

Groton Daily Independent

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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)

GDILIVE.COM

Broadcast Locally
on GDIRADIO
FM 89.3

Volleyball

Friday, Oct. 9, 2020
Roncalli at Groton

4:00 p.m.:
C and JV Matches
Sponsored by
Frost Construction

Varsity Match

Sponsored by
Flihs Sales & Service

**Bary Keith @
Harr Motors**



OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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High School Volleyball

Friday, Oct. 9, 2020

Roncalli at Groton Area

Groton Area Tigers

VARSITY

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

JUNIOR VARSITY

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

C TEAM

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

Head Coach: Chelsea Hanson

Asst. Coaches: Jenna Strom, Carla Tracy

Superintendent: Joe Schwan

Principal: Kiersten Sombke

Ath. Director: Brian Dolan



Roncalli Cavaliers

VARSITY

No.	Name	Ht.	Pos.	Gr.
1	Maesa May	5'3	L	12
3	Jaidyn Feickert	5'6	MB/OH	9
7	Mckenna Weekly	5'8	OH	12
8	Madelyn Bragg	6'2	MB	11
9	Jeci Ewart	5'9	OH	11
10	Faith Danielson	5'3	DS/S	9
11	Elissa Hammrich	5'10	MB	12
12	Hayley Schmidt	5'4	DS	11
13	Capri Hellwig	5'7	DS	12
14	Olivia Hanson	5'6	S	11
15	Ella Hanson	5'7	OH	10

JUNIOR VARSITY

2	Ava Hanson	5'8	MB	8
3	Andrea Woytassek	5'5	OH	8
4	Lillian Jensen	5'2	DS	10
5	Rachel Fahrni	5'4	DS	10
6	Madisen Martin	5'5	OH	9
7	Jaidyn Feickert	5'6	MB	9
8	Matayah Henrich	5'3	OH	8
9	Madison Huber	5'2	S/RH	8
10	Faith Danielson	5'3	S/RH	9
12	Jazmine Hart-Crissman	5'7	RS	10
13	Ilima Mouna	5'4	DS	10

C TEAM

2	Ava Hanson	5'8	MB	8
3	Andrea Woytassek	5'5	OH	8
6	Madisen Martin	5'5	OH	9
7	Jaidyn Feickert	5'6	MB	9
8	Matayah Henrich	5'3	OH	8
9	Madison Huber	5'2	S/RH	8
10	Faith Danielson	5'3	S/RH	9

Head Coach: Mandy Smid

Asst. Coaches: Alyssa Voeller, Breanna Weig

Superintendent: Tim Weisz

Principal: Paula Florey

Ath. Director: Terry Dosch; Mark Stone

GDILIVE.COM

LAKE REGION MARCHING FESTIVAL

FRIDAY, OCT. 9, 2020 - 10 A.M.

ALSO BROADCAST LOCALLY ON

GDIRADIO AT 89.3 FM

SCHOOL	REPORT	ON DECK	STEP-OFF
Groton Area High School	9:50	N/A	10:00
Simmons/Holgate Middle School	9:55	10:00	10:05
Leola	10:00	10:05	10:10
Langford	10:05	10:10	10:15
Northwestern	10:10	10:15	10:20
Ipswich	10:15	10:20	10:25
Roncalli	10:20	10:25	10:30
Sully Buttes	10:25	10:30	10:35
Pierre T.F. Riggs Emerald Regiment	10:30	10:35	10:40
Great Plains Lutheran	10:35	10:40	10:45
Warner High School	10:40	10:45	10:50

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25th 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
PHAR**MACY**
(605) 397-2363 1205 N 1st St., Groton

GROTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT #06-6

School Board Meeting

October 12, 2020 – 7:00 PM – Groton Area Elementary Commons

AGENDA:

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

POTENTIAL CONFLICTS DISCLOSURE PURSUANT SDCL 23-3

CONSENT AGENDA:

1. Approval of minutes of September 7, 2020 special school board meeting, September 14, 2020 and September 28, 2020 school board meetings as drafted or amended.

OLD/CONTINUING BUSINESS:

1. Open Forum for Public Participation...in accordance with Board Policy & Guidelines.
2. Program Overview Presentations
 - a. K-12 Special Education...J. Erdmann, D. Vogel, C. Weisenburger, B. Erickson, M. Hill, S. Wilkinson, T. Peterson
 - b. K-5 Title/Rtl...J. Helvig, L. Grieve
3. Approval of September 2020 Financial Report, Agency Accounts, and Investments.
4. Approval of September 2020 Transportation Report
5. Approval of September 2020 School Lunch Report
6. Continued discussion and necessary action on District response to COVID-19.
 - a. Amendments to 2020 Back-to-School Plan
 - b. Close Contacts/Quarantines
7. Administrative Reports: (a) Superintendent's Report; (b) Principal's Reports; (c) Business Manager Report

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Executive Session pursuant SDCL1-25-2(4) for negotiations.
2. Approve 2020-2021 Administrative Staff Negotiated Agreement.

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Monitored by ADT® the #1 home security company in the U.S.

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\$27⁹⁹
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- May qualify for a homeowners insurance discount



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FREE SECURITY SYSTEM

New customers only. Early termination fee applies. Installation starts at \$99 with 36 monitoring agreement. See all offer details below.

\$850 VALUE



FREE VISA® REWARD CARD From Protect Your Home —**\$100 Value**

FREE 7 WIRELESS DOOR/WINDOW SENSORS —**\$695 VALUE!**

FREE WIRELESS REMOTE CONTROL —**\$139 Value**

FREE INDOOR HD CAMERA When you upgrade to ADT Video Lite —**\$299 VALUE!**

See all offer details below.

LIMITED TIME OFFER—CALL TODAY!

1-605-824-1118

Ask about same-day installation!
Reply By
October 30, 2020



Protect Your Home

\$100 VISA® Reward Debit Card: \$100 Visa® reward debit card requires service activation. You will receive a claim voucher via email within 24 hours and the voucher must be returned within 60 days. Your \$100 Visa® reward debit card will arrive in approximately 6-8 weeks. Card is issued by MetaBank®, N.A., Member FDIC, pursuant to a license from Visa U.S.A. Inc. No cash access or recurring payments. Can be used everywhere Visa debit cards are accepted. Card valid for up to 6 months; unused funds will forfeit after the valid thru date. Card terms and conditions apply. **BASIC SYSTEM:** \$99 Installation. 36-Month Monitoring Agreement required at \$27.99 per month (\$1,007.64). 24-Month Monitoring Agreement required at \$27.99 per month (\$671.76) for California. Offer applies to homeowners only. Basic system requires landline phone. Offer valid for new ADT Authorized Premier Provider customers only and not on purchases from ADT LLC. Cannot be combined with any other offer. The \$27.99 Offer does not include Quality Service Plan (QSP), ADT's Extended Limited Warranty. **ADT Command:** ADT Pulse Interactive Solutions Services ("ADT Pulse"), which help you manage your home environment and family lifestyle, require the purchase and/or activation of an ADT alarm system with monitored burglary service and a compatible computer, cell phone or PDA with Internet and email access. These ADT Pulse services do not cover the operation or maintenance of any household equipment/systems that are connected to the ADT Pulse equipment. All ADT Pulse services are not available with the various levels of ADT Pulse. All ADT Pulse services may not be available in all geographic areas. You may be required to pay additional charges to purchase equipment required to utilize the ADT Pulse features you desire. **ADT VIDEO LITE:** ADT Video Lite installation is an additional \$299. 36-month monitoring contract required from ADT Video Lite: \$59.99 per month, (\$2,159.64), including Quality Service Plan (QSP). Indoor camera may not be available in all areas. **GENERAL:** For all offers, the form of payment must be by credit card or electronic charge to your checking or savings account, satisfactory credit history is required and termination fee applies. Certain packages require approved landline phone. Local permit fees may be required. Certain restrictions may apply. Additional monitoring fees required for some services. For example, Burglary, Fire, Carbon Monoxide and Emergency Alert monitoring requires purchase and/or activation of an ADT security system with monitored Burglary, Fire, Carbon Monoxide and Emergency Alert devices and are an additional charge. Additional equipment may be purchased for an additional charge. Additional charges may apply in areas that require guard response service for municipal alarm verification. Prices subject to change. Prices may vary by market. Some insurance companies offer discounts on Homeowner's Insurance. Please consult your insurance company. Photos are for illustrative purposes only and may not reflect the exact product/service actually provided. **Licenses:** AL-21-001104, AR-CMPY.0001725, AZ-ROC217517, CA-ACO6320, CT-ELC.0193944-L5, DC-EMS902653, DC-602516000016, DE-07-212, FL-EC13003427, GA-LVA205395, IA-AS-0206, ID-ELE-SJ-39131, IL-127.001042, IN-C.P.D. Reg. No. - 19-08088, City of Indianapolis: LAC-000156, KY-City of Louisville: 483, LA-F1914, LA-F1915, LA-F1082, MA-1355C, MD-107-1626, ME-LMS0017382, MI-3601205773, MN-TSO1807, MO-City of St. Louis: CC#354, St. Louis County: 100194, MS-15007958, MT-PSP-ELS-LIC-247, NC-25310-SP-FA/LV, NC-1622-CSA, NE-14451, NJ Burglar Alarm Lic. # -NJ-34BF00021800, NM-353366, NV-0068518, City of Las Vegas: 3000008296, NY-Licensed by the N.Y.S. Department of State UID#12000317691, NYS #12000286451, OH-53891446, City of Cincinnati: AC86, OK-AC1048, OR-170997, Pennsylvania Home Improvement Contractor Registration Number: PA022999, RI-3582, RI-7508, SC-BAC5630, SD- 1025-7001-ET, TN-1520, TX-B13734, ACR-3492, UT-6422596-6501, VA-115120, VT-ES-2382(7C), WA-602588694/ECPROTEYH934RS, WI-City of Milwaukee: PAS-0002966, WV-WV042433, WY-LV-G-21499. 3750 Priority Way South Dr. Indianapolis, IN 46240 ©2020 DEFENDERS, Inc. dba Protect Your Home **DF-CD-NP-Q320**

#228 in a series

Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

One day is a blip; two is worrisome; three will make a trend. We're up again today, and since this is Day 2, let's hope tomorrow changes our trajectory. We are well over 50,000 new cases again today at 56,500, a 0.7% increase. We are now at 7,636,000 cases reported in the US. There were 930 deaths reported today, close to that 1000 mark we're trying to stay away from. This is a 0.4% increase to 212,623 reported deaths. I will note that South Dakota has overtaken North Dakota in per capita new cases in the past week, although North Dakota still has the higher single-day per capita total; both are near a seven-day average of 57 daily new cases per 100,000 residents. In third place is Wisconsin with 42. That's quite a large difference, and yet there's no disputing Wisconsin is in some serious trouble. All three states are on an increasing trajectory with single-day per capita totals far above these seven-day averages. North Dakota is reaching a hospitalization crisis and is reporting a number of deaths today that is three times the previous record. Wisconsin is opening that field hospital we discussed yesterday and passed 3000 new cases today for the first time, more than 200 over its previous record; hospitalizations there have doubled in the past month. South Dakota set records today for active cases, hospitalizations, and new deaths. A small hospital that serves the Cheyenne River Lakota tribe transferred two patients out of state after 14 other closer facilities told them they were diverting patients themselves. Iowa reported a record number of new cases today and a record number hospitalized. An additional concern is Texas, where we've been seeing some pretty dramatic increases in the El Paso area in new case reporting, test positivity, and deaths since the middle of last month. Let's hope the state doesn't return to the kind of problems they were having earlier in the summer. And in a sure sign the middle of the country has no monopoly on trouble, Oregon reported a record number of new cases today, part of a longer-term upward trend. Test positivity has been increasing too, now over 6%. They continue to have problems with large social gatherings, whatever guidelines public health authorities issue. Overall, 32 states show increasing cases, and 35 states show increasing hospitalization. We are not in a good place.

Two drug makers, Regeneron and Eli Lilly and Company, announced yesterday that they are seeking emergency use authorization (EUA) for their monoclonal antibody preparations for Covid-19. You may recall that EUA is something short of full licensing for a drug, so the standard of evidence is somewhat easier to meet, generally that the drug is safe (no passes given out on that) and that the expected benefits outweigh the risks of treatment. Trials are focusing on whether newly infected people are prevented from becoming sick and also whether they prevent infection in those at high risk. The Regeneron product, for those who've been following the news, is the drug given to Mr. Trump during his current illness under compassionate use rules; few of these have been authorized for this drug. The only other people who have received it are those in the clinical trial where there is about a 50:50 chance a patient is going to receive placebo, an inert substitute for the drug undergoing trial. Regeneron has said they could make doses for 50,000 patients available quite soon and could bring production up to 300,000 courses of treatment within a few months. A factor in how many doses are available is how high a dose is required to see good results; the higher that dose, the fewer doses will be available. These monoclonal antibody preparations are highly technical to make, and scaling up production is challenging. This difficulty in production and in scaling up also makes them very expensive; so it is of note that, because the federal government has supplied some \$450 million to this company for the development of this drug, they will distribute the initial doses at no cost, supposing it is approved. I do not know how many doses this contract involves; but I would guess the retail price of a course of treatment, once they're charging for it, will be in the range of thousands, not hundreds, of dollars.

We haven't talked so much about the Lilly drug, which uses two different antibodies. In a news release yesterday, the company released partial data suggesting it reduces symptoms, the viral load in patients, and hospitalizations and ER visits for patients with mild or moderate disease. What we have here is interim data on 268 patients, 112 of whom received the antibodies. Around 5.8% of patients given placebo required hospitalization or an ER visit whereas 0.9% of those given the antibodies needed hospitalization or an ER

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visit. There were no serious side effects noted. These findings have not been published or peer reviewed yet, but if they hold up, they're also promising. I do not believe Lilly has an arrangement with the federal government, but they are confident enough in this medication that they have begun to make one of the antibodies in this preparation in advance of approval. They are testing the two antibodies separately and in combination. They expect to have a million or so doses of a single antibody available year this yet, but only about 50,000 doses of the combination. While you might not ordinarily believe spin from a company with money at stake, I'm going to guess it's probably safe to believe their optimistic statements when they are willing to drop large chunks of cash on an as-yet unproven drug. It is wise, however, to remember that EUA is not proof of efficacy; there's still a fair road to travel before we have evidence of that.

I had a question today about the (relatively) low death rate from Covid-19. To be clear, while it is considerably higher than, say, influenza, the case fatality rate for this disease is not crazy high. So my friend was wondering about whether people might conclude this disease isn't such a big deal when so few people die from it. I would point out two things here. One is that, if you have seven and a half million cases identified, when even a small percentage of those folks die, that adds up to a whole lot of funerals. The other is that there is a big stack of outcomes besides dying that the average person would not particularly enjoy. There is the suffering during the disease—serious body aches, joint pain, fatigue, struggling for breath, hair loss, high fever, some of which can linger for weeks or months; and there are the long-term problems—organ damage, scarring of the lungs, inflammation of the heart muscle, later risk of sudden cardiac death or heart failure, kidney injury requiring dialysis, abnormal blood clotting that can lead to stroke, brain damage, depression. This adds up to a whole lot of trouble, even in those who survive. Some people require lengthy rehabilitation after they recover from the infection itself. And there is the cost of care. I have yet to see estimates, but I cannot even imagine the hundreds of billions of dollars that have been spent on care during this pandemic. And no matter who's paying for it—insurance companies, the government, patients, or hospitals writing off uncollectible bills, these costs are drags on society, on our economy, and on individuals in many, many ways.

I heard an interesting story today from someone who lives in a large metropolitan area; I share it with permission. She is working from home, but had to get together with a colleague today to drop something off, so they decided to meet for lunch. Don't worry, they were meeting outdoors, socially distanced, with all the hand sanitizer a person could want—and who isn't craving companionship these days?

On the way to the lunch meeting, she saw something really sad: a family on a street corner, about 10-12 of them, holding lovely tribute signs to a family member who had died from Covid-19. Their reason for so publicly displaying their grief is that they didn't have enough money for her funeral, so they were attempting to raise enough to lay her to rest.

Now, my friend is a victim of big-city economics—pays well over \$2000 a month for a smallish apartment and a premium on insurance, groceries, and many necessities of life. Yet, what can you do when you see this? No matter she's a little short this month, she dug in her pocket, found around \$12, and coughed it up for the cause. She told me, "I had a long and frustrating day yesterday, so this little bit helped me to feel better about [it]." You should know that one of the reasons I bother with anyone is that they do things like this, giving not from their abundance, but from their need. This, I can respect.

There's more to the story. So she's at lunch with the colleague. They've just placed their orders and are getting ready to pay when the man behind them in line barges in and says he is going to pay for their meals as well as his own. And just like that, the balance is restored. She told me she felt good about helping this heartbroken family, and now this gentleman felt good about buying a couple of random strangers lunch. Of course, she'll pay this forward again.

Her final words on the subject: "Do good for one another. Pass the kindness along. The world needs it more now than ever." Amen.

Stay well. We'll talk again.

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Area COVID-19 Cases

	Oct. 7	Oct. 8	Oct. 9
Minnesota	105,740	106,651	107,922
Nebraska	48,757	49,396	50,059
Montana	15,347	16,063	16,677
Colorado	74,191	74,922	75,785
Wyoming	5,751	5,866	6,031
North Dakota	24,364	24,857	25,384
South Dakota	24,876	25,433	26,441
United States	7,501,847	7,551,257	7,607,890
US Deaths	210,918	211,844	212,789

Minnesota	+941	+911	+1271
Nebraska	+950	+639	+663
Montana	+500	+716	+614
Colorado	+654	+731	+863
Wyoming	+91	+115	+165
North Dakota	+502	+493	+527
South Dakota	+278	+557	+528
United States	+48,018	+49,410	+56,633
US Deaths	+791	+926	+945

	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 8th COVID-19 UPDATE

Groton Daily Independent from State Health Lab Reports

There were 14 deaths in South Dakota and six in North Dakota. In South Dakota, 12 were in the 80+ age group and two were in their 60s. Eight were females and six were males. Gregory and Minnehaha each recorded three deaths, Lincoln and Turner each had two and Beadle, Davison, Jerauld and Lyman each had one.

The positivity rate today in South Dakota is 8.3 percent. Those currently in the hospital increased by 11 to 284.

Counties with double digit increases were Brookings 11, Brown 12, Codington 21, Davison 14, Hughes 11, Lawrence 12, Lincoln 44, Meade 10, Minnehaha 137, Pennington 57, Turner 15, Union 29 and Yankton 11.

Locally, Brown had 12 positive and 15 recovered leaving 216 active cases. Day had one positive and two recovered leaving 30 active cases. Edmunds had no positive or recovered leaving six active cases, Marshall had one positive, two recovered and 11 active, McPherson had 0 positive, 1 recovered and 8 active, and Spink had 2 positive, 4 recovered and 11 active.

Brown County:

Total Positive: +12 (1,427) Positivity Rate: 7.6%

Total Tests: +157 (12,975)

Recovered: +15 (1,207)

Active Cases: -3 (216)

Ever Hospitalized: +1 (57)

Deaths: +0 (4)

Percent Recovered: 84.6

South Dakota:

Positive: +536 (26,441 total) Positivity Rates: 8.3%

Total Tests: 6,421 (316,262 total)

Hospitalized: +20 (1,717 total). 284 currently hospitalized +11)

Deaths: +14 (272 total)

Recovered: +359 (21,496 total)

Active Cases: +162 (4,673)

Percent Recovered: 81.3%

Staffed Hospital Bed Capacity: 12% Covid, 50% Non-Covid, 38% Available

ICU Bed Capacity: 19% Covid, 56% Non-Covid, 25% 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: +2 positive, +2 recovered (49 active cases)

Beadle (11): +8 positive, +8 recovered (96 active cases)

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

Bon Homme (1): +2 positive, +3 recovered (41 active cases)

Brookings (2): +11 positive, +9 recovered (92 active cases)

Brown (4): +12 positive, +15 recovered (216 active cases)

Brule (1): +4 positive, +6 recovered (30 active cases)

Buffalo (3): +5 positive, +1 recovered (19 active cases)

Butte (3): +5 positive, +8 recovered (39 active cases)

Campbell: +1 positive, +0 recovered (17 active cases)

Charles Mix: +5 positive, +4 recovered (77 active cases)

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

Clay (7) +3 positive, +2 recovered (54 active cases)

Codington (9): +21 positive, +20 recovered (170 active cases)

Corson (1): +2 positive, +4 recovered (12 active cases)

Custer (3): +5 positive, +2 recovered (34 active case)

Davison (3): +14 positive, +14 recovered (168 active cases)

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

Deuel: +7 positive, +3 recovered (21 active cases)

Dewey: +6 positive, +1 recovered (79 active cases)

Douglas (1): +4 positive, +1 recovered (40 active cases)

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

Fall River (5): +8 positive, +1 recovered (27 active cases)

Faulk (1): +1 positive, +2 recovered (20 active cases)

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Grant (1): +3 positive, +6 recovered (61 active cases)
 Gregory (7): +1 positive, +1 recovered (27 active cases)
 Haakon (1): +0 positive, +0 recovered (10 active case)
 Hamlin: +2 positive, +1 recovered (15 active cases)
 Hand (1): +6 positive, +6 recovered (20 active cases)
 Hanson (1): +0 positive, +0 recovered (16 active cases)
 Harding: +1 positive, +1 recovered (2 active cases)
 Hughes (5): +11 positive, +23 recovered (134 active cases)
 Hutchinson (2): +6 positive, +3 recovered (51 active cases)
 Hyde: +1 positive, +1 recovered (4 active cases)
 Jackson (1): +2 positive, +1 recovered (10 active cases)
 Jerauld (4): +0 positive, +2 recovered (26 active cases)
 Jones: +0 positive, +0 recovered (4 active cases)
 Kingsbury: +2 positive, +6 recovered (14 active cases)
 Lake (8): +6 positive, +4 recovered (28 active cases)
 Lawrence (5): +12 positive, +9 recovered (109 active cases)
 Lincoln (6): +44 positive, +22 recovered (336 active cases)

Lyman (4): +6 positive, +5 recovered (31 active cases)
 Marshall: +1 positive, +2 recovered (11 active cases)
 McCook (1): +2 positive, +4 recovered (45 active cases)
 McPherson: +0 positive, +1 recovery (8 active case)
 Meade (6): +10 positive, +14 recovered (121 active cases)
 Mellette: +0 positive, +1 recovered (9 active cases)
 Miner: +3 positive, +1 recovered (18 active cases)
 Minnehaha (87): +137 positive, +37 recovered (978 active cases)
 Moody: +8 positive, +1 recovered (42 active cases)
 Oglala Lakota (4): +3 positive, +6 recovered (85 active cases)
 Pennington (39): +57 positive, +48 recovered (536 active cases)
 Perkins: +1 positive, +0 recovered (9 active cases)
 Potter: +3 positive, +3 recovered (17 active cases)
 Roberts (1): +1 positive, +8 recovered (36 active cases)
 Sanborn: +0 positive, +0 recovered (18 active cases)
 Spink: +2 positive, +4 recovered (29 active cases)
 Stanley: +1 positive, +0 recovery (7 active cases)
 Sully: +0 positive, +1 recovered (5 active cases)
 Todd (5): +6 positive, +6 recovered (71 active cases)
 Tripp (1): +1 positive, +4 recovered (42 active cases)
 Turner (7): +15 positive, +1 recovered (64 active cases)
 Union (10): +29 positive, +11 recovered (102 active cases)
 Walworth (1): +2 positive, +3 recovered (35 active cases)
 Yankton (4): +11 positive, +5 recovered (106 active cases)
 Ziebach (1): +1 positive, +0 recovered (10 active case)

North Dakota Dept. of Health Report
 COVID-19 Daily Report, October 8:

- 7.5% rolling 14-day positivity
- 8.1% daily positivity
- 531 new positives
- 6,566 susceptible test encounters
- 125 currently hospitalized (+9)
- 3,832 active cases (+126)

Total Deaths: +6 (310)

AGE GROUP OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Age Range	# of Cases	# of Deaths
0-9 years	833	0
10-19 years	2974	0
20-29 years	5885	2
30-39 years	4509	7
40-49 years	3624	10
50-59 years	3613	22
60-69 years	2664	43
70-79 years	1353	52
80+ years	986	136

SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths
Female	13857	121
Male	12584	151

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County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Persons	Deceased	Community Spread	% RT-PCR Test Positivity
Aurora	115	66	634	0	Substantial	17.33%
Beadle	899	792	3169	11	Substantial	8.33%
Bennett	89	63	824	4	Moderate	9.45%
Bon Homme	125	83	1270	1	Substantial	10.82%
Brookings	874	780	5169	2	Substantial	13.45%
Brown	1427	1207	7749	4	Substantial	14.83%
Brule	160	129	1273	1	Substantial	8.41%
Buffalo	164	142	794	3	Substantial	10.19%
Butte	149	107	1830	3	Substantial	13.04%
Campbell	44	27	162	0	Substantial	17.91%
Charles Mix	239	162	2587	0	Substantial	9.34%
Clark	49	38	615	0	Moderate	15.63%
Clay	606	545	2783	7	Substantial	7.33%
Codington	1053	873	5500	9	Substantial	17.45%
Corson	109	96	750	1	Moderate	5.88%
Custer	207	171	1464	3	Substantial	8.67%
Davison	474	303	3840	3	Substantial	17.08%
Day	108	78	1024	0	Substantial	24.75%
Deuel	109	88	688	0	Substantial	15.38%
Dewey	196	117	3019	0	Substantial	11.67%
Douglas	115	74	635	1	Substantial	14.49%
Edmunds	104	98	658	0	Substantial	5.29%
Fall River	122	89	1576	5	Moderate	7.53%
Faulk	109	88	479	1	Substantial	12.00%
Grant	197	135	1314	1	Substantial	14.20%
Gregory	151	117	696	7	Substantial	18.38%
Haakon	37	26	400	1	Moderate	3.64%
Hamlin	117	102	1072	0	Substantial	4.76%
Hand	68	47	515	1	Substantial	14.48%
Hanson	50	33	376	1	Moderate	16.67%
Harding	6	4	97	0	Minimal	14.29%
Hughes	596	457	3142	5	Substantial	17.32%
Hutchinson	141	88	1355	2	Substantial	9.29%

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Hyde	25	21	279	0	Minimal	3.70%
Jackson	46	35	661	1	Moderate	4.44%
Jerauld	146	116	352	4	Substantial	19.23%
Jones	20	16	107	0	Moderate	21.43%
Kingsbury	82	68	896	0	Substantial	11.21%
Lake	229	193	1621	8	Substantial	12.90%
Lawrence	525	411	4731	5	Substantial	11.28%
Lincoln	1692	1350	11513	6	Substantial	15.45%
Lyman	199	164	1309	4	Substantial	13.91%
Marshall	49	38	679	0	Moderate	22.73%
McCook	139	93	986	1	Substantial	12.82%
McPherson	42	34	350	0	Moderate	9.28%
Meade	669	542	4239	6	Substantial	13.08%
Mellette	40	31	525	0	Moderate	14.00%
Miner	47	29	388	0	Moderate	15.22%
Minnehaha	7550	6485	45025	87	Substantial	8.91%
Moody	128	86	933	0	Substantial	21.92%
Oglala Lakota	359	270	4815	4	Substantial	8.18%
Pennington	2921	2346	20997	39	Substantial	10.31%
Perkins	47	38	390	0	Moderate	15.91%
Potter	66	49	530	0	Substantial	8.60%
Roberts	244	207	2838	1	Substantial	11.51%
Sanborn	50	32	372	0	Substantial	19.61%
Spink	165	136	1542	0	Substantial	5.90%
Stanley	49	42	461	0	Moderate	8.33%
Sully	19	14	142	0	Moderate	31.58%
Todd	201	125	3026	5	Substantial	12.50%
Tripp	196	153	1011	1	Substantial	18.67%
Turner	250	179	1624	7	Substantial	7.79%
Union	514	402	3352	10	Substantial	16.22%
Walworth	152	116	1206	1	Substantial	9.02%
Yankton	501	391	5094	4	Substantial	5.54%
Ziebach	70	59	536	1	Moderate	13.33%
Unassigned	0	0	4861	0		

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South Dakota

New Total Cases Today	New Confirmed Cases	New Probable Cases
536	529	7
Currently Hospitalized	Active Cases	Recovered Cases
284	4,673	21,496
Total Cases	Total Confirmed Cases	Total Probable Cases
26,441	25,961	480
Ever Hospitalized	Total Persons Tested	Total Tests
1,717	211,291	316,262
Deaths	% Progress (September Goal: 44,233 Tests)	% Progress (October Goal: 44,233 Tests)
272	216%	59%

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Brown County

New Total Cases Today	New Confirmed Cases	New Probable Cases
12	12	0
Currently Hospitalized	Active Cases	Recovered Cases
284	216	1,207
Total Cases	Total Confirmed Cases	Total Probable Cases
1,427	1,424	3
Ever Hospitalized	Total Persons Tested	Total Tests
57	9,176	12,975
Deaths	% Progress (September Goal: 44,233 Tests)	% Progress (October Goal: 44,233 Tests)
4	216%	59%

