a record tying 116 days of 100 degree weather for the year. Tucson AZ established an all-time record with 72 days of 100 degree weather for the year. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Snow was reported across parts of northern New England. Two inches blanketed Mount Snow VT. Warm weather continued in the northwestern U.S. The afternoon high of 80 degrees at Stampede Pass WA exceeded their previous record for October by seven degrees. (The National Weather Summary)



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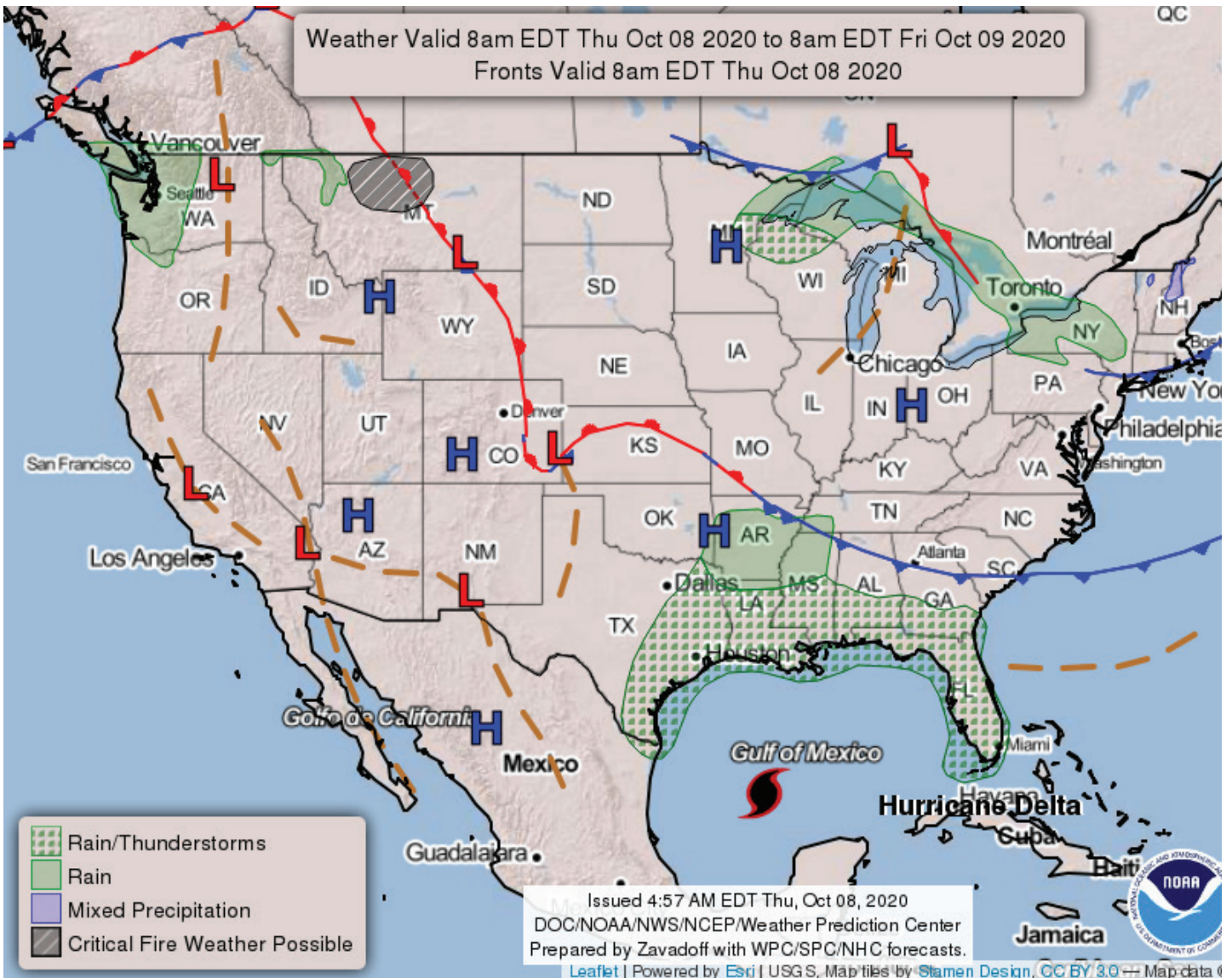
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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 68 °F at 3:55 PM**  
**Low Temp: 46 °F at 7:32 AM**  
**Wind: 17 mph at 4:08 PM**  
**Precip: .00**

## Today's Info

**Record High: 87° in 1910, 1936**  
**Record Low: 9° in 1895**  
**Average High: 62°F**  
**Average Low: 36°F**  
**Average Precip in Oct.: 0.54**  
**Precip to date in Oct.: 0.00**  
**Average Precip to date: 19.02**  
**Precip Year to Date: 15.15**  
**Sunset Tonight: 7:00 p.m.**  
**Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:43 a.m.**



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## HIDING "WHAT IS"

In ancient Greece, the theaters had no scenery, and the actors wore no costumes. To portray a character, however, they carried hand-held masks that they would place in front of their faces. They were designed to represent the character of the person in the role they were playing. They would walk onto the stage, and when speaking, hold the mask before their face.

The word hypocrisy, as we know it today, had its roots in the Greek word hupokrisis. It meant "acting a part in a play or feigning to be what one is not." Our word, hypocrite, had its origins in the Greek work hupokrisis - one who wears a "mask" to hide their real identity.

John addressed hypocrisy when he wrote, "If someone says I belong to God, but doesn't obey God's commandments, that person is a liar and does not live in the truth." Strong words that leave no "wiggle room."

True Christian faith results in consistent Christian living. John is confronting all of us because Christian faith results in Christian living, Christian conduct, and Christian service.

If we profess to be "Christian" but do not demonstrate Christlike behavior in "word and deed," we are wearing a mask to present ourselves as someone other than who we are. We are attempting to represent ourselves as someone we are not.

John is encouraging us to look at our behavior in the light of God's Word. He says, candidly, that "if we live like Christ, we belong to Christ!" In other words, "walk our talk."

Prayer: Father, we are all capable of hiding who we are from others. But we cannot hide from You. May we come out of hiding and be Christ-like Christians. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: If someone claims, "I know God," but doesn't obey God's commandments, that person is a liar and is not living in the truth. 1 John 2:4



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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

## News from the Associated Press

### SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Dakota Cash

01-02-09-13-22

(one, two, nine, thirteen, twenty-two)

Estimated jackpot: \$243,000

Lotto America

17-19-24-34-51, Star Ball: 10, ASB: 2

(seventeen, nineteen, twenty-four, thirty-four, fifty-one; Star Ball: ten; ASB: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$2.65 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$60 million

Powerball

06-24-30-53-56, Powerball: 19, Power Play: 2

(six, twenty-four, thirty, fifty-three, fifty-six; Powerball: nineteen; Power Play: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$52 million

### Tribe reports scramble for hospital beds in South Dakota

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A small hospital serving the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe has sent two coronavirus patients to an out-of-state hospital in recent days, the tribe's health department said Wednesday, even as South Dakota's top health officials insist the state has plenty of hospital capacity for COVID-19 patients.

The Cheyenne River Sioux Health Department reported that it tried to find better-equipped hospitals to transfer coronavirus patients, but that 14 facilities said that they were also diverting COVID-19 patients. Eventually, the tribal health department found a hospital in Burnsville, Minnesota, that would accept patients.

Gov. Kristi Noem has made the state's hospital capacity the bottom-line of her coronavirus response strategy. But as hospitals feel the squeeze of a rising number of cases and hospitalizations, the state's hospital systems have seen ripple effects from the largest hospitals that boast hundreds of beds down to the eight beds at the Cheyenne River Health Center, an Indian Health Services Facility.

The state's number of coronavirus-related hospitalizations again rose to an all-time high on Wednesday with 273 patients statewide.

Danette Serr, the Director of Nursing at the Cheyenne River Sioux Health Department, is helping keep track of five hospitalizations among tribal members. The tribe depends on larger facilities when infections worsen.

"We're a very, very basic hospital," Serr said. "We can't do much here."

The Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe's chairman, Harold Frazier, has said the limited number of beds and remoteness of the facility is part of the reason the tribe enacted strict lockdowns and coronavirus checkpoints to minimize outbreaks on the reservation. But as the coronavirus surges statewide, the tribe and its health department have not been able to keep the virus completely at bay.

Nonetheless, the South Dakota Department of Health reports that the state's hospital capacity remains in good shape. The Department's spokesman Derrick Haskins called any assertion that the state didn't have the needed hospital capacity "totally inaccurate."

"Diversion can happen for a variety of reasons including the level of care needed for a patient," Haskins said. "We have followed up with the IHS facility, and that is exactly what happened with the patients."

Secretary of Health Kim Malsam-Rysdon said hospital diversions and transfers are part of the way that

hospitals share the burden of patients and make sure they get needed medical care.

There are currently 37 South Dakota facilities caring for COVID-19 patients, including 10 with intensive care units and three using ventilators, according to Malsam-Rysdon. She said the large number of facilities handling COVID-19 patients shows the state's hospitals have prepared for the pandemic.

Native Americans have been disproportionately affected by the coronavirus, accounting for nearly a quarter of hospitalizations statewide despite making up roughly 9% of the population. About 19% of the 258 people who have died from COVID-19 in South Dakota have been Native American.

Serr said that for the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe's Health Department, the pandemic is worsening. "Just recently, it's been the most difficult," she said.

## Trump backs South Dakota governor's handling of COVID-19

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — President Donald Trump tweeted Wednesday in support of South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem's hands-off approach to managing the coronavirus pandemic despite a surge in cases in the state.

Trump, who is recovering from COVID-19, retweeted a clip of the Republican governor's speech to the state Legislature Monday with a comment encouraging people to watch her address. Noem, who has carved out a national following among conservatives, is heading back to the president's campaign trail this week.

"Great job South Dakota!" the president tweeted.

Noem said she provided a blueprint of how to navigate through the coronavirus pandemic without heavy-handed government mandates, telling lawmakers during a special session that she has done a good job in handling the pandemic.

Noem asserted that her approach, including her refusal to issue a stay-at-home order, was the right one, despite a surge in cases in South Dakota. On Wednesday it had the highest positivity rate of any state over the past 14 days, at 23.35%, according to data from The COVID Tracking Project. By comparison, the national average rate over the 14 days that ended Monday was 4.7%.

The state recorded 10 deaths, along with 609 people infected with COVID-19. Over the last two weeks, the state has seen the nation's second-highest number of cases per capita, with nearly 645 new cases per 100,000 people, according to Johns Hopkins Researchers.

The Department of Health said it is now including antigen testing in its daily report on the pandemic, meaning that health officials are now reporting "probable cases" from the antigen tests along with "confirmed cases" from RT-PCR tests.

"The distinction between probable and confirmed for the average person is null because they will be treated the same as being positive for COVID," Secretary of Health Kim Malsam-Rysdon said.

The number of hospitalizations reached a new high Wednesday, with 273 people requiring hospital care.

But Noem has shown no indication of veering from her strategy of foregoing government mandates to stem the spread of infections.

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

## 3 men killed in crash with semi near Sturgis

STURGIS, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Highway Patrol says three men have died in a crash on the interstate near Sturgis.

The crash on Interstate 90 happened Tuesday afternoon when a Maserati sedan crashed into the back of a semi five miles west of Sturgis, according to the patrol.

Three men in the car, ages 21, 22 and 55, were killed. All three were pronounced dead at the scene, officials said.

The Highway Patrol says a 77-year-old man driving the semi and his 74-year-old female passenger were not hurt.

The identities of the victims have not yet been released.  
The Highway Patrol is continuing its investigation.

## 2nd Trump-Biden debate to be virtual due to Trump's COVID-19

By ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The second presidential debate between President Donald Trump and Democratic nominee Joe Biden will take place virtually amid the fallout from the president's diagnosis of COVID-19.

The nonpartisan Commission on Presidential Debates debates made the announcement Thursday morning, a week before the two were scheduled to face off in Miami, "in order to protect the health and safety of all involved with the second presidential debate."

The candidates will "participate from separate remote locations," while the participants and moderator remain in Miami, the commission said.

Trump was diagnosed with the coronavirus a week ago and but in a Tuesday tweet said he looked forward to debating Biden on stage in Miami, "It will be great!" he tweeted.

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."

Trump fell ill with the virus last Thursday, just 48 hours after debating Biden in person for the first time in Cleveland. While the two candidates remained a dozen feet apart during the debate, Trump's infection sparked health concerns for Biden and sent him to undergo multiple COVID-19 tests before returning to the campaign trail.

Trump was still contagious with the virus when he was discharged from Walter Reed National Military Medical Center on Monday but his doctors have not provided any detailed update on his status. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, those with mild to moderate symptoms of COVID-19 can be contagious for as many as — and should isolate for at least — 10 days.

## American poet Louise Glück wins Nobel literature prize

By DAVID KEYTON and JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

STOCKHOLM (AP) — American poet Louise Glück won the Nobel Prize in Literature on Thursday for her "candid and uncompromising" work, becoming the first U.S. winner since Bob Dylan in 2016.

The Nobel Committee praised the writer "for her unmistakable poetic voice that with austere beauty makes individual existence universal."

The prize was announced in Stockholm by Mats Malm, the permanent secretary of the Swedish Academy.

New York-born Glück, 77, who is a professor of English at Yale University, made her debut in 1968 with "Firstborn," and "was soon acclaimed as one of the most prominent poets in American contemporary literature," the Nobel Academy said.

Anders Olsson, chairman of the Nobel literature committee, said Glück's 12 collections of poetry were "characterized by striving for clarity." They include "Descending Figure," "The Triumph of Achilles" and "Ararat."

Olsson said her verses, which often draw on classical influences and examine family life, were marked by an "austere but also playful intelligence and a refined sense of composition"

He said her voice was "candid and uncompromising" and often marked by biting wit.

The committee noted her 2006 collection "Averno," calling it "masterly" and "a visionary interpretation of the myth of Persephone's descent into hell in the captivity of Hades, the god of death."

Glück is the recipient of many awards, including Guggenheim and National Endowment for the Arts fellowships, the American Academy of Arts and Letters Gold Medal in Poetry and the National Humanities Medal.

The award, which includes a 10 million kronor (more than \$1.1 million) prize, comes after several years of controversy and scandal for the world's preeminent literary accolade.



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In 2018, the award was postponed after sex abuse allegations rocked the Swedish Academy, the secretive body that chooses the winners of the literature prize, and sparked a mass exodus of members.

After the academy revamped itself in a bid to regain the trust of the Nobel Foundation, two laureates were named last year, with the 2018 prize going to Poland's Olga Tokarczuk and the 2019 award to Austria's Peter Handke.

But Handke's prize caused a storm of protest: A strong supporter of the Serbs during the 1990s Balkan wars, he has been called an apologist for Serbian war crimes. Several countries including Albania, Bosnia and Turkey boycotted the Nobel awards ceremony in protest, and a member of the committee that nominates candidates for the literature prize resigned.

On Monday, the Nobel Committee awarded the prize for physiology and medicine for discovering the liver-ravaging hepatitis C virus. Tuesday's prize for physics honored breakthroughs in understanding the mysteries of cosmic black holes, and the chemistry prize on Wednesday went to scientists behind a powerful gene-editing tool.

Still to come are prizes for outstanding work in the fields of peace and economics.

Lawless reported from London. Associated Press writer Frank Jordans contributed from Berlin.

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

## Election 2020 Today: Sparring over pandemic, ballot mix-ups

By The Associated Press undefined

Here's what's happening Thursday in Election 2020, 26 days until Election Day:

HOW TO VOTE: AP's state-by-state interactive has details on how to vote in this election.

TODAY'S TOP STORIES:

VP DEBATE: Vice President Mike Pence and Democratic challenger Kamala Harris traded barbs through plexiglass shields in a debate dominated by the coronavirus pandemic. Harris said President Donald Trump's handling of the pandemic, which has killed more than 210,000 Americans is "the greatest failure of any presidential administration." Pence said Trump has constantly put the American people first.

FACT CHECK: Pence echoed many of Trump's falsehoods from the presidential debate as he muddied the reality on the pandemic and misrepresented Joe Biden's agenda. Pence also stated that Trump respects the science on climate change, when in fact the president mocks the science. Harris got tangled in tax policy at one point and misleadingly suggested that Trump branded the coronavirus a hoax. Trump actually said Democratic criticism of his virus response was a hoax.

CIVILITY RETURNS: The debate had sharp moments, some modest interruptions and violations of the debate clock. But the dynamics between Pence and Harris represented a rare 2020 return to some semblance of normal presidential politics.

BALLOT MIX-UP: Several high-profile cases of voters getting incorrect blank absentee ballots in the mail are raising questions about how often such mix-ups occur and whether they could affect the presidential election. Experts say snafus happen during every election but say there should be adequate time between now and the close of polls on Nov. 3 to resolve them. Elections officials, ballot suppliers and security researchers say such problems do occur with some regularity. They don't indicate fraud, they say, but rather human error.

WHAT'S BUZZING: As a fly took up residence on Pence's white hair during the debate, the social media firestorm was immediate — and intense. It easily created more, well, buzz than nearly anything else that occurred. The fly hung around for about two minutes as the vice president answered questions about racial injustice.

VISION 2020: What are the rules around poll watching on Election Day? Trump has been urging his supporters to go the polls and "watch very carefully," raising concerns about possible voter intimidation.

Monitoring the votes at polling places is allowed in most states, but rules vary and it's not a free-for-all. Read more in Vision 2020, a new series of stories answering questions from our audience about the election.

ICYMI:

Republicans see 'grim' Senate map and edge away from Trump

Pelosi out to block Trump if disputed election ends in House

Wall Street cheerleader Trump has little invested himself

## 'Sheer anxiety': Louisiana braces itself for Hurricane Delta

By STACEY PLAISANCE and REBECCA SANTANA Associated Press

MORGAN CITY, La. (AP) — Louisiana residents still recovering from the devastation of a powerful hurricane less than two months ago braced for another hit as Hurricane Delta steamed north through the Gulf on Thursday after swiping Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula.

Forecasters warned that the storm could blow ashore Friday with winds of up to 100 mph (160 kph) and a storm surge of up to 11 feet (3.4 meters). They placed most of Louisiana within Delta's path, including the southwest area of the state around Lake Charles, where Category 4 Hurricane Laura ripped houses from their foundations, peeled off roofs and tore trailers in half on Aug. 27.

Nearly six weeks later, 5,600 people remain in New Orleans hotels because their homes are too damaged to occupy. Trees, roofs and other debris left in Laura's wake still sit by roadsides waiting for pickup even as forecasters warned that Delta could be a larger than average storm.

The large majority of structures damaged by Laura haven't been permanently repaired, Gov. John Bel Edwards noted on Wednesday.

"All that debris could become missiles in really strong wind," said Edwards, who also worried about the "sheer anxiety" the storm could cause already traumatized residents.

"We don't want a hurricane to hit anywhere, but we know that the area that is least prepared and ready for a storm happens to be southwest Louisiana," he said.

Edwards said President Donald Trump approved his request to declare a federal emergency, which frees up federal resources. This is the sixth time in the Atlantic hurricane season that people in Louisiana have been forced to flee the state's barrier islands and sail boats to safe harbor while emergency officials ramp up command centers and consider ordering evacuations.

Hurricane Delta is the 25th named storm of the Atlantic's unprecedented hurricane season. Delta hit Mexico as a Category 2 hurricane just south of the resort city of Cancun early Wednesday with high winds and heavy rain, cutting power to more than 260,000 customers and forcing tourists into storm shelters. No deaths or injuries were reported.

The storm weakened to a Category 1 storm Wednesday afternoon, but had already restrengthened to a Category 2 by Thursday morning, with sustained winds near 100 mph. The storm was expected to become a major hurricane by Thursday night, with some weakening forecast once Delta approaches the northern Gulf Coast on Friday.

Many residents said they have had enough.

"This has to be the worst year that I have experienced," said Andrius Vitto, 42, a food truck owner from Grammercy who helped feed hungry evacuees after Laura. After learning this week that his native New Iberia, just to the east of Laura's worst devastation, was in Hurricane Delta's sights, "the hair rolled up on my arms," he said. "To see all this happening in one year — you know with the wildfires, with the hurricanes, the rain, all the other stuff in the news — COVID — It's mind-boggling."

In Sulphur, across the Calcasieu River from Lake Charles, Ben Reynolds was deciding Wednesday whether to leave or stay. He had to use a generator for power for a week after Hurricane Laura.

"It's depressing," Reynolds said. "It's scary as hell."

While New Orleans has been mostly spared by the weather and found itself outside Delta's cone Wednesday, constant vigilance and months as a COVID-19 hot spot have strained a vulnerable city still scarred by memories of 2005's Hurricane Katrina. Delta's shifting forecast track likely meant no need for a major

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evacuation, but the city's emergency officials were on alert.

"We've had five near misses. We need to watch this one very, very closely," New Orleans Emergency Director Collin Arnold said.

Along with getting hit by Hurricane Laura and escaping Hurricane Sally, Louisiana saw heavy flooding June 7 from Tropical Storm Cristobal. Tropical Storm Beta prompted tropical storm warnings in mid-September as it slowly crawled up the northeast Texas coast.

Tropical Storm Marco looked like it might deliver the first half of a hurricane double-blow with Laura, but nearly dissipated before hitting the state near the mouth of the Mississippi River on Aug. 24.

There are nearly eight weeks of hurricane season left, although forecasters at the National Weather Service office in New Orleans noted in a discussion Tuesday of this week's forecast that outside of Delta, the skies above the Gulf of Mexico look calm.

"Not seeing any signs of any additional tropical weather in the extended which is OK with us because we are SO DONE with Hurricane Season 2020," they wrote.

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Santana reported from New Orleans. Gerald Herbert in Theriot, Louisiana; Kevin McGill in New Orleans; Melinda Deslatte in Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Leah Willingham in Jackson, Mississippi; and Jeffrey Collins in Columbia, South Carolina, contributed to this report.

## Prince William, David Attenborough launch 'Earthshot' award

By PAN PYLAS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Prince William has joined forces with renowned British broadcaster and naturalist David Attenborough to launch Thursday a new environmental award, the Earthshot Prize, which has grand ambitions to "incentivize change and help to repair our planet over the next 10 years."

The prize takes its inspiration from the Moonshot challenge that President John F. Kennedy set for the U.S. in 1961 to put a man on the moon by the end of the decade.

William, who has been immersed in environmental issues all his life, said the same resources used to tackle the coronavirus pandemic should be devoted to saving the natural world.

"According to the experts, it really is the point of no return," he told Sky News. "We have 10 years to fundamentally fix our planet."

The plan envisions five prizes of 1 million pounds (\$1.3 million) awarded each year for the next 10 years, providing at least 50 solutions to the world's greatest environmental problems by 2030.

The first five Earthshots center on protecting and restoring nature, clean air, reviving oceans, building a waste-free world and fixing the climate.

"We very much hope that even if we can't necessarily change the world in ten years' time just from the prize alone, what we do hope is that, just like the Moonshot landings where they developed cat scanners, X-ray machines, breathing apparatus, stuff like that I think has been really, really important to come out of that," William said.

Nominations open on Nov. 1 with an annual global awards ceremony held in a different city each year, starting with London in the fall of 2021. William will be part of the panel that makes the decisions.

The prize fund will be provided by the project's global alliance founding partners, a group which includes the philanthropic bodies of billionaires like Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen, Alibaba founder Jack Ma, and Michael Bloomberg.

Attenborough, 94, said time is of the essence.

"Suddenly there are real dangers that there may be a tipping point in which the icecaps of the North Pole begin to melt, which it's doing already," he told BBC radio. "It's a matter of great urgency now."

William also spoke about how his seven-year-old son, Prince George, is getting concerned about what's going on in the world. He said his son was left so saddened by an Attenborough documentary about extinction that he told his father "I don't want to watch this anymore."

Read all AP stories on climate changes issues at <https://apnews.com/hub/Climate>.

## Protests against new labor law turn violent across Indonesia

By NINIEK KARMINI Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — Protests in many Indonesian cities turned violent Thursday as thousands of enraged students and workers criticized a new law they say will cripple labor rights and harm the environment.

Clashes between rock-throwing demonstrators and riot police broke out near Jakarta's presidential palace as police tried to disperse the protesters, including workers and high school and university students. President Joko Widodo is visiting Central Kalimantan province and was not in the palace.

Police fired tear gas at the protesters from several high schools and universities as they tried to approach the palace compound, turning roads into a smoke-filled battleground. The protesters fought back, hurling rocks and bottles.

An angry mob burned a traffic police post at an intersection near the palace, while other protesters set fires to tires and fiberglass road barriers.

Similar clashes occurred in large cities all over the country, including Yogyakarta, Medan, Makassar, Manado and Bandung, the capital of West Java province, where police arrested 209 people during two days of violent protests.

Organizers have called for a three-day national strike starting Tuesday demanding that the government revoke the legislation.

The Job Creation Law approved by Parliament on Monday is expected to substantially change Indonesia's labor system and natural resources management. It amended 79 previous laws and was intended to improve bureaucratic efficiency as part of efforts by Widodo's administration to attract more investment to the country.

The demonstrators say the law will hurt workers by reducing severance pay, removing restrictions on manual labor by foreign workers, increasing the use of outsourcing, and converting monthly salaries to hourly wages.

"We vow to continue returning to the streets until the new law is revoked," said Andi Khiyarullah, a protest organizer from the Indonesia Alliance's student executive body.

