

# Groton Daily Independent

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## Tuesday, October 13, 2020

Volleyball hosting Tiospa Zina (7th grade match at 5 p.m. in GHS Gym (no 8th grade match). Matches in the Arena are C match at 5 p.m., JV at 6 p.m. followed by varsity match)

## Wednesday, October 14, 2020

LifeTouch Pictures at Groton Area Elementary School

## Thursday, October 15, 2020

LifeTouch Pictures at Groton Area High School

3:30pm: Region 1A Cross Country Meet at Webster

Junior High Football hosts Webster Area (7th grade at 4:30 p.m., 8th at 5:30 p.m.)

Volleyball at Milbank (Junior High matches are cancelled. C/JV matches at 6 p.m. followed by varsity match.)

## Friday, October 16, 2020

End of 1st Quarter

7:00pm: Football hosting Stanley County



## **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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## Superintendent's Report to the Groton Area School District 06-6 Board of Education

October 12, 2020

### Groton Area School District COVID Data and Reporting.

Groton Area School District															
Active COVID-19 Cases															
Updated October 12, 2020; 3:35 PM															
JK	KG	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Staff	Total
0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	2	2	2	2	1	2	4	19

As of this afternoon, there are 19 active cases of COVID-19 of students and/or staff of the District. One important thing to note is that not all of the cases have been in school or school activities while in the infectious period. Some were previously excluded as close contacts either from other school cases or from cases outside of the school. A case is considered "active" for a minimum of ten days from the onset of symptoms and is otherwise dependent on the course of illness for the individual (resolution of symptoms).

Tomorrow morning, we'll have seven students absent from the elementary as close contacts, 31 absent from the MS as close contacts, and five absent from the HS as close contacts.

We currently have three four staff members absent with active cases and another eight working under the critical infrastructure guidelines.

### Close Contacts and Quarantine Recommendations.

I contacted SDHSAA Executive Director, Dr. Swartos, to clarify the impact of close contact designations on participation in extra-curricular activities. He stated that SDHSAA rules are tied to the SDDOH guidelines which includes the "recommendation" for a 14 day quarantine for close contacts. It is up to local districts on how to handle close contacts within their schools, including for participation in extra-curricular activities.

To date, of 61 students or staff determined to have been close contacts in the school setting three have subsequently tested positive (5%). There is no way to verify the cause or source of illness, but each of the three reported onset of symptoms 4 days following a known exposure. This is sooner than we are able to identify and notify these individuals as close contacts. As a reminder, the infectious period for a positive case is considered to be 48 hours prior to the onset of their symptoms. Test results seem to be returning in approximately 48 hours. In a few cases, we have become aware of a positive test result at, near, or even past the end of students ten day isolation period.

The District has no knowledge – other than from being contacted by the parents or students themselves – of close contact situations outside of the school day.

**Abbott Rapid Testing.** The School District will be receiving a supply of Abbot BinaxNOW Rapid tests in the coming weeks. Most recent correspondence indicates that we'll receive approximately 2 tests per student based on the fall 2019 child count. There is a training for test administration scheduled for Thursday, October 15.

On our call with SD Department of Health last week, a couple of important points were made. First, a negative test result wouldn't preclude the need for a child to see their provider given that they may have some other contagious illness (e.g. influenza).

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We don't know who we're supposed to administer tests to and there is some concern about families sending symptomatic children to school to receive a test at no cost.

A positive test would be treated as such with no confirmation test needed.

All tests administered would be reported by the district on the state portal.

**Regulatory Relief.** We've been told that Governor Noem will be signing an executive order waiving some regulations for K-12 schools. We don't yet know the scope of the relief.

## #232 in a series

### Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

Like yesterday, this Monday is light on reporting. Even so, there were a lot of new cases reported today, 47,500 of them, a 0.6% increase to 7,839,500 cases in the US so far in the pandemic. We've been over 40,000 cases for a week running, and we had four consecutive over-50,000-case days in that run. On our current pace, we'll hit eight million by Friday. This is not a great place to be. Reported deaths are down, which is a good thing. We are now at 214,929 deaths. There were just 330 reported today, a 0.2% increase.

We've been talking about the Midwest, but tonight we should focus a bit on Alaska. It's easy to overlook a state with such a small number of total cases—only four states have fewer; but there are worrying trends there. In the week ending yesterday, the state set a record for new cases, and the seven-day average also set a record. The average daily number of new cases is almost double where it was two weeks ago. As with many states, most of the new cases are in the 20 to 39 age group, and there is significant community transmission, which means, according to the state's Department of Health and Social Services, "there are cases in our communities that we do not know about." About half of the new cases are in Anchorage, the largest city in the state; so there is real concern about strains on the health care system there. Early in the pandemic, there were few cases, and restrictions were lifted in late May. After that, the numbers began to climb, peaking in late July and leveling off. Then late in September, the numbers began to increase again, this time starting from a new, higher baseline. And now here we are. There are currently no virus-related restrictions on activities; but travelers are required to test negative before leaving home for travel to Alaska and to quarantine for 14 days upon arrival.

There appears to be a new surge in case reports among the Navajo on their reservation in Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah. There were 30 new cases and six more deaths reported today. Just about ten per cent of the population of this reservation have been reported cases; considering the large numbers of undetected cases seen for each reported one, this is an enormous disease burden on this tribe. Natives are among the people most vulnerable to severe disease and death from this virus, and the Navajo have been hard-hit already in this pandemic.

There is a monoclonal antibody project which looks very interesting. You will recall that monoclonal antibodies are lab-made copies of the most effective human antibodies identified from the plasma of recovered patients; they are made by engineering a gene for the identified antibody into bacterial cells, which will then produce it in large-scale cultures. We've been hearing about a "cocktail" of two such antibodies made by Regeneron which is in clinical trials now and another pair of antibodies made by Eli Lilly and Company in trials in three formulations—each of them separately and a combination of the two.

There are several other monoclonal projects underway, but the one we're going to talk about tonight is being developed by a group calling themselves Prometheus, a collaboration of academic labs, the United States Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases (US AMRIID), and a company called Adimab. (For word geeks, Prometheus was the Greek's Titan god of fire who was seen as the author of science in humans.) The group doesn't have the resources of the companies already in trials and, in fact, couldn't even get access to the patient samples needed to identify particularly effective antibodies on which this work is based, which put them behind the big guns from the start; so they started instead with blood from a survivor of the 2003 SARS outbreak, caused by SARS-CoV, a close cousin of the one we're dealing with today, SARS-CoV-2. One teammate is the scientist who first published the structure of this new virus and who supplied Adimab, the commercial participant, with the spike protein the virus uses to bind to and gain access to human cells. Adimab's scientists then screened the SARS patient's blood for antibodies that would bind to that spike protein, identifying seven that recognized both viruses. They then selected the most promising and enhanced its neutralizing ability by about 100-fold. This is the antibody they are now testing in cell cultures and animals.

This is all preliminary testing, and the drug is not expected to hit clinical trials until late this year, but there is a fair amount of excitement about it because the antibody appears to be particularly powerful and is being designed to last in the patient for as long as six months, whereas the others last only a few

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weeks. In mice and in lab tests, the antibody protects against the SARS virus and similar bat viruses too, which hints it may work on coronaviruses that emerge in the future. The plan is to add a second antibody specific to SARS-CoV-2 at some point so that the virus is less likely to evolve to escape it; having selective pressures from two antibodies makes it extremely unlikely a single mutation protective against either will survive in the gene pool to confer an advantage on the population.

This research group has done creative and ground-breaking work on monoclonals for Ebola, so they have a solid track record for this sort of research. Whether this antibody meets its early promise remains to be seen, but if things work out as the developers are planning, it could be a beneficial tool against this virus. This is probably a good time to remember monoclonals are exceedingly expensive and difficult to make, so are unlikely to ever become a panacea for the world; they're more likely to simply be one of many treatments available, albeit a particularly effective one. I should also point out that a great many drugs of various kinds show promise, even much later in their development, and then never pan out, so it's early yet on this one. Nonetheless, we'll be watching to see what develops here.

Speaking of the speed bumps along the way in the development of new pharmaceuticals, Johnson & Johnson announced tonight they have paused their late-stage clinical trial of their vaccine candidate while they investigate an "unexplained illness" in a volunteer. This trial began in September, so it's early times yet. A pause for an adverse event is a not-infrequent occurrence in a vaccine trial, and there is not at this point much information available beyond that announcement. We do not even know right now whether the particular volunteer received the vaccine or placebo. If you think about any group of maybe 30,000 people, it's likely some of them will get sick or hurt over the course of a few months; but when those people are involved in a clinical trial of a vaccine candidate, it is important to discern whether these events pose a safety risk of the candidate. Therefore, every one of those illnesses and injuries must be investigated and cleared before a trial can proceed. That makes two vaccine candidates whose trials are currently paused in the US. We will await further news.

Cavanaugh Bell, 7, was the victim of relentless bullying at school. He said, "I felt a darkness inside of me," adding "I knew I didn't want other kids to feel the same way I felt. So, I asked my mom if she could help me spread love and positivity." Here was their plan: Help the local community in their Maryland suburb during the pandemic. He used his saved-up birthday and Christmas money and made care packages for elderly people. That worked pretty well, so he sought donations to expand his efforts. That worked out too, so he opened a food pantry in an nearby warehouse that a logistics company offered to let them use. Another big success: Donations poured in, and the enterprise thrived. He also attended a city council meeting and asked officials to designate February 21 as Anti-Bullying Awareness Day in honor of an Ohio boy who'd taken his life after being bullied. They did, and he started a non-profit to combat bullying and spread positivity.

Then he started thinking bigger. He remembered a trip to Mount Rushmore in South Dakota that he took with his mom two years ago. Driving through the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, he saw poverty as he'd never seen it in his short life. Some of the poorest communities in the country are on Pine Ridge; half the population lives below the federal poverty line, and some experts place the poverty rate above 90%. The average life expectancy is the lowest in the country, and the teen suicide rate on the reservation is 150% above the national average. The suicide problem especially spoke to Bell, given the feelings he had had himself.

So he reached out to his community again, asking for essential supplies for Pine Ridge. Another success: He and his mom filled a semitruck with nonperishable foods, hygiene products, cleaning supplies, and other items worth around \$20,000. He then used donations from his GoFundMe to hire a driver to transport them to South Dakota. The truck took off on July 10; on the receiving end was the director of a nonprofit on the reservation, first Families Now. She was thrilled. That went so well that Bell decided to do more: "Since winter is coming, I knew they didn't have what they needed to stay warm, so I asked people to donate blankets, jackets, and winter supplies." Another win: That truck, loaded with about \$25,000 worth of goods, set out for Pine Ridge on September 22.



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Keep in mind this is a seven-year-old child. His mom says, "He wanted to show other kids that they can be powerful, even if people say they're not." The outreach started out as a platform to speak out about bullying, but became so much more. How many second-graders do you know who lobby a city council, start a social project, found a nonprofit, and drop tens of thousands of dollars worth of food and other goods on vulnerable people. Bell says, "My goal was to help 1000 people. But so far, I've helped more than 8000."

He's still delivering the care packages to seniors. They include bread, fresh produce, canned goods, and hygiene products. He's been making regular deliveries since March. The residents at a senior living facility where he delivered got together to gather essentials for Pine Ridge; so it turns out the effect of paying it forward sometimes happens really fast. Bell's mom explains how their efforts have come full-circle: "A lot of families we helped in the beginning have actually come back and volunteered, and consistently brought us donations every week. The cycle continues of us blessing people, and they come back and bless us 10-fold." Bell makes it clear why he continues: "The more I gave back to my community, the more I wanted to keep doing it." He wants to grow up to be someone who makes a difference. I think that's one bucket-list item this kid can cross off; but I hope he keeps trying.

Surely, when a small child can move mountains, each of us can move one small thing in someone's life. Let's be looking for those opportunities.

Be well. We'll talk again.

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## Area COVID-19 Cases

	Oct. 7	Oct. 8	Oct. 9	Oct. 10	Oct. 11	Oct. 12	Oct. 13
Minnesota	105,740	106,651	107,922	109,312	110,828	112,268	113,439
Nebraska	48,757	49,396	50,059	50,059	51,144	52,382	52,839
Montana	15,347	16,063	16,677	17,399	18,117	18,702	19,125
Colorado	74,191	74,922	75,785	76,619	77,642	78,461	79,037
Wyoming	5,751	5,866	6,031	6,226	6,338	6,476	6,628
North Dakota	24,364	24,857	25,384	26,040	26,628	27,265	27,737
South Dakota	24,876	25,433	26,441	27,215	27,947	28,564	28,925
United States	7,501,847	7,551,257	7,607,890	7,667,640	7,719,254	7,763,457	7,804,643
US Deaths	210,918	211,844	212,789	213,816	214,379	214,776	215,089
Minnesota	+941	+911	+1271	+1,390	+1,516	+1,440	+1,171
Nebraska	+950	+639	+663	----	+1,085	+1,238	+457
Montana	+500	+716	+614	+722	+818	+585	+423
Colorado	+654	+731	+863	+834	+1,023	+819	+576
Wyoming	+91	+115	+165	+195	+112	+138	+152
North Dakota	+502	+493	+527	+656	+588	+637	+472
South Dakota	+278	+557	+528	+774	+732	+617	+359
United States	+48,018	+49,410	+56,633	+59,750	51,614	+44,203	41,186
US Deaths	+791	+926	+945	+1,027	+563	+397	+313
	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 12th COVID-19 UPDATE

### Groton Daily Independent from State Health Lab Reports

Two females, one in her 50s and one in the 80+ age group have died from COVID-19. One was in Roberts County and the other in Turner County. North Dakota had six more deaths.

South Dakota's positivity rate today was just 10.1 percent as of the 3,552 tests, there were 359 positive cases. Those in the hospital increased by a dozen to 12.

Locally, Brown had 20 positive and 8 recovered, leaving 296 active cases. Day had 1 recovered leaving 24 active cases. Edmunds had 4 positive, 0 recovered, and 11 active; Marshall had 0 positive, 0 recovered, 11 active; McPherson had 0 positive, 1 recovered, 10 active; Spink had 5 positive, 2 recovered, 38 active.

Positive cases in the under 18 group was 13, those in the teens was 47, 20s was 66, 30s was 53, 40s was 43, 50s was 55, 60s was 39, 70s was 21 and 80+ was 24.

#### **Brown County:**

Total Positive: +20 (1,575) Positivity Rate: 2.1%

Total Tests: +926 (14,716)

Recovered: +8 (1,275)

Active Cases: -12 (296)

Ever Hospitalized: +3 (78)

Deaths: +0 (4)

Percent Recovered: 81.0

#### **South Dakota:**

Positive: +359 (28,925 total) Positivity Rate: 10.1%

Total Tests: 3,552 (335,530 total)

Hospitalized: +20 (1,886 total). 278 currently hospitalized +12)

Deaths: +2 (288 total)

Recovered: +162 (22,575 total)

Active Cases: ++197 (6,062)

Percent Recovered: 78.0%

Staffed Hospital Bed Capacity: 12% Covid, 46% Non-Covid, 43% Available

ICU Bed Capacity: 19% Covid, 52% Non-Covid, 28% Available

Ventilator Capacity: 9% Covid, 12% Non-Covid, 79% 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, +1 recovered (62 active cases)

Beadle (11): +2 positive, +3 recovered (139 active cases)

Bennett (4): +4 positive, +1 recovered (36 active cases)

Bon Homme (1): +8 positive, +3 recovered (69 active cases)

Brookings (2): +13 positive, +5 recovered (189 active cases)

Brown (4): +20 positive, +8 recovered (296 active cases)

Brule (1): +0 positive, +1 recovered (42 active cases)

Buffalo (3): +1 positive, +3 recovered (27 active cases)

Butte (3): +4 positive, +0 recovered (56 active cases)

Campbell: +0 positive, +0 recovered (24 active cases)

Charles Mix: +5 positive, +3 recovered (88 active cases)

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

Clay (8) +7 positive, +1 recovered (89 active cases)

Codington (9): +12 positive, +5 recovered (205 active cases)

Corson (1): +2 positive, +0 recovered (18 active cases)

Custer (3): +4 positive, +0 recovered (39 active case)

Davison (4): +14 positive, +7 recovered (231 active cases)

Day: +0 positive, +1 recovered (24 active cases)

Deuel: +1 positive, +2 recovered (25 active cases)

Dewey: +9 positive, +0 recovered (88 active cases)

Douglas (1): +0 positive, +0 recovered (55 active cases)

Edmunds: +4 positive, +0 recovered (11 active cases)

Fall River (6): +2 positive, +0 recovered (39 active cases)

Faulk (1): +0 positive, +0 recovered (37 active cases)

Grant (2): +5 positive, +6 recovered (62 active cases)

Gregory (7): +2 positive, +2 recovered (24 active cases)