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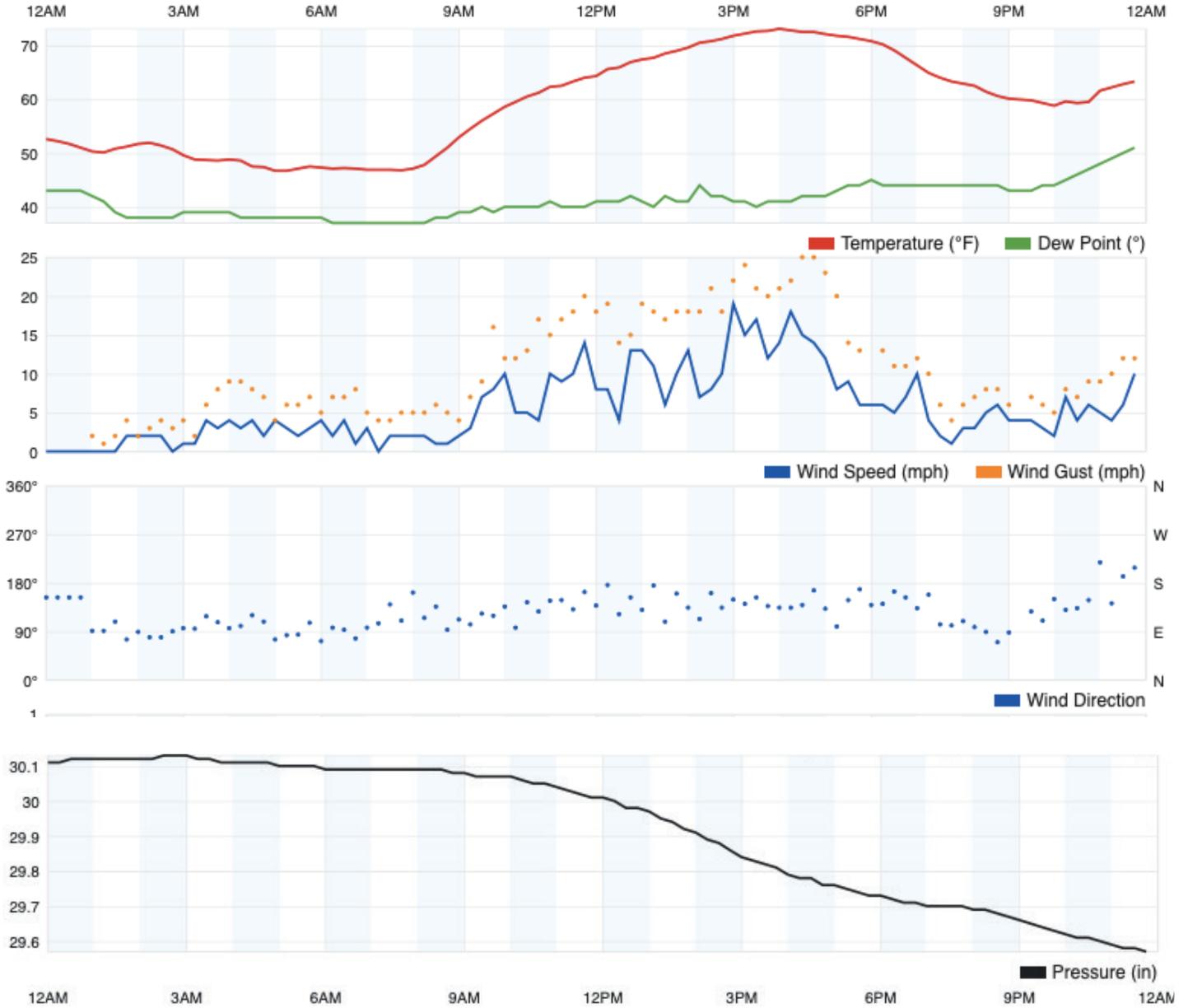
Day County

New Total Cases Today	New Confirmed Cases	New Probable Cases
1	1	0
Currently Hospitalized	Active Cases	Recovered Cases
284	30	78
Total Cases	Total Confirmed Cases	Total Probable Cases
108	108	0
Ever Hospitalized	Total Persons Tested	Total Tests
13	1,132	1,592
Deaths	% Progress (September Goal: 44,233 Tests)	% Progress (October Goal: 44,233 Tests)
0	216%	59%

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



Sunny

High: 83 °F

Tonight



Mostly Clear

Low: 42 °F

Saturday



Sunny

High: 73 °F

Saturday Night



Partly Cloudy and Breezy

Low: 57 °F

Sunday



Breezy. Partly Sunny then Chance Showers

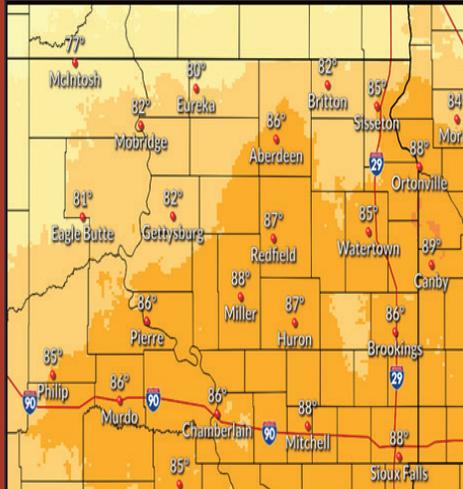
High: 77 °F

Elevated Fire Danger This Afternoon And Saturday

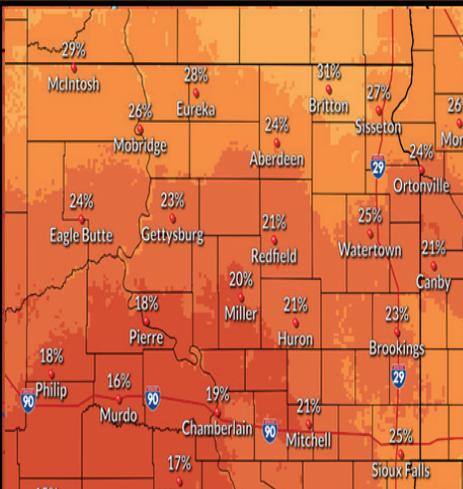
- Unseasonably warm and dry air mass in place.
- Gusty winds this afternoon and Tuesday.



Highs Today



Lowest Forecast Afternoon Humidity



Unseasonably warm and dry conditions today will lead to elevated fire danger. Highs will be in record to near-record territory today. Cooler but windier weather is anticipated Saturday with highs mainly in the 70s.

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Today in Weather History

October 9, 1964: Record cold occurred on this day in 1964 across parts of central and northeast South Dakota with temperatures falling into the mid-teens to around 20 degrees at many locations. Sisseton had a record low of 20 degrees; Watertown had a record low of 16 degrees, with Kennebec recording the lowest temperature of 13 degrees on this day in 1964. Although not a record low, Aberdeen fell to 14 degrees.

October 9, 1980: On this day in 1980, hot air streamed across central and northeast South Dakota as well as west-central Minnesota with highs mostly in the 80s. Record highs were established at Watertown with 86 degrees and both Wheaton and Sisseton with 87 degrees. One of the warmest temperatures across the area was 89 degrees at Kennebec.

1804: The famous Snow Hurricane moved ashore near Atlantic City on this day. After briefly passing through Connecticut and into Massachusetts, cold air was entrained in the circulation with heavy snow falling between New York to southern Canada. Berkshires Massachusetts and Concord New Hampshire record two feet of snow with this hurricane. This storm produced the first observation of snow from a hurricane, but not the last. Hurricane Ginny of 1963 brought up to 18 inches (400 mm) of snow to portions of Maine.

1903 - New York City was deluged with 11.17 inches of rain 24 hours to establish a state record. Severe flooding occurred in the Passaic Valley of New Jersey where more than fifteen inches of rain was reported. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1981 - The temperature at San Juan, Puerto Rico, soared to 98 degrees to establish an all-time record for that location. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Eighteen cities in the southeastern U.S. and the Middle Atlantic Coast Region reported record low temperatures for the date. Asheville NC dipped to 29 degrees, and the record low of 47 degrees at Jacksonville FL marked their fourth of the month. A second surge of cold air brought light snow to the Northern Plains, particularly the Black Hills of South Dakota. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Ten cities in the northeastern U.S. reported record low temperatures for the date, including Hartford CT with a reading of 28 degrees. Snow continued in northern New England through the morning hours. Mount Washington NH reported five inches of snow. Warm weather continued in the western U.S. Los Angeles CA reported a record high of 102 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Unseasonably cold weather continued in the Upper Midwest. Thirteen cities in Ohio, Michigan and Indiana reported record low temperatures for the date, including Marquette MI with a reading of 20 degrees. Unseasonably warm weather continued in the western U.S. as the San Francisco Giants won the National League pennant. San Jose CA reported a record high of 91 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

2001: An unusually strong fall outbreak of tornadoes spawned at least 23 twisters across parts of Nebraska and Oklahoma. Hardest hit was the town of Cordell, OK, but a 22 minute lead time led to an amazingly low casualty count: only nine injuries and no fatalities.

2013: The Puglia region of southern Italy saw tornadoes on this day.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 73 °F at 3:53 PM

Low Temp: 46 °F at 5:11 AM

Wind: 25 mph at 3:30 PM

Precip: .00

Today's Info

Record High: 85° in 1938

Record Low: 14° in 1964

Average High: 61°F

Average Low: 36°F

Average Precip in Oct.: 0.60

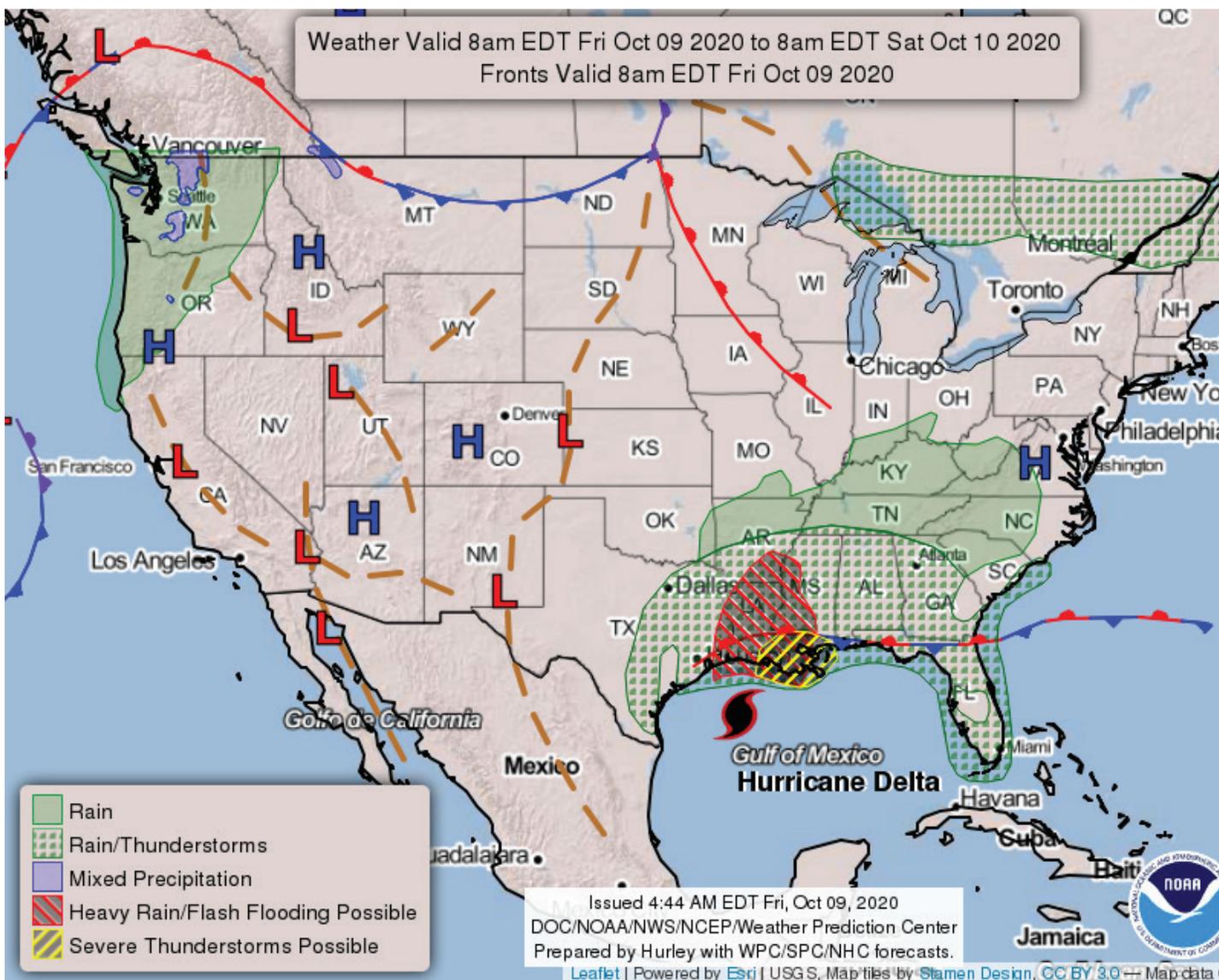
Precip to date in Oct.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 19.08

Precip Year to Date: 15.15

Sunset Tonight: 6:58 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:44 a.m.



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WHY NOT YOUR BEST?

A well-dressed gentleman stepped from a taxi cab in New York whistling half-heartedly as he collected his briefcase and umbrella. A newsboy, just a few feet away, listened for a brief moment and said, "You're not much of a whistler, are you? Listen to how good I am!"

When the newsboy finished, he asked the gentleman, "Can you do better?"

"Indeed I can," came the reply. The man was an expert whistler who was in New York for a performance. And then he whistled his very best to the astonishment of the young newsboy.

Puzzled, the young boy looked at him and then asked, "Why were you doing so poorly when you got out of the cab?"

Solomon wrote the book of Ecclesiastes to challenge God's followers to live lives with meaning and purpose. "Whatever you do," he wrote, "do well!" He very clearly and convincingly encourages us to enjoy life as a gift from God and to focus on doing our very best - always. If you are a whistler, whistle the best you can all of the time - not only during a "performance" in front of an audience. After all, we are all "performing" everything we do before God, our Creator. We are always on "stage," demonstrating our gratitude for the gifts He's given us.

We must always be aware of the fact that no matter where we are or what we are doing, we are responsible for doing our best to bring honor and glory to God.

Prayer: Lord of our lives, it is never what we have, but what we do with what You have given us. May we do our best, always, with each of the gifts You have given us. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Whatever you do, do well. For when you go to the grave, there will be no work or planning or knowledge or wisdom. Ecclesiastes 9:10

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2020 Groton SD Community Events

- **CANCELLED** Groton Lions Club Easter Egg Hunt - City Park (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- **CANCELLED** Dueling Piano's Baseball Fundraiser at the American Legion
- **CANCELLED** Fireman's Fun Night (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
- **POSTPONED** Front Porch 605 Rural Route Road Trip
- **CANCELLED** Father/Daughter dance.
- **CANCELLED** Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales, (1st Saturday in May)
- **CANCELLED** Girls High School Golf Meet at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 05/25/2020 Groton American Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services
- 07/04/2020 Firecracker Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 07/12/2020 Summer Fest/Car Show
- 07/16/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Pro Am Golf Tourney
- 07/24/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Ferney Open Golf Tourney
- 07/25/2020 City-Wide Rummage Sales
- **CANCELLED** State American Legion Baseball Tournament in Groton
- 08/07/2020 Wine on Nine Event at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 09/12-13/2020 Groton Fly-In/Drive-In at the Groton Airport north of Groton
- 09/12/2020 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Sat. after Labor Day)
- 09/13/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Couples Sunflower Classic
- 10/09/2020 Lake Region Marching Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)
- 10/10/2020 Pumpkin Fest (Saturday before Columbus Day)
- 10/30/2020 Downtown Trick or Treat
- 10/30/2020 Groton United Methodist Trunk or Treat, 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m., church parking lot
- **CANCELLED** Groton Legion Annual Turkey Party (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)
- 11/26/2020 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center
- 12/05/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Tour of Homes & Holiday Party
- 12/05/2020 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services
- 01/--/2021 83rd Annual Carnival of Silver Skates

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News from the  Associated Press

Thursday's Scores

By The Associated Press

PREP VOLLEYBALL=

Aberdeen Roncalli def. Clark/Willow Lake, 25-23, 25-15, 25-14
Alcester-Hudson def. Beresford, 25-7, 25-13, 25-13
Arlington def. Lake Preston, 25-9, 25-6, 25-12
Bridgewater-Emery def. Avon, 25-17, 25-23, 18-25, 29-27
Brookings def. Yankton, 25-16, 24-26, 25-18, 16-25, 15-12
Colome def. Stanley County, 25-19, 25-22, 25-13
Corsica/Stickney def. Burke, 25-17, 24-26, 25-18, 25-20
Edgemont def. Sioux County, Neb., 21-25, 27-25, 25-19, 18-25, 15-10
Elkton-Lake Benton def. Deubrook, 25-16, 26-24, 26-28, 25-14
Estelline/Hendricks def. Dell Rapids St. Mary, 25-13, 25-22, 25-14
Garretson def. Canton, 25-18, 25-19, 25-15
Gayville-Volin def. Menno, 25-16, 25-16, 25-19
Hamlin def. Redfield, 25-20, 25-15, 25-21
Harding County def. Baker, Mont., 25-19, 26-24, 25-17
Highmore-Harrold def. Wessington Springs, 25-13, 25-16, 25-16
Hitchcock-Tulare def. Miller, 25-10, 25-20, 25-18
Huron def. Pierre, 25-22, 25-22, 25-16
Jones County def. Dupree, 25-7, 25-14, 25-7
Langford def. Great Plains Lutheran, 21-25, 25-16, 25-18, 25-18
McCook Central/Montrose def. West Central, 25-16, 25-19, 18-25, 27-25
Northwestern def. Faulkton, 25-19, 25-10, 25-17
Oldham-Ramona/Rutland def. DeSmet, 25-23, 27-25, 15-25, 25-21
Philip def. Faith, 28-26, 25-21, 25-13
Platte-Geddes def. Gregory, 25-11, 25-13, 25-17
Rapid City Stevens def. Spearfish, 25-14, 25-11, 25-15
Sioux Falls Christian def. Sioux Falls Lincoln, 30-28, 25-18, 21-25, 20-25, 15-10
St. Thomas More def. Lead-Deadwood, 25-13, 25-19, 25-16
Sunshine Bible Academy def. Iroquois, 23-25, 25-20, 25-15, 22-25, 15-10
Tri-Valley def. Elk Point-Jefferson, 25-27, 25-17, 25-22, 25-22
Tripp-Delmont/Armour def. Sanborn Central/Woonsocket, 25-19, 25-19, 15-25, 15-25, 15-11
Watertown def. Sioux Falls Roosevelt, 23-25, 25-18, 25-23, 25-23
Waverly-South Shore def. Florence/Henry, 25-19, 25-23, 25-19
Webster def. Sisseton, 25-17, 21-25, 25-21, 25-23
Winner def. White River, 25-13, 25-16, 25-9

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

Tensions rise as virus cases surge in Wisconsin, Dakotas

By ADAM GELLER and STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A surge of coronavirus cases in Wisconsin and the Dakotas is forcing a scramble for hospital beds and raising political tensions, as the Upper Midwest and Plains emerge as one of the nation's most troubling hot spots.

The three states now lead all others in new cases per capita, after months in which many politicians

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and residents rejected mask requirements while downplaying the risks of the disease that has now killed over 210,000 Americans.

"It's an emotional roller coaster," said Melissa Resch, a nurse at Wisconsin's Aspirus Wausau Hospital, which is working to add beds and reassign staff to keep up with a rising caseload of virus patients, many gravely ill.

"Just yesterday I had a patient say, 'It's OK, you guys took good care of me, but it's OK to let me go,'" Resch said. "I've cried with the respiratory unit, I've cried with managers. I cry at home. I've seen nurses crying openly in the hallway."

The efforts to combat the quickening spread of the virus in the Midwest and Plains states are starting to recall the scenes that played out in other parts of the country over the past several months.

In the spring, New York City rushed to erect field hospitals as emergency rooms were flooded with desperately ill patients. Then, as Northeastern states got a handle on the outbreak, it spread to Sun Belt states like Arizona, Texas and California over the summer. It then moved into the Midwest.

"What worries me is we haven't learned our lessons," said Ali Mokdad, a professor of health metrics sciences at the University of Washington in Seattle. He cited data, compiled by the company Premise, showing mask usage at 39% in Wisconsin and 45% in the Dakotas, both below the U.S. average of 50%.

"People let down their guard. They said, 'It's not us. It's big cities,'" Mokdad said. "But eventually, like any other virus, it's going to spread. Nobody lives in a bubble in this country."

In North Dakota, which does not require residents to wear masks and whose 770 new cases per 100,000 residents are the highest in the country, 24 more deaths were reported Wednesday, triple the state's previous single-day record.

"The reported number of deaths today is heartbreaking," said state Health Department spokeswoman Nicole Peske said. "Unfortunately, the deaths and the increase in cases in long-term care are a direct reflection of what's happening in the community."

In Wisconsin, health officials plan to open a field hospital next week at the state fairgrounds to prevent health care centers from being overwhelmed by virus cases, even as state Republicans challenge Democratic Gov. Tony Evers' mask mandate in court.

"We hoped this day wouldn't come, but unfortunately, Wisconsin is in a much different, more dire place today, and our health care systems are beginning to become overwhelmed," Evers said.

The state surpassed 3,000 new virus cases for the first time on Thursday, more than 200 above its previous daily record, set earlier this month.

South Dakota set records Thursday for active cases, hospitalizations and new deaths, with 14. A small hospital that serves the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe transferred two virus patients out of state after administrators at 14 other facilities said they were diverting patients.

That contradicted assurances by Gov. Kristi Noem, a Republican whose plan for combating the virus has focused on increasing treatment capacity rather than preventing infection. Noem, who has insisted since the spring that the spread of the disease was inevitable, has come under growing criticism.

"It is the height of arrogance and ignorance for her to claim her inaction is a badge of honor," state Democratic Party chairman Randy Seiler said.

Despite the rising numbers, Kathleen Taylor of Redfield, South Dakota, said she sees a lot of apathy in the community of about 2,300. For months, the town had been largely spared by the pandemic. But now, she said, she knows 14 people who have tested positive.

"I watch the governor tell people how marvelously we are doing and how relying on people's own sense of responsibility has worked," said Taylor, a 67-year-old author. "Then I go into town and I see maybe three people wearing masks and nobody distancing."

Iowa on Thursday reported over 1,500 new confirmed cases over the previous 24 hours and a record 449 people hospitalized. A report issued by the White House coronavirus task force said the state has seen high transmission of the virus over the past month, with "many preventable deaths."

The report came a day after Republican Gov. Kim Reynolds urged residents not to let the virus dominate their lives, echoing the words of President Donald Trump. Reynolds, who has rejected health experts'

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repeated recommendations that people be required to wear masks, bristled Wednesday when asked why she hadn't done more to reduce virus spread.

"We are doing a lot, and I'm proud of what we're doing, but you know what? Any death is one too many, and it's heart-wrenching to see the numbers, but I have to balance a lot," she said.

Nationwide, newly reported cases have risen in recent weeks to about 44,000 a day, and deaths are running at around 700 a day, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University.

While those numbers are down from the spring, when cases and deaths peaked at much higher levels, public health experts warn that infections are far too high as the nation moves toward flu season and colder weather that will send more people indoors, where the virus can spread more easily.

"We really need to figure out how to be engaged with one another socially but physically distant," White House coronavirus response coordinator Dr. Deborah Birx said Thursday in Hartford, Connecticut. "I think that it's going to be a critical message through the fall. It will protect us against flu, and it will protect us against COVID if we keep up those behaviors."

Geller reported from New York. Associated Press writers Wayne Parry in Atlantic City, New Jersey; David Pitt in Des Moines; Carla K. Johnson in Washington state; Todd Richmond in Madison, Wisconsin; Dave Kolpack in Fargo, North Dakota; and Susan Haigh in Hartford, Connecticut, contributed to this story.

South Dakota posts all-time highs for deaths, active cases

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota experienced all-time highs for active coronavirus cases, hospitalizations and deaths on Thursday.

The Department of Health reported 14 people had died from COVID-19, bringing the state's death toll to 272 people. September was the state's deadliest month of the pandemic as health officials reported 56 deaths. But the state is on-pace to see far more deaths in October, recording 49 deaths in the month so far.

The state has seen the nation's second-highest number of cases per capita over the last two weeks. There were roughly 711 new cases per 100,000 people, according to Johns Hopkins researchers.

Health officials reported that 536 people have tested positive for the coronavirus, bringing the state's active case count to 4,673.

The number of hospitalizations increased to an all-time high once again as 284 people required hospital treatment. As hospitals have diverted patients depending on the level of care they need, some have had to be transferred to out-of-state hospitals.

But the Department of Health has said that there is plenty of hospital capacity in the state and that some hospitals are even caring for patients from other states.

The Department of Health reported that 38% of hospital beds and 25% of Intensive Care Units are open.

West Virginia site chosen for high-speed travel facility

By CUNEYT DIL Associated Press

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) — Virgin Hyperloop One will build a certification center in West Virginia for the high-speed transportation concept that uses enclosed pods to zip passengers underground at over 600 mph (960 km/h).

The company had received bids from more than a dozen states in the past year to build a 6-mile (9.7-kilometer) testing track and other safety facilities over hundreds of acres for the electromagnetic levitation transportation technology.

Hyperloop technology, which Tesla founder Elon Musk is also developing, hopes to one day provide clean-energy fast travel across the country. Virgin is studying building a route that would link Chicago and Pittsburgh in under an hour. Certification for commercial travel is still expected to be at least a decade away.

West Virginia and Virgin officials said the new center will bring thousands of temporary construction jobs to a state that has witnessed economic decline with the downturn of the coal industry. The facility will employ up to 200 full-time workers when completed.

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"What we're doing is bringing a new industry straight to the place where West Virginians once mined," said Jay Walder, CEO of Virgin Hyperloop One, at an announcement with the governor and state's U.S. senators.

Missouri had hoped to land the project for an ultrafast Hyperloop track that would transport passengers between St. Louis and Kansas City in 30 minutes. State lawmakers earlier this year passed a bill that would give the Missouri Highways and Transportation Committee the authority to form a public-private partnership to build it.

Delaware, Georgia, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas and Washington state were also in the running for the facility, according to a Virgin Hyperloop news release.

The company did not say if any financial incentives were offered in West Virginia's proposal. Mike Schneider, a vice president at Virgin Hyperloop, said the company was not "looking for gigantic tax breaks." A spokeswoman said that the project is expected to be financed by private and public funds.

"The Hyperloop Certification Center is a long-term, multi-county project, so we are still working through how the various assistance programs will be best utilized," Virgin spokeswoman Sarah Lawson wrote in an email.

The center will be located over 800 acres (325 hectares) in Tucker and Grant counties in the northeast of West Virginia. Construction is planned to begin in 2021 on an assembly facility for pods, safety centers and other operations.

Virgin will partner with Marshall University and West Virginia University, which predicted the center will add \$48 million annually to the state's economy.

The U.S. Department of Transportation has aimed to support the nascent technology with new grants for companies such as Virgin. Hyperloop systems rely on low-pressurized tunnels to ensure pods can transport passengers and goods at high speeds.

Man found in crashed car with gunshot wounds has died

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Sioux Falls police are looking for a suspect or suspects who shot and killed a local man who crashed his vehicle in a parking lot.

Officers responded to a report of gunshots and a crash about 3:30 a.m. Thursday, according to police. They found a 36-year-old Sioux Falls man with gunshot wounds in a vehicle. He was taken to the hospital where he died.

Police spokesman Sam Clemens said he doesn't know how many times the man was hit or whether he was shot while in the vehicle.

Investigators will use surveillance video from nearby businesses and homes as they work to solve the case.

Regents don't change spring calendars for SD universities

The South Dakota Board of Regents has determined the spring academic calendars for the state's universities will remain unchanged, despite a recent surge in coronavirus cases in the state.

The regents agreed Wednesday to maintain a spring semester with 77 class days starting Jan. 11 and ending May 7, the *Argus Leader* reported.

The regents' executive director Brian Maher says university and board officials initially thought about adjusting the semester in the wake of the pandemic, but that drew mixed reactions.

"We looked at proposals to adjust the start and end dates of the semester, as well as whether a spring break period was advisable. We weighed public health considerations and consulted with public health experts," Maher stated. "There were pros and cons to all. Absent a clear preference for changing the calendar, we opted to recommend the regents maintain the spring semester schedule as originally adopted."

Spring break will be March 8-12, and each university will observe official holidays on Martin Luther King Jr. Day and Presidents' Day. No classes will be held on Good Friday.

The state reported 10 additional deaths Wednesday, 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.

World Food Program wins Nobel Peace Prize as hunger surges

By DALATOU MAMANE and FRANK JORDANS Associated Press

NIAMEY, Niger (AP) — The World Food Program won the Nobel Peace Prize on Friday for its efforts to combat hunger in regions facing conflict and hardship and at a time when the coronavirus pandemic has driven millions more people to the brink of starvation.

The Rome-based United Nations agency has long specialized in getting assistance to some of the world's most dangerous and precarious places, from air-dropping food in South Sudan and Syria to creating an emergency delivery service that kept aid flowing even as antivirus restrictions grounded commercial flights. It provided assistance to almost 100 million people in 88 countries last year.

"With this year's award, the (committee) wishes to turn the eyes of the world to the millions of people who suffer from or face the threat of hunger," said Berit Reiss-Andersen, the chair of the Norwegian Nobel Committee, announcing the award in Oslo. "The World Food Program plays a key role in multilateral cooperation on making food security an instrument of peace."

In honoring the U.N. food program, the Nobel peace committee was highlighting the need for global solidarity and multilateralism at a time of increasing polarization and go-it-alone nationalism.

The head of the organization said his entire team deserved the award.

"I know I'm not deserving of an award like this, but all the men and women around the world in the World Food Program and our partners who put their lives on the line every day," David Beasley told The Associated Press by phone from Niger, where he was visiting Friday.

The organization has long been headed by an American, and U.S. President Donald Trump nominated the former Republican governor of South Carolina for the post in 2017.

WFP staffers in Niger greeted Beasley with cheers and applause as he emerged to address a crowd after the announcement. "Two things," he told them. "I can't believe I'm in Niger when we got the award, and No. 2, I didn't win it, you won it."

The Nobel Committee said that the problem of hunger has again become more acute in recent years, not least because the pandemic has added to the hardship already faced by millions of people around the world.