Police in Jakarta also blocked streets leading to Parliament, preventing labor groups from holding a mass rally there, and detained at least 200 high school students who attempted to reach the compound, Jakarta police spokesman Yusri Yunus said.

"They have been provoked by invitations on social media to create a riot in Jakarta," Yunus said.

Indonesia, Southeast Asia's largest economy, is eagerly courting foreign investors as key drivers of economic growth in a nation where nearly half the population of 270 million is younger than 30.

## Pence, Harris spar over COVID-19 in vice presidential debate

By STEVE PEOPLES, KATHLEEN RONAYNE, MICHELLE L. PRICE and JILL COLVIN Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — Trading barbs through plexiglass shields, Republican Mike Pence and Democrat Kamala Harris turned the only vice presidential debate of 2020 into a dissection of the Trump administration's handling of the coronavirus pandemic, with Harris labeling it "the greatest failure of any presidential administration."

Pence, who leads the president's coronavirus task force, acknowledged that "our nation's gone through a very challenging time this year," yet vigorously defended the administration's overall response to a pandemic that has killed more than 210,000 Americans.

The meeting, which was far more civil than last week's chaotic faceoff between President Donald Trump and Democrat Joe Biden, unfolded against an outbreak of coronavirus now hitting the highest levels of the U.S. government. Trump spent three days at the hospital before returning to the White House on Monday, and more than a dozen White House and Pentagon officials are also infected, forcing even more



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into quarantine.

With less than four weeks before Election Day, the debate was one of the final opportunities for Trump and Pence to reset a contest that could be slipping away. They're hoping to move the campaign's focus away from the virus, but the president's infection — and his downplaying of the consequences — are making that challenging.

Trump and Biden are scheduled to debate again on Oct. 15, though the status of that meeting is unclear. The president has said he wants to attend, but Biden says it shouldn't move forward if Trump still has coronavirus.

Republicans desperately want to cast the race as a choice between two candidates fighting to move the country in vastly different directions. Biden and Harris, they say, would pursue a far-left agenda bordering on socialism; the Democrats say Trump's administration will stoke racial and other divides, torpedo health care for people who aren't wealthy and otherwise undercut national strength.

Harris, 55, made history by becoming the first Black woman to stand on a vice presidential debate stage. She condemned the police killings of Breonna Taylor in Kentucky and George Floyd in Minnesota and spoke about the protests against racial injustice in policing that followed, which Trump has portrayed as "riots" as he calls for law and order.

"We are never going to condone violence but we must always fight for the values that we hold dear," Harris said. "I'm a former career prosecutor. I know what I'm talking about. Bad cops are bad for good cops."

Pence, 61, said his heart breaks for Taylor's family but he trusts the U.S. justice system. He called it "remarkable" that Harris, as a former attorney general and prosecutor, would question the grand jury's decision in the case not to charge an officer with killing her.

He also pushed back against the existence of systemic racism in police departments and rejected the idea that law enforcement officers have a bias against minorities.

"I want everyone to know who puts on the uniform of law enforcement every day, President Trump and I stand with you," Pence said. "We don't have to choose between supporting law enforcement, proving public safety and supporting our African American neighbors."

The candidates also clashed on taxes -- or specifically, Trump's refusal to release his tax returns four years after repeatedly promising to do so. The New York Times reported last month that the president pays very little personal income tax but has hundreds of millions of dollars in debt.

"It'd be really good to know who the president owes money to," Harris said.

"The one thing we know about Joe, he puts it all out there. He is honest, he is forthright," she added. "Donald Trump, on the other hand, has been about covering up everything."

Pence defended Trump as a job creator who has paid more than his fair share of taxes and shifted toward Biden: "On Day One, Joe Biden's going to raise your taxes."

Both candidates sidestepped difficult questions at times.

Pence refused to say whether climate change was an existential threat or whether Trump would accept the election results should he lose, while Harris declined to say whether Biden would push to expand the number of justices on the Supreme Court.

But so long as the coronavirus is ravaging the White House and killing several hundred Americans each day, the campaign will almost certainly be a referendum on the Trump administration's inability to control the pandemic, which Republicans have sought to downplay or ignore altogether for several months.

Pence's effort to focus on other topics was undercut by the mere fact that the candidates and moderator were separated by plexiglass shields, seated more than 12 feet apart and facing a crowd of masked audience members who faced expulsion if they removed their face coverings. The candidates on stage revealed test results earlier in the day proving they were not infected.

While the audience was forced to wear face masks throughout, second lady Karen Pence removed her mask as she joined her husband on stage at the end of the debate.

Though the night was about Pence and Harris, the men at the top of the ticket also made their presence known.

Trump released a video just three hours before the debate calling his diagnosis "a blessing in disguise"

because it shed light on an experimental antibody combination that he credited for his improved condition — though neither he nor his doctors have a way of knowing whether the drug had that effect.

He tweeted several times during the debate, offering this assessment at one point: "Mike Pence is doing GREAT! She is a gaffe machine."

Biden too kept a stream of tweets going; he posted his plans for confronting the virus, shared clips from the debate exchanges and praised Harris, who he said "is showing the American people why I chose her as my running mate."

Peoples reported from New York. Colvin reported from Washington.

## 'Catastrophically short of doctors': Virus wallops Ukraine

By MSTYSLAV CHERNOV and YURAS KARMANAU Associated Press

STEBNYK, Ukraine (AP) — Coronavirus infections in Ukraine began surging in late summer, and the ripples are now hitting towns like Stebnyk in the western part of the country, where Dr. Natalia Stetsik is watching the rising number of patients with alarm and anguish.

"It's incredibly difficult. We are catastrophically short of doctors," says Stetsik, the chief doctor at the only hospital in the town of 20,000 people. "It's very hard for a doctor to even see all the patients."

The hospital is supposed to accommodate 100 patients, but it's already stretched to the limit, treating 106 patients with COVID-19.

Early in the pandemic, Ukraine's ailing health care system struggled with the outbreak, and authorities introduced a tight lockdown in March to prevent hospitals from getting overwhelmed.

The number of cases slowed during the summer but began to rise again quickly, prompting the government at the end of August to close Ukraine's borders for a month. Despite that, the number of positive tests in the country reached a new peak of 4,661 a day in the first weekend of October.

Overall, COVID-19 infections in the country have nearly doubled in the past month, topping 234,000.

"The number of patients is rising, and an increasing share of them are in grave condition," Stetsik told The Associated Press of the situation in Stebnyk, a quiet town in the Lviv region. "The virus is becoming more aggressive and more difficult to deal with."

She said many of those doing poorly are in their 30s, adding that an increasing number of them need expensive medication.

"There is a similar situation across entire Ukraine," she said, adding that hospitals have run out of funds to provide drugs, forcing patients in some areas to buy their own.

The World Health Organization warns that the number of infections in Ukraine could continue to grow and reach 7,000-9,000 a day.

The government wants to avoid imposing a new lockdown, but officials acknowledge that the rising number of infections could make it necessary. It has sought to introduce a more flexible approach to minimize the economic damage, dividing the country into various zones, depending on the pace of infections.

At a meeting Monday with officials in Kyiv, President Volodymyr Zelenskiy chastised them for failing to do enough to slow the spread and taking too long to provide necessary supplies.

"We spend weeks on doing things that must be done within days," he said.

Zelenskiy specifically urged them to move faster on ensuring that hospitals have enough supplementary oxygen, noting that only about 40% of beds for COVID-19 patients have access to it.

Ukraine's corruption-ridden economy has been drained by a six-year conflict with Russia-backed separatists in the eastern part of the country, and Zelenskiy's administration inherited health care reforms from his predecessor that slashed government subsidies, leaving hospital workers underpaid and poorly equipped.

Last month, Zelenskiy ordered the government to increase wages for medical workers.

Official statistics show that 132 medical workers have died from the coronavirus, although the figure doesn't include those who tested negative but had symptoms typical for COVID-19.

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One of them was Ivan Venzhynovych, a 51-year-old therapist from the western town of Pochaiv, who described the challenges of dealing with the outbreak in an interview with the AP in May.

Venzhynovych died last week of double pneumonia, which his colleagues believed was caused by the coronavirus, even though he tested negative for it.

"He certainly had COVID-19," said Venzhynovych's widow, Iryna, a doctor at the hospital where he worked. "There are many infections among medical workers, some of them confirmed and others not."

The government pays the equivalent to \$56,000 to families of medical workers who die from the coronavirus. But Venzhynovych's widow can't receive the payment because he tested negative.

As the number of infections soars, many lawmakers and top officials are testing positive, including former President Petro Poroshenko, who was hospitalized in serious condition with virus-induced pneumonia.

Medical professionals want the government to bring back a sweeping lockdown, pointing to the scarce resources for the health care system.

"It's possible that Ukraine would need to return to a tight quarantine like in the spring. The number of patients is really big," said Dr. Andriy Gloshevskiy, a surgeon at the hospital in Stebnyk.

He blamed the new infections on public negligence.

"People are quite careless, and I feel sorry that they aren't impressed by numbers," he said.

Gloshevskiy said he had to switch to treating COVID-19 patients because of the personnel shortage.

"I had to change my specialty because my colleagues simply wouldn't be able to cope with it without me," he said.

Health Minister Maxim Stepanov acknowledged that the shortage of doctors and nurses is a big problem.

"We may increase the hospital capacity and improve oxygen supply, but we could just be simply short of doctors," he said. "Every system has its limit."

A tight lockdown would be a severe blow to the already weakened economy, Stepanov said, warning that authorities could be forced to do it anyway.

"If the situation takes a menacing turn, the Health Ministry would propose to return to tough quarantine measures," he said.

At the Stebnyk hospital, some patients said they only realized the coronavirus threat after falling ill.

"I didn't believe in its existence until I became infected," said 43-year-old Natalia Bobyak. "When I got here I saw that people get sick en masse."

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Karmanau reported from Kyiv, Ukraine.

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

## Analyzing Trump's illness is humbling for media's med teams

By DAVID BAUDER AP Media Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Here's an assignment to humble even the most confident doctor: Assess a patient's condition before millions of people without being able to examine him or see a complete medical chart.

That, in effect, is what medical experts at news organizations have been asked to do since President Donald Trump revealed Friday that he had tested positive for COVID-19.

They have a fine line to walk, needing to decide what level of speculation — if any — that they're comfortable with, how much to read into medications the president has been prescribed and how to explain the course of a virus so new that it still confounds the people who study it.

"You try to put the pieces of the puzzle together," said CNN's Dr. Sanjay Gupta, who logged hours comparable to his residency days in the wake of Trump's announcement.

A second or third opinion is only a click away. The question of whether Trump developed COVID 19-related pneumonia is one example of how media experts have differed despite access to the same information.

All would like to see images of Trump's lungs, but they haven't been made available. Dr. Vin Gupta (no

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relation to Sanjay), a pulmonologist who treats coronavirus patients and reports for NBC News, is confident that Trump has pneumonia because the president has had shortness of breath, low oxygen levels in his blood and has COVID-19.

CBS News' Dr. John LaPook is less definitive, but believes that's the case "because if he had a chest x-ray and it was normal, they would be shouting it from the rooftops."

But Dr. Jen Ashton, ABC News' chief medical correspondent, said that would be "quintessential speculation" because the president's medical team hasn't made that diagnosis publicly. His doctors said there were some pulmonary findings on imaging tests, but there are other things that could mean besides pneumonia.

"We don't know what the findings were, and that is precisely why I didn't jump to conclusions," Ashton said.

For Vin Gupta, however, "this is my wheelhouse.

"What might be speculative for another journalist, for me there's a level of concreteness that I feel exists that I try to pass along," he said.

Ashton also objects to how some in the media have pinned percentages on Trump's likely survival. Dr. Martin Makary said on Fox News Channel that Trump had a 99.4 percent chance of surviving COVID-19; CNN's Gupta said it's "90 to 95 percent" that he'll get through.

"This has been very, very challenging," Ashton said. "The way that I've handled this is that I do not speculate. And one of my pet peeves in this story, as it is in all medical media, is when everyone with an 'MD' after their name thinks that they can offer inside baseball."

Imagine the confusion visitors to newsstands in Massachusetts might have felt on Monday. "Trump is improving, doctors say," was the banner headline on the Wall Street Journal. "Fresh concerns on Trump's health," headlined the Boston Globe.

The New York Times, in a Monday story by Katherine J. Wu and Jonathan Corum, noted that while it's too soon to tell whether Trump's illness will follow a typical course, used it as a teachable moment to outline in detail what doctors have learned about its progression.

In The Washington Post on Tuesday, Dr. Kavita Patel, who has treated COVID-19 patients in Washington's St. Mary's Hospital, wrote a column suggesting Trump's case made no sense.

"Is he strong and invincible, as his words and actions attempt to show?" Patel wrote. "Is he in need of experimental treatments reserved for severely ill patients, as his medical charts would indicate? Or are his doctors simply throwing everything at him to see what works? Five days into Trump's illness, we don't know."

CNN's Gupta has been particularly critical of Trump's team for not releasing more medical information, and is a translator after medical briefings to outline what has and hasn't been said and what it all means.

Yet after Gupta suggested at one point that he thought Trump was sicker than his doctors were letting on, a media critic hit back at him. "What is the point of this fact-free nonsense?" tweeted Steve Krakauer, who writes the Fourth Watch newsletter.

"It's a lot harder than if they were just straightforward about it," Gupta said in an interview. "I think about it a lot when I try to put these things together, and I don't think I'm speculating when I do that. After all, we look at his age and risk factors. I've said from the start, the odds are very much in his favor."

When Trump climbed an outdoor staircase upon his return to the White House and exhibited shortness of breath, that was pointed to by several commentators as a sign of his illness.

Then again, as Gupta noted, the president is 74 years old, clinically obese and just climbed a flight of stairs. That alone could make him breathe heavily.

It's why, more often than not, the media medical reports have been dominated by careful couching. Doctors would explain, for example, what drugs like the antiviral remdesivir or the steroid dexamethasone that had been prescribed to Trump typically mean in clinical settings without being definitive on what it said about the president.

"Medicine is eternally humbling," LaPook said. "If you have any hubris left and you have been a doctor for five years, you are in the wrong profession. I think that's why you hear a lot of us say 'probably' and 'it makes sense' and 'it could be.' We're not the president's doctors."



## Before attack, a Pakistani teen sought better life in France

By KATHY GANNON Associated Press

KOTLI QAZI, Pakistan (AP) — Ali Hassan was only 15 when he left Pakistan to be smuggled to Europe, following the path of his older brother and many other young men from his home country dreaming of a better life.

Nearly three years later, Hassan is today in a Paris jail after allegedly attacking and seriously wounding two people with a meat cleaver. Before the Sept. 25 attack, he proclaimed in a video he was seeking vengeance after the French satirical newspaper Charlie Hebdo published caricatures of Islam's Prophet Muhammad.

Little is known about Hassan's time in France. There has been confusion over his age, but The Associated Press obtained his official identification documents in Pakistan that confirmed he is currently 18.

French authorities are investigating the Sept. 25 stabbings as an Islamic extremist attack. The stabbings echoed a January 2015 attack on the newspaper that killed 12 of its staffers by militants who claimed they were acting in the name of al-Qaida.

So far, there has been no indication Hassan was connected to any terrorist group. Instead, the wrath of the teenager — far from home in a world vastly different from any he knew — may have roots in Pakistan's draconian blasphemy laws.

Hassan's journey began in his home village of Kotli Qazi, deep in a rural area of Punjab province. The tiny village lies down a narrow, rutted dirt road weaving through vast agricultural fields.

The small cement houses are crowded together, their walls packed with dung patties baking in the blistering noon day sun. By sunset they'll be peeled off the walls and used to fuel the evening fires.

Many of the young men, including childhood friends of Hassan, said they dreamed of reaching Europe to find prosperity — at least 18 youths from the village have emigrated abroad in recent years. At the same time, they held up Hassan as a hero for carrying out the attack.

In the district where Kotli Qazi is located, a hard-line political party, Tehreek-e Labbaik, holds powerful influence — almost its sole agenda to uphold the blasphemy laws, which call for the death penalty against those who offend Islam. Only a few months after Hassan arrived in France, Labbaik Party-backed protesters rallied and blocked roads in the district and other parts of Pakistan in November 2018, furious that a young Christian woman, Asia Bibi, was freed from death row where she'd faced execution on blasphemy charges.

"He went to France because compared to other countries, like Saudi Arabia, earning there is much better," a childhood friend, Mohammad Ikram, said of Hassan. "Young people from our area want to live in Europe."

But, he added, "all our friends said if they were in his place they would have done the same if they had seen anything blasphemous against the Prophet."

Ali's long-time neighbor Amina, in her 80s, remembered Hassan as a good boy.

"He never went looking for mischief like some of those other boys. No, he just wanted to study," she said. Sitting on a traditional rope-woven bed in a dusty compound she shared with several family members she said: "Religiously he did the right thing. You may not agree, but he did right thing."

Neighbors and shopkeepers said Pakistan's powerful security agencies told them to say nothing of Hassan or the Paris attack. Several expressed concern for the image their tiny village was getting.

"Please don't hurt the dignity of our village, don't take away our dignity," pleaded one shopkeeper, who didn't want to give his name fearful of the plainclothes police standing nearby.

Hassan's father, Arshad Mahmood, refused to talk to reporters who knocked on his house's gate. Pakistani police and intelligence warned him against speaking publicly after he openly championed his son's actions.

Shuja Nawaz, author, political and security analyst and a fellow at the Washington-based Atlantic Council, said the influx of young migrants from countries such as Pakistan into Europe brings two factors into collision.

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"First, the conditions in the home countries, like Pakistan, that increasingly are becoming more Islamicized and anti-Western through the influence of mullahs and populist governments, while their education systems crumble," he said. "Second, in the Western countries, where migrants end up legally or illegally, there is a Ghettoization of Muslim immigrants who turn to religion as a defense mechanism and rallying point."

Official identification documents seen by the AP confirm Hassan's date of birth as Aug. 10, 2002, the second youngest of nine siblings.

An older brother, Bilal, now 32 and reportedly living in Italy, was the first of the siblings to travel to Europe, neighbors and police officials said. Hassan's younger brother, Ali Murtaza, now 16, also migrated to France and was arrested along with Hassan, though he was later released.

Ikram, Hassan's friend, said the "illegal" way to Europe can be very dangerous but from his village the majority who go are, like Hassan, between the age of 15 and 16 because minors often won't be ejected.

Hassan embarked on the journey in early 2018, crossing through Iran, Turkey and Italy and finally reaching France in August 2018. He was registered as an unaccompanied minor and was initially put in housing in the Paris suburb of Cergy, where he received aid accorded to minors.

At some point, he moved to Pantin, a working-class suburb that has a large immigrant population, including North Africans, Sub-Saharan Africans and Pakistanis. He was living in an apartment with several other Pakistanis in a grimy brick building above a hooka bar and an auto parts shop.

"They were quiet, they had their lives, left in the morning to work," said Zyed Zaied, who runs the auto shop. He said he didn't know where Hassan worked but said Pakistanis often find jobs in restaurants.

It was in Pantin that Hassan was living when, on Sept. 1, Charlie Hebdo republished the caricatures of Muhammad. The paper said it was a show of press freedoms on the eve of the start of the first trial over the January 2015 attacks.

On Sept. 25, Hassan had an appointment at the Val d'Oise regional administration to review his residency situation. Hassan had just turned 18, meaning he was no longer a minor and would have lost his claim to residency in France unless he could make an asylum case.

Instead, Hassan went to what he thought were the offices of Charlie Hebdo, unaware that they had moved. With a cleaver, he attacked two people who, it turned out, worked for a documentary film company, seriously wounding them. He was caught soon after, speckles of blood on his forehead, on the steps of the Bastille Opera.

Relatives told investigators that in recent weeks, Hassan had been watching videos by Tahreek-e Labbaik Party's leader, Khadim Hussain Rizvi, denouncing the caricatures' publication, French prosecutors said.

In a video posted to social media ahead of the stabbing, Hassan wept and said he had been inspired by the party.

"If I sound emotional, then there is a reason for it and let me share it with you. Here in France, caricatures of the Prophet were drawn, and I am going to resist it today."

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Associated Press writers Asim Tanvir in Multan, Pakistan and Elaine Ganley and Angela Charlton in Paris contributed to this report.

## Young whales looking to dine flock to waters off NYC

By PATRICK WHITTLE and TED SHAFFREY Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — If you're young and hungry, the place to go is New York City — even if you weigh 25 tons and have a blowhole.

Whale watch captains and scientists around America's most populous city say recent years have seen a tremendous surge in the number of whales observed in the waters around the Big Apple. Many of the whales are juvenile humpbacks, and scientists say they're drawn to New York by an abundance of the small fish they love to eat.

There are numerous theories about why whales are suddenly flocking to the city, but one of the most widely held is that the menhaden population has grown around New York and New Jersey. Menhaden

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are small, schooling fish that humpbacks relish, and environmentalists believe cleaner waters and stricter conservation laws have increased their numbers near New York City.

Gotham Whale, a New York City-based whale research organization, made more than 300 observations of 500 total whales in 2019, said Paul Sieswerda, the nonprofit's president. That's up from three sightings of five whales in 2011, after which a steady climb began, he said.

"Somehow or other more and more whales seem to be getting the message that New York is a good place to dine," Sieswerda said. "That kind of magnitude of increase is just phenomenal."

The resurgence of whales in the New York-New Jersey Bight, a triangle-shaped indentation in the Atlantic coast, has attracted tourists who want to see and photograph the giant marine mammals. But the concentration of whales near New York City also poses risks to the mammals, as they ply some of the most heavily traversed waters on the planet.

The whales are essentially "playing in traffic" by feeding so close to busy shipping lanes, Sieswerda said. And the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has already declared an "unusual mortality event" for humpback whales from Maine to Florida in recent years due to an elevated number of deaths.

Since 2016, NOAA records show 133 humpback whales have died on the beaches and waters of the Atlantic coast. The 29 in New York were the most of any state. Of the dead whales examined, half had evidence of human interaction, such as a ship strike or entanglement in fishing gear.

The appearance of so many whales near New York City calls for environmental stewardship, said Howard Rosenbaum, director of the Wildlife Conservation Society's Ocean Giants Program. Environmental safeguards, such as the Clean Water Act and Marine Mammal Protection Act, likely helped bring the whales back to New York's bustling waterways, and more protection can help keep them safe there, he said.

That will take nongovernmental organizations and state and federal agencies working together "to minimize the risk to animals that are using these habitats to feed," Rosenbaum said. That could include implementing new laws to protect the mammals from ship strikes, he said. Such laws have sometimes included speed reductions in areas where whales travel and feed.

The increased sighting of whales off New York City isn't necessarily evidence that the total whale population is growing, said Danielle Brown, the lead humpback whale researcher with Gotham Whale and a doctoral student at Rutgers University.

The New York whales aren't a standalone population, but rather members of feeding populations that mostly live farther north, such as in the Gulf of Maine, Brown said. And it's unclear whether the whales are in New York because the larger population is growing.

Brown and other scientists have observed that the presence of the giant whales off New York City could take mariners by surprise, and that could put the mammals at risk of ship strikes or other hazards. Increasingly clean water and a growing diversity of fish to feed on could keep the whales in the New York area for the foreseeable future, she said.

"This is most likely going to continue, and we have to find a way to coexist with these large animals in our waters," Brown said.

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Whittle reported from Portland, Maine.

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On Twitter follow Patrick Whittle: @pxwhittle and Ted Shaffrey: @TedShaffrey

## Mail-in ballot mix-ups: How much should we worry?

By FRANK BAJAK AP Technology Writer

BOSTON (AP) — Several high-profile cases of voters getting incorrect blank absentee ballots in the mail are raising questions about how often such mix-ups occur and whether they could affect this year's presidential election.

Mail-in ballots are under heightened scrutiny this year as voters request them in record numbers amid the coronavirus pandemic and President Donald Trump launches baseless attacks against the process.

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Snafus occur during every election, but experts say there should be adequate time between now and the close of polls on Nov. 3 to resolve them. U.S. elections are massive, decentralized undertakings involving hundreds of thousands of election workers and multiple contractors. Mistakes happen.

"In a normal election year, there are stories of voting machines configured for the wrong precinct. As voters shift to voting by mail, the equivalent error is a batch of ballots mailed out with the wrong ballot style," said Doug Jones, a University of Iowa election technology expert.

Elections officials, ballot suppliers and security researchers say such problems do occur with some regularity. They don't indicate fraud, they say, but rather human error.

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The company whose inserter was used in Franklin County, Bluecrest Inc., did not offer an explanation in a response to a request for comment. In a release, the county said "a high-speed scanner used to proof ballots for accuracy was not working properly."

## DOES THIS MAKE MAIL VOTING LESS RELIABLE THAN IN-PERSON VOTING?

Certainly not, the experts say. Take the Los Angeles County snag. County elections spokesman Mike Sanchez said every affected voter has already been mailed a corrected ballot.

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"When we outsource, we lose transparency and we lose accountability," he said.

Associated Press writers Marina Villeneuve in Albany, N.Y., and Andrew Welsh-Huggins in Columbus, Ohio, contributed to this report.

## VP Debate Takeaways: Pandemic looms over a more civil fight

By BILL BARROW and JILL COLVIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — In normal times, vice presidential debates don't matter much. But in an election



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year as wild as 2020, everything is magnified.

Vice President Mike Pence on Wednesday faced considerable pressure to boost coronavirus-stricken President Donald Trump's flagging reelection hopes as he trails in national and battleground state polls.