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Haakon (1): +2 positive, +0 recovered (17 active case)  
 Hamlin: +2 positive, +0 recovered (27 active cases)  
 Hand (1): +3 positive, +1 recovered (20 active cases)  
 Hanson (1): +0 positive, +1 recovered (17 active cases)  
 Harding: +1 positive, +0 recovered (5 active cases)  
 Hughes (5): +16 positive, +18 recovered (130 active cases)  
 Hutchinson (2): +1 positive, +0 recovered (58 active cases)  
 Hyde: +0 positive, +0 recovered (6 active cases)  
 Jackson (1): +2 positive, +2 recovered (17 active cases)  
 Jerauld (4): +0 positive, +0 recovered (22 active cases)  
 Jones: +0 positive, +0 recovered (2 active cases)  
 Kingsbury: +2 positive, +1 recovered (31 active cases)  
 Lake (8): +1 positive, +2 recovered (47 active cases)  
 Lawrence (5): +6 positive, +5 recovered (124 active cases)  
 Lincoln (10): +12 positive, +9 recovered (405 active cases)  
 Lyman (4): +0 positive, +1 recovered (23 active cases)  
 Marshall: +0 positive, +0 recovered (11 active cases)  
 McCook (1): +1 positive, +2 recovered (47 active cases)

McPherson: +0 positive, +1 recovery (10 active case)  
 Meade (6): +11 positive, +3 recovered (148 active cases)  
 Mellette: +0 positive, +1 recovered (7 active cases)  
 Miner: +1 positive, +0 recovered (32 active cases)  
 Minnehaha (88): +50 positive, +25 recovered (1288 active cases)  
 Moody (1): +2 positive, +1 recovered (50 active cases)  
 Oglala Lakota (4): +12 positive, +1 recovered (143 active cases)  
 Pennington (41): +56 positive, +29 recovered (657 active cases)  
 Perkins: +0 positive, +0 recovered (14 active cases)  
 Potter: +2 positive, +0 recovered (22 active cases)  
 Roberts (2): +2 positive, +1 recovered (39 active cases)  
 Sanborn: +0 positive, +1 recovered (18 active cases)  
 Spink (1): +5 positive, +2 recovered (38 active cases)  
 Stanley: +1 positive, +1 recovery (13 active cases)  
 Sully: +2 positive, +0 recovered (8 active cases)  
 Todd (5): +14 positive, +1 recovered (93 active cases)  
 Tripp (1): +3 positive, +2 recovered (36 active cases)  
 Turner (8): +3 positive, +1 recovered (88 active cases)  
 Union (10): +16 positive, +0 recovered (145 active cases)  
 Walworth (1): +6 positive, +0 recovered (66 active cases)  
 Yankton (5): +7 positive, +2 recovered (124 active cases)  
 Ziebach (1): +0 positive, +0 recovered (11 active case)

## AGE GROUP OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Age Range	# of Cases	# of Deaths
0-9 years	905	0
10-19 years	3265	0
20-29 years	6318	2
30-39 years	4884	7
40-49 years	3938	10
50-59 years	3997	23
60-69 years	2973	45
70-79 years	1539	53
80+ years	1106	148

North Dakota Dept. of Health Report  
 COVID-19 Daily Report, October 12:

- 7.8% rolling 14-day positivity
  - 8.9% daily positivity
  - 475 new positives
  - 5,342 susceptible test encounters
  - 158 currently hospitalized (+14)
  - 4,546 active cases (+120)
- Total Deaths: +6 (345)

## SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths
Female	15212	131
Male	13713	157

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County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Persons	Deceased	Community Spread	% RT-PCR Test Positivity
Aurora	136	74	655	0	Substantial	18.32%
Beadle	960	810	3513	11	Substantial	12.32%
Bennett	108	68	864	4	Substantial	15.69%
Bon Homme	164	94	1328	1	Substantial	23.91%
Brookings	997	806	5446	2	Substantial	18.72%
Brown	1575	1275	8031	4	Substantial	20.10%
Brule	179	136	1319	1	Substantial	25.66%
Buffalo	181	151	809	3	Substantial	39.73%
Butte	171	112	1885	3	Substantial	15.38%
Campbell	55	31	161	0	Substantial	26.92%
Charles Mix	267	179	2746	0	Substantial	8.99%
Clark	55	40	631	0	Moderate	3.55%
Clay	650	553	2917	8	Substantial	14.93%
Codington	1119	917	5764	9	Substantial	15.73%
Corson	117	98	760	1	Moderate	35.90%
Custer	222	180	1508	3	Substantial	20.49%
Davison	575	340	4007	4	Substantial	18.04%
Day	113	89	1114	0	Substantial	11.00%
Deuel	123	95	708	0	Substantial	15.63%
Dewey	220	135	3228	0	Substantial	11.29%
Douglas	133	77	642	1	Substantial	10.26%
Edmunds	112	101	669	0	Moderate	2.34%
Fall River	137	92	1636	6	Substantial	15.84%
Faulk	129	91	492	1	Substantial	22.22%
Grant	222	158	1360	2	Substantial	14.66%
Gregory	160	129	722	7	Substantial	15.15%
Haakon	46	28	407	1	Substantial	5.66%
Hamlin	131	104	1106	0	Substantial	6.44%
Hand	78	57	529	1	Substantial	16.85%
Hanson	53	35	392	1	Moderate	8.47%
Harding	9	4	99	0	Minimal	33.33%
Hughes	653	518	3446	5	Substantial	13.71%
Hutchinson	158	98	1417	2	Substantial	5.56%

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Hyde	28	22	285	0	Moderate	15.38%
Jackson	57	39	696	1	Substantial	21.88%
Jerauld	150	124	363	4	Substantial	11.11%
Jones	20	18	115	0	Minimal	5.56%
Kingsbury	101	70	940	0	Substantial	12.66%
Lake	255	200	1651	8	Substantial	16.09%
Lawrence	567	438	4883	5	Substantial	14.49%
Lincoln	1844	1419	11901	10	Substantial	16.76%
Lyman	202	175	1353	4	Substantial	11.73%
Marshall	51	40	716	0	Moderate	5.36%
McCook	151	103	1015	1	Substantial	6.86%
McPherson	48	38	364	0	Moderate	4.05%
Meade	720	566	4454	6	Substantial	13.29%
Mellette	42	35	533	0	Moderate	11.11%
Miner	67	35	388	0	Substantial	18.26%
Minnehaha	8036	6660	46866	88	Substantial	13.69%
Moody	146	95	1002	1	Substantial	23.40%
Oglala Lakota	435	288	5072	4	Substantial	10.97%
Pennington	3177	2479	21908	41	Substantial	13.63%
Perkins	52	38	403	0	Moderate	15.22%
Potter	78	56	563	0	Substantial	6.83%
Roberts	252	211	3004	2	Substantial	13.17%
Sanborn	59	41	391	0	Substantial	10.53%
Spink	187	144	1569	1	Substantial	11.27%
Stanley	58	45	481	0	Moderate	13.51%
Sully	24	16	148	0	Moderate	26.92%
Todd	240	142	3185	5	Substantial	19.15%
Tripp	207	167	1035	1	Substantial	11.88%
Turner	290	186	1673	8	Substantial	27.56%
Union	571	416	3643	10	Substantial	18.14%
Walworth	190	123	1219	1	Substantial	15.09%
Yankton	541	412	5358	5	Substantial	7.02%
Ziebach	71	59	546	1	Moderate	5.56%
Unassigned	0	0	2285	0		

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## South Dakota

New Total Cases Today	New Confirmed Cases	New Probable Cases
359	344	15
Currently Hospitalized	Active Cases	Recovered Cases
278	6,062	22,575
Total Cases	Total Confirmed Cases	Total Probable Cases
28,925	28,289	636
Ever Hospitalized	Total Persons Tested	Total Tests
1,886	219,244	335,530
Deaths	% Progress (September Goal: 44,233 Tests)	% Progress (October Goal: 44,233 Tests)
288	216%	103%

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## Brown County

New Total Cases Today	New Confirmed Cases	New Probable Cases
20	19	1
Currently Hospitalized	Active Cases	Recovered Cases
278	296	1,275
Total Cases	Total Confirmed Cases	Total Probable Cases
1,575	1,570	5
Ever Hospitalized	Total Persons Tested	Total Tests
78	9,606	14,716
Deaths	% Progress (September Goal: 44,233 Tests)	% Progress (October Goal: 44,233 Tests)
4	216%	103%



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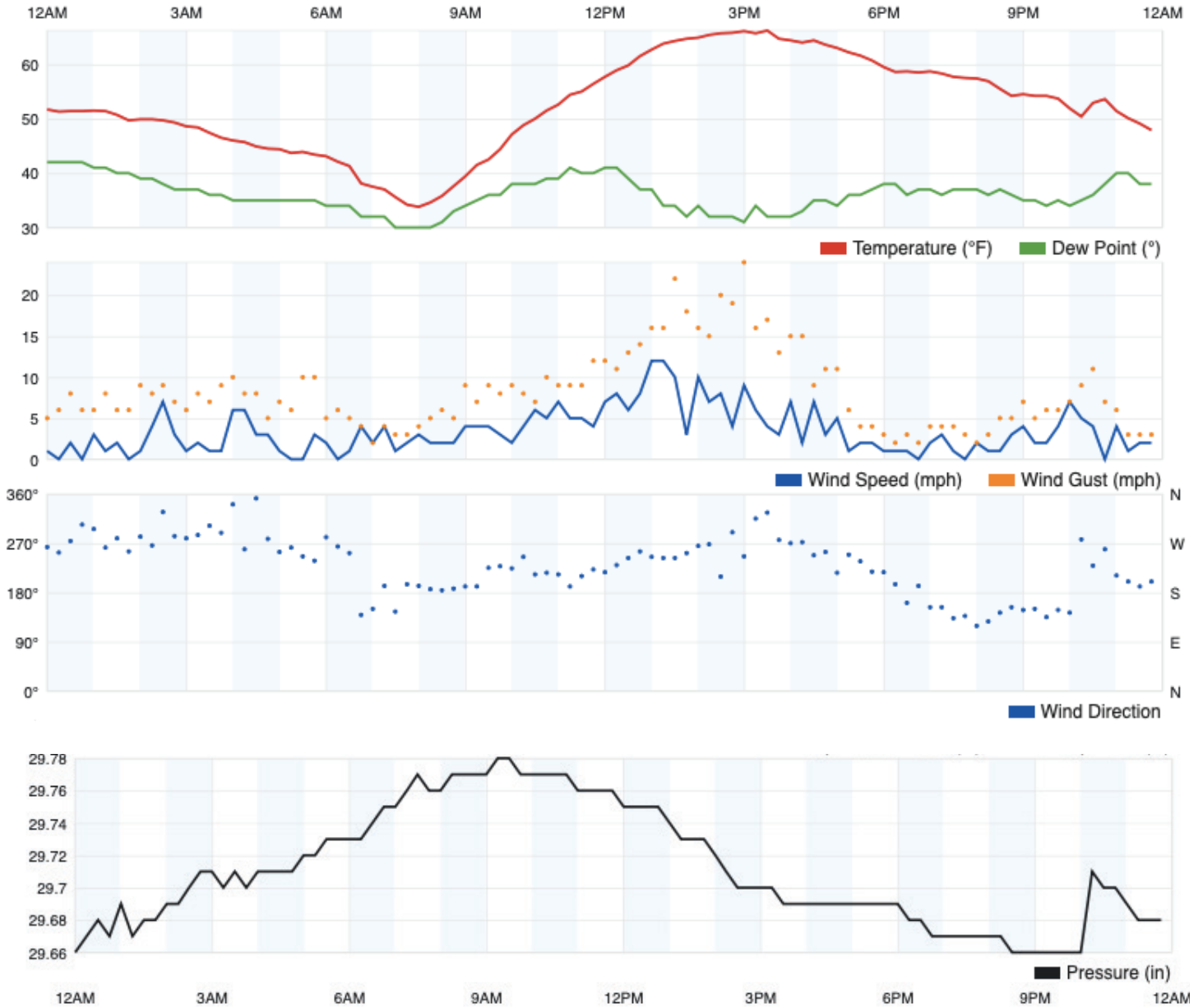
## Day County

New Total Cases Today	New Confirmed Cases	New Probable Cases
0	0	0
Currently Hospitalized	Active Cases	Recovered Cases
278	24	89
Total Cases	Total Confirmed Cases	Total Probable Cases
113	113	0
Ever Hospitalized	Total Persons Tested	Total Tests
14	1,227	1,862
Deaths	% Progress (September Goal: 44,233 Tests)	% Progress (October Goal: 44,233 Tests)
0	216%	103%

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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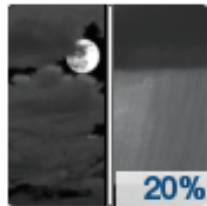
Today



Sunny

High: 64 °F

Tonight



Mostly Cloudy  
then Slight  
Chance  
Showers

Low: 45 °F

Wednesday



Mostly Sunny  
and Windy

High: 63 °F

Wednesday  
Night



Partly Cloudy  
and Blustery  
then Partly  
Cloudy

Low: 29 °F

Thursday



Sunny then  
Sunny and  
Breezy

High: 50 °F

**Today,**  
*Mostly Sunny & Mild*  
*Highs 60-70°F*

**Tonight,**  
*Mostly Cloudy with Chc Showers*  
*Mainly North and West*  
*Lows 40-50°F*

**Wednesday,**  
*Partly Sunny with Slight Chc*  
*Showers, Windy*  
*Highs 55-65°F*

- High Fire Danger Today
- Very High Fire Danger Wednesday

Updated: 10/13/2020 3:51 AM CDT

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE  
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

Today will be relatively mild and mostly sunny. However, clouds will increase tonight, with a chance of showers across mainly the north. A slight chance of showers will continue on Wednesday, and it will be windy with very high fire danger. #sdwx #mnwx

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## Today in Weather History

October 13, 1966: Late season thunderstorms brought hail and high winds to southeast South Dakota, causing extensive damage to some soybean fields. The greatest damage was in the Garretson area. The strong winds also damaged many utility lines along with many farm structures. Lightning struck a church at Lake Andes, and the resulting fire destroyed it. The storms occurred from late on the 13th to the morning of the 14th.

1983: Severe weather in Falls Church, VA, produced 2-3 tornadoes and caused \$1 million in damages.

2006: The October 2006 Buffalo storm was an unusual early-season lake effect snowstorm that hit the Buffalo, New York area, and other surrounding areas of the United States and Canada. Downtown Buffalo reported 15 inches from this event. Depew and Alden record 24 inches, the most from this lake effect storm.

2011: Three tornadoes hit central and Eastern Virginia on this day. One of the EF1 tornadoes caused damage to the Sylvania Plantation home that was built in 1746. The storm peeled the roof off the house.