"In 2019, 135 million people suffered from acute hunger, the highest number in many years," it said. "Most of the increase was caused by war and armed conflict. The coronavirus pandemic has contributed to a strong upsurge in the number of victims of hunger in the world."

In total, WFP estimates that 690 million people suffer some form of hunger in the world today.

It was the ninth award for the U.N. or one of its agencies. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said he was delighted the award went to "the world's first responder on the frontlines of food insecurity."

"In a world of plenty, it is unconscionable that hundreds of millions go to bed each night hungry," he said. "Millions more are now on the precipice of famine due to the COVID-19 pandemic."

The Nobel Committee called on governments to ensure that WFP and other aid organizations receive the financial support necessary to feed millions in countries such as Yemen, Congo, Nigeria, South Sudan and Burkina Faso.

A logistics juggernaut, WFP this year created a global emergency delivery service for humanitarian aid. Officials said the unprecedented effort involved nearly 130 countries and was key in ensuring that aid for the pandemic kept flowing in addition to other assistance, like the drugs and vaccines needed to combat other diseases. Its success was even more marked in a world where commercial air travel nearly ground to a halt.

There was no shortage of causes or candidates on this year's list, with 211 individuals and 107 organizations nominated ahead of the Feb. 1 deadline.

The Norwegian Nobel Committee maintains absolute secrecy about whom it favors before the announcement of arguably the world's most prestigious prize, but WFP had been on the shortlist of Dan Smith, the

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director of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute

"The global problem of hunger is increasing and so is the global problem of violent conflict," Smith said. "The World Food Program works at the intersection of those two problems (and) it's going to face an increasing workload in the coming years."

The award comes with a gold medal and a 10-million krona (\$1.1 million) cash prize that is dwarfed by the funding that WFP requires for its work. So far in 2020, the organization has received almost \$6.4 billion in cash or goods, with more than a third, over \$2.7 billion, coming from the United States.

Beasley's trip to Niger, where he has been meeting with leaders and visiting villages in the field, follows a three-day visit to neighboring Burkina Faso.

The Sahel region, a band south of the Sahara where both countries are located, is "under attack by extremists and climate extremes" and going through "a devastating" time, he said.

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. The literature prize was awarded to American poet Louise Glück on Thursday for her "candid and uncompromising" work.

Still to come next week is the prize for outstanding work in the field of economics.

Jordans reported from Berlin. Associated Press journalists Karl Ritter, Nicole Winfield, Patricia Thomas in Rome, Vanessa Gera in Warsaw, Poland, Cara Anna in Johannesburg, and Jamey Keaten in Geneva contributed to this report.

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

Judge denies motion to extend Florida's voter registration

By BOBBY CAINA CALVAN and FREIDA FRISARO Associated Press

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) — A federal judge has denied a motion to extend voter registration in Florida even though a computer meltdown on the final day of registration might have prevented thousands of potential voters from taking part in November's presidential election.

In a 29-page ruling on Friday morning, U.S. District Court Judge Mark E. Walker said his decision was "an incredibly close call" but added that "the state's interest in preventing chaos in its already precarious — and perennially chaotic — election outweighs the substantial burden imposed on the right to vote."

Walker noted the historical problems the state seems to have with elections.

"Notwithstanding the fact that cinemas across the country remain closed, somehow, I feel like I've seen this movie before. Just shy of a month from election day, with the earliest mail-in ballots beginning to be counted, Florida has done it again," Walker wrote.

Florida had already reopened its site for seven hours on Tuesday, providing another opportunity to people who weren't able to submit their voter registrations online before Monday night's deadline.

Data filed by the state indicates that 50,000 people registered during the extended time period. Based on previous trends, the judge noted, perhaps more than 20,000 additional people might have also registered to vote, if they had been able to access the system.

Secretary of State Laurel Lee reopened the registration for seven hours on Tuesday, after consulting with Gov. Ron DeSantis.

Walker took umbrage at a state lawyer's argument that other venues had been available to register to vote, including in-person at an elections office or by mail.

"With the public sounding the alarm, the Secretary of State decided to implement a half measure," Walker wrote. "She hastily and briefly extended the registration period and ordered Florida's supervisors of election to accept applications submitted by the Secretary's new 'book closing' deadline."

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Walker wrote that Lee's "cure" had at least one major flaw: She did not notify the public until — at the earliest — after noon on the date of her new deadline.

"This left less than seven hours for potential voters to somehow become aware of the news and ensure that they properly submitted their voter registration applications, all while also participating in their normal workday, school, family, and caregiving responsibilities," Walker wrote.

The judge said that the issue boils down to whether Lee's failure to maintain a fully functional voter registration website in the final hours of the voter registration period, and her limited deadline extension, "pass constitutional muster." Ultimately, he said, the need to prevent more chaos outweighed the denial of voting rights for thousands of Floridians.

In the end, the case is not about Floridians missing registration deadlines, or a challenge to a state statute, Walker wrote.

"This case is about how a state failed its citizens," Walker wrote. "In this case, potential voters attempted to perform their civic duty, to exercise their fundamental right, only to be thwarted, once again, by a state that seemingly is never prepared for an election."

Frisaro reported from Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Battered Louisiana coast braces for 1 more: Hurricane Delta

By REBECCA SANTANA and STACEY PLAISANCE Associated Press

ABBEVILLE, La. (AP) — Boarded windows and empty sidewalks made parts of Louisiana's Acadiana region look like empty movie sets as major Hurricane Delta roared ever closer to the U.S. Gulf coast, apparently on track to smash into the same southwestern part of the state where Hurricane Laura blasted ashore six weeks ago.

Forecasters said the 25th named storm of an unprecedented Atlantic hurricane season would likely crash ashore Friday evening somewhere on southwest Louisiana's coast. The question was whether Delta would remain at devastating Category 3 strength, with top winds of 120 mph (195 kph) early Friday, or drop just before landfall to a still extremely dangerous Category 2 storm.

Either way, Delta is such a large hurricane that the storm surge risk remains high even if it becomes less intense just before striking land, the National Hurricane Center said.

People in this battered coastal region were taking Delta seriously.

"You can always get another house another car but not another life," said Hilton Stroder as he and his wife Terry boarded up their Abbeville home with plans to head to their son's house further east.

As Delta churned north at 12 mph (19 kph) on Friday morning, the National Hurricane Center had a hurricane warning in place for the Gulf Coast extending from High Island, Texas, to Morgan City. Shortly after dawn, the first tropical storm-force winds were reaching the coast, even as the eye of the hurricane was about 160 miles (255 kilometers) south of Cameron.

It marked the sixth time this season that Louisiana has been threatened by tropical storms or hurricanes. One fizzled at the southeast Louisiana tip and others veered elsewhere but Tropical Storm Cristobal caused damage in southeast Louisiana in June. And Laura demolished much of the southwestern part of the state on Aug. 27, causing more than 30 deaths.

Life wasn't at a complete standstill though. A gas station was doing steady business as people filled their cars and spare gasoline cans and a grocery store served last customers stocking up. Similar scenes played out not far away in New Iberia, where the few signs of life included cars lined up at a drive-thru daquiri shop and people grabbing food at take-out restaurants.

Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards noted in a radio show that Delta appeared headed for the area near the Texas state line that was devastated by Laura, including Lake Charles and surrounding Calcasieu Parish, and rural Cameron Parish on the coast. "And we've got people who are very tired," he noted.

"People of Lake Charles and in Cameron Parish have already suffered enough, and then here comes this one," said Desi Milligan, who owns an RV park in Cameron that was heavily damaged by Laura.

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People in the disaster zone had unusual clarity about the damage Delta's storm surge could cause. It was predicted to reach as high as 11 feet (3.4 meters) along a stretch from the Rockefeller Wildlife Refuge near the Texas state line to Morgan City, Louisiana. Laura — which made landfall in the same area on Aug. 27 as a Category 4 hurricane with top winds of 150 mph (240 kph) — pushed a storm surge that reached 12 feet (4 meters), Edwards said.

Reminders of Laura's danger are everywhere in the region. In nearby Bell City, some debris piles are more than 6 feet (2 meters) high and 75 feet (23 meters) long. Concerns mounted Friday that Delta's arrival would cause the debris to become airborne, deadly projectiles.

Though homes and farmhouses in the area still stood, blue tarps covered many rooftops with lingering damage from Laura. In Cameron Parish, power poles along Highway 27 in a desolate stretch of marsh were all either broken or leaning — none appeared to have been repaired since the August storm.

A few miles down the road, Creole presented a scene of utter devastation under an overcast sky that soon gave way to pouring rain. Where there used to be buildings, exposed slabs remained. A church and a convenience store had been reduced to debris, and fences were blown over or completely torn down.

Delta had already clipped Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula as a Category 2 hurricane just south of the resort city of Cancún early Wednesday, bringing high winds and heavy rain. No deaths or injuries were reported there.

New Orleans, well east of the projected landfall area, was expected to escape Delta's worst impacts. But tropical storm force winds were still likely in the city on Friday, and local officials said they were preparing for the possibility of tornadoes.

And in Mississippi, Gov. Tate Reeves declared a state of emergency like his counterpart Edwards did in Louisiana. Forecasters said southern Mississippi could see heavy rain and flash flooding.

In Abbeville, Tony Russo was loading up on groceries late Thursday. "I don't know really any different," he replied when asked his reaction to the busy storm season. "You're here. If you love it you stay," he said. But he added with a chuckle: "2020 has been a hell of a year."

Plaisance reported from New Iberia, Louisiana. Associated Press contributors include Melinda Deslatte in Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Gerald Herbert in Lake Charles, Louisiana; Kevin McGill in New Orleans; and Leah Willingham in Jackson, Mississippi.

Bar or restaurant? The big issue in pandemic-struck Brussels

By RAF CASERT and MARK CARLSON Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — New coronavirus restrictions have put a spotlight on two Belgian classics this week: Beer and surrealism.

Since bars in Brussels were forced to close Thursday for at least a month to deal with a massive surge in virus cases but restaurants were allowed to remain open, the big question on the streets is: when is a bar a bar and when is a bar a restaurant? And more importantly, does the distinction really help contain the pandemic?

It is all very reminiscent of surrealism master Rene Magritte, who painted a picture of a pipe and wrote under it "Ceci n'est pas une pipe (This is not a pipe)," — because, of course, it is an image of a pipe.

"The Treachery of Images," as the painting is called, also applies to Brussels watering holes these days. To stay open, bars will have to prove that they are not bars.

Aurore Phanariotis of Le Paon d'Or, which advertises itself as a "Bar Lounge," was working on it as soon as the Brussels ban took effect. Serving coffee, beers, wines, but also pastries and nibbles, she thinks she can stay open.

"Bars indeed have to close, but bars are not places where food is served," she said. "So I interpret it in a way that benefits me and as I have a cafe serving small food, I kind of have two hats. So I take off my cafe owner hat to wear my restaurant owner hat."

Across Brussels, places known for their beers are suddenly highlighting their kitchen magic.

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For the rest of Belgium, bars are forced to close two hours earlier than restaurants. The government sought to make things clearer Friday by insisting that restaurants would have to display their food safety permits. So, without such a paper, a bar should remain a bar, however much food they serve.

Yet, who can blame bar owners for their creativity after suffering through a three-month lockdown this spring, as well as service restrictions since the pandemic hit Belgium in March? All too many are teetering on the brink of bankruptcy.

"There are already five suicides among our members," said Diane Delen, head of the FedCaf Belgian federation of cafes.

Bars insist they have made the same costly efforts as restaurants to apply coronavirus rules but authorities insist that a bar is much more of a COVID-19 spreader than a restaurant.

"We know that the virus finds a hotbed there," said Belgian Health Minister Frank Vandenbroucke told the VRT network. "They are real hotspots. Not all bars, but, unfortunately, too many."

A day later on Thursday, though, he sounded not nearly as certain when he came under fire from legislators for targeting bars.

"Is there scientific proof? Colleagues, I will have to frustrate you, disappoint you," he said in the plenary. "Science is uncertain and data could be better."

Such words turn Delen livid.

"This is a phenomenal fraud," she said. "There is no scientific proof whatsoever."

She added the measure would lead to a wave of bankruptcies as bars already had to close for months during the pandemic's first wave. There are more than 1,600 bars in the Brussels region alone and some 12,000 overall in Belgium.

Vandenbroucke said he understood bar owners' anger but said the crisis called for drastic measures.

Belgium, a nation of 11.5 million, has one of the world's highest per-capita death rates with just over 10,000 victims. Brussels, a city of 1.2 million, has one of the highest infection rates in Europe — 568 cases per 100,000 people — and it's rising. In many parts of Germany, authorities tighten restrictions when infections surpass 50 cases per 100,000 people.

"So don't ask for the ultimate proof," Vandenbroucke said. "We have to act."

Illustrating how pressing the issue is, Brussels Minister President Rudi Vervoort, who imposed the bar ban on Wednesday, tested positive on Thursday.

"Of course it is unfair, but the virus is unfair," Vandenbroucke said.

The bar industry, though, insists any lack of fairness comes from the authorities.

"The decision taken by the government is completely unproductive because it will only push people to meet in a higher concentration in restaurants or in private parties," said Hubert Blanquet, who owns four bars in Brussels.

And, despite all the investments and efforts to contain the virus by bar owners, "we are pointed at like the bad boys," he added.

Video journalist Sylvain Plazy contributed.

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

As virus fills French ICUs anew, doctors ask what went wrong

By ANGELA CHARLTON Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — During a single overnight shift this week, three new COVID-19 patients were rushed into Dr. Karim Debbat's small intensive care ward in the southern French city of Arles. It now has more virus patients than during the pandemic's first wave and is scrambling to create new ICU beds elsewhere in the hospital to accommodate the sick.

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Similar scenes are playing out across France.

COVID-19 patients now occupy 40% of ICU beds in the Paris region, and more than a quarter of ICUs nationwide as weeks of growing infections among young people spread to vulnerable populations.

Despite being one of the world's richest nations — and one of those hardest hit when the pandemic first washed over the world — France hasn't added significant ICU capacity or the staff needed to manage extra beds, according to national health agency figures and doctors at multiple hospitals.

Like in many countries facing resurgent infections, critics say France's leaders haven't learned their lessons from the first wave.

"It's very tense, we don't have any more places," Debbat told The Associated Press. The Joseph Imbert Hospital in Arles is converting recovery rooms into ICUs, delaying non-urgent surgeries and directing more and more of his staff to high-maintenance COVID-19 patients.

Asked about extra medics to help with the new cases, he said simply, "We don't have them. That's the problem."

When protesting Paris public hospital workers confronted French President Emmanuel Macron this week to demand more government investment, he said: "It's no longer a question of resources, it's a question of organization."

He defended his government's handling of the crisis, and noted 8.5 billion euros (\$9.3 billion) in investment promised in July for the hospital system. The protesting medics said the funds are too little and too slow in coming, after years of cuts that left France with half the number of ICU beds in 2020 that it had in 2010.

ICU occupancy rates are considered an important indicator of how saturated the hospital system is and how effective health authorities have been at protecting at-risk populations. And France's numbers aren't looking good.

It reported more than 18,000 new daily virus cases Thursday, and COVID patients now occupy 1,427 ICU beds nationwide — a figure that has doubled in less than a month. France's overall ICU capacity is 6,000, roughly the same as in March, according to national health agency figures provided to the AP.

In comparison, Germany entered the pandemic with about five times as many intensive care beds as France. To date, Germany's confirmed virus-related death toll is 9,584 compared to 32,521 people in France.

Getting ICU capacity right is a challenge. Spain was caught short in the spring, and has expanded its permanent ICU capacity by about 1,000 beds. Britain expanded ICU capacity by building emergency field hospitals. They were mothballed because they were barely used, but the government says they can be utilized again if required.

France added extra makeshift beds in the spring and transported patients by plane and high-speed train from hotspots to less saturated areas. The health agency said French hospitals could eventually double their ICU capacity if needed this fall.

Compared to March and April, doctors say French intensive care wards are better armed this time around, both with protective equipment and more knowledge about how this coronavirus works. Medics put fewer patients on breathing machines now and hospitals are practiced in how to rearrange their operations to focus on COVID-19.

The number of virus patients in the ICU quickly doubled last month in the New Civilian Hospital in Strasbourg, but the atmosphere is surprisingly calm. An AP reporter watched teams of medics coordinating closely to manage the trajectory and treatment of each patient according to strict protocols they're now accustomed to.

But that extra practice doesn't mean managing resurgent virus cases in ICUs is easy. In addition to extra breathing machines and other equipment, adding temporary ICU beds also takes time and labor — as does treating the COVID-19 patients in them.

"The work is harder, and takes longer" than for most other patients, said Pierre-Yves, head of the intensive care ward at the Laveran Military Training Hospital in Marseille. He was not authorized to be identified by his last name because of military policy.

Seven or more of his 47 staffers are needed each time they slowly and carefully rotate a patient from

back to stomach or vice versa. Entering and leaving the ward now involves a lengthy, careful dance of changing full-body gear and disinfecting everything they've touched.

Dr. Debbat in Arles said training ICU staff takes several months, so he's relying on the same personnel levels as in the spring, and he worries they could burn out.

"I'm like a coach and I have just one team, with no reserve players," he said.

He also worries about non-virus patients, who were already put on the back burner earlier this year. And he worries about the upcoming flu season, which sends about 2,000 patients to ICUs in France every year.

The head of emergency medical service SOS Medecins, Serge Smadja, doesn't think France will again face the situation it saw in the spring, when more than 7,000 virus patients were in intensive care at the peak of the crisis, and some 10,000 infected people died in nursing homes without ever making it to hospitals. But he said the French public and its leaders were wrong to think "the virus was behind us."

"There aren't enough beds ... and there is especially a lack of personnel," he said. And with his service seeing a steady uptick in cases and the pandemic wearing on, he warned, "what's missing is an end date."

Jean-Francois Badias in Strasbourg, France, Aritz Parra in Madrid and Pan Pylas in London contributed to this story.

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Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict draws in fighters from Mideast

By BASSEM MROUE Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — For the past two weeks, Raffi Ghazarian has been glued to the TV at home and at work watching news about the fighting between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces. If it goes on, the 50-year-old Lebanese of Armenian descent says he's ready to leave everything and volunteer to defend his ancestral land.

Some from Lebanon's large ethnic Armenian population have already travelled to join the fight, according to members of the community, although they say the numbers are small.

The new eruption of violence in the Caucasus region strikes close to home for Lebanon's Armenians. Red, blue and orange Armenian flags are flown on balconies, windows and roofs of buildings in Bourj Hammoud, Beirut's main Armenian district. Anti-Turkish graffiti in English and Armenian mark walls all over the streets.

Fighting has raged since Sept. 27 in the separatist region of Nagorno-Karabakh, leaving several hundred dead. The enclave lies within Azerbaijan but has been under the control of ethnic Armenian forces backed by neighboring Armenia since 1994, when a truce ended a years-long war that killed an estimate 30,000 people.

On the other side of the latest fighting, Turkey has sent hundreds of Syrian opposition fighters to back its ally, Azerbaijan, according to a Syrian war monitor and three Syria-based opposition activists.

Lebanese-Armenians have been sending money and aid as well as campaigning in the media in support of ethnic Armenians in the enclave, which they refer to as Artsakh. The support they can give is limited — Lebanon is passing through a severe economic crisis, and banks have imposed tight capital controls.

Lebanon is home to one of the largest Armenian communities in the world, most of them descendants of survivors of the 1915 genocide by Ottoman Turks.

An estimated 1.5 million died in massacres, deportations and forced marches that began in 1915 as Ottoman officials worried that the Christian Armenians would side with Russia, its enemy in World War I.

The event is widely viewed by historians as genocide. Turkey denies the deaths constituted genocide, saying the toll has been inflated and that those killed were victims of civil war and unrest.

"We will not allow what happened in 1915 to happen again. We will fight until the last Armenian soldier," said Ghazarian, standing next to a coffee stand decorated with Lebanese and Armenian flags.

"This is not a war between Muslims and Christians. This is a war for the existence of the Armenian entity

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and we are ready," said Ghazarian, who owns a clothes shop.

Lebanese legislator Hagop Pakradounian, who heads the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, the largest and most powerful Armenian party in Lebanon, said volunteers going from Lebanon to Armenia act on their own, and there is no decision by any organization or the community itself to send them.

"We cannot tell them not to go. They are free," Pakradounian told The Associated Press in his office in Bourj Hammoud. "We consider it a war against all the Armenian people and a continuation of the genocide project since the Ottoman Empire."

Meanwhile, Turkey has sent more than 1,200 Syrian fighters — most of them members of Turkish-backed opposition groups — to fight alongside Azeri forces, according to the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human rights, an opposition war monitor that tracks Syria's nine-year conflict. The Observatory's chief, Rami Abdurrahman, said 72 Syrian fighters have been killed so far.

Three opposition activists in Syria corroborated the report. They said Turkish security companies recruit the men ostensibly to work as guards at oil facilities in return for around \$1,200 a month, but most end up on front lines. One of the activists sent AP photos of young men allegedly killed in Azerbaijan.

A citizen journalist based in northern Syria said he knows some of the fighters who joined the battle, adding that warnings they sent about the intensity of the fighting and the dangers made others who were planning to go change their minds.

The deployment is similar to what happened in Libya, where battle-hardened Syrian fighters helped tip the balance of power in favor of the U.N.-supported government of Prime Minister Fayez Sarraj, an ally of Turkey.

Armenia has repeatedly said over the past week that Turkey sent Syrian fighters to back the Azeris, a claim that Ankara and Azerbaijan deny.

Syrian President Bashar Assad told Russia's RIA Novosti news agency that Turkey is bringing "terrorists" from Syria and Libya to fight in Azerbaijan, accusing Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of being "behind the escalation in Nagorno-Karabakh."

French President Emmanuel Macron spoke with Russia's Vladimir Putin about the conflict last week. Macron later told reporters he had information "that we're confident in" confirming Turkey's deployment of Syrian mercenaries in the fighting. "It's a very serious new development that also changes the balance of things," he said.

Russia's Foreign Ministry expressed concern over reports about "militants from illegal armed groups" from Syria and Libya being sent to the conflict zone.

Hikmet Hajiyev, a foreign policy aide to the Azerbaijani president, said this week that "we completely reject" the claim, calling on those who make the accusations to give evidence.

Maj. Youssef al-Hammoud, an official with the so-called Syrian National Army, an umbrella for Turkish-backed armed opposition groups in Syria, strongly denied in a telephone call with the AP that any fighters were being sent from Syria to Azerbaijan. "This is an Armenian media campaign," al-Hammoud said.

Lebanon's Armenians are doing what they can to help. Yeghia Tashjian, a freelance researcher, said he was writing articles to raise awareness about what Armenians are being subjected to.

"For us, this is existential war that it is important to win not just for emotional or nationalist issues but because it is our homeland and we should fight for it," Tashjian said.

In Bourj Hammoud, Tro Mandalian, who works in a perfume distribution business, said Armenians' opponents always had bigger armies but still Armenians survived. "We have strong hearts," he said.

"Let them try us," he said. "We don't surrender and we only kneel to God."

Associated Press writer Suzan Fraser contributed to this report from Ankara, Turkey.

Kyrgyz president declares state of emergency amid protests

By VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — The embattled president of Kyrgyzstan ordered a state of emergency Friday in the

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capital in a bid to end the political turmoil sparked by a disputed parliamentary election.

President Sooronbai Jeenbekov decreed that the measure starting from 8 p.m. Friday through 8 a.m. Oct. 21 could include a curfew and travel restrictions. He also ordered the military to deploy troops to Bishkek to enforce it.

Jeenbekov has faced calls to step down from hundreds of protesters who stormed government buildings the night after Sunday's parliamentary vote was reportedly swept by pro-government parties. The demonstrators also freed former President Almazbek Atambayev, who was sentenced to 11 years in prison in June on charges of corruption and abuse of office that he and his supporters described as a political vendetta by Jeenbekov.

The turmoil marks a third time in 15 years when protesters have moved to topple a government in Kyrgyzstan. Like in the uprisings that ousted Kyrgyz presidents in 2005 and 2010, the current protests have been driven by clan rivalries that play a key role in the Central Asian nation's politics.

After an initial attempt to break up protesters immediately after the vote, police have pulled back and refrained from intervening with the demonstrations. It remained unclear whether the police and the military would follow Jeenbekov's orders.

Under pressure from protesters, the Central Election Commission has overturned the parliamentary vote results and protest leaders moved quickly to form a new government. An emergency parliament session on Tuesday named lawmaker Sadyr Zhaparov as a new prime minister, but the move was immediately contested by other protest groups, plunging the country into chaos.

Atambayev spoke to demonstrators who flooded the central Bishkek on Friday, urging them to refrain from violence.

"I'm against using force, everything should be done by peaceful means," he said.

Soon after he spoke, supporters of Zhaparov assailed Atambayev's supporters, hurling stones and bottles. Jeenbekov has used infighting between his foes to dig in. He said Thursday he may consider stepping down, but only after the political situation stabilizes.

The country of 6.5 million, one of the poorest to emerge from the former Soviet Union, is strategically located on the border with China and once was home to a U.S. air base used for refueling and logistics for the war in Afghanistan. Kyrgyzstan also hosts a Russian air base and maintains close ties with Moscow.

Election 2020 Today: Debates uncertain, election unrest prep

By The Associated Press undefined

Here's what's happening Friday in Election 2020, 25 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:

DEBATES UNCERTAIN: The fate of final debates between President Donald Trump and his Democratic challenger Joe Biden was thrown into uncertainty as the campaigns offered dueling proposals for moving forward with faceoffs that have been upended by the president's coronavirus infection. It was unclear when or how the next debates would proceed, or whether voters would even get to see the two men running for the White House on the same stage again before Election Day.

VOTING BY MAIL: Some Democrats are flinching at their commitment to voting by mail. That could create more chaos on Election Day because if voters request absentee ballots and try to vote in person, it can take extra time to record and count their vote. Election officials are already bracing for a challenging day because of transitioning to mail voting and having to keep poll workers and voters safe from the coronavirus. The hesitancy frustrates some Democrats who argue that the party's voters are letting President Donald Trump get into their heads.

ELECTION-RELATED UNREST: Federal and state law enforcement officials have begun expanded preparations for the possibility of widespread unrest at the polls on Election Day, a response to extraordinarily high tensions among voters and anxieties about safety stoked in part by President Donald Trump. FBI and local officials in several states have been conducting drills, running through worst-case scenarios, setting

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up command centers to improve coordination on reports of violence and voter intimidation, and issuing public warnings that any crime that threatens the sanctity of a Nov. 3 vote will not be tolerated.

PELOSI QUESTIONS TRUMP'S FITNESS: The tensions between House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and President Donald Trump are getting even worse. Now she is questioning his fitness to serve. And she's announced legislation that would create a commission to allow Congress to intervene under the 25th Amendment to the Constitution and to remove the president from executive duties. The president quickly answered back on Twitter, saying that "Crazy Nancy is the one who should be under observation."

BIDEN, HARRIS CAMPAIGN IN ARIZONA: Joe Biden and Kamala Harris pitched an economic message during their first joint appearance on the campaign trail, hammering President Donald Trump for his handling of the coronavirus pandemic and a failure to address the needs of working Americans. The Democratic presidential ticket chose Arizona to kick off a bus tour, underscoring the significance of a state whose 11 Electoral College votes could tip the scales if Trump can rebound from his fall slump.

ICYMI:

Trump, Barr at odds over slow pace of Durham investigation

Trump says he's ready for rallies but details slim on health

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

Scalia 'heir' Barrett may be open to reversing Roe v. Wade

By MICHAEL TARM AP Legal Affairs Writer

CHICAGO (AP) — President Donald Trump's nominee to the Supreme Court has expressed unease with some landmark rulings, including ones that established a right to abortion, and has suggested in her academic writing that she may be willing to reconsider those decisions.

The question of whether Amy Coney Barrett, a one-time clerk to former conservative Justice Antonin Scalia, would actually try to overturn Roe v. Wade, the high court's 1973 ruling recognizing a woman's right to an abortion, and other long-established precedents looms large as she heads into Senate confirmation hearings next week.

A review of Barrett's writings and speeches as a Notre Dame law professor for the 15 years before she became a federal appeals court judge in 2017 reveal a nuanced thinker cautious about stating her personal views. She has never said publicly she would overturn Roe, or other precedents expanding abortion rights.

But she has clearly left the door open to that possibility.

"Our legal culture does not, and never has, treated the reversal of precedent as out-of-bounds," she said in a 2013 Texas Law Review article. She also describes the high-court tradition of heeding previous rulings, or precedent, as a "soft rule" and not "an inexorable command."

Barrett, 48, has styled herself as the heir to Scalia, and in writing about Scalia's judicial philosophy, she reveals her own.

To buttress her legal analyses, she nearly always brought up Scalia, for whom she clerked in the late 1990s. Moments after Trump named her at the White House to fill the seat vacated by Ruth Bader Ginsburg's death, Barrett paid homage to Scalia, saying, "His judicial philosophy is mine, too."

At the center of that shared philosophy is a strict form of constitutional interpretation called originalism, which Scalia championed. In deciding if a current law is unconstitutional, originalists put the focus on the original meanings of words in the Constitution.

Scalia criticized more liberal justices for creating new rights, like abortion, that he said the framers of the Constitution couldn't have foreseen. He argued, as Barrett and other originalists have, that new rights should be extended by constitutional amendments, not by courts.

Scalia said in a 2012 CNN interview that the high court's finding in Roe v. Wade that the Constitution includes a right to privacy, and thereby protects a woman's choice to have an abortion, "does not make any sense." Neither, he said, do arguments by anti-abortion groups that abortion deprives fetuses due process rights.

"My view is regardless of whether you think prohibiting abortion is good or whether you think prohibiting

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abortion is bad ... the Constitution does not say anything about it," Scalia said.

Scalia, who like Barrett was a Catholic, said the Constitution leaves the question up to the states.

"What Roe v. Wade said was that no state can prohibit it," he said. "That is simply not in the Constitution."