California Sen. Kamala Harris stepped on stage having to balance her role as Joe Biden's validator with her own historic presence as the first Black woman on a major party national ticket.

The candidates were separated by plexiglass out of concern for spread of the coronavirus from cases emanating from the White House.

Here are key early takeaways from the only vice presidential debate ahead of the Nov. 3 Election Day.

DEBATE, UNINTERRUPTED ... MOSTLY

Millions of Americans were aghast when Trump derailed the first presidential debate with incessant interruptions and a cascade of falsehoods, while Biden answered by calling the Republican incumbent a "clown" who needed to "shut up."

The opening of Wednesday's undercard matchup made clear that Pence and Harris were set for a much different encounter — an actual debate.

To be sure, there were sharp moments, some modest interruptions and violations of the debate clock. But the dynamics represented a rare 2020 return to some semblance of normal presidential politics.

Pence's even temperament has been a signature of his political career and he has often served as a kind of translator for Trump's bombast. Harris had a long career as a prosecutor, comfortable arguing her case under pressure. Both played to type.

In tone and content, their debate was like an alternate universe from the one Americans saw little more than a week ago.

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PANDEMIC, UNABATED

The Trump campaign wants voters to focus on anything but the pandemic that has killed more than 210,000 people across the country and infected at least 7.5 million more. But that subject dominated from the outset, with Trump and a growing list of White House aides, campaign staff and allies now sidelined with COVID-19.

Harris immediately put Pence on the defensive, calling Trump's pandemic response "the greatest failure of any presidential administration in the history of our country." Trump and Pence "still don't have a plan," she said.

Pence shot back that much of Biden's proposed coronavirus response is action the federal government already is taking. More clearly than Trump perhaps ever has done, Pence expressed sympathy for all those affected by the pandemic, and he accused Harris of "playing politics with people's lives." Harris has accused Trump of politicizing the vaccine development process.

In fact, Biden's plan does have elements that Trump's doesn't. Biden has called for the president to issue a mask mandate on federal property and has urged governors and mayors to do the same. He has called for using other federal spending and regulatory power. But Harris skipped those details.

—  
RACIAL POLITICS

One spoke proudly of joining racial justice protests; the other denied the existence of systemic racism.

Harris, the first Black woman on a presidential ticket, spoke passionately about "people around our country of every race, of every age, of every gender" who "marched, shoulder to shoulder, arm and arm, fighting for us to finally achieve that ideal of equal justice under law."

Still, she said, "We are never going to condone violence."

Pence, in contrast, proclaimed his trust for the justice system and put the focus on incidents of violence, saying there was "no excuse for the rioting and looting."

And he argued that the idea that "America's systemically racist" and that law enforcement has an implicit bias against minorities "is a great insult to the men and women" who serve in law enforcement.

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## SUPREME COURT ARGUMENT

Perhaps Pence's most aggressive line of attack on Harris was pressing her for an answer on whether a Biden administration would "pack" the Supreme Court by adding liberal justices if they win the election. Harris didn't take the bait, just as Biden hasn't in recent weeks.

Pence clearly sees the court vacancy as a winning issue for the Republican ticket. He hailed Trump nominee Amy Coney Barrett, who would succeed the late liberal Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg if she's confirmed, as expected, before the election. At least twice, he spoke directly to voters warning that Biden and Democrats would expand the court if they "don't get their way" on blocking Barrett.

Harris seemingly missed an opportunity to remind Pence and the audience that the court's Republican lean comes because the GOP-led Senate in 2016 refused to consider President Barack Obama's nominee in the spring of 2016, carrying over a vacancy that Trump filled in 2017. She did, however, invoke Abraham Lincoln, who declined to make a Supreme Court nomination less than a month before his reelection.

The senator did manage to turn Pence's "pack the court" attack around by noting that Trump's slate of federal court appointees has been overwhelmingly white. And she underscored Democrats' argument and public polling that suggests most voters think the Senate should wait until after the election to fill the current Supreme Court vacancy.

## HANDLING HISTORY

Harris was cautious about approaching the historic nature of her candidacy. She referenced thinking about her mother, an immigrant from India, on the day Biden invited her to join the Democratic ticket. But she stuck mostly to the talking points that any potential Democratic candidate could have offered.

Pence, on the other hand, embraced the opportunity to be magnanimous. "I also want to congratulate you ... on the historic nature of your nomination," Pence told Harris. "I never expected to be on that stage four years ago so I know the feeling."

It was a grace note from Pence, something not heard from his boss the week before.

## SO MUCH FOR THE QUESTIONS

There were many questions about specific subjects. There were many answers but not so much about those specific subjects.

Pence and Harris repeatedly dodged and sidestepped queries from debate moderator Susan Page, answering questions however they wanted.

The vice president danced around the Rose Garden Supreme Court ceremony last weekend that is now considered a spreader event and instead pivoted to platitudes about personal responsibility. He said he and the president "trust the American people to make choices" while accusing Harris of Biden of pushing mandates.

When both were asked whether they had discussed succession plans with their far older running mates in case they are incapacitated, Pence instead slammed Harris for her "continuous undermining of confidence in a vaccine" to fight the coronavirus.

Harris, meanwhile, used the question to share her biography, telling the story of her immigrant mother and her election as the first woman and the first Black person elected as attorney general in California.

## MISSIONS ACCOMPLISHED

With the president's poll numbers flagging since his manic debate performance and his infection with the coronavirus, Pence appeared to be on one mission: to stop the freefall.

Instead of speaking to on-the-fence independents or working to change the minds of undecided voters, Pence seemed intent on trying to keep the president's base behind him.

Harris had a different burden because she is less well known. She introduced herself as credible and competent and likely assured Democratic voters that she is capable of stepping into the role of commander in chief if needed.

And she gamely defended Biden, another classic role for a vice president, broadly framing Trump's tenure

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as a failure and Biden as suited to pick up the pieces.

## THE FLIES HAVE IT

While the debate was comparatively tame, there were moments that stood out, especially on social media. Most prominent were the two minutes when a fly rested on Pence's well-combed white hair. Pence did not flinch. The internet exploded.

And the Biden campaign pounced, grabbing the internet domain flywillvote.com, tweeting it out from his account, and taking users to a site for voter registration and information.

Barrow reported from Wilmington, Delaware.

## Mail-in ballot mix-ups: How much should we worry?

By FRANK BAJAK AP Technology Writer

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## AP FACT CHECK: Pence echoes Trump misfires in VP debate

By CALVIN WOODWARD, HOPE YEN, JOSH BOAK and ELLEN KNICKMEYER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Although more buttoned-up on the stage than his boss, Vice President Mike Pence nevertheless echoed many of President Donald Trump's falsehoods Wednesday in the one and only debate with Democratic rival Kamala Harris.

Pence muddied the reality on the pandemic, asserted Trump respects the science on climate change when actually the president mocks it, overstated the threat of voting fraud and misrepresented the Russia investigation in the Salt Lake City debate.

Harris got tangled in tax policy at one point and misleadingly suggested that Trump branded the coronavirus a hoax.

Altogether, the debate wasn't the madhouse matchup of Trump vs. Joe Biden last week. But there were plenty of distortions. A sampling:

ECONOMY

PENCE: "Joe Biden wants to go back to the economic surrender to China, that when we took office, half of our international trade deficit was with China alone. And Joe Biden wants to repeal all of the tariffs that President Trump put into effect to fight for American jobs and American workers."

THE FACTS: The tariffs were not the win claimed by Pence.

For starters, tariffs are taxes that consumers and businesses pay through higher prices. So Pence is defending tax increases. The tariffs against China did cause the trade deficit in goods with China to fall in 2019. But that's a pyrrhic victory at best as overall U.S. economic growth slowed from 3% to 2.2% because of the trade uncertainty.

More important, the Trump administration has not decreased the overall trade imbalance. For all trading partners, the Census Bureau said the trade deficit was \$576.9 billion last year, nearly \$100 billion higher than during the last year of Barack Obama's presidency.

HARRIS, on Trump's tax cuts: "On Day 1, Joe Biden will repeal that tax bill."

THE FACTS: No, that's not what Biden proposes. He would repeal some of it. Nor can he repeal a law on his own, much less on his first day in office. Harris also said Biden will not raise taxes on people making under \$400,000. If he were to repeal the Trump tax cuts across the board, he would be breaking that promise.

CORONAVIRUS

PENCE, on the Sept. 26 Rose Garden event after which more than 11 attendees tested positive for COVID-19: "It was an outdoor event, which all of our scientists regularly and routinely advise."



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THE FACTS: His suggestion that the event followed public-health safety recommendations is false. The event, introducing Supreme Court nominee Amy Coney Barrett, drew more than 150 people and flouted safety recommendations in multiple ways. And it was not all outside.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says large gatherings of people who have traveled from outside the area and aren't spaced at least 6 feet apart pose the greatest risk for spreading the virus. That's exactly the type of high-risk event the White House hosted.

Guests were seated close together, not 6 feet apart, in rows of chairs outside. Many were captured on camera clapping backs, shaking hands and talking, barely at arm's length.

The CDC also "strongly encourages" people to wear masks, but few in the Rose Garden wore them. There was also a private reception inside the White House following the Rose Garden ceremony, where some politicians, including North Carolina Republican Sen. Thom Tillis, who has since tested positive, were pictured not wearing masks.

HARRIS on the virus: "The president said it was a hoax."

THE FACTS: That's misleading.

She's referring to a Feb. 28 campaign rally in South Carolina in which Trump said the phrases "the coronavirus" and "this is their new hoax" at separate points. Although his meaning is difficult to discern, the broader context of his words shows he was railing against Democrats for their denunciations of his administration's coronavirus response.

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

Asked at a news conference the day after the rally to clarify his remarks, Trump said he was not referring to the coronavirus itself as a hoax.

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

## ENVIRONMENT

PENCE: "The both of you repeatedly committed to abolishing fossil fuel and banning fracking ... President Trump has made clear we're going to continue to listen to the science" on climate change.

THE FACTS: Pence is correct when he says Harris supported banning fracking, incorrect when he says Biden does, and false when he says Trump follows the science on climate change.

At a CNN climate change town hall for Democratic presidential candidates last year, Harris said, "There's no question I'm in favor of banning fracking. Starting with what we can do from Day One on public lands." Now, as Biden's running mate, she is bound to his agenda, which is different.

Biden has an ambitious climate plan that seeks to rapidly reduce use of fossil fuels. He says he does not support banning hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, however, and says he doubts such a ban is possible.

As far as Trump and climate change, Trump's public comments as president all dismiss the science on climate change — that it's caused by people burning fossil fuels, and it's worsening sharply. As recently as last month, Trump said, "I don't think science knows" what it's talking about regarding global warming and the resulting worsening of wildfires, hurricanes and other natural disasters. He's ridiculed the science in many public comments and tweets.

His regulation-cutting has eliminated key Obama-era efforts to reduce fossil fuel emissions.

## HEALTH CARE

PENCE: "President Trump and I have a plan to improve health care and to protect preexisting conditions for all Americans."

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THE FACTS: No, there is no clear plan. People with preexisting conditions are already protected by the Obama-era Affordable Care Act, and if the Trump administration succeeds in persuading the Supreme Court to overturn it, those protections will be jeopardy.

Trump has signed an executive order declaring it the policy of the U.S. government to protect people with preexisting conditions, but Trump would have to go back to Congress to work out legislation to replace those in "Obamacare."

Various Republican approaches offered in 2017 would have undermined the protections in the ACA, and Trump has not offered details of how his plan would work. Although Trump has been in office nearly four years, he has yet to roll out the comprehensive health proposal he once promised.

## MORE ON THE VIRUS

PENCE: "He suspended all travel from China, the second-largest economy in the world. Joe Biden opposed that decision, he said it was xenophobic and hysterical."

THE FACTS: Trump's order did not suspend "all travel from China." He restricted it, and Biden never branded the decision "xenophobic." Dozens of countries took similar steps to control travel from hot spots before or around the same time the U.S. did.

The U.S. restrictions that took effect Feb. 2 continued to allow travel to the U.S. from China's Hong Kong and Macao territories for months. The Associated Press reported that more than 8,000 Chinese and foreign nationals based in those territories entered the U.S. in the first three months after the travel restrictions were imposed.

Additionally, more than 27,000 Americans returned from mainland China in the first month after the restrictions took effect. U.S. officials lost track of more than 1,600 of them who were supposed to be monitored for virus exposure.

Biden has accused Trump of having a record of xenophobia but not explicitly in the context of the president's decision to limit travel from China during the pandemic. Trump took to calling the virus the "China virus" and the "foreign virus" at one point, prompting Biden to urge the country not to take a turn toward xenophobia or racism in the pandemic.

HARRIS, on the effects of the pandemic: "One in five businesses, closed."

THE FACTS: That's not accurate, as of now. We don't know yet how many businesses have permanently closed — or could do so in the months ahead.

What we do know is that the National Federation of Independent Business said in August that 1 in 5 small businesses will close if economic conditions don't improve in the next six months.

Many small businesses survived in part through the forgivable loans from the Payroll Protection Program. Larger employers such as Disney and Allstate insurance have announced layoffs, as have major airlines. Restaurants that survived the pandemic with outdoor eating will soon face the challenge of cold weather. So it's too soon to tell how many businesses have closed or will.

## RUSSIA INVESTIGATION

PENCE, on the conclusions of special counsel Robert Mueller's Russia investigation: "It was found that there was no obstruction, no collusion. Case closed. And then Senator Harris you and your colleagues in the Congress tried to impeach the president of the United States over a phone call."

THE FACTS: That's a mischaracterization of Mueller's nearly 450-page report and its core findings.

Mueller did not absolve the president of obstructing the investigation into ties between Trump's 2016 campaign and Russia. Instead, his team examined roughly a dozen episodes in which the president sought to exert his will on the probe, including by firing his FBI director and seeking the ouster of Mueller himself. Ultimately, Mueller declined to reach a conclusion on whether Trump had committed a crime, citing Justice Department policy against indicting a sitting president. But that's different than finding "no obstruction."

Mueller also didn't quite find "no collusion." His investigation identified multiple contacts between Russians and Trump associates and outlined sweeping Russian interference that he said the Trump campaign

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welcomed and expected to benefit from. Mueller said that he did not have enough to establish a criminal conspiracy between the Trump campaign and Russia; collusion is not a precise legal term.

## VOTING

PENCE: "President Trump and I are fighting every day in courthouses to prevent Joe Biden and Kamala Harris from changing the rules and creating this universal mail-in voting that will create a massive opportunity for voter fraud."

THE FACTS: Pence is vastly overstating the potential for fraud with mail-in ballots, just as Trump frequently does.

Broadly speaking, voter fraud has proved exceedingly rare. A 2017 report from the Brennan Center for Justice ranked the risk of ballot fraud at 0.00004% to 0.0009%, based on studies of past elections. A panel commissioned by the Trump administration to explore the issue uncovered no evidence to support claims of widespread voter fraud.

Trump and his allies have tried to argue that absentee balloting is fine — when someone has to request a ballot as opposed to automatically getting one in the mail — while universal mail-in balloting is open to fraud because all the state's registered voters receive a ballot through the mail. It's true that some election studies have shown a slightly higher incidence of mail-in voting fraud compared with in-person voting, but the overall risk is extremely low.

There is ongoing litigation in several states over a host of election issues, including absentee ballots. States nationwide expect a surge in mail-in voting due to the ongoing risk posed by the coronavirus.

Five states routinely send ballots to all registered voters, allowing them to choose to vote through the mail or in person. In November, four other states — California, New Jersey, Nevada and Vermont — and the District of Columbia will be adopting that system, as will almost every county in Montana.

Associated Press writers Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar, Colleen Long, Amanda Seitz, Michael Balsamo and Eric Tucker contributed to this report.

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

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## Busy 2020 hurricane season has Louisiana bracing a 6th time

By STACEY PLAISANCE and REBECCA SANTANA Associated Press

MORGAN CITY, La. (AP) — For the sixth time in the Atlantic hurricane season, people in Louisiana are once more fleeing the state's barrier islands and sailing boats to safe harbor while emergency officials ramp up command centers and consider ordering evacuations.

The storm being watched Wednesday was Hurricane Delta, the 25th named storm of the Atlantic's unprecedented hurricane season. Forecasts placed most of Louisiana within Delta's path, with the latest National Hurricane Center estimating landfall in the state on Friday.

The center's forecasters warned of winds that could gust well above 100 mph (160 kph) and up to 11 feet (3.4 meters) of ocean water potentially rushing onshore when the storm's center hits land.

"This season has been relentless," Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards said, dusting off his now common refrain of 2020 - "Prepare for the worst. Pray for the best."

A hurricane warning has been issued for a stretch of the northern U.S. Gulf Coast. The National Hurricane Center in Miami said Delta is expected to become a major hurricane again, like it was days earlier before crossing part of Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula. But some weakening is forecast once Delta approaches the northern Gulf Coast on Friday.

So far, Louisiana has seen both major strikes and near misses. The southwest area of the state around

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Lake Charles, which forecasts show is on Delta's current trajectory, is still recovering from an Aug. 27 landfall by Category 4 Hurricane Laura.

Nearly six weeks later, some 5,600 people remain in New Orleans hotels because their homes are too damaged to occupy. Trees, roofs and other debris left in Laura's wake still sit by roadsides in the Lake Charles area waiting for pickup even as forecasters warned that Delta could be a larger than average storm.

New Orleans spent a few days last month bracing for Hurricane Sally before it skirted to the east, making landfall in Alabama on Sept. 16.

Delta is predicted to strengthen back into a Category 3 storm after hitting the Mexican Yucatan Peninsula on Wednesday, then weaken slightly as it approaches Louisiana. The National Hurricane Center forecast anticipated the storm will come ashore in a sparsely populated area between Cameron and Vermilion Bay.

Edwards said President Donald Trump has agreed to sign a federal emergency declaration in advance for the state. The Democratic governor said he doesn't expect widespread mandatory evacuations.

But Edwards said Wednesday that Delta is moving fast, so hurricane force winds could reach well inland, and expected heavy rains could cause flooding.

Plywood, batteries and rope already were flying off the shelves at the Tiger Island hardware store in Morgan City, Louisiana, which would be close to the center of the storm's path.

"The other ones didn't bother me, but this one seems like we're the target," customer Terry Guarisco said as a store employee helped him load his truck with plywood needed to board up his home.

In Sulphur, across the Calcasieu River from Lake Charles, Ben Reynolds was deciding whether to leave or stay. He had to use a generator for power for a week after Hurricane Laura.

"It's depressing," Reynolds said. "It's scary as hell."

By sundown Wednesday, Acy Cooper planned to have his three shrimp boats locked down and tucked into a Louisiana bayou for the third time this season.

"We're not making any money," Cooper said. "Every time one comes we end up losing a week or two."

Lynn Nguyen, who works at the TLC Seafood Market in Abbeville, said each storm threat forces fisherman to spend days pulling hundreds of crab traps from the water or risk losing them.

"It's been a rough year. The minute you get your traps out and get fishing, its time to pull them out again because something is brewing out there," Nguyen said.

Elsewhere in Abbeville, Wednesday brought another round of boarding up and planning, said Vermilion Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Lynn Guillory.

"I think that the stress is not just the stress of the storm this year, it's everything – one thing after another," Guillory said. "Somebody just told me, 'You know, we've really had enough.'"

On Grand Isle, the Starfish restaurant planned to stay open until it ran out of food Wednesday. Restaurant employee Nicole Fantiny then planned to join the rush of people leaving the barrier island, where the COVID-19 pandemic already devastated the tourism industry.

"The epidemic, the coronavirus, put a lot of people out of work. Now, having to leave once a month for these storms — it's been taking a lot," said Fantiny. She tried to quit smoking two weeks ago but gave in and bought a pack of cigarettes Tuesday as Delta strengthened.

While New Orleans has been mostly spared by the weather and found itself outside Delta's cone Wednesday, constant vigilance and months as a COVID-19 hot spot have strained a vulnerable city still scarred by memories of 2005's Hurricane Katrina. Delta's shifting forecast track likely meant no need for a major evacuation, but the city's emergency officials were on alert.

"We've had five near misses. We need to watch this one very, very closely," New Orleans Emergency Director Collin Arnold said.

Along with getting hit by Hurricane Laura and escaping Hurricane Sally, Louisiana saw heavy flooding June 7 from Tropical Storm Cristobal. Tropical Storm Beta prompted tropical storm warnings in mid-September as it slowly crawled up the northeast Texas coast.

Tropical Storm Marco looked like it might deliver the first half of a hurricane double-blow with Laura, but nearly dissipated before hitting the state near the mouth of the Mississippi River on Aug. 24.



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"I don't really remember all the names," Keith Dunn said as he loaded up his crab traps as a storm threatened for a fourth time this season in Theriot, a tiny bayou town just feet above sea level.

And there are nearly eight weeks of hurricane season left, although forecasters at the National Weather Service office in New Orleans noted in a discussion Tuesday of this week's forecast that outside of Delta, the skies above the Gulf of Mexico look calm.

"Not seeing any signs of any additional tropical weather in the extended which is OK with us because we are SO DONE with Hurricane Season 2020," they wrote.

Santana reported from New Orleans. Gerald Herbert in Theriot, Louisiana; Kevin McGill in New Orleans; Melinda Deslatte in Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Leah Willingham in Jackson, Mississippi; and Jeffrey Collins in Columbia, South Carolina, contributed to this report.

## Trump hails experimental treatment for his virus recovery

By AAMER MADHANI, JILL COLVIN and MATTHEW PERRONE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump credited an experimental drug treatment with helping his recovery from COVID-19 and suggested his diagnosis could be a "blessing in disguise" in the nation's battle against the pandemic. But there is no way for the president or his doctors to know whether the drug had any effect.

In a new White House video posted Wednesday evening, Trump said his illness had shed light on an experimental antibody cocktail that he tied to his improved condition. Seemingly sensitive to the fact that his treatment course has been far more comprehensive than the care received by average Americans, he promised to swiftly get the drug approved for broader use — and distribute it for free — even though he does not have the power to order that himself.

"I want everybody to be given the same treatment as your president, because I feel great," Trump said in a video from the Rose Garden. "I feel, like, perfect."

Still, questions continue to swirl about the trajectory of Trump's recovery and when he might be able to return to normal activities, including campaigning, less than four weeks before Election Day. The video marked Trump's first appearance before a camera — albeit a White House-operated one — in nearly two days. The White House has released only limited details about his condition and treatment, leading to questions about what lies ahead for Trump.

Trump received an experimental antiviral cocktail made by Regeneron through a "compassionate use" exemption, a recognition of the above-and-beyond standard of care he receives as president. The safety and effectiveness of the drug have not yet been proven. And there is no way for the president or his doctors to know that the drug had any effect. Most people recover from COVID-19.

It's not the first time the president has trumpeted an unproven treatment. He spent months painting the anti-malarial drug hydroxychloroquine as a miracle treatment for the virus — taking a preventative course himself — even though experts have said it is not effective against COVID-19.

Trump hailed the Regeneron cocktail even as drugmaker Eli Lilly moves forward with its own similar treatment.

Eli Lilly formally asked the Food and Drug Administration on Wednesday to allow emergency use of its experimental antibody based on early results suggesting it reduces symptoms. There is no timetable for the FDA to make a decision, though the agency has moved on such applications within weeks.

Lilly says it could supply as many as 1 million doses of its therapy in the final quarter of 2020, with 100,000 available in October. Regeneron confirms it has also applied for emergency authorization, and said Wednesday it has enough doses for approximately 50,000 patients, and expects 300,000 available within the next few months.

The company said this advance production would allow the treatment to be distributed "immediately" if it were authorized by the FDA.

In the video, Trump continued to play down the threat of the virus, promising those who are ill that they're going to "get better fast, just like I did." More than 200,000 people in the U.S. and more than a

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million worldwide have died from the disease.

Trump posted the video on Twitter not long after aides said he had spent time in the Oval Office for briefings on Hurricane Delta, which is bearing down on the U.S. Gulf Coast, and on economic stimulus prospects — despite still being contagious two days after he was discharged from Walter Reed National Military Medical Center,

Aides insisted that only limited staff were around him and that he entered the office from the outside to limit exposure.

With national and battleground public opinion polls showing he faces an uphill fight to winning a second term, Trump spent much of his day on Twitter, throwing broadsides against Democrats and pushing lawmakers to take up piecemeal economic aid proposals after nixing negotiations on a broader assistance package.

Trump's doctor reported that the president continued to make progress in his recovery.

Dr. Sean Conley, the White House physician, said Trump had begun the day by declaring, "I feel great!"

Conley added in a memo that Trump had been symptom-free for over 24 hours, and that his oxygen saturation level and respiratory rate were normal. The memo also said a blood test Monday showed Trump had coronavirus antibodies, substances that fight infection, but he had been given an experimental drug on Friday containing these.

Regeneron says it's not possible for this type of blood test to distinguish between antibodies Trump's body may be making and those supplied by the company's drug. Most likely, the ones detected in the Monday test are from the drug, the company said.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says individuals can discontinue isolation 10 days after symptom onset. While reports of reinfection are rare, the CDC recommends that even people who recover from COVID-19 continue to wear a mask, stay distanced and follow other precautions.

Doctors said Trump began showing mild symptoms on Oct. 1.

Access to Trump for White House aides has been extremely limited since his discharge. White House chief of staff Mark Meadows and senior adviser Dan Scavino were among those with the president in the Oval Office, according to officials. Those meeting with Trump are required to wear full personal protective gear to minimize their risk.