1846 - A great hurricane tracked across Cuba, Florida, Georgia, the Carolinas, Virginia and Pennsylvania. The hurricane inflicted major damage along its entire path, which was similar to the path of Hurricane Hazel 108 years later. The hurricane caused great damage at Key West FL, and at Philadelphia PA it was the most destructive storm in thirty years. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1986 - Four tornadoes struck southeastern Virginia late in the night causing three million dollars damage. Tornadoes at Falls Church VA caused a million dollars damage. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders)

1987 - Fifteen cities in the eastern U.S. reported record low temperatures for the date. Record lows included 34 degrees at Meridian MS, 28 degrees at Paducah KY, and 26 degrees at Beckley WV. Another surge of arctic air entered the north central U.S. bringing snow to parts of Wyoming and Colorado. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - A total of forty-three cities in the eastern U.S. and the Upper Midwest reported record low temperatures for the date, including Elkins WV and Marquette MI where the mercury dipped to 18 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Sixteen cities reported record high temperatures for the date as readings warmed into the 80s and low 90s from the Southern and Central Plains to the Southern and Middle Atlantic Coast. Evansville IND and North Platte NE reported record highs of 91 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)



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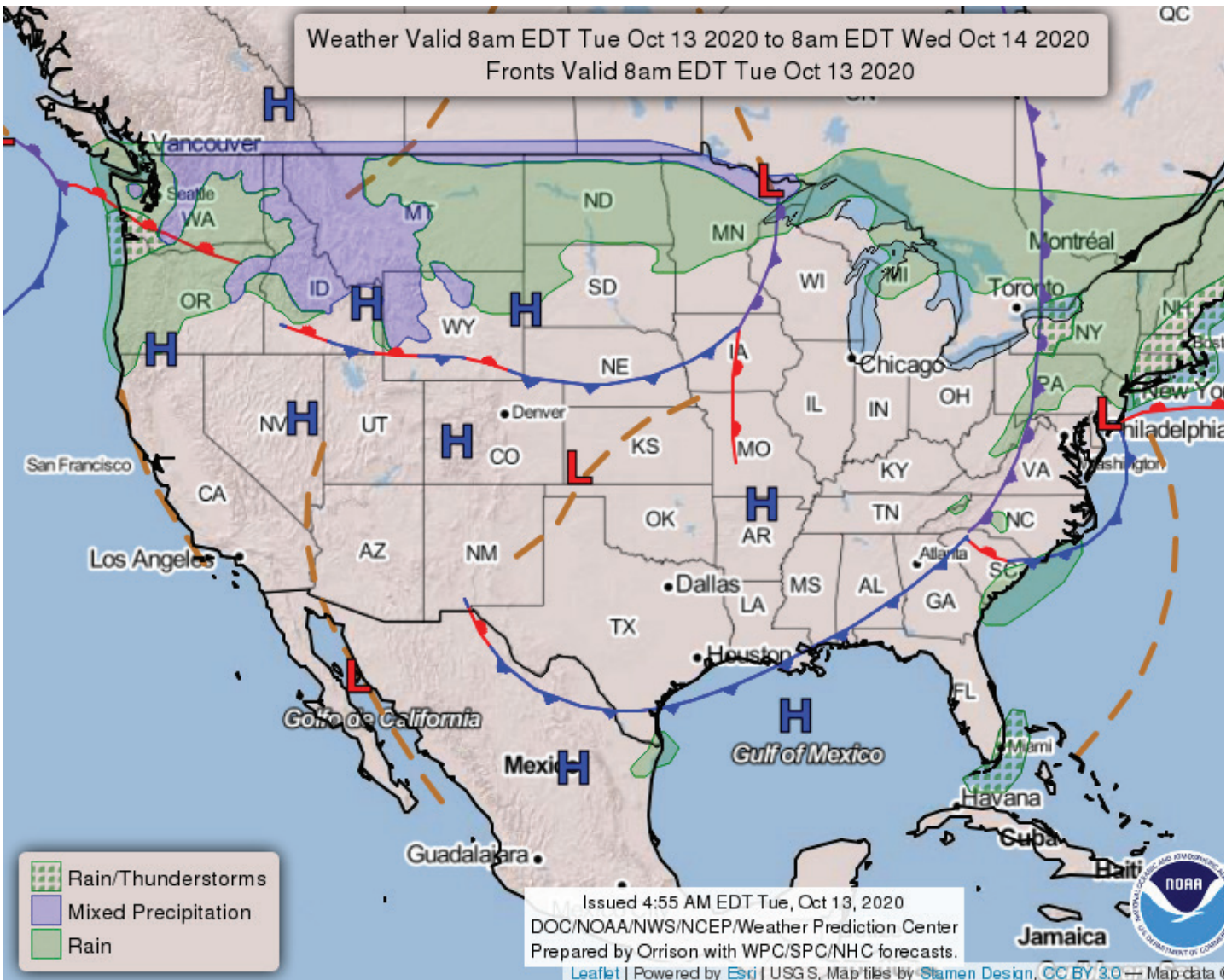
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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 67 °F at 3:25 PM**  
**Low Temp: 34 °F at 7:50 AM**  
**Wind: 24 mph at 2:51 PM**  
**Precip: .00**

## Today's Info

**Record High: 87° in 1958**  
**Record Low: 10° in 1909**  
**Average High: 59°F**  
**Average Low: 34°F**  
**Average Precip in Oct.: 0.87**  
**Precip to date in Oct.: 0.00**  
**Average Precip to date: 19.35**  
**Precip Year to Date: 15.28**  
**Sunset Tonight: 6:51 p.m.**  
**Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:49 a.m.**





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## **BELIEVE - EXPECT - RECEIVE**

The season was nearly halfway over, and Pete Rose was on a hitting streak. A reporter asked for an interview following a painful loss. He said to Rose, "You need 78 hits to break Ty Cobb's record. How many times at bat will you need to get 78 hits?"

"Seventy-eight," came his quick reply.

"Come on," said the reporter. "You don't expect to get 78 hits in 78 times at bat, do you?"

"Every time I step up to the plate," said Rose, "I expect to get a hit! If I don't expect to get a hit, I have no right to step in the batter's box."

As he was in playing baseball, so ought we be in our prayer life! Every time we go to the Lord in prayer, we must learn to expect results. Otherwise, why pray?

Jesus said, "If you ask anything in my name, I will do it for you so that the Father's glory will be demonstrated through the Son." Expecting results in prayer could not be explained more clearly or convincingly! If we ask in His name, He will grant our requests.

The problem, then, seems to be if/or. If our prayers are not consistent with what is represented in the "name" Jesus, we cannot expect Him to grant our requests. To "ask in His name" means that our prayers are consistent with what and Who Jesus represented and what He taught His disciples. If, when I pray, I know that God cannot and will not be able to bless what I am asking for, and ultimately honor Him, I cannot expect Him to meet my prayers.

Prayer: Help us, Heavenly Father, to "ask in Your name" so that when we pray, in faith believing, we can expect Your blessings. May our prayers reflect Your will. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: You can ask for anything in my name, and I will do it, so that the Son can bring glory to the Father. John 14:13

## Two ace serves by Jasmine Gengerke lifts Groton Area to 3-1 win over Mustangs

Groton Area's volleyball team posted its first win since the first match of the year with a 3-1 win over Waubay-Summit. The game was broadcast live on [GDILIVE.COM/GDIRADIO](http://GDILIVE.COM/GDIRADIO), sponsored by the Groton Vet Clinic, Bary Keith at Harr Motors and Tyson DeHoet Trucking.

Groton Area jumped out to a 5-1 lead in the first set. The Mustangs closed to within one at 17-16, but the Tigers kept the upper hand and went on to win, 25-22. In the first set, Madeline Fliehs had four kills, Jasmine Gengerke had three kills, Kenzie McInerney and Aspen Johnson each had a block and a kill and Alyssa Thaler and Trista Keith each had an ace serve.

The second set was tied three times and there were two lead changes before Groton Area scored nine straight points and went on to win, 25-19. Jasmine Gengerke had three ace serves and a kill, Sydney Leicht had three kills, Madeline Fliehs had two kills, Brooke Gengerke had an ace serve, Kenzie McInerney had a block and Allyssa Locke and Maddie Bjerke each had a kill.

The third set was a disaster for the Tigers as nothing went right. The Mustangs at one point scored 11 unanswered points and went on to win, 25-11. Maddie Bjerke had two kills, Madeline Fliehs and Sydney Leicht each had a kill and Kenzie McInerney had a block.

That set up a battle for the fourth set. Groton Area jumped out to a 5-0 lead. The Mustangs came back and tied the game at 11 and 12. Then after an 18 tie, the Mustangs took the lead, 19-18. Groton Area scored three straight points to take a 21-19 lead. Waubay-Summit tied the match at 22 and reclaimed the lead a 23-22. The Tigers died the match at 23 before Jasmine Gengerke had two ace serves to win the game, 25-23. Maddie Bjerke had three kills,

Madeline Fliehs had three kills and a block, Jasmine Gengerke had two ace serves, Sydney Leicht had two kills and an ace serve and Kenzie McInerney had two blocks and a kill.

Madeline Fliehs is the first player this year to hit double figures in kills for the Tigers. She finished with 10 kills, two blocks, 10 digs and one assist. Jasmine Gengerke finished with five kills, five ace serves and two digs. Kenzie McInerney had five kills, three blocks and two digs. Sydney Leicht had six kills and six digs. Maddie Bjerke had six kills, one block and nine assists. Aspen Johnson had one kill and one block. Trista Keith had one ace serve and eight digs. Brooke Gengerke had two ace serves, five digs and three assists. Alyssa Thaler had one ace serve, 23 digs and two assists. Stella Meier had one kill. Allyssa Locke



**Maddie Bjerke**

(Photo by Paul Kosel)

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had one kill, two ace serves, six digs and 18 assists.

Groton Area won the junior varsity match, 25-10 and 25-15. That game was broadcast live on [GDILIVE.COM/GDIRADIO](http://GDILIVE.COM/GDIRADIO), sponsored by Frost Construction. Brooke Gengerke had two ace serves, Emilie Thurston had an ace serve, Lydia Meier had four kills and two ace serves, Emma Schinkel had two kills, Megan Flihs had five kills, Kelsie Frost had four ace serves and two kills and Aspen Johnson had three kills.

Groton Area will be hosting Tiospa Zina this evening with the C match starting at 5 p.m. followed by the JV at 6 p.m. and then the varsity match.

- Paul Kosel



**Alyssa Thaller**  
(Photo by Paul Kosel)

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## 2020 Groton SD Community Events

- **CANCELLED** Groton Lions Club Easter Egg Hunt - City Park (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- **CANCELLED** Dueling Piano's Baseball Fundraiser at the American Legion
- **CANCELLED** Fireman's Fun Night (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
- **POSTPONED** Front Porch 605 Rural Route Road Trip
- **CANCELLED** Father/Daughter dance.
- **CANCELLED** Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales, (1st Saturday in May)
- **CANCELLED** Girls High School Golf Meet at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 05/25/2020 Groton American Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services
- 07/04/2020 Firecracker Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 07/12/2020 Summer Fest/Car Show
- 07/16/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Pro Am Golf Tourney
- 07/24/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Ferney Open Golf Tourney
- 07/25/2020 City-Wide Rummage Sales
- **CANCELLED** State American Legion Baseball Tournament in Groton
- 08/07/2020 Wine on Nine Event at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 09/12-13/2020 Groton Fly-In/Drive-In at the Groton Airport north of Groton
- 09/12/2020 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Sat. after Labor Day)
- 09/13/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Couples Sunflower Classic
- 10/09/2020 Lake Region Marching Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)
- 10/10/2020 Pumpkin Fest (Saturday before Columbus Day)
- 10/30/2020 Downtown Trick or Treat
- 10/31/2020 Groton United Methodist Trunk or Treat
- **CANCELLED** Groton Legion Annual Turkey Party (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)
- 11/26/2020 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center
- 12/05/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Tour of Homes & Holiday Party
- 12/05/2020 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services
- 01/--/2021 83rd Annual Carnival of Silver Skates

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## News from the Associated Press

### Monday's Scores

By The Associated Press

#### PREP VOLLEYBALL=

Alcester-Hudson def. Canton

Bon Homme def. Gayville-Volin, 25-19, 25-19, 25-21

Bridgewater-Emery def. Hanson, 25-16, 25-15, 25-21

Colman-Egan def. Oldham-Ramona/Rutland, 25-23, 25-12, 25-15

Groton Area def. Waubay/Summit, 25-22, 25-19, 11-25, 25-23

Ipswich def. Mobridge-Pollock, 25-22, 27-25, 25-15

Kimball/White Lake def. Miller, 25-15, 25-16, 25-16

Mt. Vernon/Plankinton def. Wagner, 0-0

Platte-Geddes def. Centerville, 25-19, 25-13, 25-8

Potter County def. Stanley County, 25-16, 25-10, 25-8

Rapid City Christian def. Custer, 25-16, 25-18, 25-9

South Sioux City, Neb. def. Elk Point-Jefferson, 27-29, 25-16, 15-25, 25-17, 15-11

Tri-Valley def. Lennox, 25-15, 25-21, 25-21

Wall def. Philip, 25-18, 25-18, 25-18

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

### Authorities investigating stabbing death in Box Elder

BOX ELDER, S.D. (AP) — Authorities are investigating a stabbing death in western South Dakota Sunday night.

The Pennington County Sheriff's Office says the body of 39-year-old Tessa Curley was discovered in a Box Elder apartment about 10:30 p.m. It is being treated as a homicide, investigators said.

No further information has been released.

### South Dakota Volleyball Polls

By The Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Here is the South Dakota Media volleyball poll for the week of Oct. 12, 2020. Teams are listed with first place votes in parenthesis, record, points and previous ranking.

#### CLASS AA

1. O'Gorman (14) 15-0 70 1

2. S.F. Washington 10-3 53 2

3. Huron 9-3 39 3

4. Watertown 9-2 32 4

5. Brandon Valley 9-3 14 5

Receiving Votes: Aberdeen Central (11-5) 2.

#### CLASS A

1. S.F. Christian (14) 19-0 70 1

2. Dakota Valley 9-3 55 2

3. Madison 10-2 40 4

4. Hill City 18-1 22 RV

5. Winner 11-3 15 5

Receiving Votes: R.C. Christian (18-2) 6; Parker (12-7) 1; Garretson (13-3) 1.



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## CLASS B

1. Northwestern (14)	16-1	70	1
2. Warner 12-1	55	2	
3. Chester Area 15-2	41	4	
4. Ipswich 16-2	22	NR	
5. Faulkton Area 10-4	9	3	

Receiving Votes: Bridgewater-Emery (14-2) 7; Colman-Egan (13-3) 3; Elkton-Lake Benton (14-3) 3.

## South Dakota Prep Polls

By The Associated Press

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Prep Media football polls for the week of Oct. 12 are listed below, ranking the top-five teams in each class. First-place votes received are indicated in parentheses.

### Class 11AAA

Rank-School	FPV	Rcd	TP	Pvs	
1. Sioux Falls Roosevelt	(18)	5-0	94	1	
2. Brandon Valley (1)	5-1	76	2		
3. Harrisburg	-	5-1	58	3	
4. Lincoln -	3-3	33	4		
5. Sioux Falls O’Gorman	-	4-3	24	5	

Others receiving votes: None.

### Class 11AA

Rank-School	FPV	Rcd	TP	Pvs
1. Yankton (15)	7-0	91	1	
2. Brookings	(4)	7-0	80	2
3. Pierre -	4-2	56	3	
4. Sturgis -	3-4	39	5	
5. Mitchell -	3-4	19	4	

Others receiving votes: None.

### Class 11A

Rank-School	FPV	Rcd	TP	Pvs
1. Tea Area (19)	6-0	95	1	
2. Dakota Valley	-	5-2	74	2
3. Dell Rapids	-	5-1	56	3
4. Canton -	4-2	38	4	
5. West Central	-	4-3	20	RV

Others receiving votes: Milbank 1, Madison 1.

### Class 11B

Rank-School	FPV	Rcd	TP	Pvs	
1. Winner (16)	7-0	92	1		
2. Bridgewater-Emery-Ethan	(3)	7-0	79	2	
3. Sioux Valley	-	6-1	55	3	
4. St. thomas More-	5-1	32	4		
5. Mobridge-Pollock	-	7-0	24	5	

Receiving votes: : Elk Point-Jefferson 3.

### Class 9AA

Rank-School	FPV	Rcd	TP	Pvs
1. Viborg-Hurley (19)	7-0	95	1	
2. Lemon-McIntosh	-	7-0	74	2
3. Hamlin -	8-0	52	3	

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4. Platte-Geddes - 7-0 44 4  
5. Hanson - 6-1 17 5

Others receiving votes: Deuel 3.

Class 9A

Rank-School	FPV	Rcd	TP	Pvs
1. Howard (19)	7-0	95	1	
2. Canistota-Freeman	-	6-1	76	2
3. Warner -	6-0	54	3	
4. Wall -	6-0	36	4	
5. De Smet -	5-2	22	RV	

Others receiving votes: Ipswich-Edmunds Central 1, Philip 1.

Class 9B

Rank-School	FPV	Rcd	TP	Pvs
1. Wolsey-Wessington	(19)	6-1	95	1
2. Langford Area -	5-2	71	2	
3. Herreid-Selby Area	-	6-1	44	4
4. Dell Rapids St. Mary	-	4-2	40	3
5. Alcester-Hudson -	5-2	23	5	

Others receiving votes: Kadoka Area 12.✕

## Active coronavirus cases surge to over 6,000 in South Dakota

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Active coronavirus cases in South Dakota surpassed 6,000 for the first time Monday as the state continued to struggle to contain the virus.

The Department of Health reported 359 new cases on Monday. That's a downturn from recent days, but fewer tests were processed over the weekend. The new cases bring the state's tally of people with active infections to 6,062, a new high during the pandemic.

Health officials reported two more deaths, bringing the death toll to 288. October is already the deadliest month of the pandemic, with the state so far reporting 65 deaths.

Hospitalizations from the virus have also surged during October. There are currently 278 people in hospitals with COVID-19. The Department of Health reports that 43% of hospital beds and 28% of Intensive Care Units statewide remain open for patients.

Over the course of pandemic, 28,925 people have tested positive for the coronavirus. About 79% of them have recovered to a point of no longer being infectious.

## Noem plans update on South Dakota AG crash investigation

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem plans to provide an update Tuesday on an investigation into a fatal crash in which the state's attorney general struck and killed a man with his car.

Little information has been released from authorities in the month since Attorney General Jason Ravensborg hit a man walking on a rural highway the night of Sept. 12. The attorney general told authorities he thought he had struck a deer in the collision and only realized he had killed a man after returning to the crash site the next morning.

The attorney general was driving home to Pierre from a Republican fundraiser some 110 miles (180 kilometers) away in Redfield when the crash happened. Ravensborg said he immediately called 911.