But Scalia often struck a pragmatic chord, warning that reversing some precedents could shatter trust in the Supreme Court. Barrett highlighted his caution about casting established precedent aside in a 2017 Notre Dame Law Review article. She quoted Scalia as saying: "I am an originalist. I am not a nut."

"His commitment to originalism," Barrett wrote in the same piece, "did not put him at continual risk of upending settled law. If reversal (of precedent) would cause harm, a Justice would be foolhardy to go looking for trouble. Scalia did not."

But might she?

Barrett did agree with Scalia in her 2013 Texas Law Review article that legal chaos could ensue if justices overturn precedents on which courts, lawyers and the public at large have for so long relied.

"People," she wrote, "must be able to order their affairs, and they cannot do so if a Supreme Court case is a 'restricted railroad ticket, good for this day and train only.'"

But she has also suggested that Roe v. Wade and later rulings on abortion may not be in the category of precedents that are untouchable.

Controversy around cases like Roe pointed to the public's rejection of the idea of "a permanent victor in a divisive constitutional struggle," she wrote in the Texas Law Review article.

"Court watchers," she added, "embrace the possibility of overruling, even if they may want it to be the exception rather than the rule."

The staying power of precedents, she went on, is not necessarily in their support by courts but in the broad, popular acceptance of them.

Among several cases she described in the 2013 article as clearly immune from bids to overturn them was Brown vs. Board of Education, which found racial segregation in schools was unconstitutional.

"Scholars," she said, "do not put Roe on the superprecedent list (the list of untouchable precedents) because the public controversy about Roe has never abated."

Her critics say such arguments put Barrett outside the mainstream of legal scholarship.

"Barrett takes the extreme view, unsupported by virtually anyone in the legal community, that a judge does not have to adhere to precedent if she believes a case was wrongly decided," the Alliance for Justice has said, saying it shows she is open to the possibility of reversing Roe v. Wade.

Jamal Greene, a professor at New York's Columbia Law School, said Barrett could stop short of shooting down Roe v. Wade and other abortion-rights precedents — and still end up gutting them.

"There is room for someone like her who takes Scalia's position to not vote to overturn precedent — but to never see any abortion restriction that she sees as unconstitutional," he said.

While Barrett has suggested she is nearly perfectly aligned with Scalia, Greene said she may be farther to Scalia's right and nearer to current conservative Clarence Thomas.

"Thomas' position is that if a precedent was wrongly decided, then you vote to overturn it," Greene said. "Justice Scalia distanced himself from that. ... It sounds like Barrett is trying to associate herself with a position just short of Thomas' position."

Associated Press writers Michelle Smith in Providence, Rhode Island, and Michael Biesecker in Washington contributed to this report.

Follow Michael Tarm on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/mtarm>

In 25th Amendment bid, Pelosi mulls Trump's fitness to serve

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Speaker Nancy Pelosi is questioning President Donald Trump's fitness to serve, announcing legislation Thursday that would create a commission to allow Congress to intervene

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under the 25th Amendment to the Constitution and remove the president from executive duties.

Just weeks before the Nov. 3 election, Pelosi said Trump needs to disclose more about his health after his COVID-19 diagnosis. She noted Trump's "strange tweet" halting talks on a new coronavirus aid package — he subsequently tried to reverse course — and said Americans need to know when, exactly, he first contracted COVID as others in the White House became infected. On Friday, she plans to roll out the legislation that would launch the commission for review.

"The public needs to know the health condition of the president," Pelosi said, later invoking the 25th Amendment, which allows a president's cabinet or Congress to intervene when a president is unable to conduct the duties of the office.

Trump responded swiftly via Twitter.

"Crazy Nancy is the one who should be under observation. They don't call her Crazy for nothing!" the president said.

The president's opponents have discussed invoking the 25th Amendment for some time, but are raising it now, so close to Election Day, as the campaigns are fast turning into a referendum on Trump's handling of the coronavirus pandemic. More than 210,000 Americans have died and millions more infected by the virus that shows no signs of abating heading into what public health experts warn will be a difficult flu season and winter.

Trump says he "feels great" after being hospitalized and is back at work in the White House. But his doctors have given mixed signals about his diagnosis and treatment. Trump plans to resume campaigning soon.

Congress is not in legislative session, and so any serious consideration of the measure, let alone votes in the House or Senate, is unlikely. But the bill serves as a political tool to stoke questions about Trump's health as his own White House is hit by an outbreak infecting top aides, staff and visitors, including senators.

In a stunning admission, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said Thursday that he had stopped going to the White House two months ago because he disagreed with its coronavirus protocols. His last visit was Aug. 6.

"My impression was their approach to how to handle this was different from mine and what I insisted we do in the Senate, which is to wear a mask and practice social distancing," McConnell said at a campaign stop in northern Kentucky for his own reelection.

On Friday, Pelosi along with Rep. Jamie Raskin, D-Md., a constitutional law professor, plan to roll out the legislation that would create a commission as outlined under the 25th Amendment, which was passed by Congress and ratified in 1967 as way to ensure a continuity of power in the aftermath of President John F. Kennedy's assassination.

It says the vice president and a majority of principal officers of the executive departments "or of such other body as Congress" may by law provide a declaration to Congress that the president "is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office." At that point, the vice president would immediately assume the powers of acting president.

Trump abruptly halted talks this week on the new COVID aid package, sending the economy reeling, his GOP allies scrambling and leaving millions of Americans without additional support. Then he immediately reversed course and tried to kickstart talks.

It all came in a head-spinning series of tweets and comments days after he returned to the White House after his hospitalization with COVID-19.

First, Trump told the Republican leaders in Congress on Tuesday to quit negotiating on an aid package. By Wednesday he was trying to bring everyone back to the table for his priority items — including \$1,200 stimulus checks for almost all adult Americans.

Pelosi said Thursday that Democrats are "still at the table" and her office resumed conversations with top negotiator Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin.

She said she told Mnuchin she was willing to consider a measure to prop up the airline industry, which is facing widespread layoffs. But that aid, she said, must go alongside broader legislation that includes the

kind of COVID testing, tracing and health practices that Democrats say are needed as part of a national strategy to “crush the virus.”

Normally, the high stakes and splintered politics ahead of an election could provide grounds for a robust package. But with other Republicans refusing to spend more money, it appears no relief will be coming with Americans already beginning early voting.

Democrats have made it clear they will not do a piecemeal approach until the Trump administration signs off on a broader, comprehensive plan they are proposing for virus testing, tracing and other actions to stop its spread. They have scaled back a \$3 trillion measure to a \$2.2 trillion proposal. The White House presented a \$1.6 trillion counter offer. Talks were ongoing when Trump shut them down.

“There’s no question that the proximity to the election has made this much more challenging,” McConnell said.

Associated Press writers Bruce Schreiner in Frankfort, Kentucky, and Laurie Kellman and Pamananda Rama in Washington contributed to this report.

Trump, Barr at odds over slow pace of Durham investigation

By MICHAEL BALSAMO, ZEKE MILLER and ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump is increasingly at odds with Attorney General William Barr over the status of the Justice Department’s investigation into the origin of the Russia probe, with the president increasingly critical about a lack of arrests and Barr frustrated by Trump’s public pronouncements about the case, according to people familiar with the matter.

Trump and his allies had high hopes for the investigation led by Connecticut U.S. Attorney John Durham, betting it would expose what they see as wrongdoing when the FBI opened a case into whether the Trump campaign was coordinating with Russia to sway the 2016 election. Trump has also pushed to tie prominent Obama administration officials to that effort as part of his campaign against Joe Biden, who was serving as vice president at the time.

But a year and a half into the investigation, and with less than one month until Election Day, there has been only one criminal case: a former FBI lawyer who pleaded guilty to altering a government email about a former Trump campaign adviser who was a target of secret FBI surveillance.

With time running out for pre-election action on the case, Trump is increasingly airing his dissatisfaction in tweets and television appearances. Barr, meanwhile, has privately expressed frustration over the public comments, according to a person familiar with his thinking. It’s not dissimilar to a situation earlier this year, when Trump complained publicly that he believed ally Roger Stone was getting a raw deal in his prosecution, even as Barr had already moved to amend a sentencing position of the prosecutors in the case.

Despite Trump’s unhappiness, there’s no indication Barr’s job is at risk in the final weeks of the campaign. Still, the tensions between Trump and the attorney general over the fate of the probe underscore the extent to which the president is aggressively trying to use all of the levers of his power to gain ground in an election that has been moving away from him.

This account is based on interviews with six people who have direct knowledge of Trump and Barr’s relationship. They were not authorized to speak publicly and spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

Trump is also said to blame Barr for comments from FBI Director Chris Wray on election fraud and mail-in voting that don’t jibe with the president’s alarmist rhetoric. Wray has said there has not historically been any kind of mass voter fraud, whether through the mail or otherwise, a message at odds with Trump and Barr’s repeated efforts to sound the alarms about a process they claim is especially vulnerable to abuse.

Still, much of the uptick in tensions between Trump and Barr centers on the Justice Department’s handling of the Durham probe. A senior administration official said Trump feels like he’s given Barr wide latitude to advance the investigation, including declassifying documents related to Russia. In the absence of blockbuster findings, Trump is now moving to make documents public himself with his new acting head

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of intelligence.

On Thursday morning, Trump did not hide his displeasure in an interview on Fox News Business.

"Unless Bill Barr indicts these people for crimes — the greatest political crime in the history of our country — then we'll get little satisfaction, unless I win," he said. "Because I won't forget it. But these people should be indicted. These are people who spied on my campaign. And we have everything. And I say, Bill, we've got plenty, you don't need anymore. We've got so much."

The comment followed an earlier barrage of presidential social media posts, including one in which Trump retweeted a doctored image of Barr superimposed with the late "Saturday Night Live" actor Chris Farley in character as a motivational speaker yelling at him. The caption: "for the love of God ARREST SOMEBODY."

The Justice Department declined to comment on the matter. The White House did not immediately comment.

Since Durham's appointment, he has cast a broad net in interviewing former government officials, including ex-CIA Director John Brennan. It is unclear when Durham plans to submit his report or how damning any of his final conclusions might be.

Even the outlines of the case involving FBI lawyer Kevin Clinesmith, who pleaded guilty in the Durham probe, were already known before he was charged. And the case against him didn't allege any broader FBI conspiracy to go after Trump.

Barr has privately expressed frustration over the president's public pronouncements on the Durham investigation. Though Barr is broadly in agreement with Trump on the need to investigate the origins of the Russia probe, he's often bemoaned Trump's lack of understanding about the intricacies of the legal system and the steps that need to be taken to complete an investigation.

A friend of Barr's said there has been obvious "tension" between the president and the attorney general, and while Barr himself believes deeply in the importance of the Durham investigation and in the president's authority to exercise control over federal agencies, he will not tolerate interference in specific investigations.

The friend said the Justice Department officials were eager for Durham's work to be completed while Trump is still in office for fear the investigation would be shuttered in a possible Biden administration.

Trump aides had banked on the Durham probe being finished before 2020 election to lend credibility to Trump's claims that his own investigative agencies were working against him. A report from the Justice Department's inspector general in December knocked down multiple lines of attack against the Russia investigation, finding that it was properly opened and that law enforcement leaders were not motivated by political bias. But Barr has said he and Durham disagreed with the inspector general over whether the FBI had enough information to open a full investigation and, in particular, to use surveillance on a former Trump campaign aide.

Despite being close allies on a range of issues, tensions have flared between Trump and Barr at other points, including earlier this year when Trump was tweeting about Stone's case. Barr later reversed a recommendation from prosecutors that Stone be sentenced to 7 to 9 years in prison, and critics argued he was doing Trump's bidding.

Barr said in an interview with ABC News that the president's tweets were making it "impossible" to do his job and told those close to him he was considering resigning. The two eventually patched things up.

Associated Press writers Colleen Long and Jonathan Lemire contributed to this report.

Trump says he's ready for rallies but details slim on health

By ZEKE MILLER, JILL COLVIN and JONATHAN LEMIRE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump insisted Thursday that he is ready to resume campaign rallies and feels "perfect" one week after his diagnosis with the coronavirus that has killed more than 210,000 Americans, as his doctor said the president had "completed his course of therapy" for the disease.

The president has not been seen in public — other than in White House-produced videos — since his Monday return from the military hospital where he received experimental treatments for the virus. On

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Thursday, his physician, Navy Cmdr. Sean Conley, said in a memo that Trump would be able to safely "return to public engagements" on Saturday, as the president tries to shift his focus to the election that's less than four weeks away, with millions of Americans already casting ballots.

While Trump said he believes he's no longer contagious, concerns about infection appeared to scuttle plans for next week's presidential debate.

"I'm feeling good. Really good. I think perfect," Trump said during a telephone interview with Fox Business, his first since he was released from a three-day hospital stay Monday. "I think I'm better to the point where I'd love to do a rally tonight," Trump said. He added, "I don't think I'm contagious at all."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says individuals can discontinue isolation 10 days after the onset of symptoms, which for Trump was Oct. 1, according to his doctors. Conley said that meant Trump, who has been surrounded by minimal staffing as he works out of the White House residence and the Oval Office, could return to holding events on Saturday.

He added that Trump was showing no evidence of his illness progressing or adverse reactions to the aggressive course of therapy prescribed by his doctors.

Earlier this week, the president's doctors suggested they would work closely with military medical research facilities and other laboratories on "advanced diagnostic testing" to determine when the president was no longer contagious, but did not elaborate.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, the government's top infectious disease expert, said two negative PCR lab tests 24 hours apart are a key factor in determining whether someone is still contagious.

"So, if the president goes 10 days without symptoms, and they do the tests that we were talking about, then you could make the assumption, based on good science, that he is not infected," Fauci said Thursday on MSNBC.

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. It was unclear if Trump, who eschewed mask-wearing in most settings, would abide by that guidance.

The White House, meanwhile, continued to decline to share when Trump last tested negative for the virus — which would help pinpoint when he was infected. Strategic communications director Alyssa Farah said that information was Trump's "private medical history."

Trump's campaign and the White House were already drawing up plans for Trump to resume campaigning, eyeing a visit to Pennsylvania on Monday and Michigan on Tuesday ahead of what was to have been next Thursday's debate.

But the Commission on Presidential Debates announced that event would be held "virtually" in order to "protect the health and safety of all involved." Trump swiftly rejected that offer, and his campaign later called on the commission to delay the final two debates by a week to alleviate concerns about an in-person contest.

Over the objections of some aides, Trump returned to the Oval Office on Thursday, even though a workspace had been set up in the residential section of the White House. Aides were discussing a potential photo opportunity with the president at the White House either Thursday or Friday but plans had not been finalized, according to two White House officials not authorized to publicly discuss internal deliberations. Only a few senior aides, medical staff and security personnel have laid eyes on the president since he returned to the White House on Monday afternoon.

Trump also released a video Thursday morning, filmed a day earlier, directly addressing the nation's seniors — a critical demographic for his campaign that is also at greatest risk of poor outcomes from the virus — saying, "I want you to get the same care that I got."

On Thursday, Trump continued to credit an experimental drug for the seemingly quick pace of his recovery. He called his diagnosis a "blessing in disguise" in the nation's battle against the pandemic.

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.

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Trump received an experimental antibody drug 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.

“I had tremendous luck with this Regeneron,” Trump said during the interview.

Dr. Sean Conley, the White House physician, said in a memo Wednesday that Trump had been symptom-free for over 24 hours, and that his oxygen saturation level and respiratory rate were normal.

Trump speculated that he caught the virus either at the Sept. 26 Rose Garden event announcing his new Supreme Court nominee or at a meeting with military families the following day. He said family members often want to get up close to him and “kiss” and “hug” him.

“I can’t say ‘Back up. Stand 10 feet’ away, Trump said.

Associated Press writers Marilynn Marchione in Milwaukee and Lauran Neergaard, Matthew Perrone, Deb Riechmann, Amer Madhani, and Jonathan Lemire in Washington contributed to this report.

Venezuelans once again fleeing on foot as troubles mount

By MARIANA PALAU and MANUEL RUEDA undefined

PAMPLONA, Colombia (AP) — Eleazar Hernández slept on a sidewalk amid a light drizzle, temperatures that dipped close to freezing and the roar of passing trucks.

The 23-year-old Venezuelan migrant was trying to make it to the Colombian city of Medellín with his wife, who is seven months pregnant.

But the couple had run out of money for transportation by the time they reached Pamplona, a small mountain town over 300 miles (482 km) away from their final destination. Unable to buy a bus ticket, Hernández pinned his hopes on catching a ride on the back of a truck. It was the safest way to cross the Paramo de Berlin, a freezing plateau located at 13,000 feet (4,000 meters).

“My wife can barely walk,” said Hernández, who had spent four days sleeping on Pamplona’s sidewalks. “We need transport to get us out of here.”

After months of COVID-19 lockdowns that halted one of the world’s biggest migration movements in recent years, Venezuelans are once again fleeing their nation’s economic and humanitarian crisis.

Though the number of people leaving is smaller than at the height of the Venezuelan exodus, Colombian immigration officials expect 200,000 Venezuelans to enter the country in the months ahead, enticed by the prospects of earning higher wages and sending money back to Venezuela to feed their families.

The new migrants are encountering decidedly more adverse conditions than those who fled their homeland before COVID-19. Shelters remain closed, drivers are more reluctant to pick up hitchhikers and locals who fear contagion are less likely to help out with food donations.

“We hardly got any lifts along the way,” said Anahir Montilla, a cook from the Venezuelan state of Guarico who was approaching Colombia’s capital after traveling with her family for 27 days.

Before the pandemic, over 5 million Venezuelans had left their country, according to the United Nations. The poorest left on foot, walking through a terrain that is often scorching but can also get frigidly cold.

As governments across South America shut down their economies in hopes of stopping the spread of COVID-19, many migrants found themselves without work. Over 100,000 Venezuelans returned to their country, where at least they’d have a roof over their heads.

Today, official land and bridge crossings into Colombia are still closed, compelling migrants to flee through illegal pathways along the porous 1,370-mile (2,200-kilometer) border with Venezuela. The dirt roads are controlled by violent drug trafficking groups and rebel organizations like the National Liberation Army.

“The return of Venezuelan migrants is already happening even though the border is closed,” said Ana Milena Guerrero, an official for the International Rescue Committee, a humanitarian non-profit organization helping migrants.

What’s more, many are now forced to walk within their own country for days to reach the border due

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to gas shortages that have diminished transportation between cities.

Hernández said it took him a week to walk from his hometown of Los Teques to Colombia.

"I can't allow my daughter to be born in a place where she might have to go to bed hungry," he said, while registering with a humanitarian group that handed out backpacks with food and hats for cold weather.

Once in Colombia, the migrants typically walk along highways or wait to hitch a ride. But that's also become harder.

"It's been very tough," said Montilla, who was still 200 miles (321 km) away from her final destination. "But at least with a job in Colombia, we can afford new shoes and clothes. We couldn't do that in Venezuela."

One lengthy stretch of road connecting the border city of Cucuta to Bucaramanga further inland used to be home to 11 shelters for migrants. Most have been ordered to close by municipal governments trying to contain coronavirus infections.

Before the pandemic broke out, Douglas Cabeza had turned a shed next to his house in Pamplona into a shelter that housed up to 200 migrants a night. Now he lends gym mattresses to those sleeping outside, hoping to provide them with some protection from the cold.

"There are many needs that aren't being met," Cabeza said. "But with small gestures like this, we are trying to do something for them."

Once the migrants reach their destination, a new list of worries sets in. Colombia's unemployment rate rose from 12% in March to almost 16% in August. Those who can't afford to pay rent are being evicted from their homes. Further complicating matters, more than half of all Venezuelans in Colombia have no legal status.

Still, for many, the prospect of earning even less than the minimum wage is a boost. Colombia's monthly minimum wage is currently worth around \$260, far higher than Venezuela's measly \$2.

Hernández was working as a street vendor in Venezuela, selling cakes baked by his wife. But money for food was becoming increasingly scarce, which prompted the couple to make the 860-mile (1,384-kilometer) journey to Medellín.

"I am Venezuelan and I love my country," he said. "But it has become impossible to live there."

Mariana Palau reported from Bogota, Colombia.

Teen charged in Kenosha shootings due back in Illinois court

By KATHLEEN FOODY Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — A 17-year-old accused of killing two protesters days after Jacob Blake was shot by police in Kenosha, Wisconsin, is due back in court Friday as his attorneys fight efforts to send him to Wisconsin to stand trial on homicide charges.

No immediate decision is expected during Kyle Rittenhouse's scheduled hearing in Lake County, Illinois. At Rittenhouse's last court hearing in late September, Judge Paul Novak gave his attorneys two weeks to prepare filings and said he would then schedule a hearing on the issue.

In court records filed late Thursday, Rittenhouse's attorneys argued that he was acting in self-defense and extraditing him to Wisconsin authorities would violate his constitutional rights.

They also argue that Wisconsin prosecutors and Illinois authorities didn't follow legal technicalities required for extradition. A Kenosha County prosecutor didn't immediately respond to an email after hours on Thursday about the extradition paperwork.

Extradition is typically a straightforward process, and legal experts have expressed doubt that Rittenhouse's attorneys could successfully prevent a court from sending him to Wisconsin to face charges there.

His arrest has become a rallying point for some on the right, with a legal defense fund that has attracted millions in donations. But others see Rittenhouse as a domestic terrorist whose presence with a rifle incited the protesters.

The document echoes attorneys' previous portrayal of Rittenhouse as a courageous patriot who was exercising his right to bear arms during unrest over the shooting of Blake, who is Black.

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Extraditing Rittenhouse, they claim, "would be to turn him over to the mob."

"The premature and unsupported charges are contributing to unwarranted public condemnation," attorneys wrote. "Rittenhouse has been publicly branded a 'mass murderer,' a 'terrorist,' a 'racist,' and more."

Rittenhouse was arrested at his home in Antioch, Illinois, a day after prosecutors say he shot and killed two protesters and injured a third during unrest on the streets of Kenosha on Aug. 25 over Blake's shooting.

Rittenhouse, who is white, is charged with first-degree intentional homicide in the killing of two white protesters and attempted intentional homicide in the wounding of a third. He also faces a misdemeanor charge of underage firearm possession for wielding a semi-automatic rifle.

Like Rittenhouse, the two men killed and the third man wounded were or are white. If convicted of first-degree homicide, Rittenhouse would be sentenced to life in prison.

Legal experts had questioned what basis Rittenhouse's attorneys could use to fight his extradition, which is usually an uncontested step. Mike Nerheim, the Lake County state's attorney, has said that Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker signed a warrant to return Rittenhouse to Wisconsin after a request from Wisconsin Gov. Tony Evers, a fellow Democrat.

The killings happened amid protests on Kenosha's streets two days after a white police officer shot Blake seven times in the back, leaving him paralyzed from the waist down and sparking outrage after video of the shooting was posted online. A Wisconsin Department of Justice investigation into that shooting is ongoing. The three responding officers are on administrative leave.

According to prosecutors and court documents, Rittenhouse shot and killed 36-year-old Joseph Rosenbaum, of Kenosha, after Rosenbaum threw a plastic bag at Rittenhouse, missing him, and tried to wrestle his rifle away.

While trying to get away in the immediate aftermath, Rittenhouse was captured on cellphone video saying "I just killed somebody." According to the complaint filed by prosecutors, someone in the crowd said, "Beat him up!" and another yelled, "Get him! Get that dude!"

Video shows that Rittenhouse tripped in the street. As he was on the ground, 26-year-old Anthony Huber, of Silver Lake, hit him with a skateboard and tried to take his rifle away. Rittenhouse opened fire, killing Huber and wounding Gaike Grosskreutz, of West Allis, who was holding a handgun.

Rittenhouse's extradition would not be an issue if he had been arrested in Kenosha the night of the shootings. Cellphone video that captured some of the action shows that right after the shootings, Rittenhouse walked slowly toward a police vehicle with his hands up, only to be waved through by police.

He returned to his Illinois home and turned himself in soon after. Police later blamed the chaotic conditions for why they didn't arrest Rittenhouse at the scene.

13 charged in plots against Michigan governor, police

By DAVID EGGERT and ED WHITE Associated Press

LANSING, Mich. (AP) — Agents foiled a stunning plot to kidnap Michigan Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, authorities said Thursday in announcing charges in an alleged scheme that involved months of planning and even rehearsals to snatch her from her vacation home.

Six men were charged in federal court with conspiring to kidnap the governor before the Nov. 3 elections in reaction to what they viewed as her "uncontrolled power," according to a federal complaint. Separately, seven others linked to a paramilitary group called the Wolverine Watchmen were charged in state court for allegedly seeking to storm the Michigan Capitol and seek a "civil war."

The two groups trained together and planned "various acts of violence," according to the state police.

Surveillance for the kidnapping plot took place in August and September, according to an FBI affidavit, and four of the men had planned to meet Wednesday to "make a payment on explosives and exchange tactical gear."

The FBI quoted one of the men as saying Whitmer "has no checks and balances at all. She has uncontrolled power right now. All good things must come to an end."

Authorities said the plots were stopped with the work of undercover agents and informants. The men

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were arrested Wednesday night. The six charged in federal court face up to life in prison if convicted. The state terrorism charges the other seven men face carry a possible 20-year sentence.

Andrew Birge, the U.S. attorney in western Michigan, called the men "violent extremists." They discussed detonating explosive devices — including under a highway bridge — to divert police from the area near Whitmer's vacation home and Fox bought a Taser for use in the kidnapping, Birge said.

"All of us in Michigan can disagree about politics, but those disagreements should never, ever amount to violence. Violence has been prevented today," Detroit U.S. Attorney Matthew Schneider told reporters.

A few hours later, Whitmer pinned some blame on President Donald Trump, noting that he did not condemn white supremacists in last week's debate with Joe Biden and instead told a far-right group to "stand back and stand by."

"Hate groups heard the president's words not as a rebuke but as a rallying cry, as a call to action," Whitmer said.

Trump tweeted that the governor "has done a terrible job" and again called on her to "open up your state." He said he does not tolerate any extreme violence.

Whitmer, who was considered as Biden's running mate and is nearly halfway through a four-year term, has been widely praised for her response to the coronavirus but also sharply criticized by Republican lawmakers and people in conservative areas of the state. The Capitol has been the site of many rallies, including ones with gun-toting protesters calling for her ouster.

Whitmer put major restrictions on personal movement and the economy, although many of those limits have been lifted since spring. The governor has exchanged barbs with Trump on social media, with the president declaring in April, "LIBERATE MICHIGAN!"

There is no indication in the criminal complaint that the men were inspired by Trump. Authorities also have not publicly said whether the men were angry about Whitmer's coronavirus orders.

The criminal complaint identified the six accused in the plot against Whitmer as Adam Fox, Ty Garbin, Kaleb Franks, Daniel Harris, Brandon Caserta, all of Michigan, and Barry Croft of Delaware. All but Croft appeared Thursday in federal court in Grand Rapids. They asked for court-appointed lawyers and were returned to jail to await detention hearings Tuesday.

Fox, who was described as one of the leaders, was living in the basement of a vacuum shop in Grand Rapids. The owner said Fox was opposed to wearing a mask during the pandemic and kept firearms and ammunition at the store.

"He was anti-police, anti-government," Brian Titus told WOOD-TV. "He was afraid if he didn't stand up for the Second Amendment and his rights that the country is going to go communism and socialism."

The government said the plot against Whitmer appeared to have roots in a June gathering in Dublin, Ohio, attended by more than a dozen people from several states, including Croft and Fox.

"The group talked about creating a society that followed the U.S. Bill of Rights and where they could be self-sufficient," the FBI affidavit said. "They discussed different ways of achieving this goal from peaceful endeavors to violent actions. ... Several members talked about murdering 'tyrants' or 'taking' a sitting governor."

The seven men charged in state court are accused of identifying the homes of law enforcement officers and making violent threats "intended to instigate a civil war," Attorney General Dana Nessel said.

They were identified as Paul Bellar, 21, of Milford; Shawn Fix, 38, of Belleville; Eric Molitor, 36, of Cadillac; Michael Null, 38, of Plainwell; William Null, 38, of Shelbyville; Pete Musico, 42, and Joseph Morrison, 26, who live together in Munith. According to the affidavit, Musico and Morrison are founding members of the Wolverine Watchmen, which authorities described as "an anti-government, anti-law enforcement militia group."

At least three of the 13 defendants were among some armed demonstrators who entered the Senate gallery on April 30 following a larger protest outside the Capitol against Whitmer's stay-at-home order, said Nessel spokeswoman Kelly Rossman-McKinney. At the time, a senator said the men shouted down at senators who were meeting amid debate over extending the governor's emergency declaration. The

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identities of the three men were not immediately available.

The Watchmen have met periodically for firearms and tactical training in remote areas "to prepare for the 'boogaloo,' a term referencing a violent uprising against the government or impending politically motivated civil war," state police Det. Sgt. Michael Fink wrote in an affidavit.

Some boogaloo promoters insist they are not genuinely advocating for violence. But the boogaloo has been linked to a recent string of domestic terrorism plots, including the arrests of three Nevada men accused of conspiring to incite violence during protests in Las Vegas.

Boogaloo supporters have shown up at protests against COVID-19 lockdown orders and racial injustice, carrying rifles and wearing tactical gear over Hawaiian shirts.

Michigan became known for anti-government paramilitary activity in the mid-1990s, when a number of loosely affiliated groups began organizing and training in rural areas. They used short-wave radio, newsletters and early internet connections to spread a message of resistance to what they contended was a conspiracy to impose world government and seize guns.

They gained notoriety after reports surfaced that Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols, convicted in the 1995 bombing of the Oklahoma City federal building, had met with group members, although their connections were murky.

"That old militia world is still there, but kind of long in tooth," said J.J. MacNab, a fellow at George Washington University's Program on Extremism.

Nonetheless, rallies at the Michigan Capitol against Whitmer's shutdown orders were recruiting events for such groups, said MacNab, who monitors their social media activity.