Trump could have received his briefings elsewhere in the complex, but the president believed it was important that he be seen working from the Oval, according to a White House official who was not authorized to comment publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

The president has also begun pondering a resumption of travel and is considering hitting the road next week before the scheduled Oct. 15 presidential debate in Miami. White House officials are confident that Trump will be healthy enough to take part in the debate, and are exploring the prospect of travel earlier depending on the course of his recovery.

One option the campaign is weighing involves visits to Pennsylvania Monday and Michigan Tuesday and another campaign visit to Florida. Another would be for the president to restart travel with the debate and hold a campaign event the following day, according to a campaign official who was not authorized to comment publicly.

Elsewhere in the government, the virus is threatening the top ranks of the U.S. military.

The assistant commandant of the Marine Corps, Gen. Gary L. Thomas, tested positive for the coronavirus, days after he and members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff were in a Pentagon meeting with a Coast Guard leader who was infected with the virus, the service confirmed Wednesday.

Thomas attended a meeting of the Joint Chiefs on Friday. 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 — are in quarantine after exposure at that meeting to Adm. Charles W. Ray, the vice commandant of the Coast Guard, who has since tested positive.

Amid the national public health crisis, a personal one, and warning flares from leading economists that the virus-scarred economy badly needs stimulus, Trump pushed out about 60 tweets by early evening praising supporters and eviscerating his opponents.

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While Trump continues to minimize the threat of the virus, more aides have been testing positive — including one of his closest advisers, Stephen Miller, who was diagnosed Tuesday. All told, more than a dozen White House staffers have tested positive.

Nonetheless, Trump pushed out video of South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem speaking of her decision to resist COVID-19 restrictions in her state. He also thanked a supporter who tweeted she “would wade through a sea of COVID infested water to vote for President Trump on November 3rd.”

Associated Press writers Marilynn Marchione in Milwaukee and Lauran Neergaard, Zeke Miller, Lolita C. Baldor and Jonathan Lemire in Washington contributed to this report.

## **Sri Lanka closes key state offices as virus outbreak surges**

By BHARATHA MALLAWARACHI Associated Press

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP) — Authorities in Sri Lanka closed key government offices and further expanded a curfew Thursday to contain a surging coronavirus outbreak.

The foreign ministry closed the consular affairs office for the week and suspended all services to prevent the public from congregating. The ministry said it would only accept queries and documentation assistance related to deaths of Sri Lankans overseas, strictly by appointment.

Other departments providing services related to revenue, immigration, pensions, vehicle license and registrations also closed for the week, and a state-sponsored exhibition was canceled.

The outbreak that surfaced this week has grown to 1,034 cases with more than 2,000 others asked to quarantine at home.

It is centered around a garment factory in the Colombo suburbs where the first patient and many others worked. Police have widened the curfew in the suburbs where many of the patients live. Schools have closed, public gatherings were ordered halted and restrictions were imposed on public transport.

The cluster comes after the Indian Ocean island nation reported going two months without any community infections, and health officials say it poses a high risk of spreading the virus because employees at the factory worked close together and also went home every day and mingled with others in society.

The country has reported 4,252 cases, including 13 deaths. Of the total patients, 3,274 have recovered.

## **Trump administration turns to immigration as vote nears**

By BEN FOX and ELLIOT SPAGAT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — It had the ingredients of a President Donald Trump campaign speech: dangerous immigrants, attacks on Democrat-run cities, even a mention of “America First.”

But it was Chad Wolf, acting secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, announcing a routine, and relatively minor, enforcement operation Wednesday at a Washington news conference.

“It’s not about Republicans, it’s not about Democrats, it’s not about elections,” Wolf insisted, twice, to reporters.

Yet it was the third time in a week the administration rolled out actions to appear tough on immigration, reviving an issue that was at the heart of Trump’s successful 2016 campaign, but largely on the back burner in the current one. And it added to charges from Trump critics that DHS and other agencies have become overtly politicized under this president.

DHS, which was created to improve America’s resistance to external threats following the Sept. 11 attacks, has been a tool of key Trump administration policies from the start — enforcing stricter immigration policies, building the border wall and, most notoriously, separating families apprehended trying to enter the United States.

Its political role has increased in recent months, with the decision to deploy DHS tactical agents to Portland, Oregon, to confront protesters outside the federal courthouse without the consent of local authorities as part of Trump’s “law and order” campaign theme.

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"His modus operandi for the vast majority of the administration has been to use DHS to benefit him politically," said Miles Taylor, who served as the agency's chief of staff from 2017-19. "Now, he's trying to use the department to benefit himself electorally."

Few issues are as important to Trump's political base as immigration. His get-tough approach and promise to build a border wall were cornerstones of his 2016 campaign. But attention to the issue has ebbed in the 2020 race, as Trump has focused more on unrest in Democratic cities, leftist activists and other matters.

But the effort to rekindle the anti-immigration fervor has gained steam.

In recent weeks, the administration has announced time limits for students to complete their studies, requirements for additional biometrics and even DNA in some cases to get immigration benefits and a new rule for immigrant sponsors to submit years of credit reports, bank statements and other financial information.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement, a component of DHS, posted five billboards across Pennsylvania, a battleground state, with images of migrants charged with criminal offenses whom the agency was seeking to arrest. The campaign is rare, if not unprecedented.

Last week, the administration announced it has proposed further slashing the number of refugees the United States accepts to a new record low in the coming year. On Tuesday, DHS and the Labor Department said new rules would significantly reduce the number of visas issued to skilled foreign workers, a move welcomed by groups that favor cutting legal immigration into the United States.

Then Wolf followed up with the news conference to announce the enforcement operation — a fairly routine operation that resulted in a fairly low number of arrests. "It's a worrying abuse of power," said Taylor, who has endorsed former Vice President Joe Biden in the Nov. 3 election.

The acting secretary, whose nomination is pending before the Senate, said his intention was to highlight the threat posed by cities and states that provide "sanctuary" to migrants in the country illegally by not turning them over to ICE for deportation.

But it just so happens that it tends to be cities and states run by Democrats that provide sanctuary, with local officials arguing that assisting with immigration enforcement discourages crime victims in the country illegally from cooperating with law enforcement on more serious matters.

Wolf says it's dangerous not to turn them over to ICE, noting that some of those captured in the operation had committed serious crimes such as homicide and sexual assault.

"ICE focuses its limited resources first and foremost by targeting those who pose the greatest threat to public safety," he said.

Still, his mere presence at the news conference was unusual.

"The fact that Chad Wolf thought that attending a press conference on a modest enforcement action was the best use of his time today shows that he is still hell-bent on politicizing the department's mission in order to help the President in his reelection campaign," said Rep. Bennie Thompson, a Mississippi Democrat who is chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee.

Rep. Zoe Lofgren, a California Democrat, sent a letter to the acting director of ICE, Tony Pham, demanding answers about the operation. "I am deeply disturbed that ICE is spending government dollars and putting lives at risk in furtherance of what is described as a political messaging campaign," she said.

Since Trump came into office, ICE has conducted targeted raids in sanctuary cities focused on people convicted of crimes in the United States or with pending charges. After a pause at the start of the pandemic, the agency appears to have dialed up the operations.

Trump has said Biden wants to abolish ICE and end deportations, but that's not correct. The former vice president has argued that crossing the U.S. border illegally is a crime and should remain punished as such in federal court. A committee of advisers has proposed a 100-day moratorium on deportations, but Biden hasn't endorsed the idea. President Barack Obama's administration also aggressively deported people.

In the recent California operation, about 130 people were captured in the five days leading up to Oct. 2. Last month, ICE marked similar operations in Los Angeles, Chicago and Charlotte, North Carolina, with little fanfare — just news releases on its website.



Wolf said that there would be additional sweeps soon in other U.S. cities, without providing details.

Spagat reported from San Diego.

## Fly on Pence's head generates buzz in VP debate

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The vice presidential debate featured plexiglass barriers to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. They were no match for the night's most talked-about intruder — a fly that briefly buzzed around the stage before landing and staying on Mike Pence's head.

The incident went unmentioned onstage, with the Republican vice president and Democratic Sen. Kamala Harris continuing to focus on the discussion of systemic racism in the justice system.

But as the insect took up residence on Pence's white hair, the social media firestorm was immediate — and intense. It easily created more, well, buzz than nearly anything else that occurred.

"That's not on your TV. It's on his head," tweeted MSNBC's Rachel Maddow. "The fly knows," tweeted author Stephen King. Others joked about the creature perhaps getting stuck in hair spray — or possibly now being a prime candidate for coronavirus testing.

Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden immediately got in on the act, tweeting a photo of himself clutching an orange flyswatter under the heading "Pitch in \$5 to help this campaign fly." Moments later, he tweeted again, this time highlighting "Flywillvote.com," which took users to a website set up for his campaign to help supporters make plans to vote.

Pence had spent much of the night shaking his head in response to Harris' answers. But the vice president didn't appear to notice the fly's arrival. Despite his talking and normal body movements, the hot stage lights and those virus-fighting barriers, the fly was unperturbed. It finally flew away on its own.

Wednesday night's visitor wasn't the first fly to take center stage at a presidential debate. In 2016, one briefly landed between Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton's eyes during a town hall-style debate with now-President Donald Trump. Clinton didn't flinch.

President Barack Obama, however, took action when confronted with an airborne distraction during the taping of a television interview in 2009. Obama stopped speaking to swat at a buzzing fly and tell it to "get out of here." As interviewer John Harwood quipped, "That's the most persistent fly I've ever seen," Obama concentrated on its path and swatted it dead.

## Pence, Harris spar over COVID-19 in vice presidential debate

By STEVE PEOPLES, KATHLEEN RONAYNE, MICHELLE L. PRICE and JILL COLVIN Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — Trading barbs through plexiglass shields, Republican Mike Pence and Democrat Kamala Harris turned the only vice presidential debate of 2020 into a dissection of the Trump administration's handling of the coronavirus pandemic, with Harris labeling it "the greatest failure of any presidential administration."

Pence, who leads the president's coronavirus task force, acknowledged that "our nation's gone through a very challenging time this year," yet vigorously defended the administration's overall response to a pandemic that has killed 210,000 Americans.

The meeting, which was far more civil than last week's chaotic faceoff between President Donald Trump and Democrat Joe Biden, unfolded against an outbreak of coronavirus now hitting the highest levels of the U.S. government. Trump spent three days at the hospital before returning to the White House on Monday, and more than a dozen White House and Pentagon officials are also infected, forcing even more into quarantine.

With less than four weeks before Election Day, the debate was one of the final opportunities for Trump and Pence to reset a contest that could be slipping away. They're hoping to move the campaign's focus away from the virus, but the president's infection — and his downplaying of the consequences — are making that challenging.

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Trump and Biden are scheduled to debate again on Oct. 15, though the status of that meeting is unclear. The president has said he wants to attend, but Biden says it shouldn't move forward if Trump still has coronavirus.

Republicans desperately want to cast the race as a choice between two candidates fighting to move the country in vastly different directions. Biden and Harris, they say, would pursue a far-left agenda bordering on socialism; the Democrats say Trump's administration will stoke racial and other divides, torpedo health care for people who aren't wealthy and otherwise undercut national strength.

Harris, 55, made history by becoming the first Black woman to stand on a vice presidential debate stage. She condemned the police killings of Breonna Taylor in Kentucky and George Floyd in Minnesota and spoke about the protests against racial injustice in policing that followed, which Trump has portrayed as "riots" as he calls for law-and-order.

"We are never going to condone violence but we must always fight for the values that we hold dear," Harris said. "I'm a former career prosecutor. I know what I'm talking about. Bad cops are bad for good cops."

Pence, 61, said his heart breaks for Taylor's family but he trusts the U.S. justice system. He called it "remarkable" that Harris, as a former attorney general and prosecutor, would question the grand jury's decision in the case not to charge an officer with killing her.

He also pushed back against the existence of systemic racism in police departments and rejected the idea that law enforcement officers have a bias against minorities.

"I want everyone to know who puts on the uniform of law enforcement every day, President Trump and I stand with you," Pence said. "We don't have to choose between supporting law enforcement, proving public safety and supporting our African American neighbors."

The candidates also clashed on taxes -- or specifically, Trump's refusal to release his tax returns four years after repeatedly promising to do so. The New York Times reported last month that the president pays very little personal income tax but owes hundreds of millions of dollars in debt.

"It'd be really good to know who the president owes money to," Harris said.

"The one thing we know about Joe, he puts it all out there. He is honest, he is forthright," she added. "Donald Trump, on the other hand, has been about covering up everything."

Pence defended Trump as a job creator who has paid more than his fair share of taxes and shifted toward Biden: "On Day One, Joe Biden's going to raise your taxes."

Both candidates sidestepped difficult questions at times.

Pence refused to say whether climate change was an existential threat or whether Trump would accept the election results should he lose, while Harris declined to say whether Biden would push to expand the number of justices on the Supreme Court.

But so long as the coronavirus is ravaging the White House and killing several hundred Americans each day, the campaign will almost certainly be a referendum on the Trump administration's inability to control the pandemic, which Republicans have sought to downplay or ignore altogether for several months.

Pence's effort to focus on other topics was undercut by the mere fact that the candidates and moderator were separated by plexiglass shields, seated more than 12 feet apart and facing a crowd of masked audience members who faced expulsion if they removed their face coverings. The candidates on stage revealed test results earlier in the day proving they were not infected.

While the audience was forced to wear face masks throughout, second lady Karen Pence removed her mask as she joined her husband on stage at the end of the debate.

Though the night was about Pence and Harris, the men at the top of the ticket also made their presence known.

Trump released a video just three hours before the debate calling his diagnosis "a blessing in disguise" because it shed light on an experimental antibody combination that he credited for his improved condition — though neither he nor his doctors have a way of knowing whether the drug had that effect.

He tweeted several times during the debate, offering this assessment at one point: "Mike Pence is doing GREAT! She is a gaffe machine."

Biden too kept a stream of tweets going; he posted his plans for confronting the virus, shared clips from the debate exchanges and praised Harris, who he said "is showing the American people why I chose her as my running mate."

Peoples reported from New York. Colvin reported from Washington.

## The Latest: Harris says Breonna Taylor didn't get justice

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Latest on the 2020 presidential election (all times local):

10:40 p.m.

Democrat Kamala Harris says she doesn't believe justice has been done in the case of Breonna Taylor, who was killed in a police drug raid that went bad.

Taylor was shot multiple times in March after being roused from sleep by police at her door. A grand jury did not charge any officers for their role in Taylor's death.

Addressing criminal justice reform at Wednesday's vice presidential debate, Harris says a Joe Biden administration would ban chokeholds and require a national registry for police officers who break the law. She says George Floyd would be alive if such a ban existed.

Vice President Mike Pence was also asked if justice was done in the Taylor case. He says Taylor's family "has our sympathies, but I trust our justice system, a grand jury that reviews the evidence."

Pence also says there is no excuse for what happened to Floyd, who was killed after police pressed on his neck with a knee for several minutes. He says, "Justice will be served."

But he says there is no excuse for the rioting and looting that followed Floyd's death.

HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE PRESIDENTIAL RACE:

President Donald Trump is recovering from the coronavirus at the White House. Democrat Joe Biden is holding two virtual fundraisers. The candidates' running mates, meanwhile, met in a vice presidential debate Wednesday night in Salt Lake City.

Read more:

- Pence-Harris debate to unfold as Trump recovers from virus
- Viewer's Guide: Virus response on stage with Pence, Harris
- Trump, out of sight, tweets up storm, says he 'feels great'

HERE'S WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING:

10:35 p.m.

Vice President Mike Pence says Supreme Court nominee Amy Coney Barrett is a "brilliant woman" who will bring a lifetime of experience and "a sizable American family" to the nation's highest court.

During Wednesday's vice presidential debate, Pence and Democratic candidate Kamala Harris were asked how their respective states of Indiana and California should handle abortion if the Supreme Court were to overturn Roe v. Wade.

Pence, a former Indiana governor and abortion opponent, warned against attacks on Barrett's Roman Catholic faith and mentioned her large family of seven children.

Pence says he wouldn't presume to say how Barrett would vote on Roe. But as a candidate in 2016, Pence often told conservative crowds that President Donald Trump would appoint justices who would send Roe to the "dustbin of history."

Harris said it was "insulting" to suggest that she and running mate Joe Biden would knock anyone for their faith." She noted that Biden is Catholic, and she criticized Republicans for rushing to confirm Barrett.

Harris said she will "always fight for a woman's right to make a decision about her own body."

10:30 p.m.

There was briefly another participant swooping into Wednesday night's vice presidential debate.

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For several minutes, a fly landed in Vice President Mike Pence's hair, not moving as he answered questions about racial injustice and whether justice has been done in the death of Breonna Taylor.

Conversation about the fly briefly dominated corners of Twitter, where debate watchers discussed their distraction and inability to focus on Pence and California Sen. Kamala Harris' answers. Some joked about the need to test the fly for the coronavirus, as it had skirted the plexiglass partitions separating the candidates and moderator.

Wednesday night's intruder wasn't the first to take center stage at an election year debate. In 2016, a fly briefly landed between Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton's eyes during a town hall-style debate with now-President Donald Trump.

10:30 p.m.

Vice President Mike Pence is accusing Joe Biden of planning to add members to the U.S. Supreme Court if the Democrats "somehow win this election."

Pence said at Wednesday's vice presidential debate: "I tell you people across this country, if you cherish your Supreme Court, if you cherish the separation of powers, you need to reject the Biden-Harris ticket come November."

Pence promised to keep the court a nine-member panel if Trump is reelected.

Biden has not said he would increase the number of justices to outweigh what would become a solid conservative-majority court with the confirmation of Amy Coney Barrett.

Sen. Kamala Harris didn't directly answer Pence's accusation. But she countered that the Trump administration has stacked federal courts nationwide with white conservatives, accusing Pence of participating in a different version of court packing.

"This is what they've been doing. You want to talk about packing the court. Let's have that discussion," she says. "Let's go on and talk about the issue of racial justice."

10:25 p.m.

President Donald Trump is apparently watching the vice presidential debate and thinks Mike Pence is doing "GREAT," but he's not so hot about the Democratic nominee or the moderator's performance.

Trump, who is quarantining at the White House as he convalesces from COVID-19, took to Twitter to praise Pence and slam the Democratic vice presidential nominee less than an hour into Wednesday's debate in Salt Lake City.

"Mike Pence is doing GREAT! She is a gaffe machine," Trump chimed in on Twitter.

A few minutes later, he huffed that the moderator, USA Today Washington bureau chief Susan Page, cut Pence off as he was trying to make a point about Harris questioning a judicial nominee about his membership in the Knights of Columbus, a Catholic social organization.

The president offered a link to a National Review article critical of Harris' questioning to highlight the point he said Pence was trying to make.

10:10 p.m.

Vice President Mike Pence says hesitation on behalf of the Obama administration is to blame for the death of a humanitarian worker killed and abused by Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.

Relatives of Kayla Mueller were among Pence's guests at Wednesday night's debate with California Sen. Kamala Harris in Salt Lake City.

During the debate, Pence said that, when Joe Biden was vice president, the Obama administration "hesitated" in moving on al-Baghdadi, and when forces finally went in, Mueller had been moved to another location.

Mueller was kidnapped and held for 18 months before her death was announced in early 2015.

Pence said Mueller's family believes that, if President Donald Trump had been in office, "Kayla would be alive today." Al-Baghdadi was killed during a special forces raid in Syria in 2019.



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Speaking to Mueller's family, Harris said, "What happened to her was awful and it should have never happened."

9:55 p.m.

The vice presidential debate is much more cordial than last week's raucous presidential debate with frequent interruptions and outbursts.

Democrat Kamala Harris acknowledged Vice President Mike Pence's phone call to her the day she accepted the Democratic vice presidential nomination, while Pence acknowledged the well wishes from his Democratic rivals toward President Donald Trump after the president was diagnosed with COVID-19 last week.

Harris is the first Black woman on a major party ticket. Pence congratulated her Wednesday night on her historic nomination.

9:50 p.m.

California Sen. Kamala Harris is hammering Vice President Mike Pence over health care, saying that the Trump administration is "coming for you" if you have a preexisting condition.

Citing the Trump administration's support for a challenge to the Affordable Care Act before the Supreme Court, Harris says during Wednesday night's vice presidential debate that the Trump administration is "coming for you" if you have a preexisting condition, if you "love someone who has a preexisting condition" or if you are younger than 26 years old and covered by their parents' health care plan.

In response, Pence says that "Obamacare was a disaster" and that he and Trump have a plan to cover people with preexisting conditions, though the Trump administration hasn't yet released such a plan.

9:45 p.m.

California Sen. Kamala Harris says a lack of information on President Donald Trump's outstanding debts raises concerns about possible motives for his decisions in the nation's top office.

The Democratic vice presidential nominee said Wednesday during a candidate debate in Salt Lake City that "it'd be really good to know who the president of the United States, the commander and chief, owes money to."

Harris referenced reporting by The New York Times showing Trump paid \$750 in federal income taxes in 2016 and 2017 and is carrying a total of \$421 million in loans and debt. Vice President Mike Pence shook his head as she spoke.

Trump has fiercely guarded his tax filings and is the only president in modern times not to make them public.

Harris pivoted to taxes during a question on whether the American people deserved to have information on their president's health, to which she and Pence both answered in the affirmative.

9:40 p.m.

Neither Vice President Mike Pence nor Sen. Kamala Harris is acknowledging whether they have had a conversation with their party's presidential nominee about safeguards or procedures should either man become disabled.

President Donald Trump and Democrat Joe Biden would be the oldest president ever, if elected.

Pence instead used his two minutes to attack Harris' doubt in Trump's timeframe for a coronavirus vaccine. His answer came in part off Trump's recent coronavirus diagnosis.

For her part, Harris used her time to discuss her late mother's status as an immigrant and her unlikely path to the Democratic ticket.

Though neither seem to suggest it's important to discuss conversations with their running mates, both seem to agree it's important for the American people to have details of the president's health.

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9:35 p.m.

Sen. Kamala Harris is leaving it as an open question whether she would take a COVID-19 vaccine if one is approved while President Donald Trump is in office.

The topic came up early in Wednesday's vice presidential debate.

Harris was asked if Americans should take the vaccine and if she would. Harris says that if doctors "tells us that we should take it, I'll be the first in line to take it, absolutely. But if Donald Trump tells us that we should take it, I'm not taking it."

Vice President Mike Pence says there will be a vaccine produced in record time. He says, "I just ask you, stop playing politics with people's lives."

He says that undermining confidence in a vaccine is unacceptable.

Former Food and Drug Administration officials have warned that public perception that a vaccine being rushed out for political reasons could derail efforts to vaccinate millions of Americans.

9:20 p.m.

The coronavirus pandemic was the first topic at the vice presidential debate.

In Salt Lake City on Wednesday, separated from Vice President Mike Pence by plexiglass barriers, California Sen. Kamala Harris called the Trump administration's response to the growing pandemic "the greatest failure of any presidential administration in the history of our country."

Speaking directly to the camera, as Democratic nominee Joe Biden did in his first debate with President Donald Trump, Harris said, "They knew what was happening, and they didn't tell you."

In response, Vice President Mike Pence commended Trump's decision to shut off travel from China, saying the decision "bought us invaluable time" to coordinate the country's response to the pandemic. But Trump's move only cut off some travel from China, and tens of thousands were still allowed to pour into the country.

More than 210,000 Americans have died during the pandemic. Trump is recovering at the White House from his own infection.

9 p.m.

Republican Mike Pence and Democrat Kamala Harris are facing off in their only vice presidential debate.

The candidates are separated by plexiglass barriers in an auditorium where any guest who refuses to wear a face mask will be removed.

Wednesday's prime-time meeting is a chance for voters to decide whether Pence or Harris is ready to assume the duties of the presidency. It's hardly a theoretical question: President Donald Trump is 74 and recovering from the coronavirus, and Joe Biden is 77.

Harris is the first Black woman to stand on a vice presidential debate stage. The night offers her a prime opportunity to energize would-be voters who have shown only modest excitement about Biden.

Pence is looking to boost the Republican ticket, which is trailing in polls.

7:10 p.m.

Republican Mike Pence will press the Trump campaign's "law and order" message at the vice presidential debate against Democrat Kamala Harris.

Pence's guests in the debate hall Wednesday night will include Ann Marie Dorn, the widow of retired St. Louis police captain David Dorn, who was shot to death on June 2 after a violent night of protests.

President Donald Trump and his campaign have seized on the scattered violence that has broken out amid otherwise largely peaceful protests demanding racial justice. Trump has wrongly claimed that such violence has been condoned by his Democratic rival, Joe Biden, and has warned it will continue if Biden wins in November.

Ann Marie Dorn also spoke at the Republican National Convention.

Pence will also be joined by the parents of Kayla Mueller, a humanitarian aid worker who was taken cap-

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tive and killed by Islamic State militants.

7 p.m.

Two Utah women will attend Wednesday's vice presidential debate in Salt Lake City as guests of Democrat Kamala Harris.

Angela Romero is a state representative who also works in local government in Salt Lake City, overseeing the Division for Youth and Family programs. The campaign says Romero is focused on supporting families and local businesses affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

Deborah Gatrell is a veteran and teacher who is running for a seat on the Salt Lake County Council. She is a Blackhawk pilot who served in the Utah National Guard and was deployed to the Middle East.

The campaign says the two women represent the hard-working Americans that a Joe Biden-Kamala Harris administration would fight for.

5:50 p.m.