Ravensborg has continued to work as attorney general, but his office has not had direct involvement in the investigation. He is a Republican, serving his first term in office after winning election in 2018.

A crash reconstruction expert from Wyoming and the North Dakota Bureau of Criminal Investigation assisted the South Dakota Highway Patrol in the investigation. Such accidents would ordinarily be investigated by the South Dakota Bureau of Criminal Investigation, which answers to the attorney general's office. The other agencies took on the investigation to avoid a conflict of interest.

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Noem has promised a transparent investigation. The family of the man killed, 55-year-old Joseph Boever, has questioned Ravensborg's account of the crash.

A spokesman for the Department of Public Safety declined to say whether the possibility of criminal charges would be discussed at the news conference.

## Europe eyes new restrictions as virus cases hit record high

By JAMEY KEATEN and FRANK JORDANS Associated Press

GENEVA (AP) — Governments across Europe ratcheted up restrictions Tuesday in an effort to contain the spread of the coronavirus as the continent recorded its highest weekly number of new infections since the start of the pandemic.

The World Health Organization said there were more than 700,000 new COVID-19 cases reported in Europe last week, a jump of 34% compared to the previous week, with Britain, France, Russia and Spain accounting for more than half of new infections recorded in the region.

The increasing case numbers in Europe are partly the result of more testing, but the U.N. health agency noted that deaths were also up 16% in the region last week compared to the previous week. Doctors are also warning that while many new cases currently affect younger people, who tend to have milder symptoms, the median age could rise again, resulting in more serious illnesses in elderly populations.

Italian Premier Giuseppe Conte ordered bans on pickup sports games among friends and parties in closed spaces. Private gatherings at homes with more than six people who don't live together are also discouraged.

Like other European countries, Italy is also limiting nightlife, with bars and restaurants having to close at midnight, and drinking while standing at a bar banned after 9 p.m.

Italy made wearing masks mandatory outdoors last week, a requirement already in place in Spain, Turkey, India and a handful of other Asian countries. Elsewhere in Europe, such mandates are in effect in hot spot cities like Paris, Brussels and Pristina, Kosovo, and are being introduced in several German cities.

Even with virus infections rising again, governments are eager to avoid the total lockdowns they imposed back then that caused huge economic damage and job losses. Wary of hurting already fragile economies, European governments have instead relied on a patchwork of regional restrictions that have sometimes caused confusion and frustration by those affected.

Still, the U.N. health agency cautioned Tuesday against a one-size-fits-all mindset when it comes to restrictive measures. WHO spokesman Tarik Jasarevic told reporters in Geneva that lockdowns should be a "last resort."

Chancellor Angela Merkel has summoned the governors of Germany's 16 states to meet in person Wednesday for the first time since mid-June. Bavarian governor Markus Soeder called for "a really clear set of rules for everyone in the coming weeks" to prevent the situation spinning out of control.

In an effort to avoid to keep people and goods moving throughout the European Union, member countries approved a traffic light system Tuesday.

The countries agreed to not restrict people traveling between so-called green areas — where virus infection numbers are low — but EU governments will continue to set their own restrictions, such as quarantines or mandatory testing upon arrival, for people coming from orange or red zones.

Under the criteria adopted Tuesday, most of EU regions would be either red or orange.

Jordans reported from Berlin. Associated Press writers Colleen Barry in Milan, L Lazar Semini in Tirana, Geir Moulson in Berlin, and Danica Kirka and Maria Cheng in London contributed to this report.

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

## Asia Today: China city says it's tested 3 million for virus

BEIJING (AP) — Authorities in the eastern Chinese port city of Qingdao said Tuesday that they have

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completed coronavirus tests on more than 3 million people following the country's first reported local outbreak in nearly two months.

The city's health department said no new cases have been found among the more than 1.1 million test results returned thus far. The city said it had a total of 12 cases, six with symptoms and six without, since the new outbreak was first spotted over the weekend at a hospital.

The National Health Commission, however, said Tuesday that at least six new cases of the virus were found in Qingdao in the past 24 hours.

The reason for the discrepancy was not immediately clear. China's methods for logging and reporting of virus numbers has been questioned since the pandemic first began late last year in its city of Wuhan.

Authorities in Qingdao have said they plan to test all 9 million people in the city by the end of the week, similar to previous mass testing campaigns in other cities where outbreaks have been detected. Testing began with "close contacts, close contacts of those close contacts and more casual contacts," gradually expanding to all districts of the city, the health department said.

Qingdao is a major commercial harbor and industrial center known for electronics and the country's most famous brewery, as well as the home of the Chinese navy's northern fleet.

The National Health Commission numbers released Tuesday reported a total of 30 new virus cases in the previous 24 hours nationwide. It broke down those numbers into 13 cases in which people had symptoms and 17 cases in which they had no symptoms. The total number of locally transmitted cases, both with and without symptoms, was 11, while the rest were listed as imported.

China has reported a total of 4,634 deaths from coronavirus among 85,591 cases. It has not provided a running total of asymptomatic cases, believed to number in the thousands.

China's last reported local outbreak was in the northwestern city of Urumqi in the far western Xinjiang region, with all cases since then found among those arriving from outside China.

China has relaxed mask and social distancing requirements in the wake of falling case numbers, but has maintained robust testing as it seeks to return the economy to full functioning.

In other developments in the Asia-Pacific region:

— About 100 members of a Hong Kong orchestra are being quarantined after one of its members tested positive for the coronavirus. A bass clarinet player for the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra was infected, according to a Facebook post by fellow orchestra member Andrew Simon. Simon, the orchestra's principal clarinetist, said he would be taken to a government quarantine camp for two weeks. All members of the orchestra must undergo quarantines to contain any risk for other performers and audience members, the South China Morning Post reported, citing an unidentified government official. The Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra had begun its new season of performances last Friday with a sold-out socially distanced concert due to coronavirus restrictions. Hong Kong reported eight new coronavirus cases on Tuesday. It has confirmed 5,202 infections, including 105 deaths.

— India reported its smallest daily increase in new coronavirus cases since mid-August, recording 55,342 in the past 24 hours. The Health Ministry numbers released Tuesday raised India's confirmed total to more than 7.17 million since the pandemic began. The ministry also reported 706 deaths in the past 24 hours, taking total fatalities to 109,856. India is still registering the highest number of new daily cases globally, but it has seen a steady decline since early September, when it was recording more than 90,000 new cases each day.

— South Korea has reported 102 new cases of the coronavirus, its first daily increase of more than 100 in six days. The rise is a cause of concern as officials lowered social distancing restrictions this week after concluding that the viral spread was slowing after a spike in mid-August. The figures released by the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency brought the national totals since the pandemic began to 24,805 infections and 434 deaths. Fifty-eight of the new cases were reported in the Seoul metropolitan area, while 33 were linked to international arrivals.

— Taiwan says it has diagnosed coronavirus in a Taiwanese citizen returning from China for the first time since February. The patient reported having a runny nose and cough to quarantine officials upon his arrival

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in Taiwan on Sunday, Central Epidemic Command Center spokesperson Chuang Jen-hsiang said Tuesday. Chuang said the man had been working in the eastern province of Jiangsu, which, according to China's National Health Commission, has not reported any recent cases of local transmission of the virus. He said Taiwan's last case of a person bringing the virus from China was on Feb. 6. Taiwan took strong measures to arrest the spread of COVID-19 but has since relaxed many of them to allow schools and businesses to reopen. The island has reported 530 cases, the vast majority of them brought from outside, with seven deaths and 34 people currently in treatment. China, where the pandemic is believed to have originated, reported its first cases of local transmission in months over the weekend — 12 people in the northern port city of Qingdao.

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

## **Bipartisan Christian group forms super PAC to oppose Trump**

By ELANA SCHOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A group of prominent Christians from both sides of the aisle, including a past faith adviser to former President Barack Obama, is forming a political action committee designed to chip away at Christian support for President Donald Trump in the final weeks of the 2020 campaign.

Dubbed Not Our Faith, the new super PAC plans to roll out six-figure TV and digital ads focused on Christian voters — particularly the evangelical and Catholic voters who helped power Trump to victory in 2016. Its first digital ad, set to run in Michigan and Pennsylvania, takes sharp aim at Trump's claim to a foothold with Christians.

The ad, shared with The Associated Press in advance of its release, says Trump "has used Christianity for his own purposes," invoking imagery of the Republican president's photo op outside a historic Washington church amid this summer's racial justice demonstrations. Urging Christians to break from Trump, the ad states that they "don't need Trump to save them. The truth is that Trump needs Christians to save his flailing campaign."

That sharp critique of Trump's standing with Christian voters comes as the president looks to evangelicals in particular to help him muscle to reelection over Democratic nominee Joe Biden. While Biden's campaign is mounting a well-organized faith outreach effort, that work largely focuses on an affirmative case for the former vice president rather than the overtly anti-Trump case that the new PAC is making.

Among the PAC's advisory council members are Michael Wear, a former faith adviser in Obama's administration and reelection campaign, and Autumn Vandehei, a former aide to onetime Republican Rep. Tom DeLay of Texas. Wear said in an interview that Trump has "in a predatory way attached himself to Christians," asserting that the faith would be "better off" without the president.

"Trump eked out 2016 with unprecedented support from white evangelicals and, important to note, a really strong showing among Catholics. We're going after all of it," Wear said. "We think Christian support is on the table in this election."

Trump and his reelection campaign continue to lean heavily on pitches to Christian voters, with the president asserting the baseless claim that Biden and Democrats are hostile to religion. Republicans are also appealing to voters of faith by claiming that Democrats have unfairly criticized Supreme Court nominee Amy Coney Barrett for her Catholicism, although no Democratic senator has yet raised the issue during Barrett's confirmation hearings.

Trump's faith adviser and personal pastor, Paula White, is set to appear Tuesday in the battleground state of Ohio at an event for the campaign's evangelical outreach project.

Whether Biden backers' bid to peel away evangelical support from Trump is making headway remains to be seen. A survey from the nonpartisan Pew Research Center taken after Trump's contentious church photo op found that 72% of white evangelicals approved of his handling of the job, a level that has remained largely consistent over his presidency.



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But the new PAC sees room for a wide-ranging connection with Christian voters beyond Trump's white evangelical base. Wear said the project hopes "to reach and appeal to a diverse coalition of Christians ... just as we anticipate a diverse coalition of Christians will oppose Donald Trump's reelection."

The PAC's advisory council also includes Carolyn Y. Woo, the retired president and CEO of the faith-based humanitarian group Catholic Relief Services, and the Rev. Alvin Love, pastor at Lilydale First Baptist Church-Chicago and chair of faith-based initiatives at the National Baptist Convention.

Associated Press religion coverage receives support from the Lilly Endowment through the Religion News Foundation. The AP is solely responsible for this content.

## The Latest: Europe hits record of over 700,000 new cases

By The Associated Press undefined

GENEVA — The World Health Organization said European nations reported more than 700,000 new coronavirus cases last week — the highest-ever figure since the start of the pandemic.

In a weekly briefing published Tuesday, WHO said weekly virus cases and deaths across Europe jumped by 34% and 16% respectively. Britain, France, Russia and Spain accounted for more than half of the new cases seen in the region.

WHO noted that the number of new cases reported in Spain showed a "noticeable decline" in comparison to recent weeks. But in Poland, WHO said virus cases and deaths spiked by 93% and 104% respectively, and the government has tightened restrictions to try avoiding another lockdown.

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said this week that the agency understood the frustration people were feeling as the pandemic drags on but warned "there are no shortcuts and no silver bullets."

WHO described lockdowns a "last resort" when countries have no other options and urged officials to use more targeted methods to stop the virus.

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

- Second COVID-19 vaccine trial paused over unexplained illness
- Takeaways: Coronavirus at center of Supreme Court hearings
- Defiant Trump defends virus record at his first post-COVID rally
- Britain begins 3-tier virus risk system, puts Liverpool at very high risk
- As the pandemic presses on, waves of grief follow its path

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

### HERE'S WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING:

COPENHAGEN, Denmark — The government in Norway says it will make the vaccine free and that it will cover the costs that municipalities and hospitals may have in connection with vaccinations.

Health Minister Bent Høeie said Tuesday that the government's decision was based on recommendation by the Norwegian Institute of Public Health. That agency will also be preparing a national vaccination plan with a priority order.

"We hope to be able to start offering vaccines as early as 2021 but the time for start-up will depend on when pharmaceutical authorities give their approval," Høeie told the Norwegian parliament.

Norway has seen 15,524 coronavirus cases and 276 deaths.

TAIPEI, Taiwan — Taiwan says it has diagnosed coronavirus in a Taiwanese citizen returning from China for the first time since February.

The patient, identified only as a man in his forties, reported having a runny nose and cough to quarantine

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officials upon his arrival in Taiwan on Sunday, spokesperson for the Central Epidemic Command Center Chuang Jen-hsiang told reporters Tuesday.

Chuang said the man had been working in the eastern province of Jiangsu, which, according to China's National Health Commission, has not reported any recent cases of local transmission.

He said Taiwan's last case of a person bringing the virus from China was on February 6.

China administers routine temperature checks at its airports. However, Chuang was not required to submit a negative virus test on returning to Taiwan, Chiang said.

Taiwan took strong measures to arrest the spread of COVID-19 but has since relaxed many of those measures. The island has reported 530 cases with seven virus-related deaths.

**LONDON** - Britain's government defended its new three-tier system of COVID-19 restrictions as critics suggested it was too little, too late amid reports the government's scientific advisers recommended tougher action three weeks ago.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson unveiled the new system Monday in a carefully orchestrated series of events that culminated with an address to the nation. The plan sets out progressively stricter measures to slow the spread of COVID-19 based on local infection rates and placed the northern city of Liverpool in the highest risk category.

The new system comes three weeks after the government's last nationwide program, which banned gatherings of more than six people and required pubs and restaurants to close at 10 p.m. The government's scientific advisers at that time recommended ministers go further, suggesting a two- to three-week national lockdown to short-circuit rapidly rising infection rates.

Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick told the BBC that the government took "robust action" in response to the scientist's advice, but ministers had to balance this against other impacts like the economy.

**ROME** — Italian Premiere Giuseppe Conte has ordered strict new anti-coronavirus measures, including limits on private gatherings and a ban on casual pickup sports.

Conte negotiated with the country's regions to win limits on private gatherings, over the objections of some governors. Parties in closed spaces are banned, but the measures, imposed Tuesday, are limited to "strong recommendations" against private gatherings in homes with more than six people who don't live under the same roof.

Bars and restaurants must close by midnight, and drinks can only be consumed at tables — not while standing at the bar or outside — after 9 p.m. Also banned are any contact sports that are not organized by an association that can maintain distancing rules. That means no casual games of Italy's beloved soccer in local parks.

After mandating the wearing of masks outdoors last week, the government sought the additional measures, with the number of new cases rising to around 5,000 a day in the past week.

**JERUSALEM** — Israel has now recorded more than 2,000 deaths from the coronavirus as the country remains under lockdown for a fourth week to quell the outbreak.

The Health Ministry reported Monday night that the country had surpassed 2,000 deaths. It reported five more fatalities on Tuesday, raising the toll to 2,021.

Israel — which has confirmed more than 295,000 cases — had garnered praise earlier this year for its swift imposition of travel restrictions to limit the pandemic's spread, but after lifting the first nationwide lockdown in May, new cases quickly increased.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government imposed a second blanket lockdown on Sept. 18 as the infection rate per capita grew to one of the highest in the world.

Israel's infection rate is gradually decreasing, and the Cabinet is deliberating how and when the government will start to lift restrictions.

**LONDON** — Unemployment across the U.K. spiked sharply in August, a clear signal that the jobless rate

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is heading towards levels not seen in nearly 30 years when a British government salary-support scheme ends this month and new local restrictions are imposed to suppress a resurgence of the coronavirus.

The Office for National Statistics said Tuesday that unemployment rose by 138,000 in the three months to August from the previous three-month period. The unemployment rate jumped to 4.5%, its highest rate since early 2017, from 4.1% in the previous quarter.

So far, Britain has been spared the sharp rises in unemployment seen in the United States because of the government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, which has paid most of the salaries of workers who have not been fired. Some 1.2 million employers have taken advantage of the program to furlough 9.6 million people at a cost to the government of nearly 40 billion pounds (\$52 billion).

Since the program ends at the end of October, many of those still on furlough are expected to be made redundant and unemployment to rise further.

**ISLAMABAD** — With Pakistan's coronavirus caseload inching upward, the government has increased lockdowns across the country, targeting markets and neighborhoods with increasing numbers.

At a meeting of top government officials from across the country Tuesday, Planning and Development Minister Asad Umar said 3,497 so-called "smart" lockdowns have been imposed in districts across the country of 220 million people.

Pakistan has recorded 319,848 cases, including 531 new ones reported Tuesday.