___ White reported from Detroit. AP reporters Michael Kunzelman in College Park, Maryland, and John Flesher in Traverse City, Michigan, contributed to this story.

'This is not a bad dream': New hurricane menaces Louisiana

By REBECCA SANTANA and MELINDA DESLATTÉ Associated Press

ABBEVILLE, La. (AP) — Louisiana residents confronting the menace of a new hurricane weeks after one battered parts of the state got stark warnings Thursday to brace for winds that could turn still-uncollected debris into dangerous missiles and again knock out power to thousands.

Forecasts showed Delta had strengthened back into a Category 3 hurricane as it bore down on the state carrying winds of up to 120 mph (195 kph) and the potential to deliver a storm surge of up to 11 feet (3.4 meters) when it arrives on Friday evening or Friday night.

The projected path included the southwest area of Louisiana where Category 4 Hurricane Laura made landfall less than two months ago. Laura has been blamed for more than 30 deaths.

The mayor of Lakes Charles, where thousands of residents remain without shelter following the earlier hurricane, told residents that even if their homes survived Laura, they shouldn't assume that would be the case with Delta.

"This is not a bad dream. It's not a test run. These are the cards that we have been dealt," Nic Hunter said in a Facebook video. He added, "I know that we've been through a lot, and I know that we're tired. But we have a job to do right now, and that job is to keep ourselves safe."

Residents in coastal towns appeared to be taking the latest threat seriously. Boarded windows and largely empty streets made New Iberia in south-central Louisiana look like a ghost town Thursday evening. The few signs of life included cars lined up at a drive-thru daquiri shop and people grabbing food at take-out restaurants.

"The last two storms, we didn't even board up, but this one's supposed to be worse," Charles Fuller said as he covered the windows of the fried chicken restaurant he manages.

At least five southwest Louisiana parishes that were hit hard by Laura in August were under mandatory evacuations as of midday Thursday. Parish and local governments all along the coast issued a patchwork of mandatory or voluntary evacuation orders, most focused on low-lying areas subject to flooding or on residents with special medical needs who might suffer in prolonged power outages.

Frankie Randazzo, 47, the partner of two restaurants in Lake Charles, said people in the city were ex-

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tremely anxious ahead of the hurricane. Randazzo watched pieces of one of his restaurants, Panorama Music House, fly past a meteorologist's car on a Facebook Live video during Hurricane Laura.

"There's a lot of nervous people and a lot of stress going around," Randazzo said.

Huge piles of debris caused by Laura's wrath stretched along roadways in Bell City, southeast of Lake Charles. Some of the piles were more than 6 feet high (1.8 meters) and were as long as 75 feet (23 meters). Concerns mounted that Delta's arrival would cause the debris to become airborne and turn into deadly projectiles.

In Cameron Parish, power poles along Highway 27 in a desolate stretch of marsh were all either broken and leaning — none appeared to have been repaired since the August storm.

Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards said President Donald Trump approved his request to declare a federal emergency, which frees up federal resources.

The most recent forecast for Hurricane Delta has the storm making landfall "almost precisely" where Hurricane Laura struck — a region where homes and electrical infrastructure are still damaged, Edwards said in a radio interview.

"And we've got people who are very tired," the governor said.

This is the sixth time this year that people in Louisiana have had to get ready for an approaching hurricane or tropical storm, while also coping with the coronavirus pandemic.

"People of Lake Charles and in Cameron Parish have already suffered enough, and then here comes this one," said Desi Milligan, who owns an RV park in Cameron that was heavily damaged during Hurricane Laura.

Delta is the 25th named storm of this year's unprecedented Atlantic hurricane season, the latest in a series of intensifying storms that scientists have attributed to global warming. It hit Mexico as a Category 2 hurricane just south of the resort city of Cancún early Wednesday with high winds and heavy rain. No deaths or injuries were reported.

As the storm churned north-northwest at 12 mph (19 kph) Thursday night, the National Hurricane Center had a hurricane warning in place for a section of the Gulf Coast extending from High Island, Texas, to Morgan City, Louisiana.

New Orleans, well to the east of the projected landfall area, was expected to escape the worst of Hurricane Delta. But tropical storm force winds were still likely in the city Friday, and local officials said they were preparing for the possibility of tornadoes.

In Mississippi, Gov. Tate Reeves also declared a state of emergency. The southern part of Mississippi could see heavy rain and flash flooding.

Deslatte reported from Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Gerald Herbert in Bell City; Kevin McGill in New Orleans; Leah Willingham in Jackson, Mississippi; Stacey Plaisance in New Iberia and Desiree Mathurin and Sudhin Thanawala in Atlanta contributed to this report.

Slain Black man's family vows legal fight against police

By TODD RICHMOND Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — An attorney for the family of a Black teen killed by a suburban Milwaukee police officer vowed Thursday to keep fighting and working to prove racism pervades the officer's department, after a prosecutor declined to file charges in the case.

Attorney Kimberley Motley said she plans to file a federal lawsuit against Wauwatosa Police Officer Joseph Mensah in 17-year-old Alvin Cole's death. Motley sued in state court on Tuesday seeking department documents that she believes will show Mensah's supervisors are racist and that officers have racially profiled Black drivers for years. She also wants Mensah and Chief Barry Weber fired.

Meanwhile, Cole's sister has demanded the resignation of Milwaukee County District Attorney John Chisholm after he declined to file charges against Mensah. Cole is the third person Mensah has killed since he joined the Wauwatosa department in early 2015. He has been cleared of wrongdoing each time.

"From the family's perspective, we just want justice," Motley said. "We want Officer Mensah to be held

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accountable.”

Mensah’s attorney, Jonathan Cermele, hasn’t returned messages seeking comment.

Mensah, who is Black, shot Cole during a chase outside a Wauwatosa mall in February. According to investigators’ reports, Cole had a gun and fired it; Chisholm said it appeared he shot himself in the arm. Officers said Cole refused commands to drop the weapon, prompting Mensah to fire.

Mensah shot and killed Antonio Gonzales in 2015 after police said Gonzales refused to drop a sword. A year later Mensah shot Jay Anderson Jr. In that case, Mensah found Anderson in a car parked in a park after hours. Mensah said he saw a gun on the passenger seat and thought Anderson was reaching for it, so he shot him. Mensah wasn’t charged in either shooting. Anderson was Black. Gonzales was Hispanic.

The Cole shooting sparked protests all summer in Wauwatosa, a city of 48,000 just west of Milwaukee. The demonstrations played out against a backdrop of protests nationwide over the death in May of George Floyd, a Black man who died after a white Minneapolis police officer pressed a knee on his neck for nearly eight minutes.

The decision triggered new protests Wednesday night, with some demonstrators breaking windows and looting of at least one store, a gas station. On Thursday, some protesters again stayed out past a 7 p.m. curfew, and TV footage showed some being arrested. Police tweeted only that “several” people were arrested, and said one 49-year-old woman requested medical attention and was taken to a hospital.

The Wauwatosa Police and Fire Commission suspended Mensah in July and asked former U.S. Attorney Steven Biskupic to determine whether Mensah should be disciplined. Biskupic recommended that the commission terminate Mensah, calling the risk of a fourth shooting too great. Biskupic also faulted Mensah for speaking publicly about the shooting.

Hours after Biskupic released his report, Chisholm announced he wouldn’t charge Mensah. The prosecutor said Mensah would be able to successfully argue he acted in self-defense.

Motley said she plans to file a federal lawsuit alleging Mensah violated Cole’s civil rights. She’s also representing Gonzales and Anderson’s families but said she hasn’t decided whether the lawsuit will touch on those cases as well.

She has been trying to obtain documents from the Wauwatosa Police Department that she believes will show a history of racial bias. She filed record requests in June seeking Mensah’s personnel file — Biskupic noted in his report the only blemish on Mensah’s record is a 2019 reprimand for causing an accident with his squad car — as well as all department emails transmitted between the deaths of Gonzales and Cole that mention Mensah.

The requests also seek traffic-stop data from 2018 and 2019 that she believes will show officers stop Black drivers more than white drivers. They also seek emails related to 13 officers who were suspended in 1990 for attending parties derisive to Blacks in 1988 and 1989 and those officers’ personnel records. Motley said she wants to determine if any have become supervisors and trained Mensah.

She said the department hasn’t turned over anything yet. She filed a lawsuit in state court on Tuesday to force the records’ release.

She also called Thursday for Weber to be fired, saying he has “normalized” Mensah’s behavior.

Weber said on Twitter Wednesday that his department “concur[s] with the decision not to charge Mensah but “hears the message” from the public. He said an internal review of the shooting is ongoing and that Mensah remains suspended. The department has taken steps to improve policing, including more training, posting policies online and requiring body cameras by January, he said.

The police commission is scheduled to meet later this month but their position on Biskupic’s recommendation to fire Mensah and Weber’s future isn’t clear. Commission President Dominic Leone didn’t respond to an email.

Taleavia Cole told protesters on Wednesday that Chisholm must step down. She said he has shown bias against Black families in his more than 20 years as a prosecutor, but she didn’t cite examples. Chisholm is white.

“There’s too much (expletive) he’s been sweeping under the rug,” she said.

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Chisholm, a Democrat, has served as a prosecutor in Milwaukee County since the mid-1990s. He won election as district attorney in 2006 and is running unopposed for reelection in November.

He told the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel on Wednesday that he understands people are angry with his decision not to charge Mensah but that won't change his mind. Still, he worried about Mensah's involvement in so many shootings and acknowledged it creates an "incredible dilemma" for Wauwatosa.

Chisholm brought charges in a 2016 police shooting but lost the case. In that instance, he charged Milwaukee Police Officer Dominique Heaggan-Brown with reckless homicide after he fatally shot Syville Smith during a foot chase. Both men were Black.

Smith was armed. Body-camera video showed Heaggan-Brown shooting Smith once in the arm as Smith appeared to throw his gun over a fence. The video showed a second shot 1.69 seconds later hit Smith in the chest as he lay on the ground. Defense attorneys argued Heaggan-Brown had to act quickly to defend himself and a jury acquitted him.

Calls to Chisholm's office on Thursday were met with a recording that said no voicemail had been set up. No one at the office has responded to an email seeking comment.

Follow Todd Richmond on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/trichmond1>

Prominent GOP fundraiser charged in covert lobbying effort

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Elliott Broidy, a prominent fundraiser for President Donald Trump and the Republican Party, has been charged in an illicit lobbying campaign aimed at getting the Trump administration to drop an investigation into the multibillion-dollar looting of a Malaysian state investment fund.

Broidy is the latest person accused by the Justice Department of participating in the covert lobbying effort, which also sought to arrange for the return of a Chinese dissident living in the U.S. A consultant, Nickie Lum Davis, pleaded guilty in August for her role in the scheme.

The case was filed this week in federal court in Washington, D.C., with Broidy facing a single conspiracy charge related to his failure to register under the Foreign Agents Registration Act, which requires people lobbying in the U.S. on behalf of a foreign entity to disclose that work to the Justice Department.

A lawyer for Broidy declined to comment on Thursday. The allegations are contained in a charging document known as an information, which typically signals a defendant's intent to plead guilty.

Prosecutors allege that Broidy worked with Davis and others to get the Justice Department to abandon its pursuit of billions of dollars that officials say were pilfered from 1MDB, a Malaysian wealth fund that was established more than a decade ago to accelerate the country's economic development but that prosecutors say was actually treated as a piggy bank by associates of former Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak.

As part of the scheme, prosecutors said, Broidy "facilitated and attempted to facilitate meetings and other efforts to influence officials at the highest level of the United States government, including the President and the Attorney General." During a May 2017 meeting in a Bangkok hotel suite, he agreed to lobby the Trump administration and the attorney general, then Jeff Sessions, for an \$8 million retainer fee, according to prosecutors.

The effort was done on behalf of a fugitive Malaysian financier, Jho Low, but was ultimately unsuccessful: The Justice Department in 2018 charged Low, who remains at large, in connection with conspiring to launder billions of dollars from the fund and last year reached a civil settlement to recover more than \$700 million in assets that officials said were traceable to the looted fund.

Low has denied wrongdoing and did not admit blame in that settlement. And Broidy did not register with the U.S. government that he was working on behalf of Low.

Broidy has been a top fundraiser for Trump but resigned in 2018 from his role as deputy chairman of the Republican National Committee after it was revealed that he paid \$1.6 million to a Playboy Playmate with whom he had an extramarital affair.

According to prosecutors, Broidy used his access to the White House to try to arrange a golf meeting

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between Trump and the Malaysian prime minister, and though that outing did not take place, the leaders did ultimately meet at the White House in September 2017. Broidy himself met with Trump at the White House the following month, and though he did not raise the 1MDB matter with him, he told Davis that he had, court papers say.

Broidy's work also included a separate unsuccessful lobbying effort — trying to arrange for the removal of a Chinese dissident who was living in the U.S. on a temporary visa. The dissident is not referred to by name by prosecutors, but it matches the description of Guo Wengui.

Guo left China in 2014 during an anti-corruption crackdown led by President Xi Jinping that ensnared people close to Guo, including a top intelligence official. Chinese authorities have accused Guo of rape, kidnapping, bribery and other offenses and have sought the return of the self-exiled tycoon.

Follow Eric Tucker on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/etuckerAP>

Suspended officials sue agency that runs Voice of America

WASHINGTON (AP) — Suspended officials at the agency that runs the Voice of America news outlet filed suit against it Thursday, accusing its CEO and his top aides of trying to turn it into a vehicle to promote President Donald Trump's agenda.

The lawsuit, filed in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, says the actions of U.S. Agency for Global Media CEO Michael Pack and his senior advisers violate the "statutory firewall" intended to protect VOA from political interference.

National Public Radio, which first reported the lawsuit, said the five plaintiffs have all been suspended by Pack and are seeking reinstatement.

Lawyer Theodore J. Boutros Jr. told NPR, "The lawsuit we filed today seeks to vindicate core First Amendment principles that protect the independence and credibility of this country's publicly funded media organizations, like Voice of America, which are under siege by the current administration."

Pack, a conservative filmmaker, Trump ally and one-time associate of former Trump political adviser Steve Bannon, took the helm of USAGM in June and has made no secret of his intent to shake the agency up. His moves, however, have been criticized by both Democratic and Republican lawmakers who control the agency's budget.

Democrats in particular have expressed alarm about Pack's actions, which they fear are aimed at turning VOA and other U.S.-funded broadcasters like Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Middle East Broadcasting Networks, and the Cuba-focused Radio/TV Marti into Trump propaganda outlets.

VOA was founded during World War II and its congressional charter requires it to present independent news and information to international audiences.

Next Trump-Biden debates uncertain, though Oct. 22 is likely

By ZEKE MILLER and WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The campaign's final debates between President Donald Trump and Democrat Joe Biden were thrown into uncertainty Thursday as the rival camps offered dueling proposals for the remaining faceoffs that have been upended by the president's coronavirus infection.

The chair of the nonpartisan Commission on Presidential Debates told The Associated Press that the final debate, scheduled for Oct. 22, was still slated to go on with both candidates present as planned. But next Thursday's debate seemed to be gone, after the Trump team objected to the commission's format change.

The whipsaw day began with an announcement from the commission that the town hall-style affair set for Oct. 15 in Miami would be held virtually. The commission cited health concerns following Trump's infection as the reason for the change.

Trump, who is eager to return to the campaign trail despite uncertainty about his health, said he wouldn't participate if the debate wasn't in person. Biden's campaign then suggested the event be delayed a week until Oct. 22, which is when the third and final debate was already scheduled.

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Next, Trump countered again, agreeing to a debate on Oct. 22 — but only if face to face — and asking that a third contest be added on Oct. 29, just before the election. But Biden's advisers rejected squaring off that late in the campaign.

After the release late Thursday of a letter from Trump doctor Navy Cmdr. Sean Conley that the president had "completed his course of therapy" and could resume campaigning this weekend, the Trump campaign called on the commission to hold next week's debate in person as originally scheduled.

"There is therefore no medical reason why the Commission on Presidential Debates should shift the debate to a virtual setting, postpone it, or otherwise alter it in any way," said Trump campaign manager Bill Stepien.

But commission chair Frank Fahrenkopf said late Thursday that the decision to hold the debate virtually, guided by its medical advisers at the Cleveland Clinic, was not going to be reversed.

The commission said it made the announcement in order to "protect the health and safety of all involved," including the everyday citizens invited to ask questions of the candidates.

The debate commission, which has the unenviable task of finding common ground between the competing campaigns, already came under scrutiny after the first debate between Trump and Biden deteriorated, with the president frequently interrupting his opponent and the moderator unable to take control.

The Oct. 22 debate in Nashville, Tennessee, is scheduled to feature a format similar to the first. Biden's campaign has suggested that it be modified to the "town meeting" format, though the Trump campaign has not weighed in.

Founded after the 1984 presidential election, the commission has organized every general election debate since 1988 — and typically selects the dates, moderators, formats and locations without input from the candidates.

Biden moved quickly to make sure he would still appear in front of a television audience next week. Instead of debating Trump on Thursday, he will take part in a town hall sponsored by ABC News. As he campaigned in Arizona, Biden said he would indeed attend the Oct. 22 debate.

"We agreed to three debates back in the summer," Biden said. "I'm showing up. I'll be there. And if, in fact, he shows up, fine. If he doesn't, fine."

For Trump, who is recovering from COVID-19 at the White House after spending three days in the hospital, the health-induced changes are an unwelcome disruption to his effort to shift focus away from a virus that has killed more than 210,000 Americans this year.

In an interview with Fox Business anchor Maria Bartiromo shortly after the commission's announcement, Trump insisted he was in "great shape" and called the idea of a virtual debate a "joke."

"I'm not going to do a virtual debate," he declared.

Stepien said Trump would stage a rally rather than debate next Thursday, though it's not yet clear if he will be well enough to do that.

With less than four weeks until Election Day and with millions of voters casting early ballots, pressure is building on Trump to turn around a campaign that is trailing Biden in polls nationally and in most battlegrounds, where the margin is narrower. A debate before an audience of tens of millions of television viewers could provide that reset.

But another debate could also expose Trump to political risks. GOP strategists say the party's support began eroding after his seething performance against Biden last week when he didn't clearly denounce a white supremacist group.

Trump's apparent unwillingness to change his style to win back voters he needs — particularly women — was on display again Thursday during his Fox Business interview when he referred to Democratic vice presidential nominee Kamala Harris as a "monster."

Campaigning with Harris in Arizona, Biden called Trump's characterization of the first Black woman on a major party's presidential ticket "despicable" and added that it was "so beneath the office of the presidency."

This would not be the first time Trump has skipped a debate. During the 2016 Republican primary, he boycotted the last debate before Iowa's first-in-the-nation caucuses, holding a fundraiser for veterans

instead — a move he later speculated may have contributed to his loss in the state.

Trump fell ill with the virus on Oct. 1, just 48 hours after sharing a stage with Biden in person during the first presidential debate in Cleveland. While the two candidates remained a dozen feet apart, Trump's infection sparked health concerns for Biden and sent him to undergo multiple COVID-19 tests before returning to the campaign trail. His campaign announced Thursday that Biden had undergone his fifth such test and was found to be negative.

Trump was still contagious with the virus when he was discharged from Walter Reed National Military Medical Center on Monday, but his doctor said Thursday he had "completed his course of therapy" and could resume campaigning this weekend. 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.

Associated Press writers Bill Barrow in Phoenix and Alexandra Jaffe and Jill Colvin in Washington contributed to this report.

Amid NYC protests, Orthodox Jews urge new virus-era dialogue

By ELANA SCHOR Associated Press

After months of grappling with a pandemic that has walloped New York's Orthodox Jewish communities, prompting changes to holidays, mourning and prayers, new limits on worship and other activity in some areas are pushing tensions in some neighborhoods of Brooklyn to the boiling point.

New restrictions in places where coronavirus cases are rising, including several Orthodox areas, led to street protests Tuesday night. Videos posted on social media showed hundreds of Orthodox men gathered in the streets of Brooklyn's Borough Park neighborhood, in some cases setting bonfires by burning masks, and a crowd attacking a man who filmed the unrest. On Wednesday night, crowds of men returned to the streets as police watched.

As the protests made headlines, and the Orthodox group Agudath Israel led a Thursday federal court challenge seeking to halt the constraints, some Orthodox Jews in New York urged officials and fellow believers to find a way to communicate better.

"We need partnership. We need government and the community to work together" on an approach to fighting the virus that can "respect the culture" of the faith, said Rabbi Abe Friedman, an Orthodox leader and law enforcement chaplain in Brooklyn.

Friedman said he hoped the government would understand that Orthodox Jews are not "gathering carelessly of the pandemic," but rather returning to cherished customs of communal prayer, celebration and mourning.

"We congregate together, we pray together, and this is why social distancing is even more hard at times, and it has a greater effect," said Friedman, lauding community members who are heeding public health guidance.

Orthodox Jews in the U.S. have no single faith-based governing structure, but leaders at six major groups representing different sectors signed onto a unified statement in March urging their faithful to heed social distancing rules.

In the view of many Orthodox Jews in New York whose areas were hit hard and early by the pandemic, city and state officials stoked tension with their handling of restrictions on houses of worship and schools in hot spots. On top of feeling singled out as a religious community, some Orthodox Jews can lack sufficient, reliable public health guidance, given often infrequent access to TV and the internet — all while confronting curbs on faith practices built on social engagement that have sustained them for generations.

The spike in virus cases and resulting restrictions came soon after Jews celebrated some of the holiest days on their calendar. After this week's Sukkot holiday, the weekend's Simchat Torah promises to further test Orthodox communities' ability to gather safely. The Agudath Israel-led lawsuit says the state's new limits "make it impossible for Orthodox Jews to comply with both their religious obligations and the order"

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imposing restrictions.

Simchat Torah is normally a joyful occasion when worshippers often dance with Torah scrolls, holding and kissing them — risky behaviors during a pandemic. Orthodox practices also involve multiple daily group prayers, something many were forced to change this spring as the virus began spreading.

Another essential aspect of Judaism, however, has proven helpful in promoting masks and social distancing: the Torah's emphasis on the value of human life, to the degree that violating other tenets is permissible if it means saving lives. In announcing a partnership with Agudath Israel to distribute 400,000 masks, the Boro Park Jewish Community Council in Brooklyn reminded members that "we have an obligation from the Torah to stay safe."

"Only by working with communities — treating them as partners, not problems — will the city have a chance at achieving the desired outcomes," Yair Rosenberg, a senior writer at Tablet Magazine, wrote in a Thursday column on how to prevent a "looming coronavirus crisis in Hasidic Brooklyn." Rosenberg's father is a rabbi at a modern Orthodox synagogue in one of the city areas subject to the new restrictions.

Mayor Bill de Blasio said Thursday the city has responded impartially to mass gatherings and violations of pandemic-related rules.

"This is only about the data and the science, and we're applying it evenly to all communities with respect, with understanding," de Blasio told reporters.

Orthodox Jews comprised 10% of the total U.S. Jewish population in a 2013 Pew Research Center study. In Israel a similar friction is ongoing over public health behaviors among the ultra-Orthodox, who make up about 10% of that nation's population but have accounted for more than one-third of coronavirus cases.

As debate intensified in New York's Orthodox neighborhoods, more than 400 rabbis and other leaders from multiple branches of Judaism released a letter supporting the city and state's "data-driven, geographically-based efforts to contain the spread of COVID-19."

The letter, released by the New York Jewish Agenda, calls for dissemination of public health guidance in a way that's "both culturally appropriate ... and does not promote antisemitism."

"But to be clear," it said, "requiring masking and social distancing for all gatherings, including religious gatherings, is not antisemitism."

Orthodox Jews were not alone in contesting the state's new limits on in-person worship in certain areas. A lawsuit filed Thursday by Brooklyn's Roman Catholic diocese alleges that the restrictions would force more than two dozen churches to close, "even though those churches have been reopened for months in strict adherence to all medical and governmental guidance, without any COVID-related incidents whatsoever."

Associated Press writer Josef Federman in Jerusalem contributed to this report.

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Trump still contagious? Experts say it's impossible to know

By MARION RENAULT Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — President Donald Trump said Thursday he doesn't think he's contagious anymore, but medical experts say that's impossible to know a week after his diagnosis with COVID-19.

Most people with COVID-19 can stop isolating and be around others about 10 days after they first showed symptoms, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. That's provided their symptoms have improved, they have not had a fever for 24 hours and are no longer on any medication to reduce a high temperature. But there's no way to know for certain that someone is no longer contagious so soon after falling ill, experts say.

"At this point, there's no diagnostic test that tells you whether a person that's infected remains infectious," said Dr. Benjamin Pinsky, who leads Stanford University's virology labs. "There is absolutely a chain of unknowns."

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According to Trump's latest medical update, he completed his COVID-19 treatment on Thursday and had responded "extremely well." Earlier in the day, Trump said he was still taking dexamethasone, a steroid that can reduce fevers. In Thursday's update, Dr. Sean Conley, said Saturday was day 10 after Trump's Oct. 1 diagnosis and that he anticipated the president's safe return to public events "at that time."

Trump's aides were weighing travel options for the president, including trips for small events next week. During a telephone interview with Fox Business, Trump said Thursday: "I think I'm better to the point where I'd love to do a rally tonight." He also said "I don't think I'm contagious at all."

Since his return to the White House Monday evening, only a few staffers — and no reporters — have laid eyes on the president, who has announced updates to his condition via Twitter and a few online videos. His doctors haven't held a press conference since Trump left the hospital, only releasing statements with limited information.

"We who are watching from the outside only have intimations, I'd even call them hints," about Trump's health and when he might not be contagious, said Dr. William Schaffner, an infectious disease specialist at Vanderbilt University Medical Center.

Earlier this week, the president's doctors suggested they would work closely with military medical research facilities and other laboratories on "advanced diagnostic testing" to determine when the president was no longer contagious, but did not elaborate. They have not released any details about his test results, including when Trump last had a negative virus test before he got sick.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, the government's top infectious disease expert, said two negative PCR lab tests 24 hours apart are a key factor in determining whether someone is still contagious.

"So, if the president goes 10 days without symptoms, and they do the tests that we were talking about, then you could make the assumption, based on good science, that he is not infected," Fauci said Thursday on MSNBC.

Sensitive lab tests — like the PCR test — detect virus in swab samples taken from the nose and throat. Using these, the president's medical team could hypothetically measure and track the amount of virus in samples over time, said Dr. William Morice, who oversees laboratories at the Mayo Clinic.

"If they did daily testing, you could watch it go down," Morice said. "If his viral load is low, the chance he can spread the virus is low as well."

Another potential strategy: Take the president's samples and try to get the virus to replicate in a cell culture, which would indicate it's still active. This approach would be less sensitive than molecular tests and sometimes doesn't work. And it wouldn't be scalable, or safe, to use it more widely for other COVID-19 patients.

"It would take much longer, cost much more and we don't have that many laboratories that can do it," Schaffner said.

There is a third possibility: Novel tests available at some research labs that look for minute molecular evidence that the virus is still replicating in cells. But the technology is still too new to be used to rule out if someone is infectious, Pinsky said.

"You're not going to get perfection with any of these tests," said Gigi Gronvall, of Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security. "That's why you need to think about other mechanisms of public health control" like wearing masks, washing hands and keeping socially distant to stop the spread of coronavirus.

AP reporter Jonathan Lemire contributed to this report.

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In 25th Amendment bid, Pelosi mulls Trump's fitness to serve

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Speaker Nancy Pelosi is questioning President Donald Trump's fitness to

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serve, announcing legislation Thursday that would create a commission to allow Congress to intervene under the 25th Amendment to the Constitution and remove the president from executive duties.

Just weeks before the Nov. 3 election, Pelosi said Trump needs to disclose more about his health after his COVID-19 diagnosis. She noted Trump's "strange tweet" halting talks on a new coronavirus aid package — he subsequently tried to reverse course — and said Americans need to know when, exactly, he first contracted COVID as others in the White House became infected. On Friday, she plans to roll out the legislation that would launch the commission for review.

"The public needs to know the health condition of the president," Pelosi said, later invoking the 25th Amendment, which allows a president's cabinet or Congress to intervene when a president is unable to conduct the duties of the office.

Trump responded swiftly via Twitter.

"Crazy Nancy is the one who should be under observation. They don't call her Crazy for nothing!" the president said.

The president's opponents have discussed invoking the 25th Amendment for some time, but are raising it now, so close to Election Day, as the campaigns are fast turning into a referendum on Trump's handling of the coronavirus pandemic. More than 210,000 Americans have died and millions more infected by the virus that shows no signs of abating heading into what public health experts warn will be a difficult flu season and winter.

Trump says he "feels great" after being hospitalized and is back at work in the White House. But his doctors have given mixed signals about his diagnosis and treatment. Trump plans to resume campaigning soon.

Congress is not in legislative session, and so any serious consideration of the measure, let alone votes in the House or Senate, is unlikely. But the bill serves as a political tool to stoke questions about Trump's health as his own White House is hit by an outbreak infecting top aides, staff and visitors, including senators.

In a stunning admission, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said Thursday that he had stopped going to the White House two months ago because he disagreed with its coronavirus protocols. His last visit was Aug. 6.

"My impression was their approach to how to handle this was different from mine and what I insisted we do in the Senate, which is to wear a mask and practice social distancing," McConnell said at a campaign stop in northern Kentucky for his own reelection.

On Friday, Pelosi along with Rep. Jamie Raskin, D-Md., a constitutional law professor, plan to roll out the legislation that would create a commission as outlined under the 25th Amendment, which was passed by Congress and ratified in 1967 as way to ensure a continuity of power in the aftermath of President John F. Kennedy's assassination.

It says the vice president and a majority of principal officers of the executive departments "or of such other body as Congress" may by law provide a declaration to Congress that the president "is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office." At that point, the vice president would immediately assume the powers of acting president.

Trump abruptly halted talks this week on the new COVID aid package, sending the economy reeling, his GOP allies scrambling and leaving millions of Americans without additional support. Then he immediately reversed course and tried to kickstart talks.