President Donald Trump's campaign is dialing back on advertising in Midwestern states that secured his first term in office.

Data from the ad tracking firm Kantar/CMAG shows Trump's campaign has canceled about \$3.3 million in advertising planned for Iowa and Ohio this week. But details provided from Democratic advertising trackers reveal the phenomenon is more widespread.

The data shows Trump is running \$1.3 million in advertising this week in Michigan, where Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden is spending \$2.9 million. In Wisconsin, Trump is spending \$229,000 compared to Biden's \$2.5 million. And in Minnesota, a longtime Democratic stronghold where Trump hoped to make inroads, Biden is outspending him \$1 million to Trump's \$289,000 this week.

The ad decisions by Trump's campaign are puzzling.

He amassed a massive campaign bank account after his election, but Biden has outraised him in recent months. Many Republican donors have been alarmed by the campaign's exorbitant spending on things unrelated to winning, including lavish payments to campaign consultants and surrogates.

3:45 p.m.

President Donald Trump has returned to the Oval Office for the first time since he was diagnosed and hospitalized with COVID-19.

Spokesperson Brian Morgenstern confirmed that the president returned to the Oval Office on Wednesday. He has been convalescing in the White House residence since he returned from a three-night hospital stay on Monday evening.

Trump is likely still contagious with the virus.

A Marine was posted outside the West Wing, signifying the president was in the Oval Office.

White House officials say they have put additional safeguards in place to protect staff who may interact with the president, including requiring full personal protective equipment.

Morgenstern says Trump is being briefed on stimulus talks and a potentially devastating hurricane heading toward the Gulf Coast.

2:30 p.m.

Vice President Mike Pence will be joined in the debate hall by several special guests, including the parents of Kayla Mueller, the humanitarian aid worker who was killed by Islamic State militants.

Their presence Wednesday night is intended to highlight action taken by President Donald Trump, including the killing of the group's leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, in contrast to the approach taken by the Obama administration, which Mueller's parents have criticized.

Carl and Marsha Mueller were featured in Trump's State of the Union address earlier this year and spoke at the Republican National convention. In their speech, they asserted that, had Trump "been president when Kayla was captured, she would be here today."

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The 26-year-old Mueller was taken captive in August 2013 after leaving a Doctors Without Borders hospital in Aleppo, Syria.

The debate comes the same day that two Islamic State militants — dubbed part of the “the Beatles” because of their British accents — were brought from Britain to the U.S. to face charges in connection with the deaths of American hostages, including Kayla Mueller.

10:45 a.m.

Kamala Harris has again tested negative for the coronavirus.

The campaign reported her results on Wednesday, less than 12 hours before she is scheduled to debate Vice President Mike Pence. She took the test Tuesday.

Pence also tested negative on Tuesday, according to the White House.

Harris and Pence will appear on stage at the University of Utah for a 90-minute debate. Both candidates will have plexiglass around them as an additional precaution. That was requested by the Biden-Harris campaign, and Pence’s team objected.

Harris also tested negative for the virus on Monday.

## Appellate judges let 2020 census continue through October

By MIKE SCHNEIDER Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — A panel of three appellate judges on Wednesday upheld a lower court order allowing the 2020 head count of every U.S. resident to continue through October. But the panel struck down a provision that had suspended a year-end deadline for submitting figures used to decide how many congressional seats each state gets.

The ruling by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals panel in San Francisco upheld part of U.S. District Judge Lucy Koh’s preliminary injunction last month, and rejected part of it.

Koh’s preliminary injunction suspended a Sept. 30 deadline for finishing the 2020 census and a Dec. 31 deadline for submitting numbers used to determine how many congressional seats each state gets — a process known as apportionment. Because of those actions, the deadlines reverted back to a previous Census Bureau plan that had field operations ending Oct. 31 and the reporting of apportionment figures at the end of April.

By issuing the injunction, Koh sided with a coalition of civil rights groups and local governments which had sued the Trump administration, arguing minorities and others in hard-to-count communities would be missed if the counting ended in September instead of October. But Trump administration attorneys had argued the Census Bureau was obligated to meet the congressionally mandated requirement to turn in apportionment numbers by Dec. 31.

Koh also struck down an Oct. 5 end date that the Commerce Department, which oversees the Census Bureau, had pushed after the injunction, saying it violated her order.

Hours after Wednesday’s ruling, the Trump administration asked the U.S. Supreme Court to put an immediate hold on the injunction while it appeals.

Acting Solicitor General Jeffrey Wall wrote in an application to the Supreme Court that the appellate court’s ruling will still force the Census Bureau to violate the Dec. 31 deadline. He added the decision also conflicts with the district judge’s rationale for issuing the injunction, calling it “an unprecedented intrusion” into the Trump administration’s ability to conduct the census.

“Because courts are not equipped to manage census operations, it is not surprising that the district court erred in its assessment of how accurate the census will be,” Wall said.

Supporters of the longer head count schedule praised the decision.

“The courts keep speaking even if the Trump administration is not listening,” said Julie Menin, who heads New York City’s census outreach efforts. “The Trump administration has lost time and time again in their attempts to interfere with the 2020 Census, and we welcome the Ninth Circuit’s decision, which preserves a fair and accurate census timeline.”



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Responding to the pandemic, the Census Bureau in April proposed extending the deadline for finishing the count from the end of July to the end of October and pushing the apportionment deadline from Dec. 31 to next April. The proposal to extend the apportionment deadline passed the Democratic-controlled House, but the Republican-controlled Senate didn't take up the request. Then, during the summer, bureau officials shortened the count schedule by a month so that it would finish at the end of September.

The Republicans' inaction coincided with a memorandum President Donald Trump issued, which was later ruled unlawful by a panel of three district judges in New York, directing the Census Bureau to exclude from the apportionment count people in the country illegally. The Trump administration is appealing that case to the Supreme Court.

By sticking to the Dec. 31 deadline, the apportionment count would be under the control of the Trump administration no matter who wins the presidential election next month.

While allowing the head count to continue through October leaves less time to crunch the numbers before the Dec. 31 deadline, Trump administration officials and outside advisory groups had said that the Census Bureau would be unable to meet that deadline "under any conditions," the appellate judges said.

Any harm caused by shortening the time for data processing after the count was outweighed by the harm that would come from ending the count early, they wrote.

The appellate judges also noted that just because the Dec. 31 deadline can't be met practically doesn't mean the court should require the Census Bureau to miss it.

"Perhaps the Bureau will find that with an extraordinary effort or changes in processing capacity, it is able to meet its deadline," the judges said. "Or the Department of Commerce may seek and receive a deadline extension from Congress. Or perhaps the Bureau will miss the deadline, as statement after statement by everyone from agency officials to the President has stated it would, due to the extraordinary circumstances of the pandemic."

The census determines how many congressional seats and Electoral College votes each state gets and how \$1.5 trillion in federal funding is distributed each year.

As of Tuesday, 99.7% of households nationwide had been counted, a figure that surpassed the completion rate in 2010, according to the Census Bureau.

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Follow Mike Schneider on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/MikeSchneiderAP>

## Republicans see 'grim' Senate map and edge away from Trump

By LAURIE KELLMAN and ALAN FRAM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Vulnerable Republicans are increasingly taking careful, but clear, steps to distance themselves from President Donald Trump, one sign of a new wave of GOP anxiety that the president's crisis-to-crisis reelection bid could bring down Senate candidates across the country.

In key races from Arizona to Texas, Kansas and Maine, Republican senators long afraid of the president's power to strike back at his critics are starting to break with the president — particularly over his handling of the pandemic — in the final stretch of the election. GOP strategists say the distancing reflects a startling erosion of support over a brutal 10-day stretch for Trump, starting with his seething debate performance when he did not clearly denounce a white supremacist group through his hospitalization with COVID-19 and attempts to downplay the virus's danger.

Even the somewhat subtle moves away from Trump are notable. For years, Republican lawmakers have been loath to criticize the president — and have gone to great lengths to dodge questions — fearful of angering Trump supporters they need to win. But with control of the Senate in the balance, GOP lawmakers appear to be shifting quickly to do what's necessary to save their seats.

"The Senate map is looking exceedingly grim," said one major GOP donor, Dan Eberhart.

Republican prospects for holding its 53-47 majority have been darkening for months. But recent upheaval at the White House has accelerated the trend, according to conversations with a half-dozen GOP strategists and campaign advisers, some of whom spoke on condition of anonymity because they were

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not authorized to disclose internal deliberations.

The strategists noted the decision to rush to fill the Supreme Court vacancy with conservative judge Amy Coney Barrett has not swung voters toward the GOP as hoped. Several noted internal polls suggested Republican-leaning, undecided voters were particularly turned off by the president's debate performance and his conduct since being diagnosed with the coronavirus. It wasn't clear that these voters would cast a ballot for Democrat Joe Biden, but they might stay home out of what one strategist described as a feeling of Trump fatigue.

Public polling shows Trump trailing Biden nationally but typically by smaller numbers in key battleground states.

"I think a lot of Republicans are worried that this is a jailbreak moment, and people who have been sitting on the fence looking for a rationale to stick with the president are instead abandoning the ship," said Rory Cooper, a Republican strategist and frequent Trump critic.

To be sure, Trump has a history of political resilience. Wednesday marked the four year anniversary of the release of the "Access Hollywood" tape, in which Trump boasted of sexually assaulting women. Republicans quickly abandoned him then, and his poll numbers sunk, but he still won weeks later.

Trump's behavior this week hasn't prompted that sort of GOP rebuke. But Republicans expressed clear frustration with Trump's erratic approach to negotiations on a stimulus bill aimed at mitigating the economic toll of the pandemic. Trump abruptly called off talks, then tried to restart them Wednesday, causing the stock market to plummet and then somewhat recover.

On Monday, as he returned from the hospital, a still-contagious Trump paused for a photo op at the White House, removed his mask and later tweeted that people should not fear the virus that has killed more than 210,000 Americans.

"I couldn't help but think that sent the wrong signal," said Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, whose tight race is among a handful that could cost Republicans control of the Senate. "I did not think that it set a good example at all."

Collins began airing an ad this week that urges voters to vote for her "no matter who you're voting for president."

In Arizona, another endangered Republican, Sen. Martha McSally, struggled when asked whether she was proud to serve under the president during her Air Force career.

"I'm proud that I'm fighting for Arizonans on things like cutting your taxes," McSally replied during a debate against Mark Kelly, one of multiple Democrats who have bested their Republican incumbents in fundraising.

Democrats have long considered Maine and Arizona, along with Colorado and North Carolina, top targets in their effort to gain the four seats they need to win Senate control. (It's only three if Biden wins the White House.) But the race for Senate majority has been widening into reliably Republican states, now including Iowa, Alaska, Kansas and Montana. In North Carolina, meanwhile, Democrat Cal Cunningham's recent sexting scandal has complicated his drive against Republican incumbent Thom Tillis.

Even South Carolina Sen. Lindsey Graham, a close Trump ally, is suddenly scrambling.

Trump won the state by 14 percentage points in 2016. Still, a major Republican political committee aligned with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell began spending nearly \$10 million on TV and radio ads this week attacking Graham's Democratic opponent, Jaime Harrison.

Donors have not given up on trying to hold the Senate. As Trump's fundraising has plateaued in recent months, it has spiked for Republican outside groups that are supporting House and Senate candidates.

The massive influx of new money for House and Senate committee will enable them to flood competitive races with advertising that embraces conventional Republican themes. (The South Carolina TV ad by the Senate Leadership Fund shows pictures of Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and says, "Liberal Jaime Harrison is their guy, not ours.")

The intention is to extend a lifeline to candidates who otherwise would have relied on the president's political operation for support, according to two Republican strategists with direct knowledge of the House and Senate campaign plans.

Still, there's little doubt Republican senators' fortunes are linked to the president and his volatile politi-

cal instincts. In the highly partisan environment, ticket-splitting — voting for one party for president and another for Senate, say — has become increasingly rare. In 2016, Republican Senate candidates lost in every state Trump lost and won where Trump won.

One GOP adviser said most Republican candidates are not running ahead of Trump in polling their states. And when his support drops, their support usually does, too.

Even in red states, Republicans are starting to make clear they aren't following Trump when it comes to the pandemic.

Sen. John Cornyn told the Houston Chronicle editorial board on Monday that Trump "let his guard down" and said his diagnosis should be a reminder to "exercise self-discipline."

In another GOP bastion, Republican Senate nominee Roger Marshall borrowed Trump's slogan for a "Keep Kansas Great" bus tour on Tuesday, but not his health advice.

"Of course, I think everyone should respect the virus," said Marshall, a doctor. "I'm really encouraging everyone to wear a mask when they can, to keep their physical distance, wash their hands, all those types of things."

Marshall was quickly reminded of his party's competing forces. As he spoke, he was briefly interrupted by a woman who appeared to be an opponent of wearing masks, yelling, "Stop telling people that!"

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Associated Press writers David Sharp in Portland, Maine, John Hanna in Topeka, Kan., Jonathan J. Cooper in Phoenix, and Brian Slodysko in Washington contributed to this report.

## High court nominee served as 'handmaid' in religious group

By MICHELLE R. SMITH and MICHAEL BIESECKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Supreme Court nominee Amy Coney Barrett served as a "handmaid," the term then used for high-ranking female leaders in the People of Praise religious community, an old directory for the group's members shows.

Barrett has thus far refused to discuss her membership in the Christian organization, which opposes abortion and, according to former members, holds that men are divinely ordained as the "head" of both the family and faith, while it is the duty of wives to submit to them.

Portions of two People of Praise directory pages for the South Bend, Indiana, branch were shared with The Associated Press by a former member of the community on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the issue and because this person still has family members in People of Praise. A second former member, Gene Stowe, who left the South Bend branch on good terms several years ago, confirmed the authenticity of the directory pages. He said he could not say precisely what year the directory was from, but that it had to be 2013 or earlier because one of the people listed had by then moved to another state.

All the top leaders within People of Praise are male, but in each of the group's 22 regional branches a select group of women is entrusted with mentoring and offering spiritual guidance to other female members. Until recently, these female leaders were called "handmaids," a reference to Jesus' mother Mary, who according to the Bible called herself "the handmaid of the Lord." The organization recently changed the terminology to "woman leader" because it had newly negative connotations after Margaret Atwood's dystopian novel "The Handmaid's Tale" was turned into a popular television show.

The leaders run weekly men's or women's groups of about half a dozen people where they pray and talk together, and where the leaders offer advice and guidance. They will also organize to help others in the community, such as providing meals when someone gets sick. Under the organization's rules, no female leader can provide pastoral supervision to a man, former members said.

The White House on Wednesday defended Barrett.

"These allegations are offensive and driven by anti-religious bigotry. Judge Barrett is an independent jurist with an exceptional record," spokesman Judd Deere said.

People of Praise's belief system is rooted in the Catholic Pentecostal movement, which emphasizes a personal relationship with Jesus and can include baptism in the Holy Spirit. As practiced by People of

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Praise, that can include praying in tongues to receive divine prophecies, heal the sick and cast out evil spirits, according to documents and former members.

Founded in 1971, the nonprofit organization has 22 branches across North America. It is not a church, but a faith community that includes people from several Christian denominations, though most of its roughly 1,800 adult members are Roman Catholic.

The existence of the directory listing Barrett's name as a handmaid was first reported by The Washington Post late Tuesday. The AP reported last week that a 2006 issue of the group's internal magazine, *Vine & Branches*, included a photograph showing that Barrett had attend a national conference reserved for top female leaders in People of Praise.

The group had deleted copies of that magazine and other back issues mentioning Barrett and her family from its website in 2017, when her name first emerged on President Donald Trump's short list for potential nomination to the Supreme Court.

Back issues of the magazine, tax returns and other documents showed Barrett's father served as the principal leader of People of Praise's New Orleans branch and was on the group's all-male Board of Governors as recently as 2017. Her mother also served in the branch as a handmaid.

Other records uncovered this week also showed that both Barrett and her husband, lawyer Jesse M. Barrett, had lived in the home of two of the group's co-founders while they were young law students at Notre Dame in the 1990s.

Barrett did not disclose her decades-long affiliation with People of Praise on her voluminous Senate judiciary Committee questionnaires filed last month and three years ago, when the Notre Dame law professor was appointed by Trump to a seat on the 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Chicago.

Barrett did submit to the Senate her 7th Circuit recusal list, of people and companies with which she has a conflict, including her husband, his law firm and Notre Dame University. But the list includes two other South Bend companies: the Healy Group Inc., a financial services firm owned by four People of Praise members, and Great Day LLC, which shares an address and phone number with that firm.

Barrett, 48, did not respond to a telephone message seeking comment. The White House press office did not immediately respond to an email seeking comment about why the mother of seven elected not to disclose her membership in People of Praise to the Senate.

Barrett also did not disclose that she had signed a 2006 newspaper ad sponsored by an anti-abortion group indicating she opposed "abortion on demand" and defended "the right to life from fertilization to the end of natural life."

On Tuesday, all 10 Democrats on the Senate Judiciary Committee issued a letter asking the Justice Department to explain the omissions and confirm whether any other materials have been left out from Barrett's Senate questionnaires. If so, the department should immediately provide the materials for committee review, the senators said.

Barrett's confirmation hearings are set to begin Monday as Republicans rush to approve her ascension to the Supreme Court before the Nov. 3 election.

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Smith reported from Providence, Rhode Island.

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## NFL looking at "several" protocol incidents with Titans

By TERESA M. WALKER AP Pro Football Writer

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — The NFL's investigation into how Tennessee turned into the league's first COVID-19 outbreak found "several specific incidents" of the Titans possibly breaking protocols dealing with



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the coronavirus pandemic, according to a person with knowledge of the probe.

Also, the headmaster of a private school in Nashville confirmed to The Associated Press on Wednesday that several Titans, including quarterback Ryan Tannehill, practiced on its field Sept. 30. That was a day before the NFL first postponed Tennessee's game with Pittsburgh before rescheduling to Oct. 25.

NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell warned all 32 teams Monday that following league protocols is mandatory and that violations forcing changes in the schedule could lead to forfeiting games.

Tennessee had two more players test positive Wednesday, a person familiar with the the situation said. The Titans placed starting wide receiver Corey Davis on the reserve/COVID-19 list hours later, bringing their total to 22 cases with 20 returned since Sept. 29.

The Titans cannot return to their facility before Saturday at the earliest, needing back-to-back days without a positive test result. They haven't been on a field since beating the Vikings 31-30 on Sept. 27. The NFL has to decide if they play Buffalo (4-0) as scheduled Sunday, postpone and reschedule or forfeit.

Titans coach Mike Vrabel said Tuesday any discipline would be something for the NFL to discuss.

"I don't expect anything either way," Vrabel said.

The Titans were featured with "several specific incidents" during a call Monday with the league's general managers and coaches, a person with knowledge of the NFL's investigation said. Another person familiar with the call said photos from the Titans' cafeteria were shown.

Both spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the investigation is ongoing.

The league is attempting to play a full schedule amid the pandemic without teams isolated in a bubble as other sports have done to protect players and staff from the virus. No games were affected through the first three weeks of the season.

Dr. Allen Sills, the NFL's chief medical officer, told Judy Battista of the NFL Network the league has looked into everything from video inside the Titans' facility, interviewing everyone involved and even studied seating charts on buses and planes.

Sills also made clear the league expected positive cases all along.

"The exercises are not just about did someone follow the protocols or not but, are there vulnerabilities we can tighten up, what can we learn and where can we get better and how can we improve going forward," Sills said. "And we've already made a number of those changes."

Minnesota coach Mike Zimmer said his Vikings went over the new protocols Wednesday for clubs having been exposed to a team dealing with a COVID-19 outbreak. Having played Tennessee helps his Vikings understand the significance of following the league's guidelines to stay safe.

"You look at the Pentagon, they've got it. The White House has got it. The NFL has got it," Zimmer said. "It's a crazy time."

Seattle coach Pete Carroll said they're trying to win games — both football and COVID — which means winning the travel game. He thinks the NFL's reminders on following the protocol are good for everyone, but being this strict six months ago would've been better.

"Had we been this disciplined at the start, across the country, we would never see what we have seen," Carroll said. "But it's demanding. It's difficult. It's uncomfortable. Sometimes it's hard to make sense of it, but you got to do it anyway because it's the right way to handle it."

The Patriots are dealing with their own COVID-19 cases. Cornerback Stephon Gilmore, the 2019 Defensive Player of the Year, announced on social media he had tested positive and is asymptomatic. Quarterback Cam Newton was placed on the reserve/COVID-19 list Oct. 3, with a defensive tackle from the practice squad added Tuesday.

New England canceled practices Wednesday and Thursday. The Patriots are scheduled to host Denver on Sunday.

The NFL already postponed the Patriots' last game a day before New England lost in Kansas City 26-10 on Monday night. The Chiefs host the Raiders on Sunday; Las Vegas placed defensive tackle Maurice Hurst on the reserve/COVID-19 list Tuesday.

Newton and the Titans make up the 11 confirmed positive tests among players from testing last week. The NFL also said there were 15 new confirmed positives among personnel in results announced Wednes-

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day out of 37,002 tests given to 7,981 players and team personnel last week.

Both Sills and Dr. Thom Mayer, the NFL Players Association's medical director, said the key is everyone following the protocols.

"The virus is still very much a threat not only to our season, but to the safety of everyone in our community," Mayer said in a statement.

Buffalo coach Sean McDermott is busy preparing his Bills until told differently. He said no one's perfect and they're all fighting an uphill battle with how easily COVID-19 spreads. His Bills have had no positives after beating the Raiders 30-23 in Las Vegas last week.

"We have a lot of trust and faith in the league," McDermott said of playing a game in Tennessee.

Pushing Bills-Titans to Monday night is challenging because Buffalo is scheduled to host Kansas City on Thursday, Oct. 15. That would force the NFL into further rearranging of the schedule.

The Bills aren't thinking of a forfeit right now.

"We'll handle that when the time comes," Bills safety Jordan Poyer said. "Right now, we're acting like we're playing. And when that moment comes, where they tell us this, that or the other, I think that's when we'll worry about it."

Bills quarterback Josh Allen said this virus can be as simple as one person going to a grocery store, and Baltimore wide receiver Marquise Brown said the test results show how cautious players must be away from the team facility.

"It's not just about you," Brown said. "It's about the whole NFL."

Asked about the chances of the NFL completing this season, Miami quarterback Ryan Fitzpatrick said he thinks everyone is very interested in what happens the next few days.

"Everybody's confidence level is probably a little less than a few weeks ago," Fitzpatrick said. "Two weeks ago everybody was riding high. It's amazing to see what happened in Tennessee so quickly."

Cleveland quarterback Baker Mayfield had a simple suggestion to keep all of the NFL playing.

"Just wear your masks," Mayfield said. "We all want to play football. Everybody has to do it. Just do it."

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AP Pro Football Writers Barry Wilner and Dave Campbell and Sports Writers Dave Ginsburg, Kyle Hightower, Will Graves, John Wawrow, Steve Wine, Tom Withers and Tim Booth contributed to this report.

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## Hard-hit Peru's costly bet on cheap COVID-19 antibody tests

By CHRISTINE ARMARIO Associated Press

BOGOTA, Colombia (AP) — In the early days of the coronavirus pandemic, the harried health officials of Peru faced a quandary. They knew molecular tests for COVID-19 were the best option to detect the virus — yet they didn't have the labs, the supplies, or the technicians to make them work.

But there was a cheaper alternative -- antibody tests, mostly from China, that were flooding the market at a fraction of the price and could deliver a positive or negative result within minutes of a simple fingerstick.

In March, President Martin Vizcarra took the airwaves to announce he'd signed off on a massive purchase of 1.6 million tests — almost all of them for antibodies.

Now, interviews with experts, public purchase orders, import records, government resolutions, patients, and COVID-19 health reports show that the country's bet on rapid antibody tests went dangerously off course.

Unlike almost every other nation, Peru is relying heavily on rapid antibody blood tests to diagnose active cases — a purpose for which they are not designed. The tests cannot detect early COVID-19 infections, making it hard to quickly identify and isolate the sick. Epidemiologists interviewed by The Associated Press say their misuse is producing a sizable number of false positives and negatives, helping fuel one of the

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world's worst COVID-19 outbreaks.

What's more, a number of the antibody tests purchased for use in Peru have since been rejected by the United States after independent analysis found they did not meet standards for accurately detecting COVID-19.

Today the South American nation has the highest per capita COVID-19 mortality rate of any country across the globe, according to John Hopkins University – and physicians there believe the country's faulty testing approach is one reason why.

"This was a multi-systemic failure," said Dr. Víctor Zamora, Peru's former minister of health. "We should have stopped the rapid tests by now."

As COVID-19 cases popped up across the globe, low- and middle-income nations found themselves in a dilemma.

The World Health Organization was calling on authorities to ramp up testing to prevent the virus from spreading out of control. One particular test – a polymerase chain reaction exam – was deemed the best option. Using a specimen collected from deep in the nose, the test is developed on specialized machines that can detect the genetic material of the virus within days of infection.

If COVID-19 cases are caught early, the sick can be isolated, their contacts traced, and the chain of contagion severed.

Within weeks of the initial outbreak in China, genome sequences for the virus were made available and specialists in Asia and Europe got to work creating their own tests. But in parts of the world like Africa and Latin America, there was no such option. They would have to wait for the tests to become available – and when they did, the incredible demand meant most weren't able to secure the number they required.

"The collapse of global cooperation and a failure of international solidarity have shoved Africa out of the diagnostics market," Dr. John Nkengasong, director of the Africa CDC, wrote in Nature magazine in April as the hunt was underway.