**NEW DELHI** — India has registered 55,342 new coronavirus cases, its lowest single-day tally since mid-August.

The Health Ministry raised India's confirmed total to more than 7.17 million cases on Tuesday but said the country was showing a trend of declining daily cases over the last five weeks.

The ministry also reported 706 deaths in the past 24 hours, raising the toll to 109,856.

According to data shared by the Health Ministry, the average number of daily cases from Sept. 9-15 was 92,830. The average has steadily declined since then, falling to under 73,000 per day over the last week.

Meanwhile, India's testing rate has remained constant, with almost 1.1 million tests being carried out every day.

India, a country of nearly 1.4 billion people, is second in the world in total cases, behind only the U.S., which has confirmed over 7.8 million infections.

**BEIJING** -- Authorities in the eastern Chinese port city of Qingdao say they have completed coronavirus tests on more than 3 million people following the country's first reported local outbreak of the virus in nearly two months.

The city's health department said Tuesday that no new positive cases had been found among the more than 1.1 million test results returned thus far. The city said it had a total of 12 cases, six with symptoms and six without, since the new outbreak was first spotted over the weekend at a hospital.

The National Health Commission, however, said Tuesday that at least six new cases of the virus were found in Qingdao in the past 24 hours.

The reason for the discrepancy was not immediately clear.

The National Health Commission numbers released Tuesday reported a total of 30 new virus cases in the previous 24 hours nationwide. It broke down those numbers into 13 cases in which people had symptoms and 17 cases in which they had no symptoms. The total number of locally transmitted cases, both with and without symptoms, was 11, while the rest were listed as imported.

**SEOUL**, South Korea -- South Korea has reported 102 new cases of the coronavirus, its first daily increase over 100 in six days. The steady rise is a cause of concern as officials have lowered social distancing restrictions this week after concluding that the viral spread was slowing after a spike in mid-August.

The figures released by the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency brought the national caseload

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to 24,805, including 434 deaths.

Fifty-eight of the new cases was reported from the densely populated Seoul metropolitan area, where transmissions have been linked to hospitals, sports facilities, a funeral home and an army unit.

Thirty-three of the new cases have been linked to international arrivals, including passengers from Russia, Nepal, Japan and the United States.

South Korea relaxed its social distancing guidelines beginning Monday, which allowed high-risk businesses like nightclubs and karaoke bars to reopen and for professional sports leagues to proceed with plans to bring back fans in the stands.

AUSTIN, Texas -- An ongoing wave of COVID-19 cases in the El Paso area prompted Gov. Greg Abbott to announce Monday that a surge team of medical professionals would be dispatched to the area.

The 75 doctors, nurses and respiratory therapists being dispatched will be accompanied by a supply of extra personal protective equipment to support efforts by El Paso hospitals to meet the surge of coronavirus infections. The team will be in addition to the 169 professionals the state previously sent to the area.

As of Monday, 313 people were hospitalized with COVID-19 in El Paso, Hudspeth and Culberson counties of West Texas. The state estimated that active COVID-19 cases in El Paso County alone soared from almost 4,000 on Oct. 1 to just over 6,000 Monday. Seven cases were fatal during that period.

FRANKFORT, Ky. -- Kentucky's governor said Monday that he kept up a busy work schedule despite being confined to the governor's mansion after being around someone who later tested positive for COVID-19.

Gov. Andy Beshear said he will follow the advice of state public health officials in determining how long he and his family remain quarantined at the mansion. His next COVID test is expected to be Tuesday and then Friday, he said. He added he tested negative last week.

"I've asked them (health officials) to treat me like anybody else out there," the Democratic said. "So I'm going to follow all the rules and all the guidelines."

Beshear said he had one of his busiest Mondays in a while, and that the biggest challenge of working in quarantine — away from his staff -- was all the time he spent "staring at a screen."

In his virtual briefing, the governor reported Kentucky's highest number of coronavirus cases on a Monday since the pandemic began.

## Michelle Obama, LeBron James team to help boost early voting

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A voter initiative led by Michelle Obama is partnering with a similar group founded by NBA star LeBron James and other prominent Black athletes and entertainers to sponsor events in major U.S. cities starting next week to generate excitement about voting early for the Nov. 3 election.

Mrs. Obama's When We All Vote and James' More Than A Vote are teaming to provide information, transportation, food, music, personal protective equipment and other support at early voting sites around the country Oct. 18-31.

"Millions of Americans have already cast their ballot and with only 21 days until Election Day, making your plan to vote early is critical," Mrs. Obama said Tuesday in a statement to The Associated Press. "It's now up to us to do everything in our power to get our friends and family ready to vote early and safely together. We can't leave anyone behind."

The former first lady is also launching a challenge to encourage more people to vote before Nov. 3. Her group also announced more than \$1 million in grants and supplies to local partner organizations to host their own activities.

Last week, Mrs. Obama repeated her endorsement of Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden in a lengthy new video message that was sharply critical of Republican President Donald Trump.

In-person events are planned for Atlanta; Charlotte, North Carolina; Detroit; Los Angeles; Milwaukee; Orlando, Florida; and Philadelphia. They will be held within walking distance of early voting sites and



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include free food from the nonprofit World Central Kitchen, founded by celebrity chef Jose Andres, and other providers.

Music, celebrity appearances, personal protective equipment and support for voters' rights from the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under the Law and the Election Protection coalition will also be provided. Lyft has agreed to provide discounted transportation.

When We All Vote also plans to host a virtual couch party on Oct. 23.

Other partners include BET, Comedy Central, Johnson & Johnson, MTV, the National Urban League, Radio One and United Way Worldwide.

All attendees and staff on the ground will be required to follow COVID-19 safety guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

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AP's Advance Voting guide brings you the facts about voting early, by mail or absentee from each state: <https://interactives.ap.org/advance-voting-2020/>.

## UN: Climate change means more weather disasters every year

GENEVA (AP) — In the wake of heat waves, global warming, forest fires, storms, droughts and a rising number of hurricanes, the U.N. weather agency is warning that the number of people who need international humanitarian help could rise 50% by 2030 compared to the 108 million who needed it worldwide in 2018.

In a new report released with partners on Tuesday, the World Meteorological Agency says more disasters attributed to weather are taking place each year. It said over 11,000 disasters have been attributed to weather, climate and phenomena like tsunamis that are related to water over the last 50 years — causing 2 million deaths and racking up \$3.6 trillion worth of economic costs.

In one hopeful development over that period, the average number of deaths from each separate weather disaster per year has dropped by one-third, even as the number of such events and the economic costs from them have both surged.

The 2020 State of Climate Services report, compiled by 16 international agencies and financing institutions, calls on governments to put more money into early-warning systems that can improve countries' ability to prepare for, respond to and mitigate the impact of such natural disasters.

"While COVID-19 generated a large international health and economic crisis from which it will take years to recover, it is crucial to remember that climate change will continue to pose an on-going and increasing threat to human lives, ecosystems, economies and societies for centuries to come," said WMO Secretary-General Petteri Taalas.

"Recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic is an opportunity to move forward along a more sustainable path towards resilience and adaptation in the light of anthropogenic climate change," he said.

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

## UK unemployment ascent accelerates amid winter job fears

By PAN PYLAS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Unemployment across the U.K. spiked sharply in August, a clear signal that the jobless rate is heading towards levels not seen in nearly 30 years when a British government salary-support scheme ends this month and new local restrictions are imposed to suppress a resurgence of the coronavirus.

The Office for National Statistics said Tuesday that unemployment rose by 138,000 in the three months to August from the previous three-month period. The unemployment rate jumped to 4.5%, its highest rate since early 2017, from 4.1% in the previous quarter.

So far, Britain has been spared the sharp rises in unemployment seen in the United States because of the government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, which has paid most of the salaries of workers who have not been fired. Some 1.2 million employers have taken advantage of the program to furlough 9.6



million people at a cost to the government of nearly 40 billion pounds (\$52 billion).

At one stage, around 30% of the U.K.'s working population was on furlough. Although they weren't working over the past few months, they were not counted as unemployed.

Since the program ends at the end of October, many of those still on furlough are expected to be made redundant and unemployment to rise further.

And with many parts of the U.K. seeing large increases in coronavirus infections and the government imposing local restrictions, there are concerns that unemployment could soar towards 3 million, levels not seen since the early 1990s.

"A higher case rate, new restrictions and less government support are likely to push unemployment up over the winter months," said Ian Stewart, chief economist at Deloitte. "The path of the virus continues to dictate the direction of the economy."

On Monday, the government carved England into three tiers of coronavirus risk in a bid to slow a resurgent outbreak, putting the northern city of Liverpool into the highest-risk category and shutting its pubs, gyms and betting shops.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said the three-level system was designed to "simplify and standardize" a confusing patchwork of local rules, as the country enters a "crucial phase." Johnson said hospitals are filling up with more COVID-19 patients than in March, when he ordered a national lockdown.

To ease the economic hit from the new restrictions, the government has said it will pay two thirds of the salaries of workers in companies that have to close as a result of the new restrictions.

Leaders across the north of England and unions have slammed the new package as "unacceptable" because it's not as generous as the national scheme and because it doesn't include workers in companies that would be affected indirectly.

"Wage replacement should be 80% for businesses who have to shut," said Frances O'Grady, general secretary of the umbrella Trades Union Congress.

"We need a more generous short-time working scheme for firms which aren't required to close but will be hit by stricter local restrictions, and self-employed people in local lockdown areas need help, too."

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

## **When school is home and home is school, which rules prevail?**

By KATHLEEN FOODY Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Toys that look like weapons. Barefoot students. Disruptive imagery in the background. Pets roaming the room. All a clear violation of rules inside most American classrooms. But that was when most American students were actually inside schools.

How do standards like these translate when everyone is logging on from home? Schools are struggling to figure it out this fall — yet another adaptation demanded of educators during the coronavirus pandemic.

In the learn-from-home world, teachers and experts can easily imagine the friction of extending regular classroom discipline into young people's previously private spaces.

Can students have posters visible in the background backing social or political movements that others disagree with or find racist? Can they wear clothes at home that are banned from classrooms? How can a teacher respond when a student says or does something that the instructor deems rude, offensive or threatening?

Weeks into the fall semester, a growing number of school officials are navigating those grey areas.

In Colorado, Maryland and Pennsylvania, school administrators asked police to investigate separate incidents of toy guns, BB guns and a suspected rifle visible on video feeds from students' homes. The actions raised complaints that they had overreacted to something that didn't threaten either those students or their classmates.

There's more. A Florida school district promised an investigation of an apparent high school student

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shouting racial slurs over a virtual class session. A Texas teacher was put on leave after parents noticed her virtual classroom is decorated with (virtual) posters backing LGBTQ rights and the Black Lives Matter movement.

"So many of our legal standards for speech at school are based on the notion that there's a limited expectation of privacy when you're at school, and certainly the expectation of privacy in your own home is much more expansive," says Miranda Johnson, director of the Education Law and Policy Institute at Loyola University.

"I think, under the circumstances, we have to be really mindful of the ways in which discipline is extending into the home environment," she says.

She recommends that school leaders evaluate whether a student's action disrupts learning — and if it does, look for a way to address it one on one.

"The ultimate goal should be to avoid punitive or exclusionary consequences, because students have already had their education disrupted in so many different ways," Johnson says.

It's not easy when the lines are so blurred. Standards that were never in doubt inside school classrooms have prompted pushback in some communities. On social media, parents and teachers have mocked lists of rules about wearing shoes, keeping pets out of view or banning food and drink during virtual lessons. It is, they say, school going too far and reaching into private spaces.

Angela McByrd, a statistics teacher at Mansueto High School in Chicago, says she's been horrified by lengthy rule lists shared by other teachers in Facebook groups for educators.

Mansueto is part of the Noble Charter Schools network, known for its demerit-based system enforcing a strict dress code and other rules. McByrd said teachers began pushing back against that approach before the pandemic and demanded more leniency as they prepared for virtual learning this fall.

When her classes began this month, McByrd told her high schoolers that they were expected to participate in class activities but she wouldn't require video cameras to be on. She had to reassure some students repeatedly that there was no need to wear their usual uniforms.

Schools around the country relying on virtual learning are taking various approaches to rules and discipline. Some have created new policies; others have decided existing rules for student conduct would be enforced, including dress codes.

Advocates, though, worry that many schools will turn to suspensions or expulsions first, neglecting built-in features that allow teachers to turn off a disruptive student's microphone or camera while still allowing him or her access to the lesson.

"Students have a right to attend school, and they also have a right to express themselves freely," says Johanna Miller, director of the New York Civil Liberties Union's Education Policy Center. "And those rights can come into tension with each other ... But there are other ways to deal with things without saying to that child: 'Because you distracted people, you can no longer be part of this class.'"

Reliance on suspensions or expulsions could be particularly damaging for students who are Black and Latino and historically face more frequent discipline for violating school rules, says Andrew Hairston, director of the School-to-Prison Pipeline Project at Texas Appleseed. The group has joined other advocacy groups calling on Texas to ban on expulsions or suspensions during the pandemic.

"If we as adults expect our employers and our friends to give us breaks during this pandemic ... to be able to use the restroom, drink water and rest, we should be extending that grace for the young people," Hairston said.

Ultimately, the uneasy line-blurring between school and home — and melding those different rules in a manner that's appropriate for extraordinary times — is temporary. Few students or educators expect a different approach to classroom rules when in-person learning again becomes the norm.

Until then, however, those who teach students and mete out discipline will have to navigate an uncertain, constantly shifting educational landscape.

"I know some schools are saying, 'Oh, we want to present students with some sense of normalcy,'" says McByrd, the statistics teacher in Chicago. "But it's so easy for people to forget that the times that we're

in right now are not normal. And this is a chance for us to try to do things differently than we've done in the past."

Follow Chicago-based Associated Press journalist Kathleen Foody on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/KatieFoody>

## **US, UK fight foreign bribery but most nations do very little**

By DAVID RISING Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — An anti-corruption watchdog on Tuesday ranked the United States and United Kingdom as the largest exporters most active at enforcing rules meant to prohibit companies from paying bribes in foreign markets, but said many others are doing next to nothing.

Berlin-based Transparency International said only four of 47 countries — the U.S., U.K., Switzerland and Israel, making up 16.5% of global exports — were actively enforcing legislation against foreign bribery in 2019.

That's down from seven countries, making up 27% of exports, that were conducting active enforcement in 2018.

"Our research shows that many countries are barely investigating foreign bribery," said Gillian Dell, the lead author of the Transparency report. "Unfortunately, it's all too common for businesses in wealthy countries to export corruption to poorer countries, undermining institutions and development."

The 1997 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development convention prohibits bribes to win contracts and licenses, or to dodge taxes and local laws.

China, the world's largest exporter and not a signatory to the convention, was found to conduct "little or no enforcement," in a category that also includes India, and convention members Japan and Korea.

Germany, the world's third-largest exporter and also signatory to the convention, only conducts "moderate enforcement," as do other major exporters like France, Italy and Spain.

Germany and Italy both pursued fewer cases in 2019 than in the previous year, while France and Spain improved their performance.

The Netherlands, Canada and Austria — all signatories to the convention — are the biggest exporters in the category of those showing only "limited enforcement."

"Too many governments choose to turn a blind eye when their companies use bribery to win business in foreign markets," Transparency International head Delia Ferreira Rubio said. "G-20 countries and other major economies have a responsibility to enforce the rules."

Transparency's recommendations include ending secrecy in ownership of companies, which makes investigating foreign bribery difficult, and exploring increased liability of parent companies for the actions of their foreign subsidiaries.

## **Filmmaker's trial raises concerns over freedom in new Sudan**

By SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — More than a year after the overthrow of Sudanese strongman Omar al-Bashir, amid the promise of new leadership, Sudanese film director Hajooj Kuka was arrested during a theater workshop by the security forces that had served al-Bashir for years. He was tried and sentenced to prison on vague charges often used by the former government to enforce its conservative interpretation of religion.

The jarring episode, including alleged beatings by guards, rattled Kuka and other artists and activists, who say that the country has a long way to go before it can overcome the legacy of three decades of autocratic rule under al-Bashir.

Although a higher court overturned the ruling and released Kuka earlier this month, the case has raised concerns about personal freedoms in Sudan. The country has been ruled by a joint civilian-military government for 14 months, after a popular uprising led to the military's ouster of al-Bashir in April 2019 and put the country on a fragile path to democracy.

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"While these rules exist, we will never have a freedom of expression," Kuka said.

Kuka, who is a member of the film academy that awards the Oscars, was one of a group of young artists taking part in a three-day theater workshop in August when neighbors complained about the noise, and the fact that women and men were mixing at the event. The organizers responded by lowering the volume, but the dispute escalated.

One of the neighbors physically assaulted Duaa Tarig, an artist and office manager for Civic Lab, the organization hosting the workshop. Other neighbors beat and threw stones at participants and staff. Dozens were trapped for a couple of hours before the police arrived.