It all came in a head-spinning series of tweets and comments days after he returned to the White House after his hospitalization with COVID-19.

First, Trump told the Republican leaders in Congress on Tuesday to quit negotiating on an aid package. By Wednesday he was trying to bring everyone back to the table for his priority items — including \$1,200 stimulus checks for almost all adult Americans.

Pelosi said Thursday that Democrats are "still at the table" and her office resumed conversations with top negotiator Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin.

She said she told Mnuchin she was willing to consider a measure to prop up the airline industry, which is facing widespread layoffs. But that aid, she said, must go alongside broader legislation that includes the

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kind of COVID testing, tracing and health practices that Democrats say are needed as part of a national strategy to “crush the virus.”

Normally, the high stakes and splintered politics ahead of an election could provide grounds for a robust package. But with other Republicans refusing to spend more money, it appears no relief will be coming with Americans already beginning early voting.

Democrats have made it clear they will not do a piecemeal approach until the Trump administration signs off on a broader, comprehensive plan they are proposing for virus testing, tracing and other actions to stop its spread. They have scaled back a \$3 trillion measure to a \$2.2 trillion proposal. The White House presented a \$1.6 trillion counter offer. Talks were ongoing when Trump shut them down.

“There’s no question that the proximity to the election has made this much more challenging,” McConnell said.

Associated Press writers Bruce Schreiner in Frankfort, Kentucky, and Laurie Kellman and Pamananda Rama in Washington contributed to this report.

Biden, Harris aim to tip battleground Arizona for Democrats

By JONATHAN J. COOPER, ALEXANDRA JAFFE and BILL BARROW Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — Joe Biden and Kamala Harris pitched an economic message Thursday during their first joint appearance on the campaign trail, hammering President Donald Trump for his handling of the coronavirus pandemic and a failure to address the needs of working Americans.

“You’re facing real challenges right now, and the last thing you need is a president who exacerbates them, who ignores you,” Biden told a union crowd in Phoenix, adding that Trump “looks down on you.”

“We’ve paid too high a price already for Donald Trump’s chaotic, divisive leadership.”

The Democratic presidential ticket chose Arizona to kick off a bus tour, underscoring the significance of a state whose 11 Electoral College votes could tip the scales if Trump can rebound from his fall slump. Vice President Mike Pence was campaigning in the state as well Thursday.

Harris introduced Biden by blasting Trump’s “reckless disregard for human life and for the well-being of the American people” when it comes to the coronavirus pandemic. She encouraged Arizonans to vote “like your life depends on it,” because, she says, “it really does.”

Early voting began this week in Arizona, and both Biden and Harris placed a heavy emphasis on the importance of getting to the polls. Speaking of Republicans, Biden warned that “they’re setting up the argument that these votes aren’t gonna matter,” and mentioned Trump’s comments during the first presidential debate that a far-right group should “stand back and stand by.”

“This is serious stuff. We can’t just win by a vote. We have got to all turn out,” he said.

Thursday’s bus tour marked Biden’s first trip to Arizona as the presidential nominee, but it was a long time coming for a campaign that for months has singled out the state for expanding the battleground map, owing to demographic changes, new residents and a noticeable realignment away from Republicans among key suburban voters.

Arizona’s transformation seems stark for a state that just a decade ago was the epicenter of Republicans’ push against anti-illegal immigration push. But with early voting underway and millions of ballots in the mail, the home of pathbreaking Republicans from Barry Goldwater to John McCain to Sandra Day O’Connor is a top Democratic target this year, and some Republicans are anxious.

While the Trump campaign projects confidence in a state the president won by 3.5 percentage points four years ago, it’s notable that Thursday marks Pence’s fourth trip to the state this year, on top of Trump’s five trips in 2020.

“I didn’t think it would happen this soon,” said former Republican Gov. Jan Brewer of the shift. Brewer rose to national prominence when she signed the state’s anti-illegal immigration law in 2010 and publicly feuded with then-President Barack Obama. “But I think we have done a bad job of trying to educate them, the new population, that they ought to be Republican.”

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Veteran lawmakers and political operatives point to three main factors driving Arizona's move away from Republicans: Democratic-leaning newcomers such as Novoa; a young Latino population that was politically activated by Arizona's immigration fights of the past decade and is now reaching voting age; and the turn away from the GOP by suburban women.

The state appears to be following a pattern seen elsewhere in the West, going from solidly Republican to up for grabs. To varying degrees, Nevada, Colorado and New Mexico have all moved closer to Democrats since the turn of the century.

Democrats point to Brewer's decision a decade ago to sign SB1070, a law that cracked down on immigrants living in the country illegally, and immigration roundups by Sheriff Joe Arpaio. Young Latinos organized, ousting the legislator who sponsored the legislation in 2011 and Arpaio in 2016. In the process, they built a progressive infrastructure that endures.

"It created a whole new class of activists and organizing," said U.S. Rep. Ruben Gallego, who represents many of Phoenix's Latino neighborhoods. "I came out of the 1070 movement. A lot of the state reps, state senators, voter registration organizations — all were born because of SB1070."

Brewer, who has never wavered from her support for the immigration bill, agrees that it galvanized Latinos.

"I'm sure it was probably a rallying cry that they utilized to bring people together," Brewer said.

Trump has worked overtime to keep Arizona in his column, and he had two more rallies scuttled here this week after his coronavirus diagnosis.

Since 1952, a Democrat has won Arizona only once — Bill Clinton in 1996, with about 46% of the vote. Public polling has shown Biden with a narrow but consistent lead over Trump, who also finished shy of a majority in his victory four years ago.

Biden's path to an Arizona victory runs through Maricopa County, home to Phoenix and its rapidly growing suburbs. It has grown 18% in the past decade, according to Census Bureau data. Once a reliable Republican stronghold, it went comfortably for Democratic Sen. Kyrsten Sinema in 2018, a victory that got attention in Washington and opened the spigot of money for Democrats and progressive organizing groups.

Democrats have long dominated in the Tucson area. Biden will look to run up the score there and on the Navajo Nation in northeastern Arizona.

Trump's hopes lie in winning back some of the suburban women he's alienated and picking up votes in the whiter areas of rural Arizona, where he remains popular.

Jaffe reported from Washington.

Rapper Tory Lanez charged with shooting Megan Thee Stallion

By ANDREW DALTON AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Los Angeles prosecutors on Thursday charged rapper Tory Lanez with shooting artist Megan Thee Stallion during an argument earlier this year.

Lanez is accused of shooting at Megan Thee Stallion's feet, hitting her, after she left a SUV during a fight in the Hollywood Hills on July 12, according to a release.

He faces two felony charges — assault with a semiautomatic firearm and carrying a loaded, unregistered firearm in a vehicle. The complaint states Lanez "inflicted great bodily injury" on Megan Thee Stallion.

A message sent to Lanez's representative was not immediately returned.

Lanez, a 27-year-old Canadian rapper and singer whose legal name is Daystar Peterson, is due to be arraigned Tuesday in Los Angeles. If convicted, he faces a maximum sentence of roughly 23 years.

Lanez was arrested the night of the shooting but released after posting bail. Prosecutors are recommending that his bail be set at \$1.1 million at his arraignment.

Megan Thee Stallion, whose real name is Megan Pete, is identified in the felony complaint only as Megan P. She had declined to name Lanez as the person who shot her in social media posts and videos on the subject for more than a month. But on Aug. 20, she said in an Instagram video that "Yes ... Tory shot me," and urged him to "stop lying" about the incident.

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She's discussed the shooting in several often emotional Instagram videos, calling it "super scary" and "the worst experience of my life."

She declined to tell police that night that she had been shot, and initial reports were only that a woman had foot injuries consistent with broken glass. She has said that she was too frightened the situation would have escalated if she revealed to police that there had been gunfire.

Lanez has not spoken publicly about the incident. On Sept. 24, he said on his social media accounts that he would break his silence that evening, but that announcement turned out to be a teaser for the release of his fifth studio album, "Daystar."

Lanez has not reached the stardom that Megan the Stallion has, but had a Billboard top 20 hit with "Luv" in 2016, and has had a successful run of mixtapes and major-label records since his career began in 2009.

At the time of the shooting, Megan Thee Stallion was already a major hip-hop star following a triumphant year that saw her nominated for artist of the year at the MTV Video Music Awards. Since the shooting, her guest stint on the Cardi B song "WAP" helped turn the track — and music video — into a huge cultural phenomenon, and she has performed on the season premiere of "Saturday Night Live."

Entertainment Writer Jonathan Landrum Jr. contributed to this report.

JPMorgan puts \$30B toward fixing banking's 'systemic racism'

By KEN SWEET AND ALEXANDRA OLSON AP Business Writers

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) — JPMorgan Chase said Thursday it will extend billions in loans to Black and Latino homebuyers and small business owners in an expanded effort toward fixing what the bank calls "systemic racism" in the country's economic system.

The New York bank said it is committing \$30 billion over the next five years toward programs that include earmarking more money for getting Black and Latino families into homeownership and providing additional financing to build affordable rental housing units.

"Systemic racism is a tragic part of America's history," said JPMorgan Chase CEO Jamie Dimon in a statement. "We can do more and do better to break down systems that have propagated racism and widespread economic inequality."

In the immediate aftermath of the police killing of George Floyd, JPMorgan announced a commitment of \$1.75 billion toward programs they said would help address racial inequalities. But since then, as protests have remained constant in some urban centers, there has been a push for banks to do more.

Citigroup announced last month it is committing \$1 billion toward closing "the racial wealth gap" in the United States, including \$550 million toward homeownership programs for racial minorities.

JPMorgan, which has \$3.2 trillion in assets, said it expects the \$30 billion to help finance 40,000 additional mortgages for Black and Latino households, another 20,000 loans that will refinance mortgages and help construct 100,000 affordable rental units. Additional funds will go to finance 15,000 small business loans to Black and Latino-owned businesses.

There will also be programs to place 1 million customers in low-cost checking and savings accounts, partly by opening new branches in minority-majority neighborhoods.

Black households are several times more likely to be what is known as unbanked, meaning they do not have a primary checking account with a traditional bank, or underbanked, where households still rely on high-cost financial services like check cashing, pawn shops and payday loans.

American banking still has a long way to go to fix the problems of the past. Banks large and small are still regularly cited for discriminatory practices, including allegations of "redlining" Black homebuyers. Redlining is a practice in which banks deny or avoid providing credit services to consumers because of racial demographics or the neighborhood where they live.

Ed Golding, the executive director of the MIT Golub Center for Finance Policy, said JPMorgan's investment is impressive but narrowing the gap requires more fundamental changes to the financial system. He noted that there's a 30% gap between Black and white homeownership, amounting to about 4.5 million

households. JPMorgan's investment would go to a fraction of those.

"We are not going to do it overnight," said Golding, who served as the head of the Federal Housing Administration under the Obama administration. "I applaud the energy and the direction but it's going to take massive government policy changes to really move the needle and make up for hundreds of years of systemic racism."

According to a recent study that Golding co-authored, African Americans on average pay higher mortgage interest payments, insurance premiums and property taxes than white families, adding an average of \$67,320 to their homeownership costs. The study said Black families are disadvantaged by a risk-based pricing system, which charges higher mortgage rates for lower down payments and credit scores. Golding called for a system that would pool risk among borrowers.

The Black Lives Matter protests have pushed dozens of companies to announce initiatives and policies to fight racial inequities, from pledges to bring more African Americans into leadership roles, to new investments intended to promote Black owned businesses.

JPMorgan was one of 27 major New York-based companies that joined a program to recruit 100,000 workers from the city's low-income, predominately Black, Latino and Asian communities over the next 10 years. Mastercard announced a \$500 million investment last month in Black communities, including providing Black-owned businesses access to affordable capital. IBM is investing \$100 million in technology education at historically Black universities.

Stephanie Creary, an assistant professor of management at University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School, said many of the programs appear promising because they are strategically targeted.

"That's when I get excited is when it's targeted toward something very concrete and that they are not just throwing money at the problem and hoping that people on the other side will figure out what to do with it," said Creary, who researches diversity and inclusion issues.

But she said the question remains whether companies will continue investing in minority communities at this scale beyond this year.

"We've never seen this type of corporate response before and it feels a little hard to trust that it's going to be long-term," Creary said. "It feels like a window of opportunity, and right now corporations are paying attention, but one would hope that it becomes an annual moment."

Olson contributed from New York

Trump, Barr at odds over slow pace of Durham investigation

By MICHAEL BALSAMO, ZEKE MILLER and ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump is increasingly at odds with Attorney General William Barr over the status of the Justice Department's investigation into the origin of the Russia probe, with the president increasingly critical about a lack of arrests and Barr frustrated by Trump's public pronouncements about the case, according to people familiar with the matter.

Trump and his allies had high hopes for the investigation led by Connecticut U.S. Attorney John Durham, betting it would expose what they see as wrongdoing when the FBI opened a case into whether the Trump campaign was coordinating with Russia to sway the 2016 election. Trump has also pushed to tie prominent Obama administration officials to that effort as part of his campaign against Joe Biden, who was serving as vice president at the time.

But a year and a half into the investigation, and with less than one month until Election Day, there has been only one criminal case: a former FBI lawyer who pleaded guilty to altering a government email about a former Trump campaign adviser who was a target of secret FBI surveillance.

With time running out for pre-election action on the case, Trump is increasingly airing his dissatisfaction in tweets and television appearances. Barr, meanwhile, has privately expressed frustration over the public comments, according to a person familiar with his thinking. It's not dissimilar to a situation earlier this year, when Trump complained publicly that he believed ally Roger Stone was getting a raw deal in his prosecution, even as Barr had already moved to amend a sentencing position of the prosecutors in the case.

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Despite Trump's unhappiness, there's no indication Barr's job is at risk in the final weeks of the campaign. Still, the tensions between Trump and the attorney general over the fate of the probe underscore the extent to which the president is aggressively trying to use all of the levers of his power to gain ground in an election that has been moving away from him.

This account is based on interviews with six people who have direct knowledge of Trump and Barr's relationship. They were not authorized to speak publicly and spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

Trump is also said to blame Barr for comments from FBI Director Chris Wray on election fraud and mail-in voting that don't jibe with the president's alarmist rhetoric. Wray has said there has not historically been any kind of mass voter fraud, whether through the mail or otherwise, a message at odds with Trump and Barr's repeated efforts to sound the alarms about a process they claim is especially vulnerable to abuse.

Still, much of the uptick in tensions between Trump and Barr centers on the Justice Department's handling of the Durham probe. A senior administration official said Trump feels like he's given Barr wide latitude to advance the investigation, including declassifying documents related to Russia. In the absence of blockbuster findings, Trump is now moving to make documents public himself with his new acting head of intelligence.

On Thursday morning, Trump did not hide his displeasure in an interview on Fox News Business.

"Unless Bill Barr indicts these people for crimes — the greatest political crime in the history of our country — then we'll get little satisfaction, unless I win," he said. "Because I won't forget it. But these people should be indicted. These are people who spied on my campaign. And we have everything. And I say, Bill, we've got plenty, you don't need anymore. We've got so much."

The comment followed an earlier barrage of presidential social media posts, including one in which Trump retweeted a doctored image of Barr superimposed with the late "Saturday Night Live" actor Chris Farley in character as a motivational speaker yelling at him. The caption: "for the love of God ARREST SOMEBODY."

The Justice Department declined to comment on the matter. The White House did not immediately comment.

Since Durham's appointment, he has cast a broad net in interviewing former government officials, including ex-CIA Director John Brennan. It is unclear when Durham plans to submit his report or how damning any of his final conclusions might be.

Even the outlines of the case involving FBI lawyer Kevin Clinesmith, who pleaded guilty in the Durham probe, were already known before he was charged. And the case against him didn't allege any broader FBI conspiracy to go after Trump.

Barr has privately expressed frustration over the president's public pronouncements on the Durham investigation. Though Barr is broadly in agreement with Trump on the need to investigate the origins of the Russia probe, he's often bemoaned Trump's lack of understanding about the intricacies of the legal system and the steps that need to be taken to complete an investigation.

A friend of Barr's said there has been obvious "tension" between the president and the attorney general, and while Barr himself believes deeply in the importance of the Durham investigation and in the president's authority to exercise control over federal agencies, he will not tolerate interference in specific investigations.

The friend said the Justice Department officials were eager for Durham's work to be completed while Trump is still in office for fear the investigation would be shuttered in a possible Biden administration.

Trump aides had banked on the Durham probe being finished before 2020 election to lend credibility to Trump's claims that his own investigative agencies were working against him. A report from the Justice Department's inspector general in December knocked down multiple lines of attack against the Russia investigation, finding that it was properly opened and that law enforcement leaders were not motivated by political bias. But Barr has said he and Durham disagreed with the inspector general over whether the FBI had enough information to open a full investigation and, in particular, to use surveillance on a former Trump campaign aide.

Despite being close allies on a range of issues, tensions have flared between Trump and Barr at other

points, including earlier this year when Trump was tweeting about Stone's case. Barr later reversed a recommendation from prosecutors that Stone be sentenced to 7 to 9 years in prison, and critics argued he was doing Trump's bidding.

Barr said in an interview with ABC News that the president's tweets were making it "impossible" to do his job and told those close to him he was considering resigning. The two eventually patched things up.

Associated Press writers Colleen Long and Jonathan Lemire contributed to this report.

Law enforcement preps for potential election-related unrest

By MICHAEL BALSAMO, MICHAEL KUNZELMAN and COLLEEN LONG Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Federal and state law enforcement officials have begun expanded preparations for the possibility of widespread unrest at the polls on Election Day, a response to extraordinarily high tensions among voters and anxieties about safety stoked in part by President Donald Trump.

FBI and local officials in several states have been conducting drills, running through worse-case scenarios, setting up command centers to improve coordination on reports of violence and voter intimidation, and issuing public warnings that any crime that threatens the sanctity of a Nov. 3 vote will not be tolerated.

The efforts are broader and more public-facing than in past years as fears grow over the potential for violent clashes in cities across the United States. Law enforcement officials say they are not responding to any specific threats or information but are preparing for a host of different scenarios that could play out.

Tensions are especially high given the increased political polarization and months of mass demonstrations against racial injustice that have seen violence by the left and right. Gun sales are way up. Six men were arrested after federal officials said they plotted to kidnap Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, D-Mich., at her vacation home. Experts are concerned that right-wing extremists will be emboldened by Trump's recent refusal to clearly denounce the Proud Boys, a neo-fascist group, and instead tell them to "stand back and stand by."

Trump has spent months suggesting without evidence that the election could be rigged. His call to supporters to "go into the polls and watch very carefully" has election officials worried about that unofficial or self-appointed "monitors" could cause chaos and conflict at voting places.

An FBI official said the agency was considering the current climate of the country in its preparations to ensure safety at the polls, as well as working with other agencies to protect the voting system. The official would not discuss the plans publicly and spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

Adding to the alarm is the fact this election will be the first in nearly 40 years in which the Republican National Committee isn't barred from coordinated poll-monitoring activities. Democrats fear that could open the door to voter intimidation, the reason the courts have largely prohibited Republicans from poll monitoring since the early 1980s.

So far, experts who study extremism say they haven't seen any open discussion online of plans to instigate violence or interfere with voting.

Elon University professor Megan Squire, a computer scientist who studies online extremism, said the far-right extremists she tracks on social media appear to be preparing for trouble — a "prepper mindset" — without citing specifics.

"They're waiting for something to pop off," she said. "It's like a simmering kind of feeling."

She said the mindset is particularly keen among boogaloo supporters, a loose, anti-government, pro-gun extremist online network. Boogaloo adherents have shown up at protests against COVID-19 lockdown orders and protests over racial injustice, carrying rifles and wearing tactical gear.

In one of the internet forums Squire follows, a boogaloo supporter recently discussed plans to stock up on water, food, gasoline and generators in case "infrastructure goes down and supply lines are cut off."

Squire also said the Proud Boys, a group known for inciting street violence at rallies in the Pacific Northwest and elsewhere, appear to be emboldened by Trump's comments, as do less organized and strident figures posting on Facebook.

The deadly shooting by a heavily armed teenager during a protest in Kenosha, Wisconsin, in August has

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fueled "pro-vigilantism" attitudes among more mainstream conservatives, Squire said.

And halfway through 2020, just over 19 million FBI background checks have been done, more than all of 2012 and each of the years before that. July hit an all-time high. Background checks are the key barometer of gun sales, but the FBI's monthly figures also incorporate checks for permits that some states require to carry a firearm. Each background check also could be for the sale of more than one gun.

The Justice Department's civil rights division is responsible for enforcing federal voting rights laws and tasks U.S. attorney's offices with appointing special election coordinators to handle voting rights cases. The federal government has for decades sent prosecutors and federal observers to polling places to ensure compliance with federal law.

Local offices from New Mexico to Florida have been prepping, holding tabletop exercises and pouring over potential security threats.

But their jobs are especially fraught this year in part over concerns of politicization. Attorney General William Barr has repeatedly suggested without evidence that could be widespread mail-in voter fraud, though there is little to back that up.

This year, officials from a number of federal law enforcement agencies will be coordinating on Election Day at the FBI's Strategic Information and Operations Center, a global command center at FBI headquarters, people familiar with the matter said.

Justice Department prosecutors from different parts of the agency, including the civil rights and national security divisions, will be on hand to monitor incidents and help coordinate a federal response in the event of violence and threats to election infrastructure or cyberattacks, as well as high-profile incidents at polling places, said the people, who were not authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

The Justice Department and Homeland Security Department have sent additional personnel to cities where violence has cropped up during protests. The National Guard has designated military police units in Arizona and Alabama to serve as rapid reaction forces so they can respond quickly to any potential unrest.

But the first line of response on Election Day will be local law enforcement.

Philadelphia District Attorney Larry Krasner has launched a hotline that rings directly to assistant district attorneys, who will send detectives to investigate reports of voter suppression or intimidation. He said this week his office will not allow armed groups at the city's polling places amid growing concerns about voter intimidation by vigilante groups aiming to "protect the election." Such groups have caused violence at demonstrations.

But Oren Segal, vice president of the Anti-Defamation League's Center on Extremism, said he has not seen any specific campaigns for groups intending to target polling stations.

"A lot of the chatter that you see is going to be hyperbole, and one of the things we don't want to do is amplify hyperbole," he said.

Segal said white supremacists often turn to violence "when they feel like their culture is being taken away," while militias "tend to get more antsy when they think their guns are being taken away." Now he sees a possible threat from a loose coalition of vigilantes and other armed extremists who "think that their election is going to be taken away."

Kunzleman reported from College Park, Maryland. Associated Press writers Claudia Lauer in Philadelphia and Eric Tucker contributed to this report.

Experts: Warming makes Delta, other storms power up faster

By SETH BORENSTEIN AP Science Writer

Hurricane Delta, gaining strength as it bears down on the U.S. Gulf Coast, is the latest and nastiest in a recent flurry of rapidly intensifying Atlantic hurricanes that scientists largely blame on global warming.

Earlier, before hitting Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula and temporarily losing strength, Delta set a record for going from a 35 mph (56 kph) unnamed tropical depression to a monstrous 140 mph (225 kph) Category

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4 storm in just 36 hours, beating a mark set in 2000, according to University of Colorado weather data scientist Sam Lillo.

"We've certainly been seeing a lot of that in the last few years," said National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration climate and hurricane scientist Jim Kossin. "It's more likely that a storm will rapidly intensify now than it did in the 1980s ... A lot of that has to do with human-caused climate change."

Over the past couple decades, meteorologists have been increasingly worried about storms that just blow up from nothing to a whopper, just like Delta. They created an official threshold for this dangerous rapid intensification — a storm gaining 35 mph (56 kph) in wind speed in just 24 hours.

Delta is the sixth storm this year and the second in a week to reach the threshold, Lillo calculated.

Hurricanes Hannah, Laura, Sally and Teddy and tropical storm Gamma all gained at least 35 mph (56 kph) in strength in 24 hours. And a seventh storm, Marco, just missed the mark. Laura, which jumped 65 mph (105 kph) in the day before landfall, tied the record for the biggest rapid intensification in the Gulf of Mexico, said former hurricane hunter meteorologist Jeff Masters.

The run of killer hurricanes in 2017 featured a lot of rapid intensification, especially Harvey, Kossin said.

This is not only happening more often, it is more dangerous, said MIT hurricane scientist Kerry Emanuel. Hurricane damage doesn't just rise with wind speed, it goes up exponentially, Masters said.

"If you go to bed and there's a tropical storm in the Gulf of Mexico and you wake up the next morning with a Category 4 about to make landfall, there's no time to evacuate," Emanuel said. "It's a very worrying trend."

Since 1982, the proportion of storms that rapidly intensify in the Atlantic has come close to around doubling, according to a study last year by Kossin and a team out of Princeton University. This year is particularly nasty and Delta is a good example, said study co-author Gabriel Vecchi, a Princeton climate scientist.

That study also found this type of growing trend of rapid intensification cannot be explained by natural forces. Vecchi and Kossin said climate change, from the burning of coal, oil and natural gas, is clearly playing a major role.

That's because two factors are key in storms getting stronger and weaker: fuel from hot water — and the type and direction of winds high up that have the potential for decapitating hurricanes or letting them get more powerful.

In the day-to-day changing weather for individual storms, the wind issue is important, but over the decades that the team studied, water temperature was a far bigger factor, scientists said.

"We've created so much more heat in the ocean," Kossin said. Rapid strengthening "is what you get when create so much fuel for hurricanes. They're going to get fat, they're going to get intense and they're going to do it quickly."

Delta gained strength over water temperatures around 87 degrees (31 degrees Celsius), considerably warmer than normal. When Delta powered up on late Monday and into Tuesday, the water that was warm enough to be fuel to make the storm stronger extended about 245 feet (75 meters) deep, Masters said. So "it went bonkers."

After hitting the Yucatan, Delta's wind speed dropped to 85 mph (137 kph), but 24 hours later it was back up to 115 mph (185 kph). That just missed qualifying for a second bout of rapid intensification, but it remains a growing threat to further intensify until just before an anticipated Friday landfall in the United States, according to the National Hurricane Center.

"This season has given a lot of examples of these rapidly intensifying storms that we expect to be more common," Princeton's Vecchi said.

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

Follow Seth Borenstein on Twitter at @borenbears .

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Brazil strains at quarantine as virus cases pass 5 million

By DAVID BILLER Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — Dozens of people converged on the cobblestone streets of downtown Rio de Janeiro for its traditional Pedra do Sal samba party — the first since the pandemic began — and it seemed Brazil was returning to normal.

Among those dancing Monday were Luana Jatobá and two friends, all of whom overcame COVID-19. As a nurse technician caring for coronavirus patients, she knows better than most that occupancy rates at Rio's intensive-care units have surged as the city's seven-day average number of cases reaches its highest level since June.

But, she said, everyone is desperate for a respite from the gloom.

"We take care of the people who are sick with COVID, but something that isn't discussed is that there's a very serious disease all over the world, which is depression," said Jatobá. "After confinement, this samba circle is really to rescue those who felt downbeat and were oppressed. It's not just the virus that kills."

Brazilians, like many across the world, are burned out on quarantine. The somewhat slower pace of COVID-19's spread, combined with less media coverage after it moved beyond Brazil's two biggest cities, has helped people put the disease out of mind. But it continues to rip through Latin America's largest country, and mayors — many of whom aren't keen to keep restrictions in place ahead of November elections — are reopening their cities.

And experts are warning of a possible second wave.

At its height, Brazil was registering more than 45,000 cases and 1,000 deaths per day. Those totals took the shape of a months-long plateau, unlike most other countries whose viral curves had defined peaks. While Brazil's figures have fallen to about 27,000 cases and 700 deaths daily — significant improvement, clearly — they're still nothing to sneeze at.

Brazil surpassed 5 million confirmed cases on Wednesday night and is verging on 150,000 dead, the second-most in the world, according to the tally from Johns Hopkins University.

"People thought it unacceptable that 1,000 people were dying every day two months ago, and now they are fine with 700 people dying every day. It simply doesn't make any sense," said Pedro Hallal, an epidemiologist who coordinates the Federal University of Pelotas' testing program, by far the country's most comprehensive. "We can say the worst part of the first wave is done, and now obviously we need to continue to be monitoring to see if numbers go up again."

Hallal added that a second wave of infections is unlikely this year, because of how long Brazil's crest lasted, but that tens of millions remain susceptible. As such, a second wave is "very likely" in 2021, he said.

The University of Miami's observatory for COVID-19 in the Americas indicates that, at Brazil's state level, the number of policies adopted to counter infection has fallen to the third-lowest in the region, behind Nicaragua, which declined to muster any meaningful response, and Uruguay, where virus incidence is among the world's lowest.

The phenomenon is visible in Brazil's cities, too, as campaigning mayors allow bars, restaurants and movie theaters to reopen, encouraging people to emerge from quarantine. Brazil's statistics institute released data last week showing that the percentage of people in strict isolation or leaving home only when necessary dropped to 57% in mid-September, from 68% in early July.

"Mayors running for reelection have no interest in imposing any kind of lockdown or restrictions," said Miguel Lago, executive director of Brazil's Institute for Health Policy Studies, which advises public health officials. Their incentive now is to roll back pandemic measures, he added.

Limitations that ostensibly remain are often ignored. For example, Rio's beaches have been packed on recent weekends, despite the fact sunbathing remains prohibited.

"In the Brazilian tradition, there are laws that stick and others that don't," Alvaro Costa e Silva, a columnist for Brazil's biggest newspaper, Folha de S.Paulo, wrote this week. "To maintain what today is considered mental health, filling beaches and gathering in bars became a tolerated compulsion in Rio."

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As shops and some offices reopen in Sao Paulo, traffic jams in South America's biggest city have started making a comeback. By mid-September, mobility across Brazil had returned to normal levels, according to the University of Miami's COVID-19 observatory, based on GPS data from Google.

In Amazonas state, where early on the pandemic slammed the capital, Manaus, and forced cemeteries to dig mass graves, mobility was 24% above pre-pandemic levels. A fresh surge of cases prompted local authorities in late September to reinstate restrictions on commerce and gatherings, and to shut down the riverside beachfront.