Nations that got an early jump start in preparing or had a relatively robust health care system already in place fared best. Two weeks after Colombia identified its first case, the country had 22 private and public laboratories signed up to do PCR testing. Peru, by contrast, relied on just one laboratory capable of 200 tests a day.

For years, Peru has invested a smaller part of its GDP on public health than others in the region. As COVID-19 approached, glaring deficiencies in Peru became evident. There were just 100 ICU beds available for COVID-19 patients, said Dr. Víctor Zamora, who was appointed to lead Peru's Ministry of Health in March. Corruption scandals had left numerous hospital construction projects on pause. Peru also faced a significant shortage of doctors, forcing the state to embark on a massive hiring campaign.

Even now, months later, Peru's needs are vastly under met. To date, the country has less than 2,000 ICU beds, compared to over 6,000 in the state of Florida, which has 10 million fewer inhabitants, according to official data.

High levels of poverty and people who depend on daily wages from informal work complicated the government's efforts to impose a strict quarantine, further challenging Peru's ability to respond effectively to the virus.

When Zamora arrived, he said the government had already decided molecular tests weren't a viable option. The nation didn't have the infrastructure needed to run the tests but also acted too slowly in trying to obtain what little was available on the market.

"Peru didn't buy in time," he said. "Everyone in Latin America bought before us – even Cuba."

Antibody tests — which detect proteins created by the immune system in response to a virus — had numerous drawbacks. They had not been widely tested and their accuracy was in question. If taken too early, most people with the virus test negative. That could lead those infected to think they do not have COVID-19. False positives can be equally perilous, leading people to incorrectly believe they are immune.

Antibody tests didn't require high-skill training or even a lab; municipal workers with no medical education could be taught how to administer them.

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"For the time we were in, it was the right decision," Zamora said. "We didn't know what we know about the virus today."

Ernesto Canayo, a 44-year-old father and city cleaner in Peru's capital, initially brushed off the fever and headache that wouldn't go away.

A member of the indigenous Shipibo-Conibo community, he lived in a shack on a hill about 10 blocks from the presidential palace and parliament. The one-room home he shared with his fiancée and 2-year-old son is held together by pieces of wood and plastic tarps.

In early April, at his urging, his family left to stay with relatives outside Lima, believing they'd be better able to avoid the virus. The symptoms started not long after. Over the phone, he told his sister he felt pain in his chest. He went to work, where he was given a rapid test.

"Nothing came up," he told her.

Worried about losing his job, he continued working, traveling on public transportation, and even joining in members of his community in draining out their shared toilets. The Cantagallo neighborhood – rooster's crow, in English – does not have regular water or electricity. Since 2013, officials have pledged improvements. Two city mayors who promised housing have been implicated in Latin America's largest graft probe.

Weeks later, Canayo was still feeling bad and getting worse. Ministry of Health officials arrived at Cantagallo in early May, armed with 120 rapid tests.

Half of those tested came back positive – but not Canayo.

"How can they say I don't have it?" he asked his sister later. "I feel all the symptoms."

Throughout Cantagallo, the test caused confusion and alarm. People who seemingly had no symptoms were coming back positive, while others convinced they had COVID-19 tested negative. Those who were positive were told to quarantine, while those who were negative were told they did not have the virus.

"The tests lied," said Harry Pinedo, an artist and teacher in Cantagallo who said he had numerous symptoms but tested negative. "They deceived us."

Evelyn Reyes, Canayo's fiancée, said he told her maybe he was just feeling the effects of the weather. A cold breeze snuck into their unprotected shack at night. He'd barely ever gotten sick; two negative COVID-19 tests cast doubt.

"He told me, 'I'm fine,'" she said. "'I'm going to recover from this.'"

Antibody tests are designed to be used as serological surveys to provide public health authorities an indication of how widespread the virus is in a community. Some physicians believe they can also be a useful tool if a patient with severe COVID-19 has repeatedly tested negative on a molecular test but has the symptoms. In that case, the virus may no longer be in their airways, but antibodies could be detected.

In Peru, by contrast, the test is frequently being used to make a diagnosis.

"We are not using them in the appropriate way," said Dr. Rubén Espinoza, former director of Peru's medical regulation agency. "The results of rapid tests are mentioned as if they were diagnostic ones – which only confuses people."

Peru's central government purchased nearly six million antibody tests of four different brands in the initial months of the pandemic, according to public records. At least one, imported from China made by Core Technology Co., does not have approval by China's medical regulatory agency. It is unclear whether the company sought Chinese regulatory approval; not having it is not necessarily an indicator of quality. The tests can be sold within the European Union because there is no regulatory body to evaluate them before they are placed on the market.

Another, by South Korean company SD Biosensor, has been subject to scrutiny in the U.S.

The group's Standard Q antibody test was barred for use by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. The agency does not detail why tests are pulled from distribution; it can be for failing to provide sufficient data or if found not to meet the agency's standards, among other reasons. An independent analysis of the test sponsored by the National Cancer Institute found that it had only a 76.7% total chance of cor-



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rectly identifying a positive case.

Peru's government contends the Standard Q test it purchased is different, because it uses one test strip instead of two, though an FDA spokeswoman said that both are "very similar."

The state of Rhode Island purchased 20,000 SD Biosensor antibody tests in April but ended up returning them and getting a refund after the FDA barred their use.

The SD Biosensor test – some 5 million of which have been imported to Peru, according to import records compiled by one of the nation's leading diagnostic companies and shared with The Associated Press – is still being used there. Authorities used it both in the Cantagallo indigenous community and at least one food market in August.

SD Biosensor and Core Technology did not respond to repeated requests for comment.

Dr. Víctor Suárez, subdirector of Peru's National Institute of Health, said qualitative studies were performed on all the central government's purchased tests, and that any that did not meet the country's requirements were sent back. But those tests account for only about half of all rapid antibody tests that have been conducted in Peru. Millions more have been imported from dozens of other brands, many of which are FDA barred.

Suárez said the government's regulatory agency has done sample surveys of non-state purchases and issued alerts to remove many as a result. Public alerts have been issued for about a dozen tests but not all that have been called into question.

He said that despite the questions raised about individual brands, overall they have helped Peru in identifying more cases than it would have otherwise.

"We've done the best we could to identify the most cases possible," he said. "Whether it's through molecular tests or rapid ones."

Ten of the roughly 80 different brands of antibody tests imported are prohibited in the U.S., the records show. A number were bought from relatively small, new companies that were awarded hefty contracts. One company that contracted with the Peruvian government until recently advertised itself as a cosmetics brand.

Emergency declaration regulations have made it easier to obtain contracts and fewer safeguards to protect against corruption are in place, several physicians and people who work in the pharmaceutical industry said.

"They brought in tests from just any company," said Victor Chu, head of Diagnostica Peruana, one of the older pharmaceutical companies in the country. "Anyone can buy the brand they want, the quantity they want, with hardly any control."

The FDA – which countries like Peru routinely turn to for guidance – was initially lax on what antibody tests were allowed on the market.

The agency had been criticized for acting too slowly in making molecular tests available. When antibody exams entered the picture, it opted to move fast. U.S. regulators allowed the blood tests to hit the market without first providing proof that they worked. They were only required to notify the FDA of their plans and provide disclaimers.

By May, the FDA announced it was rescinding that policy as part of a crackdown on the quality of products introduced on an emergency basis.

"We, unfortunately, see unscrupulous actors marketing fraudulent kits and using the pandemic as an opportunity to take advantage of Americans," FDA Deputy Commissioner Anan Shah said.

But Americans weren't the only ones who were sold on faulty products.

In Spain, England, India, and elsewhere, regulators have turned back rapid antibody test purchased and found to yield too many false positives or negatives, or both.

Less developed countries without a strong system to validate the veracity of tests were slower to remove them, and some are still authorized for use today.

"Clearly this is a mistake that the FDA, that the U.S. made, that is having a significant negative ripple effect in other countries," said Peter Pitts, a former FDA associate commissioner. "Every country that

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relied on the FDA needs to admit that they made a mistake – that they were inappropriately convinced that these tests were accurate.”

He added: “Bad data only helps the virus spread faster. Bad data costs lives.”

Peru isn’t the only country that has imported potentially faulty tests. In Ecuador, Chile, Mexico, and elsewhere in Latin America, lists of authorized antibody tests still include some of those on the FDA’s banned list. Their governments did not respond to requests for comment.

The specific brand of antibody test being used is critical, advised the Infectious Diseases Society of America, a professional organization of medical specialists. Lateral flow assays – like the blood prick test most commonly used in Peru – are notably inconsistent. Even for surveillance purposes, the society warned it is vital to have tests with a 99.5% or higher specificity, the ability to correctly identify negative cases.

Independent studies sponsored by the National Cancer Institute found some of the tests now removed from the U.S. market but still in use in other countries like Peru had low rates of correctly identifying a positive or negative case.

“Many people who are sick think they are negative, and they’re not,” Chu said. “The government puts labels on food, warning about the quantity of fat. Why not do the same for rapid tests, when this is a matter of life or death?”

The society also urged medical professionals to use antibody tests three or four weeks after the onset of symptoms to avoid incorrect results. In Peru, by contrast, the tests are often being used within days or just a week after symptoms.

“I would not make the conclusion they are all bad,” said Dr. Angela Caliendo, a board member of the society. “I would make the conclusion that some perform strikingly better than others. And if you are going to use – look very closely at the performance statistics.”

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In Cantagallo, the nearly 250 families who live packed in small huts grew even sicker after the state’s first round of COVID-19 testing.

When government workers returned 10 days later, they detected far more cases; of 656 people given an antibody exam, 476 came back positive, or nearly 73%. People who had tested negative like Canayo hadn’t properly isolated themselves. A long-standing skepticism of hospitals meant the sickest refused to seek help. A people of close-knit ties, they were also reluctant to leave those who tested positive alone.

Instead, families kept their sick nearby, trying to help them recover with natural remedies like inhaling the vapors of boiled eucalyptus leaves.

“Everyone was sick,” said Pineda, the artist. “Everyone had COVID.”

Images from a day of mass testing in May show technicians used a test by Chinese company Coretests. Relatively little information can be gleaned from its website or in published independent studies. The test is not on the FDA’s barred list, but is not approved either. It is not approved for use by China’s own medical regulatory agency.

Canayo, meanwhile, continued to grow worse. He had all the classic COVID-19 symptoms, including loss of his sense of taste. His fiancée said he took Tylenol but likely needed oxygen, which the community did not have.

The day before Mother’s Day, Rossi Canayo, 40, called to check up on her brother. Though she couldn’t see him, she could tell from the sound of his voice that he was ill and agitated.

Neighbors came to check on him but his fiancée and sister were nowhere near, trapped in towns far away amidst the nation’s strict lockdown.

“He was alone,” she said.

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Across Peru, many families were grappling with similarly confusing results.

Janina Huallpa, a phlebotomist for a children’s cancer clinic, came down with a fever in May. She’d been out working in the early months of the pandemic -- going to bus stops, supermarkets, and other crowded areas searching for blood donors who could help save lives.

A rapid test administered at work came back negative. Dubious, she went to a public hospital, where

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another antibody test also delivered a negative result.

"They told me maybe it was an infection," she said.

Over the next three weeks, she got progressively worse, struggling to walk and breathe. Again, she went to the hospital and again she tested negative and was sent home. Doctors told her she didn't have the virus.

Worried and anxious, the mother of two went back to the hospital days later when she didn't improve. This time, doctors did a chest X-ray and found pneumonia. A fourth rapid test came back negative, but doctors nonetheless decided to send her to a larger hospital in Lima, where she got a molecular test.

The test came back positive and she spent 10 days on a ventilator.

When she woke up, doctors told her that eight other people who entered the ICU on the same day she did had all died of COVID-19.

"If one of those tests had been positive, I would have gotten adequate treatment," Huallpa said. "How many people are dying because of this?"

To date, Peru has diagnosed over 800,000 people with COVID-19; 77% of those cases have been diagnosed through rapid antibody tests. Overall, it has conducted over 8 million blood tests – and just 780,000 nasal swab molecular ones.

In the world's hardest-hit region, it is the country with the third highest number of cases, nearly on par with Colombia, which has almost 20 million more residents.

More than 32,000 people have died, but health officials admit 23,585 more with COVID-19 symptoms may have perished before getting a positive test. Even by the lowest statistic, Peru has about as many deaths as France, which has a population twice as large.

Some physicians are reluctant to chastise the country's heavy reliance on antibody testing. They contend that, when used correctly, the tests can be a helpful tool, particularly for nations like Peru that do not have wide molecular testing capability. In addition, several said doctors should be making a diagnosis based on symptoms, not a test – and that multiple factors including years of underinvestment in health care are ultimately to blame.

The nation has made advances in expanding molecular testing; there are now 46 public and private labs capable of processing the exams. In addition, Peru recently began using a molecular test created by doctors within the country that can deliver results within two hours.

"Rapid tests have their place and their moment for use," said Pilar Mazzetti, Peru's minister of health. "No test can detect the virus 100% of the time."

Even though Peru can now do 12,000 molecular tests a day – still far fewer than many other countries in Latin America – it continues to diagnose primarily through antibody tests. Physicians said that widespread misperceptions about the significance of a positive or negative result on an antibody test are leading to grave mistakes.

"The use of rapid tests hasn't changed, which is unacceptable to me," said Dr. Ernesto Gozzer, a professor at the Cayetano Heredia University in Peru.

At a wide range of jobs– from photo shoots to food markets – employers require a negative antibody test in order to return to work. The tests – which can cost \$30 each – have become popular. Yet a positive result isn't necessarily a sign of an active infection. Rather, it can indicate that someone had previously had the virus.

Likewise, a negative result offers no assurance that someone doesn't have the virus.

Molecular tests run at about \$110 each in Lima, or nearly half the monthly minimum wage, making them out of reach for many Peruvians who can't pay out of pocket and might only be offered a serological test at a local clinic.

Construction supervisor Marco Mayo saw firsthand the haphazard results the tests can generate. He used two different tests sold under two different brands -- one on his left index finger and the other on his middle finger. One finger came back positive, the other negative.

He was not allowed to return to work while the results remained unclear.

"I lost a month of my life because of this," he said.

Other bad results have been far more consequential.

Katy Retamozo, president of the Peruvian Association of ICU nurses, said she has seen patients that tested negative on rapid antibody exams return days later with advanced COVID-19 pneumonia. The delay in properly identifying cases, she believes, could be a factor in the nation's especially high level of mortality.

"That made them delay getting to the hospital," she said.

At 5 a.m. on Mother's Day, Rossi Canayo's cell phone rang. On the other end, a voice relayed the news: Her brother was dead.

Word of Ernesto's death struck fear in Cantagallo. Suddenly, the virus many had dismissed as a distant threat was in their midst. And if an otherwise healthy adult who tested negative could die a week later, all of them were vulnerable.

For his sister, his death has stirred up questions and anguish. She wonders what would have happened if a test had quickly diagnosed his illness. And she also questions why the city he worked for used an antibody test on a worker who was out in the streets, with symptoms.

"They abandoned him," she said.

Associated Press researcher Chen Si in Shanghai, China contributed to this report.

Contact AP's global investigative team at [Investigative@ap.org](mailto:Investigative@ap.org).

## **Bleak outlook without stimulus: More layoffs, anemic growth**

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's move Tuesday to cut off talks on another government aid package will further weaken an economy straining to recover from an epic collapse, economists say, and deepen the hardships for jobless Americans and struggling businesses.

Half of all small businesses expect to need more aid from the government over the next 12 months to survive, according to a survey by the right-leaning National Federation of Independent Business. Sales for about one-fifth of small companies are still down 50% or more from pre-pandemic levels, the NFIB said.

For roughly 25 million laid-off Americans who are receiving unemployment aid, weekly payments, on average, have shrunk by two-thirds since a \$600-a-week federal benefit expired more than two months ago. Trump did provide an extra \$300 for six weeks. But that money has also run out.

Economists have warned that without further aid, families across the country will struggle in coming months to pay bills, make rent, afford food and avoid eviction. It could also reduce Americans' overall incomes to below pre-pandemic levels by year's end, thereby reducing spending and slowing economic growth. On Tuesday, Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell made clear his belief that unless the government supplied additional support, the recovery was at risk of derailing.

"Given what looks to be a growing probability of a second wave of the coronavirus pandemic, we now attach a 50% probability of a recession over the next 12 months," said Joe Brusuelas, chief economist at tax advisor firm RSM.

If a large stimulus is adopted early next year, the likelihood of a downturn would fall, Brusuelas added.

Oxford Economics projects that without further federal aid, the economy will eke out just a 1% annual growth rate in the current quarter, down sharply from its previous forecast of 4%.

Trump opened the door Wednesday to the possibility of a narrower aid package that would bolster specific industries, notably airlines, or distribute another round of \$1,200 stimulus checks to most adults. That prospect sent stock prices surging a day after they had tumbled in the wake of Trump's tweet ending talks. Yet there was little sign Wednesday that even a smaller-scale agreement would be reached.

"The recovery will continue without it, but it's going to be a much slower recovery," Loretta Mester, president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland, said in an interview on CNBC. "We're still in a pretty big hole."

Kelly said "it was comforting" to read Trump's tweet in support of immediate additional aid for airlines,



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"and hopefully that will get done." Kelly acknowledged there are critics of aid to his industry, but he insisted it is not a bailout. "This isn't a bailout. It's like World War II, and no company can survive ... losing all of its revenue."

According a Census Bureau survey released Wednesday, one-third of adults are struggling to pay for their usual expenses, including rent, food, car payments and utilities.

"This is a disaster — I don't know what is going to happen to us," said Julio Delgado, referring to the end of stimulus talks.

Delgado, who has six children, worked for more than 20 years at a job staging events at the Hynes Convention Center in Boston — until he was laid off this spring.

Delgado's wife was also laid off from a human resources job at a hospital. Together, they receive about \$900 in unemployment aid a week. But that's all set to expire before the year ends.

After that, Delgado doesn't know how the family will manage to pay their nearly \$2,000 in rent, plus utility bills, car insurance and other payments. His supervisor said he won't be recalled to his job until March — at the earliest.

On Tuesday, just hours before Trump tweeted his decision to abandon talks on a new rescue package, Powell warned in a speech to business economists, "Too little support would lead to a weak recovery, creating unnecessary hardship for households and businesses."

A unique feature of the current recession, economists say, is that incomes soared in the April-June quarter by a record amount, even as more than 22 million people lost jobs. The increase occurred because \$1,200 checks were sent to most households, and jobless aid was boosted by \$600 a week.

That extra money enabled spending at retailers to recover to pre-pandemic levels. Analysis by Opportunity Insights, a research group, has found that spending has rebounded faster in lower-income neighborhoods than in wealthier ones because of the benefit of stimulus payments.

Just over half the 22 million jobs that were lost to the pandemic have been recovered. Most of them reflect the recall of temporarily laid-off workers by restaurants and retail stores. Even though the unemployment rate has fallen to 7.9%, the number of permanent layoffs has jumped, a sign that the remaining 10.7 million lost jobs will take longer to return.

The American Hotel & Lodging Association has said that nearly three-quarters of hotels say they will have to lay off more workers without further financial aid.

And American Airlines and United Airlines combined furloughed 32,000 employees last week. Airlines have already shed tens of thousands of positions through early retirements and buyouts. Delta Air Lines began the year with 91,000 employees, but 18,000 left voluntarily and 40,000 others agreed to take unpaid leaves of absence. The company may cut 1,700 pilots Nov. 1 unless their union agrees to contract concessions.

The nation's fourth-biggest airline, Southwest Airlines, hasn't furloughed anyone, but this week it asked unions to accept pay cuts to avoid job cuts next year if there is no more federal money. More than 4,000 of Southwest's 60,000 workers have departed voluntarily.

"The pandemic has been devastating in our sector," and a recovery is "a long way away," said the airline's CEO, Gary Kelly.

With air travel still down nearly 70% from a year ago, additional government aid "gives us a fighting chance to get through this pandemic with our network intact, our jobs secure and the pay secure," Kelly said.

Congress and the White House had given passenger airlines up to \$50 billion in cash and loans, half of it earmarked for wages and benefits, in exchange for no layoffs through Sept. 30. Airlines and their unions have lobbied for \$25 billion more and a ban on layoffs or furloughs through next March.

Most GOP senators have opposed another large stimulus package, with some arguing that the economy must adjust to changes wrought by the coronavirus. Airlines, for example, may experience a long-term loss in business travel as more companies conduct business meetings over videoconference. That would mean that many airline workers will have to find jobs in different industries.

Yet some economists say it isn't clear how widespread such changes will be. Once there's a vaccine, or the virus is brought under control in other ways, it's likely Americans will resume many of their old habits

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— shopping, traveling, dining out and going to concerts and movies.

Martha Gimbel, a labor economist at Schmidt Futures, a think tank, said that if most of the jobs in those industries will be needed again, the government should support those workers until they return.

"Their jobs are not really obsolete," Gimbel said. "They just can't do them right now."

AP Business Writers Alexandra Olson in New York and David Koenig in Dallas contributed to this report.

## Putin sends a mixed message on US election, hedging his bets

By VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — Russian President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday decried what he called Joe Biden's "sharp anti-Russian rhetoric" but praised the Democratic presidential nominee's comments on arms control.

In his first detailed statements on the U.S. presidential campaign, Putin also lamented President Donald Trump's failure to improve relations between Moscow and Washington, but blamed this on a "bipartisan consensus on the need to contain Russia, to curb our country's development."

Putin's comments, to Russian state television, seemed intended to serve multiple purposes: playing to Trump's side by casting the Democrats in a pro-Moscow light, while at the same time hedging his bets by flirting with Biden's camp in case he wins.

He said Biden's reference to Trump in last week's debate as "Putin's puppy" was in fact a compliment to Russia and "actually enhances our prestige, because they are talking about our incredible influence and power."

Russia-U.S. relations have sunk to post-Cold War lows over Moscow's annexation of Ukraine's Crimea, the Russian meddling in the 2016 U.S. presidential election and other issues. Last month, Microsoft said that the same Russian military intelligence outfit that hacked the Democrats has attempted similar intrusions into the computer systems of more than 200 organizations, including political parties and consultants.

While Putin again denied meddling in the U.S. election, U.S. intelligence officials believe Russia is using a variety of measures to denigrate Biden and that individuals linked to the Kremlin are boosting Trump's reelection bid.

Biden has been critical of Russia throughout the campaign and dating back to his time as vice president, and the Kremlin leader took note of his "sharp anti-Russian rhetoric," saying it was something "we regretably have grown accustomed to."

But Putin also praised Biden for declaring an intention to extend the New START arms control treaty that expires in February. The U.S.-Russian talks on extending the pact have produced no visible progress, and Russian diplomats said that chances for making a deal with the Trump administration look slim.

"This is a very serious element of our potential collaboration in the future," Putin said, speaking on his 68th birthday. He added that Russia would be ready to work with any future U.S. president.

## Low tech talk in Google, Oracle high tech copyright clash

By JESSICA GRESKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The topic was high tech: the code behind smartphones.

But on Wednesday the Supreme Court looked to more low tech examples, from the typewriter keyboard to restaurant menus, try to resolve an \$8 billion-plus copyright dispute between tech giants Google and Oracle.

The case, which the justices heard by phone because of the coronavirus pandemic, has to do with Google's creation of the Android operating system now used on the vast majority of smartphones worldwide. In developing Android, Google used some of Oracle's computer code.

Some justices seemed concerned that a ruling for Oracle could stifle innovation.

Chief Justice John Roberts was among the justices who turned to examples beyond technology to try to get a handle on the dispute, asking Oracle's lawyer to imagine opening a new restaurant and creating a menu.

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"Of course you're going to have, you know, appetizers first, then entrees and then desserts. Now you shouldn't have to worry about whether that organization is copyrighted," Roberts said, suggesting Oracle's argument went to far.

But Roberts also had strong words for Google's lawyer. "Cracking the safe may be the only way to get the money that you want, but that doesn't mean you can do it," Roberts said, suggesting Google could have licensed what it wanted to use.

To create Android, which was released in 2007, Google 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 says what it did is long-settled, common practice in the industry, a practice that has been good for technical progress. And it says there is no copyright protection for the purely functional, noncreative computer code it used, something that couldn't be written another way. But Oracle says Google "committed an egregious act of plagiarism" and sued.

Justice Sonia Sotomayor was one of several justices who worried about the consequences of ruling for Oracle. She noted that what Google took was "less than 1% of the Java code" and asked why the justices should "upend" the current understanding of what is able to be copyrighted.

Justice Elena Kagan said that there are "all kinds of methods of organization in the world," from the keyboard to the periodic table, and she said Oracle was suggesting that the person who developed them could have a copyright and "prevent anybody else from using them."

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. 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.

Justice Brett Kavanaugh noted that the justices had been told "the sky will fall" if the court rules against Google. But he also he wanted to know: "You're not allowed to copy a song just because it's the only way to express that song. Why is that principle not at play here?"

Justice Samuel Alito said he was concerned that under Google's argument "all computer code is at risk of losing protection."

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.

## Vision 2020: What are the rules around poll watching?

The Associated Press undefined

WASHINGTON (AP) — What are the rules around poll watching on Election Day in the United States?

President Donald Trump has been urging his supporters to go the polls and "watch very carefully," raising concerns about possible voter intimidation.