When they did, they took 11 artists, including Kuka and Tarig, along with several neighbors, to a police station. The neighbors were quickly released, according to both artists.

The artists, however, were tried and sentenced in mid-September to two months in prison on charges of public disturbance and violating public safety measures amid the pandemic.

"The circumstances of the case including the charges combined with the police abuse and the sentences against the artists highlight the continuation of infringement on basic rights," said Mohammed Osman, Sudan researcher at Human Rights Watch.

Sudan's Justice Ministry did not immediately respond to requests for comment, other than refer to a previously released statement that it is working to reform the country's legal system in order to "establish a state of law." A government spokesman did not return numerous phone calls.

After Kuka and his fellow artists were arrested, they said they were beaten and intimidated. When Tarig lost consciousness after allegedly being hit by a police officer, the other arrested artists started to chant slogans they used in last year's anti-government protests.

That seemed to only anger security officers more, who then decided to press charges against them, the artists and their lawyer Othman al-Basry said.

More than a year after al-Bashir's ouster, the laws that empower Sudan's security state have not changed, Kuka said.

Promises for reform have often run up against an alliance between Islamist officials and security forces that was forged to underpin al-Bashir's rule and has outlasted his overthrow. According to the Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa, a rights group, the Sudanese judiciary system continues to be influenced by what the group described as the militant Islamist ideology of the former leadership.

The transitional government has taken some steps to eliminate several al-Bashir-era laws. In November, it overturned the Public Order Act, a Shariah-inspired law that criminalized a wide range of individual behavior including revealing clothing and drinking alcohol. It also passed a set of sweeping amendments to the country's criminal code, including one that criminalized the widespread practice of female genital mutilation, and abolished the death penalty for people under 18.

But Tarig, the artist, described these changes as cosmetic. She said that al-Bashir's Islamist base remains intact and wants to show that it still holds power within the security and judicial system.

Last month, while Kuka and his fellow artists were in jail, a group of artists held a protest outside the Justice Ministry in Khartoum. They met with Justice Minister Naser al-Din Abdel-Bari, who promised reforms.

The ruling against Kuka and the other artists has also grabbed the attention of film professionals worldwide, many of whom sent an open letter to the government calling for the artists' release.

Kuka's documentary film "Beats of the Antonov," which weaves together the sounds of bombardment in the Nuba Mountains with resident's use of music to deal with the ongoing war, won the People's Choice Award at the 2014 Toronto International Film Festival. His previous works have focused on the plight of displaced people in the country's war-torn south. He was ushered in to the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, which awards the Oscars, earlier this year.

Kuka is originally from the Nuba Mountains, held by the rebel Sudan Liberation Movement-North led by Abdel-Aziz al-Hilu. Prior to the uprising that erupted late in 2018, he could not enter government-run areas. He arrived in Khartoum in January 2019 at the height of the uprising to take part in the protests, and was detained the following month and spent a couple of weeks in jail, he said.



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Al-Hilu's movement, the country's largest single rebel group, did not join a peace agreement sealed earlier this month between the government and another rebel alliance, because of disputes mainly over the role for religion in lawmaking.

Kuka said he hopes Sudan's political changes will help end decades of war between the government and rebels in the south, and usher in a more inclusive society.

"The peace is not complete," Kuka said. "It is a start for putting down arms."

He has chosen to stay in the capital even after his arrest, because he believes things are changing. Now, he sees himself as a member of a vocal opposition that can act as a check on the institutions of power.

"I can work, I can live here," he said. "Although we got attacked and things are not perfect, it is definitely way, way, way better."

## California orders GOP to remove unofficial ballot boxes

By AMY TAXIN and ADAM BEAM Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — California's chief elections official on Monday ordered Republicans to remove unofficial ballot drop boxes from churches, gun shops and other locations and Attorney General Xavier Becerra warned those behind the "vote tampering" could face prosecution.

Republican refused, saying they are taking advantage of California's liberal ballot collection law that allows anyone to collect ballots from voters and deliver them to county election offices.

"As of right now, we're going to continue our ballot harvesting program," California Republican Party spokesman Hector Barajas said.

Due to the coronavirus and concerns about health safety at polling places, California for the first time mailed ballots for the Nov. 3 election to all active registered voters — more than 21 million people. The ballots come with pre-paid envelopes for voters to mail back, free of charge.

State law also allows county election officers to set up drop boxes throughout the county where people can drop off their ballots in person. The secure boxes can sometimes weigh more than 600 pounds and are monitored frequently by local election officials.

Republicans have set up their drop boxes at churches, gas stations and gun shops in at least three California counties. Some are identified as "secure ballot dropoff location," while others say "approved and bought by the GOP."

The party declined to say precisely how many boxes have been distributed and where they all have been placed.

Secretary of State Alex Padilla, a Democrat, said state law only allows county election officials to set up official ballot drop boxes, with rules for how often the ballots are retrieved. He said these unofficial drop boxes lack those protections, making them vulnerable to tampering.

Padilla had his chief legal counsel send Republicans a letter on Monday ordering them to remove those boxes by Thursday. He also ordered them to provide the state with the names, addresses and birthdays of all voters who have already dropped off ballots.

Attorney General Xavier Becerra, also a Democrat, went further, threatening to prosecute "anyone who knowingly engages in the tampering or misuse of a vote."

"We hope that the message goes out loud and clear to anyone who is trying to improperly solicit, obtain, and manage a citizen's vote that they are subject to prosecution," Becerra said. "I'm trying to be careful with how I say this, but the reports we are hearing are disturbing."

Padilla declined to speculate on why Republicans would be collecting votes via unofficial drop boxes.

"Our interest is in protecting the integrity of this election," he said.

Barajas said the party's drop boxes just provide voters with "another opportunity" to cast their ballots.

In a news release, the California Republican Party said state law does not specifically ban them from collecting ballots in a box. They say the law only prevents tampering or forging ballots and that people collecting the ballots cannot be paid for doing it.

"It appears Republicans are well within their right to collect ballots in this manner. It's just that Democrats



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don't like it," Republican state Sen. Melissa Melendez posted to her official Twitter account.

The controversy surfaced during the weekend after state election officials received reports of the boxes in Fresno, Los Angeles and Orange counties, all areas with highly competitive U.S. House races. Democrats have blasted the use of the unofficial boxes and say they fear Republicans could use them to gather and discard ballots.

Officials in Ventura County also said Monday that they had received reports of groups promoting unofficial ballot drop boxes.

In California, state law says voters who can't return their ballots themselves can ask anyone else to do it for them. Previously, people who returned a ballot for someone else also had to sign it and list their relationship to the voter. But a separate law passed in 2018 eliminated that requirement.

In Orange County, which is home to 3 million people between Los Angeles and San Diego, a regional field director for the state GOP posed for a photo with one of the boxes. The image posted to social media showed him wearing a face covering supporting the congressional campaign of Michelle Steel, a Republican county supervisor.

Steel is challenging Democratic U.S. Rep. Harley Rouda for his seat representing a coastal district. Rouda flipped the seat two years ago from longtime Republican Rep. Dana Rohrabacher.

Orange County Registrar of Voters Neal Kelley said official drop boxes are clearly recognizable and carry official county elections logo. He said it wasn't clear how many voters had used unofficial boxes but after receiving reports about them, he notified the state and district attorney's office, which is investigating.

Rachel Potucek, a spokeswoman for the Democratic Party of Orange County, said she didn't know what Republicans planned to do with the ballots they collected and worried they could target Democratic areas with boxes to suppress votes.

There also were reports of GOP drop boxes at a church in the Los Angeles County community of Castaic and at various locations in Fresno County in California's farm-rich Central Valley.

Fresno County Republicans said they will remove the boxes and ballots will be turned in to county election officials, which was always the plan, the Sacramento Bee reported.

Taxin reported from Orange County, California.

## Barrett to face senators on health care, legal precedent

By MARK SHERMAN, LISA MASCARO and MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Supreme Court nominee Amy Coney Barrett will face senators' questions over her approach to health care, legal precedent and even the presidential election during a second day of confirmation hearings on track to lock in a conservative court majority for years to come.

The mood is likely to shift to a more confrontational tone as Barrett, an appellate court judge with very little trial court experience, is grilled in 30-minute segments Tuesday by Democrats gravely opposed to President Donald Trump's nominee, yet virtually powerless to stop her rise. Republicans are rushing her to confirmation before Election Day.

"This should not be President Trump's judge," said Sen. Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn., a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee. Democrats say the winner of the presidential election should choose the nominee.

"This should be your judge," she said.

Barrett presented her approach to the law as conservative and fair on Monday at the start of fast-tracked confirmation hearings. Democrats cast her as a threat to Americans' health care coverage during the coronavirus pandemic.

With her husband and six of their seven children behind her in a hearing room off-limits to the public and altered for COVID-19 risks, Barrett delivered views at odds with the late Ruth Bader Ginsburg, the liberal icon whose seat Trump nominated her to fill, laying out a judicial philosophy she has likened to that of her conservative mentor, the late Justice Antonin Scalia.

"Courts are not designed to solve every problem or right every wrong in our public life," declared the

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48-year-old federal appeals court judge, removing the protective mask she wore most of the day to read from a prepared statement.

Americans "deserve an independent Supreme Court that interprets our Constitution and laws as they are written," Barrett told the committee.

The Senate, led by Trump's Republican allies, is pushing Barrett's nomination to a quick vote before Nov. 3, and ahead of the the latest challenge to the Affordable Care Act, which the Supreme Court is to hear a week after the election.

Republicans also hope to seat Barrett quickly enough to hear any legal challenges after the election. Sen. Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut was among several Democrats demanding that Barrett pledge not to take part in any election case. She has made no such commitment.

Ginsburg's legacy was felt throughout the hearing, with some Democrats wearing lapel pins with her likeness. Barrett also praised the liberal icon, saying she was "forever grateful" for Ginsburg's trailblazing path as a woman on the court.

Yet Sen. Kamala Harris of California, Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden's running mate, warned that Barrett's nomination puts in jeopardy everything Ginsburg fought to protect.

Testifying from her office because of the pandemic, Harris said that the court is "often the last refuge for equal justice" and that not only health care but voting rights, workers' rights, abortion rights and the very idea of justice are at stake.

Barring a dramatic development, Republicans appear to have the votes to confirm Barrett to a lifetime seat on the Supreme Court, and they spent their time portraying her as a thoughtful judge with impeccable credentials. She would be Trump's third justice.

"She is a slam dunk" based on her qualifications, Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., the committee chairman, told reporters late in the day. Barrett received the highest rating — "well-qualified" — from the American Bar Association, though she is the first nominee since Clarence Thomas who did not receive a unanimous assessment.

Underscoring the Republicans' confidence, Graham set an initial committee vote on the nomination for Thursday, even before the last day of hearings wrapped, which would allow final approval by the panel for one week later and a vote for confirmation by the full Senate on Oct. 26.

One after another, Democrats sought Monday to tie her nomination to the upcoming Obama-era health care case.

Republicans lambasted Democrats for attacking Barrett's Catholic religion, although none actually did.

Some senators took part remotely, after two committee Republicans, Mike Lee of Utah and Thom Tillis of North Carolina, tested positive for the novel coronavirus 10 days ago.

Lee was present in the hearing room, bearing a doctor's note saying he didn't need to remain isolated. Tillis took part remotely, but his spokesman said he also was free of symptoms.

Protesters rallied outside the Senate buildings with the hearing room largely closed to the public.

The start of the four-day hearings followed a White House event announcing her nomination just over two weeks ago, in which most of the audience did not wear masks. The event has been labeled a "super-spreader" for the virus.

More than two dozen people linked to the Sept. 26 Rose Garden event, including the two GOP senators, have contracted COVID-19, the disease caused by the virus. Barrett and her family went maskless at the event. She and her husband, Jesse, tested positive for the virus earlier this year and recovered, administration officials have said.

Democrats already were enraged that Republicans are moving so quickly, having refused to consider President Barack Obama's nominee after Scalia's death in February 2016, well before that year's election.

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Associated Press writers Matthew Daly and Michael Balsamo in Washington, Elana Schor in New York and Kathleen Ronayne in Sacramento, California, contributed to this report.

## Trump intensifies focus on Harris in final weeks of campaign

By KATHLEEN RONAYNE Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — Grasping for a comeback, President Donald Trump and his Republican allies are intensifying their focus not on Democratic nominee Joe Biden, but on his running mate, Sen. Kamala Harris — arguing without evidence that it's Harris, the first Black woman on a major party ticket, who would really be in charge if Democrats win the White House.

The effort is laced with sexist and racist undertones, and one that is aimed at winning back Republicans and independents who are comfortable with Biden's more moderate record, but may associate Harris with Democrats' left flank, despite her own more centrist positions on some major issues.

During the past week, Trump told Sean Hannity of Fox News that Harris would assume the presidency within "three months" of Biden's inauguration. During a conversation with Rush Limbaugh, he warned that House Speaker Nancy Pelosi would "replace" Biden with Harris. And the president called her a "monster" during an interview with Maria Bartiromo of Fox Business.

Trump's focus on Harris is building as he tries to regain an advantage against Biden, who is leading most national and battleground state polls three weeks before the election. Trump has long sowed doubt about Biden's fitness for the job, but is especially eager to shift attention after contracting the novel coronavirus and confronting his own health scare.

At his first campaign rally since being hospitalized for the virus, Trump told a Florida crowd on Monday that Biden has "a lot of bad days coming."

Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich, a Trump ally, is pushing the president to make Harris a campaign centerpiece.

"If voters understand the totality of her radicalism, they would conclude that she would be a very high-risk person to put in the White House," Gingrich said.

He went on to call Biden "docile" and Harris "aggressive."

The sexism and racism associated with such language, including Trump's reference to Harris as a "monster," are aimed at Trump's most loyal supporters.

"It is really an effort to say to their base, 'Look, we don't want a Black woman to be president,'" said Rep. Marcia Fudge, D-Ohio, a former chair of the Congressional Black Caucus. "We don't want this Black person to take over in case something happens to Joe Biden."

Fudge said efforts to brand Harris as radical don't align with her record, particularly on law enforcement. Harris and Fudge are both former prosecutors.

Republicans "consistently talk about law and order to the only person in this race that has a law-and-order background," Fudge said.

Still, there are some signs that Trump's message is resonating with his base.

"I'm scared that if Harris gets in, it will be a Harris administration 'cause old Joe's got some issues," said Bob Stanley, a retired orthopedic physician assistant who lives in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, and said he will be voting again for Trump.

Joshua Dyck, an associate professor of political science at the University of Massachusetts, Lowell, said the focus on Harris is a sign that Trump's attacks on Biden aren't working.

"This is a desire not to run against Joe Biden, to run against anybody but Joe Biden," he said.

There's little evidence that Trump's strategy will change minds. While vice presidential picks generate buzz, they rarely sway voters, said Dyck, who also runs the UMass-Lowell's Center for Public Opinion.

One exception may be 2008, when Republican John McCain chose little-known Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin as his running mate. McCain was 72. A New York Times/CBS News poll taken just before the election found 59% of voters said Palin was not prepared to be president.

A vice presidential nominee's ability to step in as commander in chief has long been a prime qualification for a running mate. Either the 77-year-old Biden or the 74-year-old Trump would become the oldest president ever inaugurated.

Biden last released medical records in December 2019, during the Democratic primary. Biden's doctor

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called him "healthy, vigorous" and fit to execute the duties of the presidency. He takes a statin medication for cholesterol and has a "persistent" atrial fibrillation, a type of irregular heart beat. He takes a blood thinner to prevent risks like blood clots or stroke.

A Pew Research Center poll released in August found that among Biden supporters, 31% called his age or health a concern in an open-ended question. Just 1% of Trump's supporters said the same about the president, though the survey was taken before Trump contracted the coronavirus.

Harris and Vice President Mike Pence deflected in last week's debate when asked if they had conversations with Biden and Trump, respectively, about procedures in the event of presidential disability.

Harris did not address the question directly or speak to Biden's health at all, instead pivoting to their shared values and her own political background, an implicit nod to her fitness for the top job if need be.

"I serve on the Senate Intelligence Committee, where I've been in regular receipt of classified information about threats to our nation and hot spots around the world. I've traveled the world. I've met with our soldiers," she said.

It was a rare moment of Harris talking about herself. As typical for running mates, she regularly pivots to Biden's record in a clear demonstration that he is the one running to lead the nation.

Biden and Harris can best respond to the attacks by focusing on their agenda and policies, said Democratic Rep. Barbara Lee of California. Other allies can denounce Trump's comments, as the women of the Congressional Black Caucus recently did.

"There are those in the country who need to raise their voices and say this is un-American," Lee said. "We cannot tolerate this in a multiracial country."

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Associated Press writers Bill Barrow in Wilmington, Del., and Jill Colvin in Washington contributed to this report.