"I wouldn't recommend governments to relax further; there's still room for big spikes based on people moving around and not wearing masks," said Michael Touchton, a political science professor at the University of Miami, and co-founder of its observatory. "A second peak is still quite possible in Brazil."

Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro has downplayed the severity of COVID-19 from the start, and insisted that shutting down economies would inflict worse hardship on working-class families than the disease. He told the United Nations General Assembly last month that the virus and joblessness were problems that needed solving simultaneously, and touted emergency cash payouts that helped 65 million Brazilians through the downturn.

But his government hasn't implemented a comprehensive national testing policy to identify cases swiftly and prevent their spread, nor shown any sign it intends to, according to Hallal. On the contrary, the Health Ministry yanked financing of his university's testing program in 133 cities after its third phase, forcing him to seek private funding for its fourth and upcoming fifth phases.

Results from the most recent phase, conducted in late August, found an average 1.4% infection rate in 33,250 people, down from 3.8% in June. While the rate was just 0.8% in Rio and Sao Paulo, 23 cities — almost all in Brazil's north and northeast — had triple that level or more.

"The population is behaving like the pandemic has been controlled, which isn't true," said Margareth Dalcolmo, a respiratory medicine professor at the state-funded Oswaldo Cruz Foundation, who is also lead researcher for one of several vaccine studies in Brazil. "The official discourse, versus the pressure from business and mayors to reopen everything, leaves people confused about what recommendations to follow. That's a big challenge in Brazil."

Back at the samba show in Rio, partygoers showed they still remember how to quickstep without spilling their plastic cups of beer. A couple danced cheek to cheek. The percussionists striking their drums wore masks, but few spectators followed their lead.

Still, one of the event's organizers, Jeferson dos Santos, celebrated the return of the longed-for rhythm. "Today we have the first wave of samba, all the musicians are wearing their masks, all playing and respecting World Health Organization norms," dos Santos said. "We hope everything goes right, with God's will. We're in that positive vibe."

American poet Louise Glück wins Nobel Prize in Literature

By HILLEL ITALIE AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Louise Glück, an American poet long revered for the power, inventiveness and concision of her work and for her generosity to younger writers, has won the Nobel Prize in Literature.

The Nobel Committee on Thursday praised her as "candid and uncompromising" in granting a rare honor for a U.S. poet, with Wallace Stevens, Gwendolyn Brooks and Robert Frost among her predecessors who were bypassed. Glück spoke briefly to reporters waiting outside her home in Cambridge, Massachusetts, saying she felt "agitation, joy, gratitude."

Glück is a former U.S. poet laureate who had already received virtually every honor possible for a poet, including the Pulitzer Prize in 1993 for "The Wild Iris," the National Book Award in 2014 for "Faithful and Virtuous Night" and a National Humanities Medal in 2015. She is just the 16th woman to get the Nobel for literature since it was started in 1901.

"As one of our most celebrated American poets, we are thrilled that Louise Glück has received this year's Nobel Prize in Literature," Michael Jacobs, chairman of the Academy of American Poets, said in a statement.

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"Her poems, her overall body of work, and her utterly distinctive voice, present the human condition in memorable, breathtaking language."

A native of New York City, descended in part from Hungarian Jews, Glück began reading poetry obsessively as a child, and by her early teens, she was already trying to have her work published. She struggled with anorexia as an adolescent, later saying that her eating disorder was less an expression of despair than of her desire to free the soul from the confines of her body, a theme that later arose in her work. The 77-year-old Glück has drawn from both personal experience and common history and mythology, whether revisiting the final section of "The Iliad" in "Penelope's Song" or the abduction of Persephone in "Persephone's Song," in which she imagines Persephone "lying in the bed of Hades":

"What is in her mind?/ Is she afraid? Has something/ blotted out the idea/ of mind?"

Anders Olson, chairman of the Nobel literature committee, said that "Glück seeks the universal, and in this she takes inspiration from myths and classical motifs, present in most of her works. The voices of Dido, Persephone and Eurydice — the abandoned, the punished, the betrayed — are masks for a self in transformation, as personal as it is universally valid."

Glück's poetry collections also include "Descending Figure," "Ararat" and "The Triumph of Achilles," winner of the National Book Critics Circle prize in 1985. It contains one of her most anthologized poems, the spare and despairing "Mock Orange," in which a flowering shrub becomes the focus of a wider wail of anguish about sex and life: "How can I rest? / How can I be content / when there is still / that odor in the world?"

Glück's legacy extends beyond her own work. Currently dividing her time between Yale University and Stanford University, she has called teaching one of the few pure joys of her life and has mentored many younger poets, including Claudia Rankine, author of the acclaimed "Citizen" and a current work, "Just Us." Rankine, who studied under Glück at Williams College and is now a colleague at Yale, praised her as "incredible" teacher who valued the work above all.

"I remember the rigor, the wit and the patience that she showed me as a 19-year-old student trying to learn what there was to learn about getting inside the craft of writing poetry," Rankine told The Associated Press on Thursday. You would hand in something and Louise would find the one line that worked. There was no place for the niceties of mediocrity, no false praise. When Louise speaks you believe her because she doesn't hide inside of civility."

Nobel laureates receive a 10 million kronor (more than \$1.1 million) prize and are usually feted at a banquet in December, but the event was canceled this year because of the coronavirus pandemic. On Thursday, her longtime publisher Farrar, Straus & Giroux announced that a new collection, "Winter Recipes from the Collective," will come out next year. A previous work, the career retrospective "Poems 1962-2012," jumped into the top 100 on Amazon.com's bestseller list soon after her Nobel was reported.

Glück has enough experience winning awards to be skeptical of their importance. In a 2012 interview with the Academy of Achievement, she said that how she feels about a prize often depends on what she is working on at the time and whether she feels it's worthy of praise. Glück also found that the rewards were temporary.

"Worldly honor makes existence in the world easier. It puts you in a position to have a good job. It means you can charge large fees to get on an airplane and perform," she said. "But as an emblem of what I want — it is not capable of being had in my lifetime. I want to live after I die, in that ancient way. And there's no way of knowing whether that will happen, and there will be no knowing, no matter how many blue ribbons have been plastered to my corpse."

The literature prize comes after several years of controversy and scandal for the organization that awards the accolade. In 2018, the award was postponed after sex abuse allegations rocked the Swedish Academy, which names the Nobel literature committee, and sparked a mass exodus of members.

After the academy revamped itself to try 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., who has been called an apologist for Serbian war crimes. Albania, Bosnia and Turkey were among the countries boycotting the Nobel awards ceremony, and a member of the committee that nominates candidates for the literature prize resigned.

Associated Press writer Jill Lawless in London, David Keyton in Stockholm and Frank Jordans in Berlin contributed.

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

'So frustrating': Doctors and nurses battle virus skeptics

By HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH Associated Press

MISSION, Kan. (AP) — Treating the sick and dying isn't even the toughest part for nurse Amelia Montgomery as the coronavirus surges in her corner of red America.

It's dealing with patients and relatives who don't believe the virus is real, refuse to wear masks and demand treatments like hydroxychloroquine, which President Donald Trump has championed even though experts say it is not effective against the scourge that has killed over 210,000 in the U.S.

Montgomery finds herself, like so many other doctors and nurses, in a world where the politics of the crisis are complicating treatment efforts, with some people even resisting getting tested.

It's unclear how Trump's bout with the virus will affect the situation, but some doctors aren't optimistic. After a few days of treatment at a military hospital, the president tweeted Monday, "Don't be afraid of Covid. Don't let it dominate your life. ... I feel better than I did 20 years ago!"

After one tough shift in the coronavirus unit at Cox South Hospital in Springfield, Missouri, Montgomery went onto Facebook to vent her frustrations about caring for patients who didn't socially distance because they didn't believe the virus was real. The hospital later shared her post on its website.

She complained that some people demand the anti-malaria drug hydroxychloroquine and think the only patients who get really sick have underlying health problems.

"The majority of people don't understand and can't picture what we are seeing. That has been frustrating for all of us," Montgomery said in an interview, adding: "It wears."

Combating virus skeptics is a battle across the country.

In Georgia, at Augusta University Medical Center, visitors have tried to get around the mask requirement by wearing face coverings made of fishnet and other material with visible holes, something the hospital has dubbed "malicious compliance." People also have shown up with video cameras in an attempt to collect proof the virus is a hoax, said Dr. Phillip Coule, the health system's chief medical officer, who contracted the virus in July and has seen two staff members die.

"Just imagine that while you are caring for your own staff that are dying from this disease, and while you are trying to keep yourself safe, and you are trying to keep your family safe, and you are trying to deal with a disease that such little is known about, and then to have somebody tell you that it is all a hoax after you have been dealing with that all day," he said. "Imagine the emotional distress that that causes."

He said most skeptics — including some who have argued with him on Facebook — are converted to believers when they get sick themselves. And he is starting to hear fewer people dismiss the virus entirely since the president was diagnosed.

"It is unfortunate that the president has contracted the disease, but it is difficult for groups who support the president to be out there saying it doesn't exist," he said.

But he also said he fears people may draw the wrong lesson about the seriousness of the disease from what happened to Trump: "People may extrapolate that the risk for a 74-year-old is low when the reality is the risk to a 74-year-old is quite high."

Dr. Beth Oller, who practices family medicine with her physician-husband in rural Kansas' Rooks County, isn't optimistic the president's diagnosis will change much in her community, where cases are on the rise, many resist masks, and weddings with hundreds of guests have been held in recent weeks.

"None of the things he did since he had it have helped us a bit, and, if anything, would fly in the face of it," she said, noting that the president took his mask off as soon as he returned to the White House. "All he did was continue to show people that the things we are saying to do are overblown and an overreac-

tion. As a physician, it is so damn frustrating.”

The issue has been a challenge in red states for months.

In Iowa, home health nurse Lisa Dockery was fired from her job caring for a boy with severe disabilities after arguing with his parents, who said COVID-19 is a “hoax.” The argument started because the parents refused to wear masks around Dockery and the boy, even though she told them their son’s life was in danger because he has respiratory problems, relies on tube feedings and cannot walk, state unemployment records show.

The case ended with a judge ordering her former employer to pay her unemployment.

Dr. Gary LeRoy, president of the American Academy of Family Physicians, said he isn’t surprised that it has been so hard to persuade the public, noting that there was also a lot of denial as the Spanish flu was sweeping across the world a century ago, killing tens of millions of people.

“When you look at human history, it is what happens in every situation,” he said. “In war, in famine, in disease, there is going to be a population of people where the bombs are dropping all around them and they don’t believe that it exists.”

Dr. Brad Burmeister, an emergency medicine physician at Bellin Hospital in Green Bay, Wisconsin, said he has encountered a few patients who have declined to be tested for the coronavirus despite having possible symptoms.

“They say they don’t want to become a statistic or some kind of rhetoric like that,” he said, adding that he thinks a shift might be coming, given what happened to Trump. “It just sort of shows how infectious COVID-19 is and how easily it can spread, that even when you are taking all of those precautions, you can still get infected with the virus.”

Dr. Natasha Bhuyan, a family physician in Phoenix, said politics often come up in discussions with patients who come in asking whether the death toll is being inflated.

“It’s an info-demic as well as a pandemic,” she lamented.

Dr. Jay W. Lee, a family physician in Orange County, California, recalled a patient who demanded the “largest hydroxychloroquine prescription you can give me.”

“If I didn’t have my mask on, he would have seen my mouth agape,” said Lee, chief medical officer of the Share Our Selves medical clinics, adding that a small number of patients “flat-out said this was a hoax.”

He has found himself turning to social media and meeting with elected leaders to combat some of the misinformation.

“I think part of it is we feel like we can’t just sit back and take it because silence is complicity,” he said.

Harry, Meghan, team with Malala Yousafzai on girls’ rights

LONDON (AP) — Prince Harry and his wife Meghan are joining activist Malala Yousafzai in a video chat about the challenges girls face in accessing education amid the coronavirus pandemic.

The couple’s conversation with the 23-year-old education campaigner will be released on the Malala Fund’s YouTube channel and website on Sunday, to mark the International Day of the Girl.

The video chat covers how the pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on young women’s access to education. Research by the Malala Fund has suggested that 20 million secondary-school aged girls may never return to the classroom after the health crisis is over.

Yousafzai, who survived a shot in the head after being targeted for campaigning for girls’ education in Pakistan, went on to become the youngest-ever Nobel Peace Prize winner in 2014. She graduated with a degree in philosophy, politics and economics from Oxford University in June.

Meghan, now based in California with Harry to seek financial independence from the British monarchy, has campaigned on education for girls for some time. She has spoken about gender equality at forums including the UN Women Conference in 2015.

In 2011 the United Nations declared Oct. 11 as the International Day of the Girl Child to promote girls’ rights and address the challenges girls face around the world.

Trump 270 path narrows, Wisconsin mirrors swing state plight

By THOMAS BEAUMONT Associated Press

MEDFORD, Wis. (AP) — President Donald Trump's once-comfortable advantage in the pivotal region of Wisconsin around the blue-collar hub of Green Bay has dwindled. In suburban Milwaukee, long a Republican-dominated area, it has thinned as well.

And his supporters are far from confident he can find thousands of new voters in the state's sparsely populated rural areas to make up for the setbacks.

Trump's path to victory in Wisconsin, a state he won narrowly in 2016, has become increasingly complicated, and so has his path to the 270 electoral votes needed for his reelection.

"It's challenging. There are far more states in play in 2020 than there were in 2016," said Whit Ayers, a veteran Republican pollster. "And they include states Trump won by a significant margin like Arizona, Iowa, Ohio and Georgia."

Few states are as important to the president's prospects as Wisconsin, which he carried by less than 23,000 votes out of nearly 3 million cast in 2016 and which had not voted for a Republican for president in more than a generation.

But even Trump's supporters concede the hill is steep given the declines they are seeing. "Can Republicans and Trump offset that? That's the big question, and I don't have a strong answer," said Jim Miller, the Republican chairman of Wisconsin's 7th Congressional District, which covers the state's northernmost 26 counties.

A similar narrative is playing out in other Midwestern states, and in Pennsylvania, with local officials sounding alarms about Trump's prospects. He must make up significant ground in these states in the campaign's final four weeks to replicate his 2016 upset and defeat Democrat Joe Biden.

Trump is stressing his nomination of Judge Amy Coney Barrett to the Supreme Court and his call for law and order in response to demonstrations over racial injustice, which aides say are winning Wisconsin issues.

"I think that we are not necessarily losing those voters. I think that those voters are currently undecided," especially in the Milwaukee area, said Nick Trainer, the Trump campaign's director of battleground strategy.

Trump had planned to campaign last Saturday in Green Bay, but his positive coronavirus test forced him to cancel, punctuating his struggles in this region of the state where he beat Clinton by 18 percentage points, Wisconsin voting records show.

Trump's once narrow edge in that region collapsed in a Marquette University poll published Wednesday. GOP legislative surveys noted by strategists are also prompting worries that there's little time to rebuild the margins they need to win the state a second time.

"He's winning the Green Bay market, but not by enough to help him statewide," said Scott Jensen, a Republican former Wisconsin Assembly speaker who is advising in several competitive Statehouse races.

The obstacle is similar to Trump's in Ohio, where he won by 8 percentage points but where public surveys show the race close.

"You can't win a state by 8 and then 30 days out be struggling in places you dominated," said Scott Borgemenke, a onetime top adviser to Republican former Ohio Gov. Bob Taft.

As Biden's campaign on Tuesday announced stepped-up Ohio advertising, Trump was reducing his Ohio advertising, according to the ad tracking firm Kantar/CMAG.

The trend is similar in Wisconsin, where Trump slashed his advertising by 75% over the past month and was being swamped by Biden's spending, \$2.3 million to less than \$173,000 as of last week, according to Kantar/CMAG.

Trump also needs to vastly improve in Milwaukee's suburbs, Jensen said.

The president last campaigned in Milwaukee in January, the night Democrats debated in Des Moines, Iowa, ahead of the presidential caucuses. Trump visited blue-collar Kenosha south of Milwaukee in August after the shooting of a Black man by white police officers, though he held no political events.

Trump's campaign says the president's son Eric will headline events in Menomonie Falls, northwest of Milwaukee and in Milton, near blue-collar Janesville in south-central Wisconsin on Monday.

Still, Trump's suburban absence has underscored his Wisconsin dilemma, one that shadows him in Penn-

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sylvania: Stay away from the state's population centers or show up and risk alienating suburban voters. It's sparked some unlikely campaign travel advice for Trump from Wisconsin Republican Rep. John Nygren. "Not to be disrespectful to him, but, for him, he may be better off not going to the suburbs," said Nygren, from Marinette in far northeastern Wisconsin. "Because if he's not in the news, maybe it's not a reminder of concerns that people have."

Jensen said the president's combative persona has cost him. "It's all a matter of style. That traditional GOP base of college-educated professionals can't stand the president's style," said Jensen, who has conducted focus groups in key Milwaukee area legislative districts. It's a scenario also playing out in Pennsylvania, where Trump won by a smaller percentage than in Wisconsin.

And in Pennsylvania Trump is facing a more dire decline in suburbs where Republicans held sway until 2016, such as Chester County, and have lost ground since, said Republican former U.S. Rep. Ryan Costello, who represented Chester County until last year.

Trump has seemed to heed Nygren's advice, campaigning since August in Oshkosh, a hub of the southern Fox Valley, and in September outside Wausau, the media market reaching furthest into northern Wisconsin. Vice President Mike Pence has followed suit, campaigning in Wausau, in LaCrosse on the western border and in Eau Claire in the northwest.

But Trump would have to attract several thousand first-time voters in the sparsely populated rural north, where in several counties he received more than 60% of the vote, to compensate for the declines in more populous parts of the state.

"It's going to be a challenge," Mike Bub, GOP chairman in tiny Taylor County, said with a shrug. Trump received 70% of the vote in the county of 20,000 west of Wausau. Taylor posted Trump's second-highest 2016 margin in Wisconsin.

What's more, Marquette's September poll shows Biden, not Trump, receiving more support from first-time voters.

"Can you squeeze enough votes out of there to make the difference?" Jensen said. "Probably not."

This story has been corrected to reflect that Marinette is in northeastern Wisconsin, not northwestern.

US hits all of Iran's financial sector with sanctions

By MATTHEW LEE AP Diplomatic Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration has blacklisted virtually all of Iran's financial sector, dealing another blow to an economy that is already reeling under U.S. sanctions. The move will deepen tensions with European nations and others over Iran.

Thursday's move hits 18 Iranian banks that had thus far escaped the bulk of re-imposed U.S. sanctions and, more importantly, subjects foreign, non-Iranian financial institutions to penalties for doing business with them. Thus, it effectively cuts them off from the international financial system.

"Today's action to identify the financial sector and sanction eighteen major Iranian banks reflects our commitment to stop illicit access to U.S. dollars," said Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin. "Our sanctions programs will continue until Iran stops its support of terrorist activities and ends its nuclear programs. Today's actions will continue to allow for humanitarian transactions to support the Iranian people."

The action targets 16 Iranian banks for their role in the country's financial sector, one bank for being owned or controlled by a another sanctioned Iranian bank and one military-affiliated bank, Treasury said in a statement. Some of them had been covered by previous designations but Thursday's move places them all under the same authority covering Iran's entire financial sector.

The targeted banks are the Amin Investment Bank, Bank Keshavarzi Iran, Bank Maskan, Bank Refah Kargaran, Bank-e Shahr, Eghtesad Novin Bank, Gharzolhasaneh Resalat Bank, Hekmat Iranian Bank, Iran Zamin Bank, Karafarin Bank, Khavarmianeh Bank, Mehr Iran Credit Union Bank, Pasargad Bank, Saman Bank, Sarmayeh Bank, Tosee Taavon Bank, Tourism Bank and Islamic Regional Cooperation Bank.

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Foreign companies that do business with those banks were given 45 days to wind down their operations before facing so-called "secondary sanctions."

European nations have opposed the blanket financial services blacklisting because it will open up their biggest banks and other companies to U.S. penalties for conducting business with Iran that had previously been allowed.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammed Javad Zarif reacted angrily to the designations, calling them a "crime against humanity" at a time of global crisis. "Amid Covid19 pandemic, U.S. regime wants to blow up our remaining channels to pay for food & medicine," he said in a tweet. "Iranians WILL survive this latest of cruelties. But conspiring to starve a population is a crime against humanity. Culprits & enablers — who block our money — WILL face justice."

The move comes as the U.S. has stepped up efforts to kill the 2015 Iran nuclear deal that President Donald Trump withdrew from in 2018. Since then, Trump has steadily increased pressure on Iran by imposing sanctions on its oil sales, blacklisting top government officials and killing a top general in an airstrike.

Last month, the administration unilaterally announced that it had restored all international sanctions against Iran that had been eased or lifted under the nuclear deal. And, having been ridiculed by most members of the U.N. Security Council for claiming to have retained the right to restore international sanctions despite no longer being a member of the deal, the administration has continued to seek to boost its leverage with Iran.

While almost the entire rest of the world, which has an interest in preserving the deal, has vowed to ignore those sanctions, violating them will come with significant risk of losing access to the U.S. financial system. Some believe that Thursday's action could destroy any chance of salvaging the accord by making it impossible for Iranian banks to have any relationships with their foreign counterparts.

Critics say the sanctions will further cut off Iran's ability to import humanitarian goods that are especially needed during the coronavirus pandemic, although U.S. officials insist there are carve-outs for legitimate items such as food and medicine. Relief organizations and others, however, say the exemptions still starve the Iranian people of essentials.

Thursday's decision, which was first reported by The Washington Post, follows months of internal administration debate about the best way to proceed with Iran, particularly as Trump faces a difficult reelection challenge against former Vice President Joe Biden, who has said he wants to return to the nuclear deal.

Until Wednesday, the Treasury Department had opposed the step, arguing that it would adversely affect U.S. relationships with Europe. However, Iran hawks in Congress and outside the government have long sought the cut-off.

Some worried Democrats have 2nd thoughts on voting by mail

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

Ann Mintz and Clifford Wagner have been struggling with indecision about the election for weeks. Their angst isn't over whom to vote for — the Philadelphia couple are Democrats who support Joe Biden. It's about how, precisely, they should cast their ballots.

They voted by mail without hesitation in the state's June primary. But now there are new stresses. Will a slowdown at the U.S. Postal Service make ballots arrive too late? Will technical mishaps filling out ballots lead to the vote not getting counted? Or, in one even more complicated but possible scenario, would their mail votes be tallied later than in-person ballots, and will the in-person ballots be largely Republican, and will that allow Trump to prematurely declare victory on election night?

"The stakes are so high. We're putting a lot of thought into it," the 65-year-old Wagner said.

Many voters who decided early in the coronavirus pandemic to cast their votes by mail have been rethinking their options as Election Day approaches. Nervousness about whether and when their ballots will be counted is leading some voters to increasingly strategize and analyze a decision that was once a no-brainer. All the worry is spreading rapidly to election officials, who warn it might contribute to more chaos at the polls on Election Day.

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If voters who requested absentee ballots change their minds and try to vote on Election Day, they may run afoul of a thicket of rules that vary from state to state. In many states, switching from absentee to in-person requires a series of steps to cancel the absentee ballot. Voters may be asked to cast provisional ballots that take longer to process. All these last-minute changes take more resources and more time and introduce the possibility for errors.

"It puts a whole lot of pressure on already overburdened election officials," said Wendy Weiser of the Brennan Center for Justice.

Still, some Democratic groups trying to turn out voters have shifted their messaging from voting by mail to voting in person. In Philadelphia, the result is an unhelpful "whiplash," said Al Schmidt, an elections commissioner in the city who worries about the unexpected impact.

"It adds to lines and has more people in polling places longer, which is what we're trying to avoid," he said.

Republicans have a parallel risk of disruption. Trump has sown baseless distrust of mail voting among GOP voters, frustrating his party's strategists who worry the message could depress turnout. Trump tried to shift his message last month in North Carolina, urging supporters to vote by mail and then also cast ballots on Election Day to check whether the election was really secure.

That earned stern warnings from state officials that voting twice is a felony. Trump shifted to tell supporters to simply check on Election Day to ensure their mail ballots arrived.

But it's some Democrats who are now looking at a shift. It achieved widespread popularity in the party's rank and file during the initial outbreak of coronavirus this spring, which coincided with primary season. The party stressed it wanted voters to cast their ballots in whichever way made sense for them, even going so far as to sue Nevada's Republican secretary of state to ensure there were more in-person voting options for that state's June primary.

Reports about Postal Service changes and delivery slowdowns triggered a new set of concerns. Starting at the party's virtual convention in August, some prominent Democrats began tweaking their recommendations. Barack and Michelle Obama urged supporters to, if possible, vote in-person at early voting locations. Some groups organizing Democratic-leaning voters followed suit.

"We've been letting voters know you can request absentee ballots and still go to the polls," said Marcus Bass of Advance Carolina, which organizes Black voters in battleground North Carolina. "You just can't vote twice."

The Collective PAC, which focuses on turning out Black voters, has moved its \$7 million campaign to push early, in-person voting rather than mail voting. Founder Quentin James said that while older, reliable Black voters have happily switched to mail voting, it's been harder to persuade less frequent, younger ones.

"They don't trust government," James said. "They just want to go vote and punch the ballot in person."

The change comes as coronavirus cases have begun to rise again in the fall, climbing rapidly in some battleground states like Wisconsin and potentially making in-person voting riskier on Election Day.

Jamie Perrapato of the activist group Turn PA Blue says she feels "like a therapist" because so many people call her to discuss their voting worries and option.

Perrapato's advice: "Don't think you can game the system. You can't try to outgame him (Trump)."

Many states don't make changing your mind easy. In North Carolina, voters who have requested an absentee ballot need to have a witness signature with it if they want their ballot counted. Pam Winton, a 73-year-old retired professor in Durham, plans to vote for Biden during the state's early, in-person voting. But she also requested a mail ballot in case those lines are too long — unaware she'd need to get a witness before sending that in.

"I haven't studied it that carefully," Winton said. "I'm still waiting to see what the options are and what seems to be the safest and most reliable way to go about it."

In Pennsylvania, voters who have requested an absentee ballot can only vote on Election Day if they bring the entire ballot package to return at the polls. Otherwise, their votes will be provisional.

John Fetterman, Pennsylvania's Democratic lieutenant governor, says he worries about whether some of the 2.5 million Pennsylvanians who have already requested an absentee ballot for the election — three times as many Democrats as Republicans — will remember to bring the correct documents should they

try to vote in person instead.

"All of this is predicated on absolute propaganda that they know has no basis in reality," Fetterman said of Democrats' concerns about mail voting.

Associated Press writers Bryan Anderson in Raleigh, N.C., and Christina A. Cassidy in Atlanta contributed to this report.

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 relation to Sanjay), a pulmonologist who treats coronavirus patients and contributes 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. Jon 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."

This story corrects the first name of Dr. Jon LaPook, it is not John.

US layoffs still high, but so is skepticism on jobless data

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The number of Americans seeking unemployment benefits dipped last week to a still-high 840,000, evidence that layoffs remain elevated seven months into the pandemic recession.

Yet economists say they are increasingly dubious about the unemployment claims figures, even though there is little doubt that hiring has slowed and employers have continued to lay off workers.

One reason layoffs remain high is that companies often hold on to workers when a recession begins, if they can, in hopes of outlasting the downturn. Yet if the recession drags on, many will eventually give up and cut jobs.

"Some of these new layoffs are coming from firms that didn't want or didn't have to lay people off at first," said Constance Hunter, chief economist at KPMG. Now, "they have no choice but to start reducing their workforce."

Consider Luke McCann. He had hoped through September that business would finally pick up at his online marketing company, CollectionAgencyMatch.com, based in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

It didn't. So McCann was forced to lay off seven of the 15 staffers at his company, which helps businesses find collection agencies. His revenue had shrunk as small businesses either closed down or decided not to pursue customers who hadn't paid their bills, McCann said.

A loan from the government's Paycheck Protection Program had helped McCann stave off cutting workers. But "without more (government help) on the way and demand not picking up, we had to lay off employees to help save expenses to stay in business."

At face value, the Labor Department's report Thursday indicated that more than 800,000 people are still being laid off each week, a historically huge number — more than in any week during the 2008-2009 Great Recession. Weekly applications for unemployment benefits have long been considered a proxy for job cuts.

But the flood of layoffs during the pandemic recession and the creation of some new jobless-aid pro-

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grams have overwhelmed state unemployment agencies. A result is that the jobless claims figures the government has been reporting have become an object of skepticism.

"We can't view it as real-time job separation data," said Elizabeth Pancotti, a policy adviser at Employ America, a left-leaning advocacy group, referring to layoffs. "We're still seeing massive overcounting of initial claims."

Some states are still processing backlogged applications from this summer, Pancotti noted. California, for example, stopped accepting new claims for two weeks so it could clear a backlog of 600,000 applications that are more than three weeks old.

In many states, the data for initial jobless claims also includes workers who had been laid off previously, then found temporary work or were recalled temporarily — only to lose their jobs again and reapply for unemployment benefits. These repeat applicants account for roughly half of jobless claims in California, according to the California Policy Lab.

Till von Wachter, an economist at UCLA and director of the Policy Lab, said that initial applications can also include workers who have used up their 26 weeks of state unemployment and are transitioning to an extended benefits program that provides three additional months of payments.

And this spring, Congress created a new program, Pandemic Unemployment Assistance, or PUA, that made self-employed and gig workers eligible for unemployment aid for the first time. Yet in many states, to qualify for the PUA program, the unemployed must first apply for regular jobless benefits. Only after they have been rejected under that system can they apply for PUA.

Last week, more than 464,000 people applied for aid through PUA. These figures aren't adjusted for seasonal trends, so the government reports them separately from the traditional jobless claims. Yet the figure may include some people who applied under the traditional benefits program.