Monitoring the votes at polling places is allowed in most states, but rules vary and it's not a free-for-all. States have established rules, in part, to avoid any hint that observers will harass or intimidate voters. There is a long history of whites intimidating and preventing Blacks from voting in the South. And the Republican Party had been prohibited from employing poll monitors until recently because of its own history of using them as a strategy for intimidation.

Generally, the terms poll watchers, poll monitors and citizen observers are interchangeable, and they can be partisan or nonpartisan. Nonpartisan poll watchers are trained to monitor polling places and local elections offices that tally the votes, looking for irregularities or ways to improve the system. Partisan poll watchers are those who favor particular parties, candidates or ballot propositions and monitor voting places and local election offices to ensure fairness to their candidates or causes. They can make note of

potential problems as a way to challenge the voting or tabulating process. In all cases, poll watchers are not allowed to interfere with the conduct of the election. In some states, they are allowed to challenge individuals' eligibility to vote; in those cases, a voter may need to file a provisional ballot.

State rules vary on who can be a poll watcher, how many are allowed at polling places or local elections offices, and how they must conduct themselves inside the office or precinct. In most states, political parties, candidates and ballot issue committees can appoint poll watchers, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures. They are usually required to be registered voters, but states differ on whether the poll watcher must be registered in the county or precinct rather than just in the state.

This fall's election will be the first in nearly 40 years in which the Republican National Committee will be out from under a consent decree that restricted its ability to engage in coordinated poll watching activities. Democrats are concerned that could open the door for Republicans to engage in the same kind of voter intimidation that resulted in the consent decree in the first place in the early 1980s.

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

## 2 scientists win Nobel chemistry prize for gene-editing tool

By MARILYNN MARCHIONE, CHRISTINA LARSON and DAVID KEYTON Associated Press

STOCKHOLM (AP) — The Nobel Prize in chemistry went to two researchers Wednesday for a gene-editing tool that has revolutionized science by providing a way to alter DNA, the code of life — technology already being used to try to cure a host of diseases and raise better crops and livestock.

Emmanuelle Charpentier of France and Jennifer A. Doudna of the United States won for developing CRISPR-cas9, a very simple technique for cutting a gene at a specific spot, allowing scientists to operate on flaws that are the root cause of many diseases.

"There is enormous power in this genetic tool," said Claes Gustafsson, chair of the Nobel Committee for Chemistry.

More than 100 clinical trials are underway to study using CRISPR to treat inherited diseases, and "many are very promising," according to Victor Dzau, president of the National Academy of Medicine.

"My greatest hope is that it's used for good, to uncover new mysteries in biology and to benefit humankind," said Doudna, who is affiliated with the University of California, Berkeley, and is paid by the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, which also supports The Associated Press' Health and Science Department.

The prize-winning work has opened the door to some thorny ethical issues: When editing is done after birth, the alterations are confined to that person. Scientists fear CRISPR will be misused to make "designer babies" by altering eggs, embryos or sperm — changes that can be passed on to future generations.

Much of the world became aware of CRISPR in 2018, when Chinese scientist He Jiankui revealed he had helped make the world's first gene-edited babies, to try to engineer resistance to infection with the AIDS virus. His work was denounced as unsafe human experimentation, and he has been sentenced to prison in China.

In September, an international panel of experts issued a report saying it is too soon to try such experiments because the science isn't advanced enough to ensure safety.

"Being able to selectively edit genes means that you are playing God in a way," said American Chemistry Society President Luis Echegoyen, a chemistry professor at the University of Texas El Paso.

Dr. George Daley, dean of Harvard Medical School, said: "New technology often presents this dichotomy — there is immense potential for human benefit, especially for disease treatment, but also the risk of misapplication."

However, scientists universally praised the great potential that gene editing has for patients now.

"There's no aspect of biomedical research that hasn't been touched by CRISPR," which has been used to



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engineer better crops and to try to cure human diseases including sickle cell, HIV infection and inherited forms of blindness, said Dr. Kiran Musunuru, a genetics expert at the University of Pennsylvania who is researching it for heart disease.

Doudna said CRISPR also has the potential to be used to engineer plants to store more carbon or to withstand extremes of climate change, giving researchers a chance to "address urgent problems humanity is facing."

It's the fourth time in the 119-year history of the prizes that a Nobel in the sciences was given exclusively to women.

Charpentier, the 51-year-old leader of the Max Planck Unit for the Science of Pathogens in Berlin, said that while she considers herself first and foremost a scientist, "it's reflective of the fact that science becomes more modern and involves more female leaders."

"I do hope that it will remain and even develop more in this direction," she said, adding that it is "more cumbersome to be a woman in science than to be a man in science."

Three times a woman has won a Nobel in the sciences by herself; this is the first time an all-female team won a science prize. In 1911, Marie Curie was the sole recipient of the chemistry award, as was Dorothy Crowfoot Hodgkin in 1964. In 1983, Barbara McClintock won the Nobel in medicine.

The breakthrough research done by Charpentier and Doudna was published in 2012, making the discovery very recent compared with a lot of other Nobel-winning research, which is often honored only after decades have passed.

Dr. Francis Collins, who led the drive to map the human genome, said the technology "has changed everything" about how to approach diseases with a genetic cause.

"You can draw a direct line from the success of the human genome project to the power of CRISPR-cas to make changes in the instruction book," said Collins, director of the U.S. National Institutes of Health, which helped fund Doudna's work.

The Broad Institute, jointly run by Harvard and MIT, has been in a court fight with the Nobel winners 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.

Feng Zhang, the Broad scientist most known for that work, made no comment on the awards, but the Broad's director, Eric Lander, messaged congratulations on Twitter to the winners. Another Broad gene editing scientist, David Liu, noted on Twitter that the winners' seminal research paper in 2012 has been cited more than 9,500 times, or about once every eight hours.

The Nobel comes with a gold medal and 10 million kronor (more than \$1.1 million), courtesy of a bequest left more than a century ago by the prize's creator, Alfred Nobel, the inventor of dynamite.

On Monday, the Nobel in medicine was awarded for the discovery of the liver-ravaging hepatitis C virus. Tuesday's prize in physics honored breakthroughs in understanding black holes. The prizes in literature, peace and economics will be awarded in the coming days.

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Larson reported from Washington, Marchione from Milwaukee, and Keyton from Stockholm. Frank Jordans in Berlin and AP Science Writer Seth Borenstein in Kensington, Maryland, 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>

## 'Jurassic World' shoot suspended after COVID-19 positives

By LINDSEY BAHR AP Film Writer

Filming on the new "Jurassic World" movie at Pinewood Studios in the U.K. has been suspended for two weeks because of COVID-19 cases on set. Director Colin Trevorrow tweeted Wednesday that there were "a few" positive tests for the virus.

He added that the individuals tested negative shortly after, but that they would be pausing for two weeks

regardless to adhere to safety protocols.

A spokesperson for Universal Pictures said they were informed of the positive tests last night and that all tested negative this morning.

"The safety and well-being of our entire cast and crew is paramount," the spokesperson added. "Those who initially tested positive are currently self-isolating, as are those who they have come into contact with."

On Tuesday, Universal said that the release of "Jurassic World: Dominion" was being delayed a year to June 2022.

The franchise starring Chris Pratt was one of the first major Hollywood productions to restart after pandemic-related shutdowns. The New York Times in August wrote about the enhanced safety protocols on the set and a few crewmember cases in Britain and in Malta over the summer.

It's the second significant shoot to be affected by COVID-19. Last month the U.K. shoot on "The Batman," a Warner Bros. film, also halted production because of a positive case.

## Peru bet on cheap COVID antibody tests; it didn't go well

By CHRISTINE ARMARIO Associated Press

BOGOTA, Colombia (AP) — In the early days of the coronavirus pandemic, the harried health officials of Peru faced a quandary. They knew molecular tests for COVID-19 were the best option to detect the virus — yet they didn't have the labs, the supplies, or the technicians to make them work.

But there was a cheaper alternative -- antibody tests, mostly from China, that were flooding the market at a fraction of the price and could deliver a positive or negative result within minutes of a simple fingerstick.

In March, President Martin Vizcarra took the airwaves to announce he'd signed off on a massive purchase of 1.6 million tests — almost all of them for antibodies.

Now, interviews with experts, public purchase orders, import records, government resolutions, patients, and COVID-19 health reports show that the country's bet on rapid antibody tests went dangerously off course.

Unlike almost every other nation, Peru is relying heavily on rapid antibody blood tests to diagnose active cases — a purpose for which they are not designed. The tests cannot detect early COVID-19 infections, making it hard to quickly identify and isolate the sick. Epidemiologists interviewed by The Associated Press say their misuse is producing a sizable number of false positives and negatives, helping fuel one of the world's worst COVID-19 outbreaks.

What's more, a number of the antibody tests purchased for use in Peru have since been rejected by the United States after independent analysis found they did not meet standards for accurately detecting COVID-19.

Today the South American nation has the highest per capita COVID-19 mortality rate of any country across the globe, according to John Hopkins University — and physicians there believe the country's faulty testing approach is one reason why.

"This was a multi-systemic failure," said Dr. Víctor Zamora, Peru's former minister of health. "We should have stopped the rapid tests by now."

As COVID-19 cases popped up across the globe, low- and middle-income nations found themselves in a dilemma.

The World Health Organization was calling on authorities to ramp up testing to prevent the virus from spreading out of control. One particular test — a polymerase chain reaction exam — was deemed the best option. Using a specimen collected from deep in the nose, the test is developed on specialized machines that can detect the genetic material of the virus within days of infection.

If COVID-19 cases are caught early, the sick can be isolated, their contacts traced, and the chain of contagion severed.

Within weeks of the initial outbreak in China, genome sequences for the virus were made available and specialists in Asia and Europe got to work creating their own tests. But in parts of the world like Africa

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and Latin America, there was no such option. They would have to wait for the tests to become available – and when they did, the incredible demand meant most weren't able to secure the number they required.

"The collapse of global cooperation and a failure of international solidarity have shoved Africa out of the diagnostics market," Dr. John Nkengasong, director of the Africa CDC, wrote in Nature magazine in April as the hunt was underway.

Nations that got an early jump start in preparing or had a relatively robust health care system already in place fared best. Two weeks after Colombia identified its first case, the country had 22 private and public laboratories signed up to do PCR testing. Peru, by contrast, relied on just one laboratory capable of 200 tests a day.

For years, Peru has invested a smaller part of its GDP on public health than others in the region. As COVID-19 approached, glaring deficiencies in Peru became evident. There were just 100 ICU beds available for COVID-19 patients, said Dr. Víctor Zamora, who was appointed to lead Peru's Ministry of Health in March. Corruption scandals had left numerous hospital construction projects on pause. Peru also faced a significant shortage of doctors, forcing the state to embark on a massive hiring campaign.

Even now, months later, Peru's needs are vastly under met. To date, the country has less than 2,000 ICU beds, compared to over 6,000 in the state of Florida, which has 10 million fewer inhabitants, according to official data.

High levels of poverty and people who depend on daily wages from informal work complicated the government's efforts to impose a strict quarantine, further challenging Peru's ability to respond effectively to the virus.

When Zamora arrived, he said the government had already decided molecular tests weren't a viable option. The nation didn't have the infrastructure needed to run the tests but also acted too slowly in trying to obtain what little was available on the market.

"Peru didn't buy in time," he said. "Everyone in Latin America bought before us – even Cuba."

Antibody tests – which detect proteins created by the immune system in response to a virus – had numerous drawbacks. They had not been widely tested and their accuracy was in question. If taken too early, most people with the virus test negative. That could lead those infected to think they do not have COVID-19. False positives can be equally perilous, leading people to incorrectly believe they are immune.

Antibody tests didn't require high-skill training or even a lab; municipal workers with no medical education could be taught how to administer them.

"For the time we were in, it was the right decision," Zamora said. "We didn't know what we know about the virus today."

## **Astronaut chooses daughter's wedding over space test flight**

By MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — The commander of Boeing's first astronaut flight has pulled himself off the crew so he's on Earth — not at the International Space Station — for his daughter's wedding next year.

It's the second crew switch for Boeing's Starliner capsule, grounded until the end of this year or early next because of software problems encountered during the first test flight last December.

Boeing astronaut Chris Ferguson announced his decision Wednesday. Last year, NASA astronaut Eric Boe stepped aside from the first Starliner crew for medical reasons. Both were replaced by experienced space station astronauts.

In a video posted to his Twitter account, Ferguson said it was a difficult decision, but "next year is very important for my family." He said he has several commitments "which I simply cannot risk missing." A Boeing spokeswoman confirmed one is his daughter's wedding.

"I'm not going anywhere. I'm just not going into space next year," Ferguson said. He stressed that he remains committed to the Starliner program and will continue to work for Boeing.

The former NASA astronaut has flown in space three times, commanding the last shuttle flight in 2011. He has been replaced on the Starliner crew by NASA astronaut Butch Wilmore, who had been training as a

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backup for the test flight. Wilmore joins NASA astronauts Nicole Mann and Mike Fincke, who replaced Boe. In December or early January, Boeing plans to repeat a Starliner test flight without a crew, in hopes of reaching the space station this time. If that goes well, Wilmore, Fincke and Mann will fly to the space station aboard a Starliner as early as June 2021, and remain in orbit anywhere between two weeks and six months.

SpaceX, meanwhile, plans to launch its second astronaut flight at the end of this month. Two NASA test pilots returned to Earth in August to close out SpaceX's first crew mission. NASA has turned over the job of ferrying astronauts, to and from the space station, to private companies.

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## Wall Street cheerleader Trump has little invested himself

By BERNARD CONDON Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Even from the hospital, as his doctors were administering a mixture of drugs to battle the coronavirus, President Donald Trump couldn't quite help himself.

"STOCK MARKET UP BIG," he blared in one tweet. "The Stock Market is getting ready to break its all time high," came another. "NEXT YEAR WILL BE THE BEST EVER."

Trump's relentless cheerleading for the stock market, taking full credit for its gains, has been a hallmark of his presidency, through more than 150 tweets and exuberant rhetoric at his rallies. Yet behind the bluster is a simple fact of which most voters are unaware:

Trump barely has any of his own money in the stock market.

"It's like Trump Vodka — he wants everyone to drink it, but he doesn't drink it himself," said Jack Ablin, chief investment officer of Cresset Wealth Advisors. To have so much wealth and so little invested, he added, is "completely out of balance" and "extremely unusual."

Deep in The New York Times' recent report on Trump's tax returns is the fact that he sold more than \$200 million in stocks and bonds in the three years leading up to his inauguration. And an Associated Press analysis of his financial disclosures since then shows as much as \$8 million more was sold in his first three years in office, even with his investments now in a trust, beyond his direct control.

Significantly, those disclosures — which give figures in ranges, not exact amounts — show no substantial buying to make up for it. That left him a stock portfolio last year that ranged between \$693,000 — less than what many Americans have in their 401(k)s — and \$2.2 million. Even that top figure is less than one-tenth of 1% of his fortune, estimated by Forbes at \$2.5 billion.

"Why would you talk up the stock market and not own stocks at the same time?" said David Rosenberg, former chief North American economist at Merrill Lynch.

What's behind Trump's sell-off and lack of buying is not entirely clear, though in a debate during the 2016 campaign, he took a bleak view of the stock market, saying, "We're in a bubble right now."

Also, after a large sale of individual stocks before the last election, Trump told NBC that he wanted to avoid conflicts of interest while "making deals for this country that maybe will affect one company positively and one company negatively." (He has continued to hold on to his diversified stock funds, which contain shares from a variety of companies.)

Others, though, have cast doubt on the conflict-of-interest explanation and speculated instead that he sold off stock to raise money quickly and quietly to cover his debts. Trump poured \$47 million into his last campaign for president and still owes a sizable amount.

The White House referred queries about Trump's stock holdings to the Trump Organization, which declined to comment, leaving financial and political watchers only to speculate.

Whatever the reason for selling, Trump's lack of a substantial stake has not stopped him from vigorously touting the run-up in the stock market. Polls consistently show Trump's handling of the economy is his strongest issue with voters, and the stock market has withstood the coronavirus crisis better than the



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economy as a whole. The Standard and Poor's 500 index has jumped 59 percent since the last presidential election, recovering all the ground lost during a March plunge.

American families now have an average of 15 percent of their assets riding on the market, according to Federal Reserve data, and the richest 1 percent even more: 40 percent.

Several voters interviewed this week said that they were surprised Trump wasn't more heavily invested but that it wouldn't change their vote.

"He isn't interested in the people; he's interested in the stock market," 79-year-old Ruth Johnson said as she shopped at a Walmart in Council Bluffs, Iowa.

Johnson, who voted for Trump four years ago but didn't again this year, thought about it some more and added: "I think he's more interested in Donald Trump than anything else."

Kenton E. Moore said that he doesn't support the president but that it makes sense for Trump to avoid stocks, given all the money he has made in real estate.

"The stock market is not a safe thing," Moore, 70, said as he fished in the Missouri River in Council Bluffs. "Why play in the stock market if you don't have to?"

Trump supporter Cindi Holland, who worked in the transportation industry in Michigan, said she doesn't know much about what Trump does with his money but there's one thing she does know: "I have a 401(k) and it's doing awesome."

Some financial analysts warn that ordinary investors could be particularly vulnerable at a time when stocks are overvalued in relation to long-term earnings. They note individual investors and day traders are flooding into the market the way they did before previous market highs, driving the fastest-rising stocks ever higher.

"Momentum investing has run amok here," said James Abate, managing director of Centre Asset Management. "We're in a very dangerous time."

Some have speculated Trump has sold stocks in recent years because he needs cash to pay his debts or to prop up golf properties that have reportedly lost hundreds in millions of dollars. While selling one of his properties could raise alarm bells, unloading some stock might not.

Trump's 2016 sell-off leading up to the election involved shares of more than 100 companies, including manufacturers such as Boeing and General Electric, tech giants Amazon and Ebay, and food makers Kellogg and J.M. Smucker. He also dumped oil drillers and refiners and a pair companies that were involved in the disputed Dakota Access oil pipeline that Trump backed once he took office.

What he has left now are just stocks in funds. Those include funds that are betting stocks go down as well as up, ones targeting Japan and Canada, and several that are pegged to the S&P 500.

The full extent of Trump's holdings and sales is impossible to determine from his annual disclosure reports. The holdings are given in ranges, not precise figures, and some disclosures list just capital gains realized from sales, not the much larger cash total.

Also, when Trump took office he put his business in a trust managed by his two adult sons, Eric and Don Jr., and his stock funds now reside in three other trusts overseen by JP Morgan.

There are no federal ethics laws barring a president from buying and selling as much stock as he wants.

Trump has been openly disdainful of some of the rules and norms that have held sway in Washington. His Washington hotel, for example, has become a magnet for foreign diplomats and lobbyists, triggering allegations that Trump is violating the Emoluments Clause of the Constitution.

"It would be out of character for President Trump to take action to avoid a conflict of interest," said Kathleen Clark, a government ethics lawyer at Washington University in St. Louis. "It would be great if he acted that way, but it would out of character."

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AP writers Josh Funk in Council Bluffs, Iowa, and Sharon Cohen in Chicago contributed to this report.

## Appeals court: Trump must turn over taxes to prosecutor

By LARRY NEUMEISTER Associated Press

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NEW YORK (AP) — President Donald Trump's accountant must turn over his tax records to a New York state prosecutor, an appeals court ruled Wednesday in a decision that likely sets up a second trip to the U.S. Supreme Court over the issue.

The 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Manhattan said in a written decision that a stay of a lower-court decision will remain in effect so Trump's lawyers can appeal the ruling to the high court.

In August, a district court judge had rejected their renewed efforts to invalidate a subpoena that the office of Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance Jr. issued to Trump's accounting firm last year.

Part of Vance's probe pertains to an investigation related to payoffs to two women — porn actress Stormy Daniels and model Karen McDougal — to keep them quiet during the 2016 presidential campaign about alleged extramarital affairs with Trump. Trump has denied the affairs.

Vance is seeking more than eight years of the Republican president's personal and corporate tax records, but has disclosed little about what prompted him to request the records. In one recent court filing, Vance's lawyers have said he was justified in demanding them because of public reports of "extensive and protracted criminal conduct at the Trump Organization."

A Justice Department spokesperson said the department was reviewing the ruling.

The Supreme Court in July ruled 7-2 against the president, rejecting Trump's arguments that he can't even be investigated, let alone charged with any crime, while he is in office. But the court said Trump can challenge the subpoena on other grounds, like anyone else who receives a subpoena.

The likelihood that the taxes would be released was unlikely to be resolved before the November election, especially since the high court is down to eight justices after the death of Ruth Bader Ginsburg. And any release would not result in immediate public disclosures, since grand jury proceedings are secret.

Through his lawyers, Trump argued that the subpoena was issued in bad faith, might have been politically motivated and amounted to harassment of him, especially since the wording copied the language in congressional subpoenas. The lawyers also maintained that seeking tax records dating back to 2011 was a "fishing expedition" and the overbroad request should be rejected.

In its decision, the 2nd Circuit disagreed.

"We hold that none of the President's allegations, taken together or separately, are sufficient to raise a plausible inference that the subpoena was issued 'out of malice or an intent to harass,'" the appeals court said.

In filings with the 2nd Circuit, Vance's lawyers cited public reports including news accounts and Congressional testimony by former Trump personal lawyer Michael Cohen saying it was common for the Trump Organization to submit falsified financial records when the company applied for loans.

Vance's lawyers wrote that if Trump and his entities made misstatements about business properties, wherever located, to New York-based business partners, insurers, potential lenders, or tax authorities, those misstatements could establish crimes including falsifying business records, insurance and tax fraud and scheming to defraud.

Last month, The New York Times reported that it had obtained over two decades of tax return data for Trump and hundreds of his companies. It said he paid just \$750 in federal income tax the year he entered the White House and no income tax at all in 11 of 18 years it reviewed.

At the time, Trump dismissed the report as "fake news" and maintained he has paid taxes, but he provided no specifics.

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Associated Press writer Michael Balsamo in Washington contributed to this report.

## Texas high court blocks Houston plan to offer mail ballots

By PAUL J. WEBER Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — The Texas Supreme Court ruled Wednesday that 2 million Houston voters cannot receive unsolicited mail ballot applications from local elections officials who are dramatically expanding ways to vote in November in the nation's third-largest county, a key battleground in Texas.

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The decision by the all-Republican court is the latest defeat in a string of losses for Democrats whose efforts to change Texas voting laws during the coronavirus pandemic have largely failed.

Polls show unusually tight races this year in America's biggest red state, intensifying battles over voting access. Texas is one of just five states not allowing widespread mail-in voting this year. Republican Gov. Greg Abbott has resisted calls to expand eligibility and courts have sided with GOP leaders who say fear of catching COVID-19 doesn't qualify voters for mail-in ballots.

Abbott also continues facing lawsuits, including one filed Wednesday by the Texas NAACP, over his decision last week that barred Texas' 254 counties from operating more than one drop-off box for absentee ballots, which forced the closure of dozens of drop-off sites in Harris County and other Democratic-led counties.

Mail voting in Texas is generally limited to voters who are 65 years old or older, or who have a disability. In the ruling, the justices sidestepped the issue of whether mail-in voting was safer in the pandemic, ruling instead that current Texas law wouldn't allow Harris County to send mass ballot applications.

"The question before us is not whether voting by mail is good policy or not, but what policy the Legislature has enacted. It is purely a question of law," the court wrote in its ruling.

Democrats, who believe this year's election is their biggest opportunity in Texas in decades, slammed the decision. "Once again, the all-Republican Texas Supreme Court steps into this election against the interests of voters and a functioning democracy," said Gilberto Hinojosa, chairman of the Texas Democratic Party.

The case is among several significant battles over voting in Texas that are still playing out in courts with four weeks until Nov. 3. An appeals court reversed a federal judge's decision to reinstate straight-ticket voting in Texas, which Democrats had sought over concerns of voters waiting in long lines on Election Day during the pandemic, particularly in large counties that have longer ballots.

Abbott had also faced a lawsuit from within his own party over his decision to extend early voting by six days, part of an extraordinary backlash the governor has faced from the right wing of the GOP over his handling of the pandemic. In a separate order Wednesday, the Texas Supreme Court rejected that effort to scale back early voting, saying the challenge came too close to the election.

The weeklong battle over whether mail-in ballot applications can be proactively sent to every registered voter in Texas' most populous county has not appeared to dampen interest in the option. More than 200,000 voters around Houston have already requested a mail-in ballot, roughly double the number in a typical presidential election year, said Susan Hays, an attorney for Harris County.

Houston is a stronghold for Democrats, but the surrounding county still includes GOP-held seats that are helping keep Republicans in power in Texas. Democrats are most energized by their chances of winning a majority in the Texas House for the first time in 20 years, needing to flip just nine seats to take over the chamber.

Harris County officials are implementing a \$27 million plan to expand voting access by tripling the number of early voting centers — including seven that will be open 24 hours for an entire day — and adding more polling locations on Election Day. Like other cities with NBA teams, the Houston Rockets' home arena, the Toyota Center, will also be used as a polling location.

Associated Press writer Acacia Coronado contributed to this report.

## Election 2020 Today: VP debate night, US cautions voters

By The Associated Press undefined

Here's what's happening Wednesday in Election 2020, 27 days until Election Day:

HOW TO VOTE: AP's state-by-state interactive has details on how to vote in this election.