## Baseball's first fans of 2020 see Dodgers-Braves NLCS opener

By SCHUYLER DIXON AP Sports Writer

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP) — Scott McIlroy reached out with his left hand as a batting practice home run clanged off a railing and hit him in the palm, the ball popping in the air before settling back into his grip as he held a cell phone in his right hand.

Count the Texas resident and Los Angeles Dodgers fan among the first in the pandemic-shortened 2020 season to catch a pre-game souvenir — and among the first ticket buyers to see live baseball in Game 1 of the National League Championship Series on Monday night.

Major League Baseball said it was selling 11,500 tickets per game at Globe Life Field for the series between the Dodgers and Atlanta Braves and plans a similar allotment at the same ballpark when it hosts the first neutral-site World Series starting Oct. 20. McIlroy got a call from a friend knowing the longtime Dodgers fan would want to make the two-hour drive to the Dallas area.

The announced attendance was 10,700, not including those who didn't pay. Ticket prices ranged from \$40 to \$250 for the NLCS, and \$75-450 for the World Series, which has already sold out.

About 75% of fans appeared compliant with the requirement to wear masks except when "actively" eating or drinking. Some weren't covering their nose or mouth.

"We were wondering what the mixture of fans would be," McIlroy said. "In this new age of what we're going through, we were just curious. When we came in, we saw a lot of Dodger blue out there."

There were plenty of Braves logos, too, and the tomahawk chop chant was audible when Ronald Acuña Jr. stepped in as Atlanta's leadoff hitter against Walker Buehler.

"They brought it for sure, and it definitely got the adrenaline going, especially late in the game. It was intense," Atlanta's Austin Riley said of the fans after his home run leading off the ninth sparked a four-run rally in a 5-1 victory.

It was the first MLB game of any kind with fans since March 12, when five Grapefruit League games in Florida were completed as the novel coronavirus caused the shutdown of spring training there and in



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Arizona.

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott said in June that professional and college stadiums would be allowed to operate at 50% capacity, and MLB decided to sell tickets starting with the NLCS following a regular season in which attendance dropped to 0 from 68.5 million. The NFL's Dallas Cowboys have sold about 31% capacity at nearby AT&T Stadium, drawing 25,147 for Sunday's win over the New York Giants.

No tickets are being sold for the American League Championship Series between Houston and Tampa Bay at San Diego's Petco Park.

"It was really weird going on the field to get ready before the game and seeing people in general," said Los Angeles' Kiké Hernández, who homered for the Dodgers' only run in a 5-1 loss. "It was kind of shocking for everybody to see, at least for the first few minutes. It definitely added more to this game. I missed what the roar of the crowd sounded like."

The previous time fans attended a Major League Baseball game that counted, it also was in Texas: Game 7 of the 2019 World Series in Houston, a sellout of 43,326 when the Washington Nationals beat the Astros to win the title.

This time, seats were sold in groups of four at the new, 40,518-seat retractable roof stadium, with the empty seats between ticketed sections secured by zip ties to prevent people from sitting in them.

"It was kind of a novel thing because of the new field and there have never been fans in it," said Jeff Wood, a Braves fan who drove about four hours from Little Rock, Arkansas. "And with this whole COVID thing, I kind of thought about it. Thought it was exciting."

In March, Claudia Magallanes, her husband and two sons drove nine hours from Carlsbad, New Mexico, to catch spring training games in Arizona. They never saw any because of the shutdown.

When they realized fans would be allowed for the NLCS, they remembered deciding against going to World Series games in Los Angeles a couple of years ago. It was an easy call to see their first LA post-season game, even though Claudia Magallanes was headed to the airport Tuesday morning for a previous scheduled pleasure trip to Nevada.

"Friday morning he gives me the news, and I'm like, 'Yea, yes.' So we're all for it," said Claudia Magallanes, who said these four tickets were paid in part by the money they got back from the canceled spring training games. "I tell him two years ago I still regret that we didn't buy the tickets."

Justin Farris of the Dallas suburb of Plano had his Texas Rangers cap on, with two sons wearing Rangers jerseys. It was clear why they were on their way in to the new ballpark fans didn't get to see during what was supposed to be its inaugural season.

"Wanted to see it before anybody does," said Farris, who said he would root for the Dodgers because of Dallas native Clayton Kershaw. "And it's going to be cleaner. It's the cleanest it's ever going to be."

Eli Dills has season tickets for the Braves and lives a couple of hours north of Atlanta. He says he didn't miss any home playoff games the past two years, so he had to talk his boss into giving him the day off.

Dills was headed back home — and to work — after Game 1, but the 21-year-old Walmart manager was already thinking about the World Series.

"I'm going to be down here no doubt," Dills said. "I'm going to tell my boss, 'Hey, man, you can come with me.'"

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

## 5 men in Michigan governor kidnapping plot to face hearings

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (AP) — Five men accused in a plot to kidnap Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer will appear in federal court Tuesday for a hearing on whether they should be detained before trial.

U.S. Magistrate Judge Sally Berens will oversee the bail and detention proceeding in Grand Rapids for Adam Fox, Ty Garbin, Kaleb Franks, Daniel Harris and Brandon Caserta — all Michigan residents. A sixth man, Barry Croft, was being held in Delaware.

The FBI made arrests last week after using confidential sources, undercover agents and clandestine



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recordings to foil the alleged kidnapping conspiracy. Some defendants had conducted coordinated surveillance of the Democratic governor's vacation home in northern Michigan in August and September, according to a criminal complaint.

The men were trying to retaliate against Whitmer due to her "uncontrolled power" amid the coronavirus pandemic, authorities said. They said four of the men had planned to meet last week to pay for explosives and exchange tactical gear.

Whitmer, who was considered as Joe Biden's running mate and is nearly halfway through a four-year term, has been widely praised for her response to the virus outbreak 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.

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.

The defendants face up to life in prison if convicted.

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 providing material support for terrorist acts by seeking a "civil war."

The investigation is ongoing.

## Asian shares lower after tech-driven rally on Wall Street

By ELAINE KURTENBACH AP Business Writer

Shares were mostly lower in Asia on Tuesday as investors awaited the release of Chinese trade data.

An overnight rally on Wall Street, driven mainly by technology companies such as Apple and Amazon, faded amid worries over U.S. economic stimulus and a resurgence of coronavirus caseloads in many countries.

Shares fell in Tokyo, Shanghai and Seoul but rose in Sydney. Hong Kong's market was closed for a typhoon.

Chinese state media reported that exports jumped 10.2% in yuan, or renminbi, terms in September from a year earlier, while imports rose 4.3%, according to the General Administration of Customs. Dollar-based figures were due later in the day.

Traders were keeping an eye on the Chinese currency after the central bank scrapped a requirement for currency traders to post cash deposits, opening the way for more negative speculation on the country's yuan, which might help to restrain its rise in value.

The change took effect Monday and eliminates a requirement imposed in 2018 for a 20% deposit on yuan trades to discourage speculators.

The recovery of the world's second biggest economy has been a rare bright spot as investors wait to see if the U.S. Congress will manage to provide further economic aid for Americans and businesses struggling due to the coronavirus pandemic. With caseloads in the U.S., Europe and many other countries gaining pace, risks of further disruptions to trade, business and other daily activities are rising in some regions.

Tokyo's Nikkei 225 index edged 0.1% lower to 23,525.64, while the Shanghai Composite index shed 0.6% to 3,339.76. South Korea's Kospi also gave up 0.6% to 2,388.96. Shares were mostly lower in Southeast Asia.

Australia's S&P/ASX 200 climbed 0.9% to 6,188.50, led by banks' shares. Strong Chinese demand is good news for Australian exporters, though unconfirmed reports that Beijing is slowing or halting imports of Australian coal have raised concerns over the economic impact of political friction between the two countries.

Wall Street extended its gains Monday from last week's rally, the market's best in three months. Investors appeared to largely shrug off the latest signs that Democrats and Republicans are no closer to reaching a deal on more aid for the economy, which remains hobbled by the pandemic.

The S&P 500 rose 1.6% to 3,534.22, with Big Tech stocks, including Apple and Microsoft, powering

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much of the gains. Their businesses have proven to be practically impervious to the pandemic, unlike most companies that would benefit from a strengthening economy. The S&P 500 is now within 1.4% of its all-time high set Sept. 2.

Investors may be betting that Congress will deliver a more generous aid bill after the Nov. 3 election, should Democrats regain the majority in Congress, as some polls suggest. That could offset the possible drag on corporate profits from higher taxes and tighter regulations from a Democratic-controlled Washington.

"The market is expressing some comfort with Democrats taking the White House and the Senate, if it means that there will be more stimulus," said Willie Delwiche, investment strategist at Baird. "But the reality is it's several months away before anything could get passed."

The Dow Jones Industrial Average climbed 0.9% to 28,837.52. The Nasdaq composite, which is heavily weighted with technology stocks, gained 2.6%, to 11,876.26.

Apple climbed 6.4% and alone accounted for a quarter of the S&P 500's rise. The iPhone maker also was the index's biggest gainer. Amazon rose 4.8%. Both companies have events coming up this week, with Apple expected to unveil its latest batch of iPhones on Tuesday and Amazon holding its Prime Day on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Microsoft also closed higher, rising 2.6%, Facebook added 4.3% and Google's parent company gained 3.6%.

The Russell 2000 index of small-cap stocks, which tends to move more with expectations for the economy's strength than Big Tech companies, picked up 0.7% to 1,649.05.

Investors have been agitating for more stimulus since the expiration of extra unemployment benefits for laid-off workers and other support for the economy approved by Congress earlier this year. Even if Washington can't deliver the aid soon, some investors are hoping for more help in 2021.

Analysts are forecasting the upcoming earnings reporting season will show another quarter of weaker profits. S&P 500 earnings are expected to be down 20.5% from a year earlier, according to FactSet.

But that's not as bad as the 31.6% drop that S&P 500 companies reported for the spring quarter. Business activity has since regained some momentum as widespread lockdowns eased across the country.

In energy dealings, U.S. benchmark crude gained 2 cents to \$39.45 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. It lost \$1.17 to \$39.43 per barrel on Monday.

Brent crude also added 2 cents, to \$41.74 per barrel.

The U.S. dollar strengthened to 105.37 Japanese yen from 105.34 yen. The euro weakened to \$1.1792 from \$1.1896.

AP Business Writers Alex Veiga and Stan Choe, and Joe McDonald in Beijing contributed.

## 2nd COVID-19 vaccine trial paused over unexplained illness

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J. (AP) — A late-stage study of Johnson & Johnson's COVID-19 vaccine candidate has been paused while the company investigates whether a study participant's "unexplained illness" is related to the shot.

The company said in a statement Monday evening that illnesses, accidents and other so-called adverse events "are an expected part of any clinical study, especially large studies," but that its physicians and a safety monitoring panel would try to determine what might have caused the illness.

The pause is at least the second such hold to occur among several vaccines that have reached large-scale final tests in the U.S.

The company declined to reveal any more details about the illness, citing the participant's privacy.

Temporary stoppages of large medical studies are relatively common. Few are made public in typical drug trials, but the work to make a coronavirus vaccine has raised the stakes on these kinds of complications.

Companies are required to investigate any serious or unexpected reaction that occurs during drug testing. Given that such tests are done on tens of thousands of people, some medical problems are a coincidence. In fact, one of the first steps the company said it will take is to determine if the person received

the vaccine or a placebo.

The halt was first reported by the health news site STAT.

Final-stage testing of a vaccine made by AstraZeneca and Oxford University remains on hold in the U.S. as officials examine whether an illness in its trial poses a safety risk. That trial was stopped when a woman developed severe neurological symptoms consistent with transverse myelitis, a rare inflammation of the spinal cord, the company has said. That company's testing has restarted elsewhere.

Johnson & Johnson was aiming to enroll 60,000 volunteers to prove if its single-dose approach is safe and protects against the coronavirus. Other vaccine candidates in the U.S. require two shots.

## Defiant Trump defends virus record in 1st post-COVID rally

By JILL COLVIN and JONATHAN LEMIRE Associated Press

SANFORD, Florida (AP) — Defiant as ever about the coronavirus, President Donald Trump on Monday turned his first campaign rally since contracting COVID-19 into a full-throated defense of his handling of the pandemic that has killed 215,000 Americans, joking that he was healthy enough to plunge into the crowd and give voters "a big fat kiss."

There was no social distancing and mask-wearing was spotty among the thousands who came to see Trump's return to Florida. He held forth for an hour, trying to get his struggling campaign back on track with just weeks left before Election Day.

Though he was hospitalized battling the virus only a week ago, Trump's message on COVID-19 was unaltered since his diagnosis: a dubious assessment that the pandemic was just about a thing of the past. Hundreds of people in the U.S. continue to die of the virus every day.

"Under my leadership, we're delivering a safe vaccine and a rapid recovery like no one can even believe," Trump insisted. "If you look at our upward path, no country in the world has recovered the way we have recovered."

His voice was perhaps a touch scratchy but otherwise, Trump was, well, Trump.

Boisterous and bellicose, he thanked the audience for their well-wishes and declared he was no longer contagious as he embarked on a frenetic final stretch of the campaign.

Trump insisted that, after being given experimental medication and other VIP treatment, he felt great and was glad he no longer needs to be concerned about infection because he's now "immune."

"I feel so powerful," said Trump, displaying no obvious signs of lingering infection. "I'll walk into that audience. I'll walk in there, I'll kiss everyone in that audience. I'll kiss the guys and the beautiful women ... everybody. I'll just give ya a big fat kiss."

Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious-disease expert, said Monday on CNN that those who recover from COVID-19 are likely to be immune for a limited period of time, but there are cases emerging of people getting reinfected weeks or months later.

Despite Trump's battle with a deadly disease, it was striking how little had changed. Threats to smooch audience members aside, the rally felt like so many others during the pitched general election battle against Democrat Joe Biden.

Trump returned to his many usual attack lines, slamming Democrats as "engaged and unhinged and out for vengeance," and hyping "tremendous progress" on virus therapeutics. He promised the third-quarter economy would be "record-setting" and claimed that, if he wins in November, "normal life" will resume, while Biden would delay the vaccine and destroy the economy with a "draconian" lockdown.

And when he was done, with his new exit song, The Village People's "YMCA," blaring over the loudspeakers, the president did what has become his trademark dance, pumping his fists somewhat in time to the beat as the crowd roared. But he kept his distance from the audience.

With three weeks to go before the election, Trump is pushing to correct a stubborn deficit in national and battleground state polling as he continues to spread misinformation about a virus that he spent months downplaying.

That includes in Florida, which is seen as crucial to his reelection chances. Trump narrowly beat his 2016 rival, Democrat Hillary Clinton, in the state by just over 112,000 votes. Some recent polls have suggested

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a close race in the state, while others have put Democrat Joe Biden ahead.

Underscoring the importance of Florida, Trump will be back in the state Friday for another rally, this time in Ocala.

Trump's Sanford rally was his first stop in a busy week that will include events in Pennsylvania, Iowa, North Carolina, Georgia and Wisconsin. The robust schedule highlights the urgency he is facing to recover from a series of self-inflicted setbacks that have rattled his base of support and triggered alarm among Republicans who fear the White House is on the verge of being lost to Biden.

And it comes amid still-unanswered questions about the impact so much travel so soon could have on the 74-year-old president's health. The progression of COVID-19 is often unpredictable, and there can be long-term complications.

After Air Force One lifted off from Joint Base Andrews, the president's doctor released an update on his health that said Trump had tested negative for the virus — and had done so on consecutive days. His doctor, Navy Cmdr. Scott Conley, said the tests, taking in conjunction with other data, including viral load, have led him to conclude that Trump was not contagious.

For days, the White House had sidestepped questions about whether Trump had tested negative. Conley over the weekend said that the president met Centers for Disease Control and Prevention criteria for safely discontinuing isolation and that by "currently recognized standards," Trump was no longer considered a transmission risk.

There was no evidence of any new health precautions, although more passengers than usual on Air Force One, including U.S. Secret Service agents and White House chief of staff Mark Meadows, were seen wearing masks on board.

Trump's decision to so quickly return to the campaign trail drew criticism from Biden and other Democrats. "President Trump comes to Sanford today bringing nothing but reckless behavior, divisive rhetoric, and fear mongering," Biden said in a statement. "But, equally dangerous is what he fails to bring: no plan to get this virus that has taken the lives of over 15,000 Floridians under control."

Trump continued to mock Biden for his efforts to encourage social distancing at his campaign events, deriding as "crazy" the circles Biden's campaign uses to delineate individual space.

"He's got a lot of bad days coming," Trump said at another point.

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Lemire reported from New York. Associated Press writer Curt Anderson in St. Petersburg, Fla., contributed to this report.

## McConnell, McGrath spar over federal response to coronavirus

By BRUCE SCHREINER and PIPER HUDSPETH BLACKBURN Associated Press

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's opponent accused him of failing the country with the lack of another coronavirus relief package, while the Republican incumbent described himself as a powerful advocate for Kentucky in a hard-hitting televised debate Monday evening.