Organized fraud has also been a problem, particularly in the PUA program, in which it's difficult for states to verify applicants' incomes. Contractors and gig workers, for example, rarely have W-2 tax forms, which employees in traditional jobs receive.

Thursday's report from the Labor Department said the number of people who are continuing to receive unemployment benefits dropped 1 million to 11 million. The decline suggests that many of the unemployed are finding work. But it also reflects the fact that some have used up the 26 weeks of their regular state benefits and have transitioned to extended benefit programs.

About 2 million people are receiving aid under a federal extended benefit program created this spring, and an additional 11.4 million people are doing so through PUA. All told, 25.5 million people were receiving some form of unemployment aid in the week that ended Sept. 19, the government said.

Yet those figures are also likely inflated, mostly by double-counting. California and other states have counted retroactive payments under PUA as multiple payments to separate individuals.

"Nobody knows exactly how many people are receiving unemployment insurance benefits right now," said Heidi Shierholz, policy director at the Economic Policy Institute and former chief economist at the Labor Department. That is a "reminder that we need to invest heavily in our data infrastructure and technology."

The figures nevertheless point to a flagging recovery and come two days after President Donald Trump cut off talks over a new rescue aid package that economists say is urgently needed. A failure to enact another round of government aid would crimp household income and spending, and some economists say it would raise the risk of a double-dip recession.

In the meantime, the pace of layoffs shows little sign of flagging. Disney said last week that it would cut 28,000 jobs. And American Airlines and United Airlines combined furloughed 32,000 employees last week. Airlines had been barred from cutting jobs as long as they were receiving federal aid, which expired this month. The American Hotel & Lodging Association has said that nearly three-quarters of hotels say they'll have to lay off more workers without further financial aid.

Congress is still considering extending the airline aid in stand-alone legislation. But there is little sign that a deal will be reached with the White House.

Across the country, hiring has slowed just as federal rescue aid has run out, hampering an economy still

climbing out of the deep hole created by the pandemic. Employers added just 661,000 jobs in September, less than half of August's gain and the third straight monthly decline.

Just over half the 22 million jobs lost to the coronavirus have been recovered, leaving the economy with 10.7 million fewer jobs than in February — a figure that exceeds all the job losses from the Great Recession.

AP Business Writer Joyce M. Rosenberg contributed to this report from New York.

'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 reported in the country continued climbing quickly and reached a new daily peak of 5,397 on Thursday.

Overall, COVID-19 infections in Ukraine have nearly doubled in the past month, topping 244,000.

"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 Zelenskyy 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.

Zelenskyy 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 Zelenskyy's administration inherited health care reforms from his predecessor that slashed government subsidies, leaving hospital workers underpaid and poorly equipped.

Last month, Zelenskyy 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.

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.

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"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 Gloshovskiy, 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.

Gloshovskiy 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."

Karmanau reported from Kyiv, Ukraine.

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

US officials: Climate change not a threat to rare wolverine

By MATTHEW BROWN Associated Press

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — U.S. wildlife officials are withdrawing proposed protections for the snow-loving wolverine after determining the rare and elusive predator is not as threatened by climate change as once thought.

Details on the decision were obtained by The Associated Press in advance of an announcement Thursday.

A federal judge four years ago had blocked an attempt to withdraw protections that were first proposed in 2010, pointing to evidence from government scientists that wolverines were "squarely in the path of climate change."

But years of additional research suggest the animals' prevalence is expanding, not contracting, U.S. Fish and Wildlife officials said. And they predict that enough snow will persist at high elevations for wolverines to den in mountain snowfields each spring despite warming temperatures.

"Wolverines have come back down from Canada and they are repopulating these areas in the Lower 48 that they historically occupied," said U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologist Justin Shoemaker. "There's going to be significant areas of snow pack in the spring at the time they would need it and the levels they would need it."

Wildlife advocates expressed doubts about the rationale for the move and said they are likely to challenge it in court.

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"They are putting the wolverine on the path to extinction," said Andrea Zaccardi with the Center for Biological Diversity.

Wolverines, also known as "mountain devils," were wiped out across most of the U.S. by the early 1900s following unregulated trapping and poisoning campaigns. They're slowly clawing their way back in some areas, according to biologists, who no longer consider the relatively few wolverines in the Lower 48 states to be an isolated population. Instead, they are believed to be linked to a much larger population in Canada.

Wildlife officials have previously estimated that 250 to 300 wolverines survive in remote areas of Montana, Wyoming, Idaho and Washington state. The animals in recent years also have been documented in California, Utah, Colorado and Oregon.

A newly released government assessment of the species status does not provide an updated population estimate.

The animals need immense expanses of wild land to survive, with home ranges for adult male wolverines covering as much as 610 square miles (1,580 square kilometers), according to a study in central Idaho.

The projection that they'll have enough snow to den as temperatures warm is based on computer models developed by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the University of Colorado.

Wildlife officials had previously relied on a study that said snow cover would decline by roughly a third across the U.S. Rocky Mountains by 2059, and by two-thirds by the end the century.

While snow cover is still expected to decline under the latest analysis, researchers looked more closely at two areas — Montana's Glacier National Park and Colorado's Rocky Mountain National Park — and determined they'll still have enough snow for wolverines to successfully den and breed. That's believed to hold true for other areas of the Rockies too, officials said.

"As we've learned more we've become more comfortable with the status of wolverines," said Mark Boyce, a University of Alberta biologist who reviewed the science behind the government's findings. "It's hard to imagine there is serious cause for concern."

Young male animals have been known to travel up to 310 miles (500 kilometers) to establish new territory, meaning the animals can easily travel between the U.S. and Canada, Boyce said. Even in areas without spring snow, he said wolverines survive by denning in abandoned beaver lodges and other locations.

Wildlife advocates have sought since the early 1990s to protect wolverines but alleged that political meddling in the government's decision-making process thwarted those efforts. Tim Preso with the environmental law firm Earthjustice said the latest decision fits in with a pattern of the Trump administration downplaying the threat of climate change.

Agency officials rejected the notion of any interference in their scientific deliberations.

"This was an analysis that was done by the scientists in the field looking at the best available information," said Jodi Bush, Montana project leader for the Fish and Wildlife Service.

Follow Matthew Brown on Twitter: @MatthewBrownAP

Antibody drugs are no cure but seem promising for COVID-19

By MARILYNN MARCHIONE and MATTHEW PERRONE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — They're not cures and it's not likely that everyone will be able to get them as President Donald Trump has suggested. But experimental antibody drugs like the one Trump was given are among the most promising therapies being tested for treating and preventing coronavirus infections.

Eli Lilly and Regeneron Pharmaceuticals Inc. are asking the U.S. government to allow emergency use of their antibody drugs, which aim to help the immune system clear the virus. The medicines are still in testing; their safety and effectiveness are not yet known.

Trump is among fewer than 10 people who were able to access the Regeneron one under "compassionate use" rules, without enrolling in a study.

Q: How do they work?

A: Antibodies are proteins the body makes when an infection occurs; they attach to a virus and help

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it be eliminated. Vaccines mimic an infection to spur antibody production. But it can take several weeks after a vaccine or natural infection for the most effective antibodies to form. The experimental drugs are concentrated versions of specific antibodies that worked best against the coronavirus in lab and animal tests. In theory, they start helping right away. The one-time treatment is given through an IV — it's not like a pill that people can take at home.

Q: How do the drugs differ?

A: Regeneron is using two antibodies to enhance chances its therapy will work even if the virus evades one. The company made a successful Ebola combo antibody treatment this way. Lilly is testing two different antibodies -- one with the Canadian company AbCellera and another with a Chinese company, Junshi Biosciences — individually and in combination. Others testing similar drugs are GlaxoSmithKline and Vir Biotechnology Inc., which says it has engineered antibodies to last longer than they usually do. Amgen, Adaptive Biotechnologies and the Singapore biotech company Tychan Pte Ltd. also have studies underway.

Q: When might they be available?

A: Eli Lilly and Regeneron have asked the Food and Drug Administration for emergency authorization. During public health emergencies the FDA can speed drugs to market based on a lower standard of evidence than is normally required. Drugmakers need only show that the expected benefits of their therapies outweigh the risks for treating COVID-19. There is no deadline for the FDA to rule on the drugs, but it typically makes decisions on such emergency applications within days or weeks.

Q: Who would get them?

A: Researchers are still trying to determine the best candidates for antibody treatment. Some studies involve newly infected people to see if early treatment can lower the risk of becoming sick. Other studies in hospitalized patients aim to prevent serious illness, complications or death. Researchers also are testing these drugs to try to prevent infection in people at high risk of it, such as health workers, housemates of people with COVID-19, and nursing home workers and residents.

Q: Will there be enough for everyone?

A: It depends on how potent the drugs prove to be, something still being studied. If a high dose is needed to be effective, it will mean that fewer people can be treated with limited supplies. Regeneron says it has enough doses for approximately 50,000 patients and expects 300,000 available within the next few months. Under a \$450 million contract, the federal government has agreed to buy initial supplies of Regeneron's drug and distribute them at no cost to U.S. patients. Lilly says it expects to have 1 million doses this year of the single antibody that it submitted to FDA. However, the company's research has focused on a combination of two antibodies to treat COVID-19 patients. Lilly said it expects to have just 50,000 doses of that combo this year.

Q: What's the evidence that they work?

A: Lilly and Regeneron have revealed only partial results in news releases; they haven't been published or vetted by independent scientists. Lilly said Wednesday that its two-antibody combo reduced symptoms, the amount of virus, hospitalizations and ER visits for patients with mild or moderate COVID-19. The results are an interim look at a mid-stage study in which 112 people received the antibodies and 156 got a placebo. The amount of virus was significantly lower 11 days later in those given the drug -- the main goal of the study. About 5.8% of patients given placebo required hospitalization or an emergency room visit versus 0.9% of those given the antibodies. Previously, Regeneron said its drug reduced the amount of virus and symptoms in non-hospitalized patients. The partial results came from the first 275 patients enrolled in ongoing studies.

Marchione reported from Milwaukee.

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AP FACT CHECK: Pence on climate, Harris on taxes, in 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 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:

CLIMATE CHANGE

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.

PENCE: The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration "tells us that, actually, as difficult as they are, there are no more hurricanes today than there were 100 years ago, but many of the climate alarmists use hurricanes and wildfires to try and sell a bill of goods."

THE FACTS: He's evading what science actually says about climate change and hurricanes. The main studies don't assert Earth is seeing more hurricanes than a century ago. They find that today's hurricanes are worse because of the warming climate.

Research shows that intensification of the storms has increased tremendously since the 1980s in the Atlantic and the only explanation is human-caused climate change.

An analysis of 167 years of federal storm data by The Associated Press in 2017 found that no 30-year period in history has seen this many major hurricanes, with winds greater than 110 mph, this many days of those whoppers spinning in the Atlantic, or this much overall energy generated by those powerful storms.

Such findings are what alarm scientists and part of what Pence calls alarmist.

PENCE: "You know, what's remarkable is the United States has reduced CO2 more than the countries that are still in the Paris climate accord."

FACTS: True but hardly remarkable. With its giant economy, the U.S. has far more raw emissions of climate-damaging carbon dioxide to cut than any other country except China.

A more telling measure of progress in various countries is to look at what percentage of emissions they have cut. Since 2005, the United States hasn't been even in the top 10 in percentage of greenhouse gas emission reductions.

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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."

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

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here. I'm talking what they're doing. That's the hoax."

HEALTH CARE

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

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 in jeopardy.

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

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 care 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 one in five 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

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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 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 Seth Borenstein, 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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England's big northern cities brace for more lockdown curbs

By PAN PYLAS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — The British government is mulling fresh restrictions on everyday life in England, potentially in the big northern cities such as Liverpool, Manchester and Newcastle, amid mounting fears that hospitals in coronavirus hot spots may soon be overwhelmed.

With the number of people needing to go to the hospital with virus-related conditions rising, and in some areas in the north of England alarmingly so, the pressure on the Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Conservative government to do more is mounting.

"We are currently considering what steps we should take, obviously taking the advice of our scientific and medical advisers, and a decision will be made shortly," British Housing Secretary Robert Jenrick told the BBC on Thursday. "In some parts of the country, the number of cases are rising very fast and we are

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taking that very seriously.”

Britain already has Europe’s deadliest outbreak, with over 42,600 dead. The latest daily figures published Thursday showed 17,540 new cases across the U.K., more than double the level of the previous week. The number of people being hospitalized increased by 609 while the death toll rose by 77.

Behind the national numbers lurk huge regional variations, which has led to calls for more concerted local actions.

“We are seeing a definite and sustained increase in cases and admissions to hospital,” said Dr. Yvonne Doyle, medical director for Public Health England. “The trend is clear, and it is very concerning.”

Because the virus has been accelerating at differing speeds around England, the government has opted for tighter local restrictions to combat the spread. But the differing rules have stoked confusion and there is growing speculation the government will back a new simplified three-tier system for England soon.

Hot spots, notably in the big cities of northern England, such as Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester and Newcastle, could see restrictions tightened to those taking effect Friday in Scotland, where pubs in the two biggest cities, Glasgow and Edinburgh, have been ordered to close for 16 days.

In many areas of northern England, it’s not clear the local restrictions have worked — in some areas, the number of new infections is 10 times higher than when the localized virus restrictions were announced.

Many local leaders are upset over what they say is a lack of communications from the Conservative government.

“I am prepared to consider restrictions but they have to be No. 1, evidence-based, and they have to come with support,” said Andy Burnham, the Labour mayor of Greater Manchester, told the BBC.

He said the current national curfew of 10 p.m. for pubs to closed only acts as an incentive for more gatherings in the home.”

Unions are demanding that the government accompanies any lockdown changes with a financial support package to prevent mass unemployment.

The umbrella Trades Union Congress is urging the government to announce local job retention programs, stepping in to pay the lion’s share of the salaries of those workers who have been forced to go idle. A national program that has helped keep a lid on unemployment is due to halt at the end of October.

“In areas facing high infection rates and further business closures, the government must act to preserve jobs and stop family firms going to the wall through a new local furlough scheme,” said the TUC’s general secretary, Frances O’Grady.

Follow AP coverage of the virus outbreak at <https://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

VIRUS DIARY: In age of pandemic, she finds solace in trees

By JENNIFER LEHMAN Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — When the virus was raging in New York City, I found solace on the arm of a flowering tree. I embraced a low-hanging branch, rested my head and mourned for my city.

It was April, and I was afraid. Afraid for Brooklyn, the other boroughs, family far away, strangers and neighbors I knew must be suffering. Afraid for myself.

I was and have been among the safest and most privileged in these times, and in the Before Times, too. But sometimes fear and sadness do not care what you should be grateful for. The haunt of mortality certainly does not.

That night, I headed out to Prospect Park, an expanse not far from my home in Brooklyn. I went because part of my body was convinced it could not breathe, while other parts knew better. I stood in the grass and counted to five again and again, steadying my breath.

Amid the city’s staggering daily hospitalizations, new case counts and deaths, there was another visual I couldn’t shake: More than 3,000 New Yorkers hooked to ventilators, most of them in the city. That number later peaked at roughly 4,500.

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A unique life sheltered each pair of lungs, and I imagined the individual characteristics of their breath lost to a computer that calibrated their inhales and exhales. Plugged to a machine out of desperation and hope for bought time, many never woke again.

In the distance, two trees covered in pink-white flowers stood out in the dark.

A large branch, easily a foot in diameter, extended from one of the trees. I ran my hand over the bark and laid an arm over the branch. My eyes welled and marveled at the buoyant blossoms against the night sky. Comfort and heartache. I leaned in and held tight.

In the days and weeks that followed, trees flowered throughout the park. Blossoms wilted and fell. Other trees took their turn. (I learned my flowering tree was a kind of magnolia that blooms early.)

And the green: brilliant leaves of all kinds, breathtaking, blinding in the right light. Perhaps the brightest and richest shades I'd ever seen. Or maybe the weary, narrowed world of the pandemic brought them out in great relief.

In a \$5 Zoom class with a local tree expert over the summer, I learned how trees can be identified by leaf shape and serration; bark texture and seed production, the shape in which a tree grows into the sky. Most memorable fact: Trees respire through lenticels (our instructor also called them breathing holes!), visible pores that speckle their bark.

I found myself staring at individual trees around the park for stretches of time, overwhelmed by their beauty or a curve in a particular branch, and wondering about the history of a life that I could not know.

Once, a soft grey face looked out from a hole high up in a tall tree, and I gasped like a child. I thought this only happened in cartoons. When my breath caught, the raccoon stared back in the moonlight. We held that gaze until she disappeared inside. When I returned in the following days, three babies, like kittens, clung to their mother, navigating the rough bark.

There is a balm in these rooted beings continuing on their mortal path alongside us, likely unaware of our suffering, joys, failings, our toil for redemption, for greatness, for love. Perhaps they bear silent witness to our humanity over these millennia. Perhaps they do not even notice.

Summer has now tipped into fall. Layers of leaves in the park are starting to take on shades of gold, brown, red, signaling the next turn. The next turn of the virus for New York may be out there, too.

May we all hold it steady. Take heart. Be generous. Be kind. Hug a tree.

Virus Diary, an occasional feature, showcases the coronavirus pandemic through the eyes of Associated Press journalists around the world. Follow New York-based AP journalist Jennifer Lehman on Twitter <http://twitter.com/juniptulip>.

Am I immune to the coronavirus if I've already had it?

By The Associated Press undefined

Am I immune to the coronavirus if I've already had it?

You have some immunity, but how much and for how long are big unanswered questions.

There's evidence that reinfection is unlikely for at least three months even for people who had a mild case of COVID-19. That's how long New York City researchers found stable levels of protective antibodies in a study of nearly 20,000 patients of the Mount Sinai Health System.

Reinfection so far has been rare. The best known example: Researchers in Hong Kong said a man had mild COVID-19 and then months later was infected again but showed no symptoms. His second infection was detected through airport testing, and researchers said genetic tests revealed slightly different strains of the virus.

It's actually evidence the man's immune system worked like it should. Very few diseases leave people completely immune for life.

Antibodies are only one piece of the body's defenses, and they naturally wane over time. And usually, "memory" immune cells can identify germs they previously encountered so they're better at fighting them the second time around. That can help make any repeat infections less severe.

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Scientists are studying how the other parts of the immune system kick in with the coronavirus.

It's not known whether people who've been reinfected but show no symptoms would be able to spread the virus to others. That's why health authorities say even people who have recovered from COVID-19 need to wear a mask, keep their distance and practice good hygiene.

The AP is answering your questions about the coronavirus in this series. Submit them at: FactCheck@AP.org. Read more here:

What do we know about superspreader events in the pandemic?

How long could I be contagious before a positive virus test?

How do I politely ask someone to wear a mask?

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 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 regulations to protect the mammals from ship strikes, he said. Such rules 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.

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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.

Whittle reported from Portland, Maine.

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

On edge of 72, Stevie Nicks just wants to sing a song live

By MESFIN FEKADU AP Music Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — It's Saturday at 9:30 p.m. and Stevie Nicks is singing on the phone.

The rock icon is at her Los Angeles home, where she's been cooped up since December after wrapping the "An Evening with Fleetwood Mac" tour. She arrived there at first to relax after spending a year on the road and to celebrate the holidays. But then the coronavirus pandemic hit.

Stuck at the house is both good and bad for Nicks. The good news? Her house is a creative oasis where all her favorite musical instruments live. It's where she spent a year recording her 2011 album "In Your Dreams" with Dave Stewart and Glen Ballard.

Her current 10-month stint — and counting — at home even fueled her to record the new single "Show Them the Way," out on Friday.

"It's beautiful," she says after singing the song's chorus at the end of a 90-minute-plus interview, where Nicks excitedly discussed everything from her admiration for late icons and pals Tom Petty and Prince to her relationships with Harry Styles and Beyoncé.

The bad news? Nicks is 72 and doesn't want to be homebound when she prefers to be singing live on the road.

"This pandemic is more than just a pandemic for me. This is stealing what I consider to be my last youthful years," Nicks told The Associated Press. "I don't have just 10 years to hang around and wait for this thing to go away. I have places to go, people to sing for, another album to make. With every day that goes by, it's like taking this time away from me. That I think is the hardest thing for me."

"I have a lot of friends that are 60 and they're going, 'Oh I'm so old, I'm 60.' I'm like, 'You know what, the violins of the world are playing for you. You're going to really appreciate 60 when you turn 72,'" she continued. "I don't feel like the whole world is really getting behind getting this to go away. I feel like people are just thinking it really is just magically going away. All it takes is a few people that don't wear a mask to spread. Just let one person catch it from you and there it goes — it's like the never-ending story. That worries me because I'm going, 'Will it really be gone by the end of 2021?'"

"Will it be safe next year for us to walk into Madison Square Garden?" I don't know that it will," she said.

Nicks is hoping to satisfy fans she would typically see in-person on tour with the new concert film "Stevie Nicks 24 Karat Gold The Concert." It was recorded over two nights during her 2016-17 "24 Karat Gold" tour and will be available at select theaters and drive-ins on Oct. 21 and 25. A CD and digital album of the concert will be released Oct. 30.

"As we started to understand that this COVID thing was not a joke, I started going to myself, 'Well, you know what? This may be the closest to going to a big, big concert that's actually not from 1977 that is new,'" Nicks said. "It's brand new and it's fantastic."

The only time she left her West Coast home was to edit the film in Chicago. She took a private jet to the

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home on a golf course that had been vacant for some time, spending a month there and editing down hours of footage to create the 140-minute film.

"They can't do it without me. I won't allow it," Nicks said. "We got it all done. It was really fun. We were really safe."

But at the end of the trip, Nicks tripped in the snow and fractured her knee: "I was like screaming as I went through the air and saw the gravel driveway coming toward my face and just made a quick turn. So, I didn't fall face down and caught myself. Because of my strong, tambourine arms, I was able to stop myself from crashing even worse. It was a really bad fall, but it's OK.

"It's had a hard time getting better," she continued. "I hurt this knee really bad, my left knee, before, years ago. I had been dealing with it and fixed it. ...I had just really gotten it to be to the place where it was totally better, then I fractured it. So now it's almost better," she said.

Apart from producing her concert film and recording "Show Them the Way," Nicks has been busy in the home where she's been creative in the past: "Another famous rock 'n' roll star, who will not be mentioned, sent me a song that he wants me to sing on," she revealed.

Though "Show Them the Way" arrives Friday, Nicks said the song came to her in a dream in 2008 when Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton were competing for the Democratic Party nomination for president. In the dream Nicks is performing at a political benefit where attendees include Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., John Lennon, John Lewis, John F. Kennedy and Bobby Kennedy.

Dave Grohl plays drums on the new song, which was produced by Greg Kurstin (Sia, Adele, Beck). Cameron Crowe is directing the music video.

"This song really is a prayer. This song is a prayer for people to unite. A prayer for people to get together," Nicks said.

"I didn't really realize that until just the last few days. The chorus was written a week or so later," she continued.

"The chorus, and I can sing it for you, it goes, 'Please God show them the way/Please God on this day/Spirits all give us strength/Peace will come if you really want it/I think we're just in time to save it/Please God, oh please God, show them the way.'"

France arrests 61 in vast online child pornography bust

By NICOLAS VAUX-MONTAGNY Associated Press

LYON, France (AP) — French police have arrested 61 people suspected of involvement in a vast child pornography network, including at least three people who raped children on camera, officials said Thursday.

Among the suspects are several who work in jobs that put them in contact with children, such as teachers, religious leaders and city hall officials, according to Eric Bérot, head of the French police agency overseeing the operation.

They were arrested in coordinated operations in 30 regions of France between Monday and Thursday, based on months of investigation of child pornography shared on peer-to-peer networks online, Berot told The Associated Press. French investigators specializing in online crime spotted exchanges of child pornography files using software from a U.S. non-profit company, Child Rescue Coalition.

French police seized hundreds of hard drives, computers, tablets and USB keys during numerous searches, and investigators are still sorting through the images and data, Berot said.

Among the suspects are a sports teacher who filmed children in locker rooms and a computer scientist who admitted to investigators that he had regularly raped his 14-year-old daughter since she was nine, Berot said. At the suspect's home, the police found more than 110,000 images and 2,000 criminal videos. Three other suspects were seen on camera raping children, he said.

"These arrests include everyone, all trades, all social classes, from merchants to managers, from white collar to blue collar, of all ages, from 28 to 75 years old, from all family situations, single people, those in a couple, with or without children," Bérot said.

Sixty of the suspects are men, and one is a woman accused of watching the videos with her partner.

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Of the 61 arrested, 13 had previous records and were on the national register of perpetrators of sexual offenses. Some 60 prosecutors are now investigating each case.

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Friday, Oct. 9, the 283rd day of 2020. There are 83 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Oct. 9, 1936, the first generator at Boulder (later Hoover) Dam began transmitting electricity to Los Angeles.

On this date:

In 1888, the public was first admitted to the Washington Monument.

In 1910, a coal dust explosion at the Starkville Mine in Colorado left 56 miners dead.

In 1914, the Belgian city of Antwerp fell to German forces during World War I.

In 1967, Marxist revolutionary guerrilla leader Che Guevara, 39, was summarily executed by the Bolivian army a day after his capture.

In 1974, businessman Oskar Schindler, credited with saving about 1,200 Jews during the Holocaust, died in Frankfurt, West Germany (at his request, he was buried in Jerusalem).

In 1985, the hijackers of the Achille Lauro (ah-KEE'-leh LOW'-roh) cruise liner surrendered two days after seizing the vessel in the Mediterranean. (Passenger Leon Klinghoffer was killed by the hijackers during the standoff.)

In 2001, in the first daylight raids since the start of U.S.-led attacks on Afghanistan, jets bombed the Taliban stronghold of Kandahar. Letters postmarked in Trenton, N.J., were sent to Sens. Tom Daschle and Patrick Leahy; the letters later tested positive for anthrax.

In 2009, President Barack Obama won the Nobel Peace Prize for what the Norwegian Nobel Committee called "his extraordinary efforts to strengthen international diplomacy and cooperation between peoples."

In 2012, former Penn State assistant football coach Jerry Sandusky was sentenced to 30 to 60 years in prison following his conviction on 45 counts of sexual abuse of boys.

In 2014, six U.S. military planes arrived in the Ebola hot zone with more Marines as West African leaders pleaded for the world's help in dealing with what Sierra Leone President Ernest Bai Koroma described as "a tragedy unforeseen in modern times."

In 2016, During a bitter debate in St. Louis, Hillary Clinton declared that Donald Trump's vulgar comments about women revealed "exactly who he is" and proved his unsuitability to be president; firing back, Trump accused Clinton of attacking women involved in Bill Clinton's extramarital affairs and promised she would "be in jail" if he were president.

In 2018, Brett Kavanaugh took the bench for the first time as a Supreme Court justice in a jovial atmosphere that was at odds with the rancor that surrounded his confirmation.

Ten years ago: Chile's 33 trapped miners cheered and embraced each other as a drill punched into their underground chamber where they had been stuck for an agonizing 66 days. The International Monetary Fund wrapped up two days of talks in Washington without resolving deep differences over currency movements. A crush of fans circled a flower-graced mosaic in Central Park's Strawberry Fields and sang lyrics from "Imagine" to honor John Lennon on his 70th birthday.

Five years ago: President Barack Obama visited Roseburg, Oregon, the scene of a community college shooting that had claimed the lives of nine victims as well as the gunman; the president met with victims' relatives, but also faced protests from legal gun owners. A democracy group, the Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet, won the Nobel Peace Prize for its contributions to the first and most successful Arab Spring movement. Former British Treasury chief and foreign secretary Geoffrey Howe, 88, died in Warwickshire, England.

One year ago: Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden said for the first time that President Don-

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ald Trump must be impeached for abusing the powers of his office to help his own reelection. Turkey launched airstrikes, fired artillery and began a ground offensive against Kurdish fighters in northern Syria after U.S. troops pulled back from the area. A heavily-armed man tried to force his way into a synagogue in Germany on Yom Kippur, Judaism's holiest day, then shot two people to death nearby in an attack that was livestreamed on a gaming site. (The suspect was arrested about 1 ½ hours after the attack and is charged with murder and attempted murder.) The Nobel Prize in chemistry was awarded to three scientists, including American John Goodenough, for their work on lithium-ion batteries.

Today's Birthdays: Retired MLB All-Star Joe Pepitone is 80. Former Sen. Trent Lott, R-Miss., is 79. C-SPAN founder Brian Lamb is 79. Rhythm-and-blues singer Nona Hendryx is 76. Singer Jackson Browne is 72. Nobel Peace laureate Jody Williams is 70. Actor Gary Frank is 70. Actor Richard Chaves is 69. Actor Robert Wuhl is 69. Actor-TV personality Sharon Osbourne is 68. Actor Tony Shalhoub is 67. Actor Scott Bakula is 66. Musician James Fearnley (The Pogues) is 66. Actor John O'Hurley is 66. Writer-producer-director-actor Linwood Boomer is 65. Pro and College Football Hall of Famer Mike Singletary is 62. Actor Michael Paré is 62. Jazz musician Kenny Garrett is 60. Rock singer-musician Kurt Neumann (The BoDeans) is 59. Country singer Gary Bennett is 56. Movie director Guillermo del Toro is 56. Former British Prime Minister David Cameron is 54. Singer P.J. Harvey is 51. Movie director Steve McQueen (Film: "12 Years a Slave") is 51. World Golf Hall of Famer Annika Sorenstam is 50. Actor Cocoa Brown is 48. Country singer Tommy Shane Steiner is 47. Actor Steve Burns is 47. Rock singer Sean Lennon is 45. Actor Randy Spelling is 42. Christian hip-hop artist Lecrae is 41. Actor Brandon Routh is 41. Actor Zachery Ty Bryan is 39. Actor Spencer Grammer is 37. Comedian Melissa Villasenor (TV: "Saturday Night Live") is 33. Actor Tyler James Williams is 28. Country singer Scotty McCreery (TV: "American Idol") is 27. Actor Jharrel Jerome is 23.