TODAY'S TOP STORIES:

DEBATE NIGHT: Vice President Mike Pence and his Democratic challenger, California Sen. Kamala Harris, are set to face off in a debate that will offer starkly different visions for a country confronting escalating crises. The debate in Salt Lake City is the most highly anticipated vice presidential debate in recent memory. Pence will likely have to defend the Trump administration's handling of the pandemic, while Harris

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is expected to address racial injustice and explain her views on law enforcement.

**VOTER BEWARE:** U.S. officials 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 that 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.

**TRUMP'S TAXES:** An obscure function of Congress may have once put President Donald Trump's tax information in the hands of congressional staff. But even if it did, that doesn't mean staffers can give access to Trump's tax returns to lawmakers, at least not legally. The audit of Trump's taxes, The New York 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 committee staffers disagree with the IRS on a decision, the review is typically kept open until the matter is resolved.

**FLORIDA VOTERS:** Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis extended the state's voter registration deadline after he said heavy traffic crashed the state's online system and potentially prevented thousands of people from enrolling to vote in next month's election. Several progressive groups are suing for an additional extension.

**BY THE NUMBERS:** Regeneron Pharmaceuticals Inc. revealed how rare it was for anyone to get the experimental COVID-19 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. Fewer than 10 of these requests have been granted, a Regeneron spokeswoman says. 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.

ICYMI:

Countering Trump, US officials defend integrity of election

Democrat's personal scandal roils N. Carolina Senate race

Barrett lived in house owned by co-founders of faith group

## **Bollywood actress at the center of media frenzy granted bail**

By SHEIKH SAALIQ Associated Press

**NEW DELHI (AP)** — A Bollywood actress who was arrested by India's narcotics agency, setting off a media frenzy that has gripped the nation, walked out of jail on Wednesday after being granted bail.

Rhea Chakraborty was released from Byculla District Prison in Mumbai a month after being arrested for allegedly buying drugs for her boyfriend, popular movie actor Sushant Singh Rajput, who was found dead in a suspected suicide in June.

India's freewheeling TV news channels speculated that Chakraborty drove him to take his life and was part of a drug-dealing mafia in Bollywood, India's Mumbai-based film industry.

The court in Mumbai on Wednesday said the actress was not part of any drug syndicate and had no criminal record. It said Chakraborty could not have financed or supported illegal drug trafficking as alleged by the narcotics agency.

The 28-year-old actress' lawyer, Satish Maneshinde, said her arrest was "totally unwarranted and beyond the reach of law."

Chakraborty's brother, who was arrested in the same case and has also denied the charges, however, remains in custody.

Rajput's suspected suicide in June initially triggered a debate over mental health. But his family disputed Indian media reports that he suffered from mental illness and lodged a police complaint accusing Chakraborty of abetment of suicide. She has denied the allegation.

Many Indian television news channels then declared Chakraborty guilty of Rajput's death and claimed she had overdosed him on drugs. The TV channels have since spent months obsessing over the case, at the expense of other issues such as India's stalling economy, the government's virus response and growing hostilities with China over a border dispute.



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Earlier this week, a panel of doctors examining Rajput's autopsy reports at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, a leading public hospital in New Delhi, submitted a report to the Central Bureau of Investigation that ruled out murder as a cause of the actor's death.

Rajput, 34, was found dead in his Mumbai apartment on June 14. Police listed the cause of death as asphyxia by hanging and said he appeared to have taken his own life. The case is still being investigated.

Rajput, an engineering student who grew up in Bihar, India's poorest state, was the quintessential outsider who managed to open the doors of Bollywood and craft a brief but successful acting career.

After Chakraborty's arrest in September, the federal narcotics agency also questioned other actresses in a parallel investigation into claims of widespread drug use and trafficking in Bollywood.

No date has been set for Chakraborty's trial.

## Linda Ronstadt looks back at her most cherished moments

By SIGAL RATNER-ARIAS Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Growing up close to U.S. border in Tucson, Arizona, Linda Ronstadt was exposed to the music and culture of Mexico from an early age. Her father would often sing at their home in Spanish.

"I heard Mexican radio my whole life," the American singer told The Associated Press in a recent phone interview.

It's something that stuck with her even decades after establishing her professional career in the mid-1960s, singing everything from folk-rock, country, light opera and pop.

"All the time I was doing other kinds of music, I kept thinking there would be a chance — like trying to record some of my pop songs to Spanish, but there weren't really good translations. And I just really wanted to sing rancheras and huapangos," Ronstadt said.

She finally did, starting in 1987 with the traditional Mariachi music album "Canciones de mi Padre" ("Songs of my Father") — which remains as the best-selling non-English album in the U.S. — followed by 1991's "Más Canciones" ("More Songs,") 1992's "Frenesí" ("Frenzy") and 2004's "Mi Jardín Azul" ("My Blue Garden").

Now at 74, the 10-time Grammy winner and Rock and Roll Hall of Famer has been recognized as a "Legend" at the 33rd annual Hispanic Heritage Awards. The ceremony, prerecorded and socially distanced due to the coronavirus pandemic, was aired Tuesday night on PBS.

Other honorees included Bad Bunny (Vision Award,) Selena Gomez (Arts Award,) U.S. essential farm-workers (Heroes Award) and Sebastián Yatra (Inspira Award), who was also the host.

Ronstadt, attending remotely from her home in San Francisco, was surprised by Los Tigres del Norte's Jorge and Hernán Hernández with the award.

"It made me really happy," she said. "I'm a huge fan of Los Tigres del Norte. I've loved their music for years and I didn't realize they were coming to my house to present me with the award. I thought they were gonna do it on the internet, you know? I hadn't been hugging anybody because of COVID, but I hugged them. I was so excited. I said, 'We're Mexicans, we hug.'"

She was also serenaded with a bilingual tribute that featured The Mavericks with Carla Morrison, Gaby Moreno, Joy Huerta (from Jesse & Joy), Lupita Infante and La Marisoul (from La Santa Cecilia).

Ronstadt, who in 2012 was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, said that her life changed "very little" during the pandemic because she stays home most of the time anyway, "but it changed so profoundly for other people it breaks my heart."

In an electoral year that has seen so much illness as well as social unrest and racial conflict, she said: "I wish we can have a dialogue with the greater community. I wish that Americans wouldn't dismiss and marginalize immigrants or Mexican Americans or any people of Latinx descent. They shouldn't just treat them like they're pieces of furniture."

Looking back on her most cherished moments of her career, the singer said "the most fun" she had was back in 1998 and 1999 touring with her Mexican music. "I'd fall asleep on the bus and I'd hear all these voices in Spanish and English talking and singing." It was something that reminded her of her childhood, she said.

Asked if she had any regrets in her life, she replied quickly with a laugh: "I wish that I had more time to work on the Mexican music. I would spend a lot of time learning how to play the jarana," she said, referring to a guitar-shaped instrument from the southern region of the state of Veracruz, Mexico.

Among other accolades, Ronstadt was honored by the Kennedy Center last year and has received three American Music Awards, two ACM Awards and an Emmy.

She can soon be seen in "Linda and the Mockingbirds," a documentary on her journey to Mexico with a group of young students in 2019, which will be released digitally on Oct. 20.

Follow Sigal Ratner-Arias on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/sigalratner>.

## What do we know about superspreader events in the pandemic?

By The Associated Press undefined

What do we know about superspreader events in the pandemic?

We're still learning, but it seems that much of the spread of the coronavirus has been caused by what disease trackers call superspreader events.

That's when a single person infects a large number of other people, or when a gathering is linked to a large number of cases.

There's no rule for when a cluster of cases is big enough to be called a superspreader event. But these are not instances of spread within one household. Instead, these are large clusters of cases where infection occurs in settings such as churches, restaurants or bars.

In the United States, for instance, a choir member with symptoms attended a rehearsal in March. Of 60 others who attended, 52 got sick with COVID-19, including two who died.

In Hong Kong, an outbreak at four bars infected 39 customers, 20 staff members and 14 musicians before ballooning further to infect 33 family members and other contacts. Disease trackers discovered that bands played at all four bars, so musicians may have spread the virus to more than 100 people all told.

Scientists studying three months of contact tracing data from Hong Kong estimated that 19% of people infected were responsible for 80% of the spread of coronavirus infections.

To prevent superspreader events, we need to better understand them, said Anne Rimoin, an infectious diseases expert at the University of California, Los Angeles.

She has called for detailed contact tracing of the infections around President Donald Trump, including those who attended a Sept. 26 Rose Garden ceremony and indoor White House reception for Supreme Court nominee Judge Amy Coney Barrett.

The timing of the event and the number of people infected suggests the possibility of superspreading, she said.

"Contact tracing is the way you get to the bottom of a superspreader event," Rimoin said. "That's how you break chains of transmission."

Unlike many contact tracing investigations, where it can be difficult to find everybody involved, the White House investigation would have "exquisite records and video about who was where and when," Rimoin said. "It's an opportunity to learn about superspreader events that could save thousands of lives, if not millions of lives, in the long run."

The AP is answering your questions about the coronavirus in this series. Submit them at: [FactCheck@AP.org](mailto:FactCheck@AP.org). Read more here:

Read previous Viral Questions:

What is contact tracing, and how does it work with COVID-19?

Can the coronavirus travel more than 6 feet in the air?

How long could I be contagious before a positive virus test?

## For Coptic Church, changes, questions after priest ouster

By MARIAM FAM Associated Press

For 17 years, Sally Zakhari said she told priests and leaders in the Coptic Orthodox Church her childhood nightmare — how a Coptic priest visiting from Egypt sexually abused her at her Florida home during what was supposed to be her first confession.

“I’ve already gone to countless bishops. I’ve already gone to two different popes,” she told The Associated Press. She went to police as well.

She said she watched the priest — Reweis Aziz Khalil — continue serving at Coptic churches. Then, Zakhari aired her allegations on social media in July and Khalil was stripped of his priesthood and ordered to return to his pre-ordination name days later.

In announcing the move, Khalil’s Minya and Abu Qurqas diocese in Egypt mentioned undated complaints by congregants in Egypt as well as from the United States and Canada. A papal decree said disciplinary action had been taken against Khalil in the past for “his repeated infringements.” Neither statement specified the nature of the complaints or “infringements.”

The papal decree said prior action against Khalil included “defrocking him from all ministry” in 2014. It wasn’t clear what that entailed and there were times when Khalil served as priest after 2014.

In response to questions and a request to interview Khalil, his attorney, Michelle Suskauer, said by e-mail: “Mr. Khalil will not be responding to your questions and denies all allegations against him.”

For Egypt’s ancient Coptic Church, which is usually closed about its inner workings, the allegations and the laicization after sexual abuse claims were unusually public and shocked many. In the aftermath, some anti-abuse efforts were announced and questions were raised about oversight and the handling of Zakhari’s allegations.

After Khalil’s ouster, several Coptic dioceses in America and other Western countries issued statements supporting survivors of clerical sexual abuse, encouraging members to report sexual misconduct or announcing protocols to handle claims and protect the vulnerable.

Some, like Zakhari, are using social media to keep the spotlight on how accusations are handled, setting off intense debates among some Coptic Christians. Others argue such issues are too sensitive for public airing and vetting or fear the scrutiny could be exploited to unfairly taint the church or its clergy — a concern amplified among some by Christians’ status as a religious minority in Egypt.

Despite Khalil’s removal, Zakhari, now 33, said she cannot celebrate.

“This has been too many years,” she said. “I’m not scandalizing anything. I’m just saying the truth.”

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Over the years, as other faith communities publicly grappled with clerical abuse, the Coptic Church in Egypt was more likely to make headlines when targeted with violence by militant groups and other extremists. The church is the main community among Egypt’s Christian minority and has many followers who have emigrated to the United States and elsewhere.

“As Copts, we’re not used to discussing such things in public,” said Samuel Tadros, senior fellow at Hudson Institute’s Center for Religious Freedom. “While I’m sure that such cases have existed throughout time and are probably not limited to just one individual ... when they were handled, they were handled behind closed doors.”

Emotions run the gamut. Online, some criticized openly naming the priest and said “sins” shouldn’t be publicly exposed. Others praised the church for removing Khalil from the priesthood. Still others said leaders acted too slowly and demanded education about sexual misconduct and transparent and swift handling of accusations.

Zakhari said she is not trying to hurt the church she loves.

“We wanted this to just be handled,” she said.

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It happened in the late 1990s when Zakhari was 11 or 12, she recounted in a statement she made to the Altamonte Springs Police Department in Florida in February 2013. (As a rule, the AP does not name

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survivors or alleged survivors of sexual abuse unless they have identified themselves publicly, as Zakhari has done.)

A first-generation American, she was born in Florida to parents who are "faithful servants" in the Coptic Church. The church was the center of her strict upbringing, she said.

According to the police report, Zakhari told authorities that Khalil, then a visiting priest from Egypt, was staying with her family in Florida. While alone with her, ostensibly to take her confession, Khalil touched her under her bra, squeezed and fondled her breasts and started kissing her face, neck, ears and lips and forced his tongue inside her mouth, she said in the report, which was viewed by the AP.

As he left, her statement to police said, Khalil told her whatever happens in confession is a secret.

The Altamonte Springs Police Department said an investigator discussed Zakhari's report with the state attorney's office and it was determined then that the statute of limitations had expired.

At 16, Zakhari said, she started telling her story to people involved with the church, and around 17 — in 2003 or 2004, she said — she told Bishop Youssef of the Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States.

She said she told her mother later. "With our culture, it's really hard to talk about sexual abuse to begin with," Zakhari explained. "It's difficult to even have this conversation with my parents."

Father Pishoy Salama of St. Maurice & St. Verena Coptic Orthodox Church in Canada said Zakhari, whom he met at a youth conference, began sharing her abuse allegations with him years ago. "Her pain was real, and her story was always consistent," he said.

Around 2010, Zakhari said, her mother saw in a church publication that Khalil had been promoted in clerical rank by his diocese in Egypt.

"I really started fighting hard," Zakhari said.

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Tracking exactly how Zakhari's complaint was handled is difficult, especially since Khalil, then a priest of a diocese in Egypt, has served in different areas in the U.S.

According to Zakhari, Bishop Youssef told her he was aware of other abuse allegations against Khalil and said the then-priest had been sent to Egypt and banned from the Southern Diocese.

An AP request to interview Bishop Youssef was answered by a public relations representative who provided statements by the Southern Diocese.

According to the statements, Khalil left the Southern Diocese long before Zakhari spoke to Bishop Youssef, the diocese "did everything in its power" to prevent Khalil from serving in ministry and the bishop barred Khalil from returning to his diocese.

One statement said Bishop Youssef "believed Ms. Zakhari's complaint against the former priest and informed her of the immediate action taken against him." This included him bringing the accusation to the attention of then-Pope Shenouda III and his successor, Pope Tawadros II, as well as the then-bishop of Khalil's diocese in Egypt, Metropolitan Arsanious, it said.

"Bishop Youssef did not and does not have any influence, control or ecclesiastical authority over a Diocese in Egypt," the statement said. "Nor did he have any authority over the former priest after he had left the Southern Diocese."

The statement said it was "disappointing" that Zakhari has expressed dissatisfaction "with how the Southern Diocese and specifically Bishop Youssef handled this troubling issue when she came forward." It added that Bishop Youssef and the Southern Diocese "remain steadfast in their commitment to protecting children and vulnerable adults and creating a safe environment for all congregants."

The statement didn't address some of the AP's questions, including whether Bishop Youssef was aware of other reports of abuse against Khalil.

Coptic Orthodox Church spokesman in Egypt, Father Boules Halim, didn't respond to specific questions but said that the Church doesn't cover up crimes against its followers. Bishop Makarios of the Minya and Abu Qurqas diocese, reached via WhatsApp, declined to comment beyond publicly issued statements.



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Khalil moved on. Over the years, Zakhari said, she learned that he led services in different states, sometimes as a visiting priest. She said she contacted Coptic leaders to alert them.

At least one of Khalil's stints, at the St. Mary and ArchAngel Gabriel Coptic Orthodox Church of West Virginia in Charleston, came after the Church banned him from serving in 2014.

Between October 2015 and February 2016, three postings captured by the Internet Archive's Wayback Machine from the website of the West Virginia church appear to mention Khalil. Multiple photos of a priest who appears to be Khalil were also posted on the church's Facebook page in late 2015 and early 2016. In some, he's surrounded by congregation members or poses with children, some wearing costumes, and adults.

Bassam Makar, treasurer at the West Virginia church, said Khalil served as priest there for about five months. He said the church's board wasn't aware Khalil had been ordered to stop serving and when it found out, Khalil's service was ended.

He said there were no complaints from members about Khalil during his time there.

Makar said that while he respects the laicization decision, he dislikes that the issue had become public.

"It's OK to prevent him from serving but we don't need to announce it and then it becomes a scandal. That's not good for the church," he argued. "I am not saying to cover up for anyone ... I want everyone to be held accountable but not in a public way. ... We are all sinners."

That there would be some in the community resistant to airing that story comes as no surprise to Salama, the priest in Canada.

Clergy members are held in high esteem and some help perpetuate a culture of silence, using their authority and religious arguments to urge victims to "forgive and forget" and call for "unrestricted obedience" to religious authorities, he said.

"We know that there was a problem in the system," Salama said of Zakhari's case. "But, you know, so long as everyone's saying, 'It's not my fault, it's someone else's,' then maybe we are all to blame."

Halim, the church spokesman in Egypt, was asked about the divergent reactions to Khalil's case in an interview with Copts United website.

"The church doesn't punish a priest the moment he makes a mistake. ... When there is a deviant position regarding the teachings or the behavior, the church provides a chance, two, 10 and possibly up to 20 as long as he has the desire to change," he said. "The church takes a position and makes a judgment — and that happens in very limited and very rare situations — when it sees that there's nothing that works."

At that point, the church must announce its decision so that people are warned, and the person doesn't exploit his clerical garb to continue his violations, he said.

Asked by the AP about his comments, which angered some of those advocating for accountability, Halim said via WhatsApp that his remarks referred to general church policies for defrocking and were not related to a particular incident.

"I stress that there's a difference between a sin and a crime," he said. "For a sin, we give a chance for repentance and a crime is handled by investigation authorities. We do not cover up any crime against our children."

There have been announced changes. Among them, the Coptic Orthodox Archdiocese of North America and the Diocese of New York and New England said in a joint statement in September that they updated policies and procedures related to claims of sexual misconduct. They also said they engaged a third-party victim reporting center and established behavioral guidelines on interaction with minors, as part of efforts to prevent sexual abuse and promptly investigate claims.

The Coptic Orthodox Diocese of Pennsylvania and Affiliated Regions, which includes West Virginia, issued statements on sexual misconduct after the papal decree. It pledged to revamp policies, establish clear protocols for investigating allegations, provide mandatory sexual misconduct training to clergy and servants and conduct thorough background checks on clergy. "As a young Diocese, we recognize that the current infrastructure in place to deal with allegations of sexual misconduct is insufficient," it said. It has

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since issued a "progress report."

Ishak Ibrahim, a religious freedoms researcher with the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights, lauded the public steps to tackle sexual misconduct by some dioceses but said the momentum hasn't been matched in Egypt. Fear among some Coptic Christians that criticism of clergy could hurt the church or spark "social bullying" against them leads to "scandals being kept under wraps," he said.

With Egypt's largely conservative culture, sexual issues are not typically publicly discussed and many, Christians and Muslims alike, worry that coming forward with stories of sexual abuse could hurt victims' reputations. Recently, young Egyptian activists have increasingly campaigned online to chip away at the stigma.

But in the West — where the church has expanded — Coptic leaders must deal with the different ways of thinking of younger members, said the Hudson Institute's Tadros.

Zakhari sees the benefit and righteousness of more openness. She said her faith has fueled her years-long fight.

"I just know Jesus Christ would not be OK with this," she said, her voice cracking. "I know that this is a responsibility that Jesus Christ gave me."

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Fam reported from Winter Park, Florida. New York-based AP investigative researcher Randy Herschaft and reporters Samy Magdy and Maggie Michael in Cairo contributed to this report.

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## Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Thursday, Oct. 8, the 282nd day of 2020. There are 84 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Oct. 8, 1871, the Great Chicago Fire erupted; fires also broke out in Peshtigo, Wisconsin, and in several communities in Michigan.

On this date:

In 1890, American aviation hero Eddie Rickenbacker was born in Columbus, Ohio.

In 1934, Bruno Hauptmann was indicted by a grand jury in New Jersey for murder in the death of the kidnapped son of Charles and Anne Morrow Lindbergh.

In 1945, President Harry S. Truman told a press conference in Tiptonville, Tennessee, that the secret scientific knowledge behind the atomic bomb would be shared only with Britain and Canada.

In 1981, at the White House, President Ronald Reagan greeted former Presidents Jimmy Carter, Gerald Ford and Richard Nixon, who were preparing to travel to Egypt for the funeral of Anwar Sadat.

In 1985, the hijackers of the Italian cruise ship Achille Lauro (ah-KEE'-leh LOW'-roh) killed American passenger Leon Klinghoffer, who was in a wheelchair, and threw his body overboard.

In 1997, Scientists reported the Mars Pathfinder had yielded what could be the strongest evidence yet that Mars might once have been hospitable to life.

In 1998, the House triggered an open-ended impeachment inquiry against President Bill Clinton in a momentous 258-176 vote; 31 Democrats joined majority Republicans in opening the way for nationally televised impeachment hearings.

In 2002, A federal judge approved President George W. Bush's request to reopen West Coast ports, ending a 10-day labor lockout that was costing the U.S. economy an estimated \$1 to \$2 billion a day.

In 2005, a magnitude 7.6 earthquake flattened villages on the Pakistan-India border, killing an estimated 86,000 people.

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In 2014, Thomas Eric Duncan, a Liberian man who was the first person diagnosed with Ebola in the United States, died at Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital Dallas 10 days after being admitted.

In 2017, Harvey Weinstein was fired from The Weinstein Company amid allegations that he was responsible for decades of sexual harassment. Vice President Mike Pence left the 49ers-Colts game in Indianapolis after about a dozen San Francisco players took a knee during the national anthem.

In 2018, New Orleans Saints quarterback Drew Brees became the NFL's all-time leader in yards passing during a 43-19 win over Washington.

Ten years ago: Imprisoned Chinese dissident Liu Xiaobo (lee-OO' show-BOH') won the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize, prompting a furious response from China. British aid worker Linda Norgrove, who'd been taken captive in Afghanistan, was killed during a U.S. special forces rescue attempt, apparently by a U.S. grenade. Gen. James Jones announced he was quitting as President Barack Obama's national security adviser. Albertina Walker, the Grammy-winning singer from Chicago known as the "Queen of Gospel," died at age 81.

Five years ago: Volkswagen's top U.S. executive, Michael Horn, offered deep apologies yet sought to distance himself from the emissions scandal enveloping the world's largest automaker, asserting before a congressional subcommittee that top corporate officials had no knowledge of the cheating software installed in 11 million diesel cars. Svetlana Alexievich, a Belarusian journalist and prose writer, won the Nobel Prize in literature. Chef Paul Prudhomme, 75, who'd sparked a nationwide interest in Cajun food, died in New Orleans.

One year ago: White House Counsel Pat Cipollone sent a letter to House leaders declaring that President Donald Trump would not cooperate with what the letter called an "illegitimate" impeachment investigation; Democrats responded that the letter was a clear reason to write an article of impeachment charging Trump with obstruction. Home in Vermont while recovering from a heart attack a week earlier, Bernie Sanders said he had no plans to abandon his Democratic presidential campaign, but that he might slow down from a frenetic pace that could have contributed to his health problems. Democrat Joe Biden unveiled an education plan that would make community and technical college free, and federal college loan programs more generous. Business executive Gregory Abbott and his wife Marcia were each sentenced to a month in prison for paying \$125,000 to rig their daughter's college entrance exams.

Today's Birthdays: Entertainment reporter Rona Barrett is 84. Actor Paul Hogan is 81. Rhythm-and-blues singer Fred Cash (The Impressions) is 80. Civil rights activist Rev. Jesse Jackson is 79. Comedian Chevy Chase is 77. Author R.L. Stine is 77. Actor Dale Dye is 76. Country singer Susan Raye is 76. TV personality Sarah Purcell is 72. Rhythm-and-blues singer Airrion Love (The Stylistics) is 71. Actor Sigourney Weaver is 71. Rhythm-and-blues singer Robert "Kool" Bell (Kool & the Gang) is 70. Producer-director Edward Zwick is 68. Country singer-musician Ricky Lee Phelps is 67. Actor Michael Dudikoff is 66. Comedian Darrell Hammond is 65. Actor Stephanie Zimbalist is 64. Rock musician Mitch Marine is 59. Actor Kim Wayans is 59. Rock singer Steve Perry (Cherry Poppin' Daddies) is 57. Actor Ian Hart is 56. Gospel/rhythm-and-blues singer CeCe Winans is 56. Rock musician C.J. Ramone (The Ramones) is 55. Actor-producer Karyn Parsons is 54. Singer-producer Teddy Riley is 54. Actor Emily Procter is 52. Actor Dylan Neal is 51. Actor-screenwriter Matt Damon is 50. Actor-comedian Robert Kelly is 50. The mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, is 50. Actor Martin Henderson is 46. Actor Kristanna Loken is 41. Rhythm-and-blues singer Byron Reeder (Mista) is 41. Rock-soul singer-musician Noelle Scaggs (Fitz and the Tantrums) is 41. Actor Nick Cannon is 40. Actor J.R. Ramirez is 40. Actor Max Crumm is 35. Singer-songwriter-producer Bruno Mars is 35. Actor Angus T. Jones is 27. Actor Molly Quinn is 27. Actor/singer Bella Thorne is 23.