In their first, and potentially only debate of the campaign, McConnell and Democratic challenger Amy McGrath sparred over the federal response to the COVID-19 crisis, the Supreme Court nomination fight and the Republican incumbent's decadeslong record.

McGrath, a retired Marine combat pilot, was aggressive in blaming the senator for Congress' inability to secure another round of federal relief for a pandemic-battered economy, calling it a "dereliction of duty." McConnell blamed congressional Democrats for the stalemated negotiations.

McConnell touted his top Senate leadership post and his ability to deliver federal money as valuable assets for Kentucky that would be lost if he leaves the Senate. McGrath said the Republican incumbent has failed to tackle the state's chronic economic and health problems.

The exchange turned personal as McConnell responded to the barrage from McGrath and her repeated references crediting her Marine career for training her to be a problem solver.

"I think her entire campaign is: she's a Marine, she's a mom and I've been there (the Senate) too long," McConnell said.



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McGrath responded: "Senator, you've been there for 36 years. How's it looking, Kentucky?" She pointed to the state's stubbornly high cancer and diabetes rates along with lack of broadband access and well-paying jobs in some parts of the state.

McConnell countered that he's delivered billions of dollars in federal money that McGrath couldn't replicate if she replaces him and takes her place as a freshman on the "back bench" in the Senate.

"I allow Kentucky to punch above its weight," McConnell said. "What does it mean to Kentucky over the last term? My last term \$17.5 billion for the commonwealth that would not have been there had I not been the majority leader of the Senate."

The debate offered McGrath her best chance for a breakthrough against McConnell, who has long dominated Kentucky's political landscape and has consistently led in polling as he seeks a seventh term. In-person early voting begins Tuesday, and many Kentuckians are filling out absentee ballots.

The debate comes at a crucial time for McConnell, who is running his own race while also focused on keeping his job as majority leader as the GOP struggles to retain control of the Senate.

When asked about the federal response to the coronavirus outbreak, McGrath gave President Donald Trump and Congress an "F," before turning her attention to McConnell.

"His one job is to help America through this crisis right now in passing legislation to keep our economy afloat so that people can make ends meet," she said. "And instead of doing that, he is trying to ram through a Supreme Court nominee right now, instead of negotiating, which is what he should have been doing all summer long to make that happen."

For his part, McConnell said he offered another coronavirus relief bill about a month ago that stalled when it drew no Democratic support in the Senate.

"I think they don't want a solution prior to the election," he said of congressional Democrats.

Trying to put the blame back on McConnell, McGrath said: "If you want to call yourself a leader, you got to get things done. Those of us who served in the Marines, we don't just point fingers at the other side, we get the job done."

McConnell noted that he shepherded an economic rescue package totaling more than \$2 trillion through the Senate early in the fight against the pandemic. McGrath responded: "That legislation was passed back in March, and here we are this coronavirus is still happening."

The Kentucky rivals also delved into the Supreme Court nomination battle under way in Washington. The nominee, Amy Coney Barrett, presented her approach to the law as conservative and fair on Monday at the start of the confirmation hearings, while angry Democrats, powerless to stop her, cast her as a threat to Americans' health care coverage during the pandemic.

McGrath said there should be no vote on filling a Supreme Court vacancy so close to the election, and criticized what she saw as McConnell's inconsistency on the matter. Four years ago, McConnell blocked then-President Barack Obama's choice of Judge Merrick Garland to fill another Supreme Court vacancy in a presidential election year.

"Look, four years ago, Senator McConnell said by the McConnell rule during an election year, 'We don't vote on a nominee, let the people decide,'" McGrath said. "Well, right now, with 22 days to an election, we should let the people decide."

McConnell, who is leading the fast-track confirmation process for Barrett, called her an "extraordinary nominee" and an "accomplished scholar."

The hourlong debate was aired on Gray Television's Kentucky-based stations. It came near the end of a big-spending campaign that has been waged in distance, with the two sparring in hard-hitting TV ads.

The rivals debated at WKYT, and the Lexington station took a number of precautions in response to the coronavirus. Kentucky is in the midst of another spike of COVID-19 cases.

## Microsoft attempts takedown of global criminal botnet

By FRANK BAJAK AP Technology Writer

Microsoft announced legal action Monday seeking to disrupt a major cybercrime digital network that



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uses more than 1 million zombie computers to loot bank accounts and spread ransomware, which experts consider a major threat to the U.S. presidential election.

The operation to knock offline command-and-control servers for a global botnet that uses an infrastructure known as Trickbot to infect computers with malware was initiated with an order that Microsoft obtained in Virginia federal court on Oct. 6. Microsoft argued that the crime network is abusing its trademark.

"It is very hard to tell how effective it will be but we are confident it will have a very long-lasting effect," said Jean-Ian Boutin, head of threat research at ESET, one of several cybersecurity firms that partnered with Microsoft to map the command-and-control servers. "We're sure that they are going to notice and it will be hard for them to get back to the state that the botnet was in."

Cybersecurity experts said that Microsoft's use of a U.S. court order to persuade internet providers to take down the botnet servers is laudable. But they add that it's not apt to be successful because too many won't comply and because Trickbot's operators have a decentralized fall-back system and employ encrypted routing.

Paul Vixie of Foresight Security said via email "experience tells me it won't scale — there are too many IP's behind uncooperative national borders." And the cybersecurity firm Intel 471 reported no significant hit on Trickbot operations Monday and predicted "little medium- to long-term impact" in a report shared with The Associated Press.

But ransomware expert Brett Callow of the cybersecurity firm Emsisoft said that a temporary Trickbot disruption could, at least during the election, limit attacks and prevent the activation of ransomware on systems already infected.

The announcement follows a Washington Post report Friday of a major — but ultimately unsuccessful — effort by the U.S. military's Cyber Command to dismantle Trickbot beginning last month with direct attacks rather than asking providers to deny hosting to domains used by command-and-control servers.

A U.S. policy called "persistent engagement" authorizes U.S. cyberwarriors to engage hostile hackers in cyberspace and disrupt their operations with code, something Cybercom did against Russian misinformation jockeys during U.S. midterm elections in 2018.

Created in 2016 and used by a loose consortium of Russian-speaking cybercriminals, Trickbot is a digital superstructure for sowing malware in the computers of unwitting individuals and websites. In recent months, its operators have been increasingly renting it out to other criminals who have used it to sow ransomware, which encrypts data on target networks, crippling them until the victims pay up.

One of the biggest reported victims of a ransomware variety sowed by Trickbot called Ryuk was the hospital chain Universal Health Services, which said all 250 of its U.S. facilities were hobbled in an attack last month that forced doctors and nurses to resort to paper and pencil.

U.S. Department of Homeland Security officials list ransomware as a major threat to the Nov. 3 presidential election. They fear an attack could freeze up state or local voter registration systems, disrupting voting, or knock out result-reporting websites.

While cybersecurity experts say the operators of Trickbot and affiliated digital crime syndicates are Russian speakers mostly based in eastern Europe, they caution that they are motivated by profit, not politics. They do, however, operate with impunity with no Kremlin interference as long as their targets are abroad.

"In today's world, Trickbot is a type of a plague," said Alex Holden, founder of Milwaukee-based Hold Security, which tracks its activity closely on the dark web, "and a government that ignores a global plague is more than complacent."

Trickbot is "malware-as-a-service," its modular architecture lets it be used as a delivery mechanism for a wide array of criminal activity. It began mostly as a so-called banking Trojan that attempts to steal credentials from online bank account so criminals can fraudulently transfer cash.

But recently, researchers have noted a rise in Trickbot's use in ransomware attacks targeting everything from municipal and state governments to school districts and hospitals. Ryuk and another type of ransomware called Conti — also distributed via Trickbot — dominated attacks on the U.S. public sector in September, said Callow of Emsisoft.

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Holden said the reported Cybercom disruption — involving efforts to confuse its configuration through code injections — succeeded in temporarily breaking down communications between command-and-control servers and most of the bots.

“But that’s hardly a decisive victory,” he said, adding that the botnet rebounded with new victims and ransomware.

The disruption — in two waves that began Sept. 22 — was first reported by cybersecurity journalist Brian Krebs.

The AP could not immediately confirm the reported Cybercom involvement.

## Barrett vows fair approach as justice, Democrats skeptical

By MARK SHERMAN, LISA MASCARO and MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Supreme Court nominee Amy Coney Barrett presented her approach to the law as conservative and fair on Monday at the start of fast-tracked confirmation hearings, while angry Democrats, powerless to stop her, cast her as a threat to Americans’ health care coverage during the coronavirus pandemic.

With her husband and six of their seven children behind her in a hearing room off-limits to the public and altered for COVID-19 risks, Barrett delivered views at odds with the late Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, whose seat President Donald Trump nominated her to fill, likely before Election Day.

“Courts are not designed to solve every problem or right every wrong in our public life,” declared the 48-year-old federal appeals court judge, removing the protective mask she wore most of the day to read from a prepared statement.

Americans “deserve an independent Supreme Court that interprets our Constitution and laws as they are written,” Barrett told the Senate Judiciary Committee, laying out her judicial philosophy, which she has likened to that of her conservative mentor, the late Justice Antonin Scalia.

The Senate, led by Trump’s Republican allies, is pushing Barrett’s nomination to a quick vote before Election Day, Nov. 3, and ahead of the the latest challenge to the Affordable Care Act, which the Supreme Court is to hear a week after the election.

Republicans also hope to seat Barrett quickly enough to hear any legal challenges after the election. Sen. Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut was among several Democrats demanding that Barrett pledge not to take part in any election case. She has made no such commitment.

Barrett will face questions Tuesday after a day dedicated to opening statements.

Ginsburg’s legacy was felt throughout the hearing, with some Democrats wearing lapel pins with her likeness. Barrett also praised the liberal icon, saying she was “forever grateful” for Ginsburg’s trailblazing path as a woman on the court.

Yet Sen. Kamala Harris of California, Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden’s running mate, warned that Barrett’s nomination puts in jeopardy everything Ginsburg fought to protect.

Testifying from her office because of the pandemic, Harris said that the court is “often the last refuge for equal justice” and that not only health care but voting rights, workers’ rights, abortion rights and the very idea of justice are at stake.

Barring a dramatic development, Republicans appear to have the votes to confirm Barrett to a lifetime seat on the Supreme Court, and they spent their time portraying her as a thoughtful judge with impeccable credentials. Her nomination offers the chance to entrench a conservative majority on the court for years to come with Trump’s third justice.

“She is a slam dunk” based on her qualifications, Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., the committee chairman, told reporters late in the day. Barrett received the highest, “well-qualified” rating from the American Bar Association, though she is the first nominee since Clarence Thomas who did not receive a unanimous assessment.

Underscoring the Republicans’ confidence, Graham set an initial committee vote on the nomination for Thursday, the last day of hearings, which would allow final approval by the panel for one week later and

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a vote for confirmation by the full Senate on Oct. 26.

One after another, Democrats sought Monday to tie her nomination to the upcoming Obama-era health care case.

"Health care coverage for millions of Americans is at stake with this nomination," said Sen. Dianne Feinstein of California, the committee's senior Democrat.

Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse, D-R.I., said the nomination is a "judicial torpedo aimed" at the law's protection for people with preexisting health conditions. The Trump administration wants the court to strike down the entire law widely known as "Obamacare." Barrett has criticized the court's two earlier major rulings supporting the law.

Among Republicans, Sen. Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, dismissed warnings Barrett will undo the law as "outrageous."

Trump himself seemed to be watching, tweeting several times about the hearing. In one message, he tweeted that he'd have a "FAR BETTER" health care plan, with lower costs and protections for preexisting conditions. But he has not, as yet, discussed an actual health care plan.

Barrett's religious views and past leadership role in a Catholic faith community pose a challenge for Democrats as they try to probe her judicial approach to abortion, gay marriage and other social issues without veering into inappropriate questioning of her faith.

Republican Sen. Josh Hawley of Missouri lambasted what he called a "pattern and practice of religious bigotry" by Democrats. However, Democratic senators made clear in advance of the hearing that they didn't plan to question the judge on the specifics of her religious faith.

Democratic presidential nominee Biden, also a practicing Catholic, told reporters ahead of a campaign trip to Ohio that he doesn't think "there's any question about her faith."

The Senate Judiciary Committee met on a federal holiday to kick off four days of hearings. Some senators took part remotely, after two committee Republicans, Mike Lee of Utah and Thom Tillis of North Carolina, tested positive for COVID-19 10 days ago.

Lee was present in the hearing room, bearing a doctor's note saying he didn't need to remain isolated. Tillis took part remotely, but his spokesman said he also was free of symptoms.

Graham opened the hearing acknowledging "the COVID problem in America is real." But he said, "We do have a country that needs to move forward safely."

Graham acknowledged the obvious: "This is going to be a long, contentious week."

Protesters rallied outside the Senate buildings with the hearing room largely closed to the public. Capitol Police said 22 people were arrested and charged on suspicion of crowding, obstructing or other violations.

Faith and family punctuated Barrett's testimony, and she said she would bring "a few new perspectives" as the first mother of school-age children on the nine-member court.

She said she uses her children as a test when deciding cases, asking herself how she would view the decision if one of her seven children were the party she was ruling against.

"Even though I would not like the result, would I understand that the decision was fairly reasoned and grounded in the law?" she said.

The hearing followed a White House event announcing her nomination just over two weeks ago, in which most of the audience did not wear masks. The event has been labeled a "superspreader" for the coronavirus.

More than two dozen people linked to the Sept. 26 Rose Garden event, including the two GOP senators, have contracted COVID-19. Barrett and her family went maskless at the event. She and her husband, Jesse, tested positive for the virus earlier this year and recovered, administration officials have said.

Democrats already were enraged that Republicans are moving so quickly, having refused to consider President Barack Obama's nominee after Scalia's death in February 2016, well before that year's election.

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Associated Press writers Matthew Daly and Michael Balsamo in Washington, Elana Schor in New York and Kathleen Ronayne in Sacramento, California, contributed to this report.

## Biden makes big push in Ohio, once seen as long shot for him

By BILL BARROW and WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

CINCINNATI (AP) — Joe Biden made two campaign stops Monday in Ohio, attempting to expand the battleground map and keep President Donald Trump on the defensive in a state long thought to be out of reach for Democrats after Trump's wide margin of victory there four years ago.

The Democratic presidential nominee stressed an economic message and touted his own record while casting Trump as having abandoned working-class voters who helped him win Rust Belt states that put him in the White House in 2016. The president's reelection campaign countered that few expected Trump to win Ohio so comfortably four years ago and that he would repeat a similar upset on Election Day.

In Toledo, Biden addressed United Auto Workers who represent a local General Motors' powertrain plant. The former vice president spoke in a parking lot with about 30 American-made cars and trucks arrayed nearby, and he struck a decidedly populist note, praising unions and arguing that he represented working-class values while the Republican Trump cared only about impressing the Ivy League and country club set.

"I don't measure people by the size of their bank account," Biden said. "You and I measure people by the strength of their character, their honesty, their courage."

Biden highlighted his role as vice president as the Obama administration rescued the U.S. auto industry after the 2008 financial collapse. President George W. Bush signed the aid package after the 2008 election, but the Obama administration managed most of the rescue program.

"The auto industry that supported 1 in 8 Ohioans was on the brink," Biden said at the drive-in rally, eliciting horn honks from people listening from their vehicles. "Barack and I bet on you, and it paid off."

Trump was resuming campaign travel for the first time since testing positive for the coronavirus, with a Florida rally. The president tweeted, "We have far more support and enthusiasm than even in 2016." And Vice President Mike Pence staged his own event in Ohio's capital, Columbus, concluding remarks at Savko & Sons, an excavation company that hosted Obama at one of its job sites in 2010, shortly before Biden took the stage in Toledo.

"You said yes to President Donald Trump in 2016, and I know the Buckeye State's going to say yes to four more years," Pence told the crowd.

In a nod to Senate confirmation hearings on Amy Coney Barrett's nomination to the Supreme Court — where Biden's running mate, California Sen. Kamala Harris, was participating remotely — Pence declared to applause that "We're going to fill that seat."

He also noted that Biden has refused to say whether he will heed the calls of some progressive Democrats who would like to see the party expand the number of seats on the Supreme Court, should Democrats win the White House and the Senate on Nov. 3 while retaining control of the House.

"It could be nothing less than the biggest power grab in American history," Pence said. "Joe Biden and Kamala Harris won't tell the American people what they're going to do."

Biden has called for the late Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg's seat to remain vacant until after the election but hasn't answered questions about whether he would be open to expanding the court. He says doing so would be playing politics by Trump's rules.

Trump carried Ohio over Democrat Hillary Clinton by a comfortable 8 percentage points in 2016, but recent polls show this year's presidential race tightening in the state.

The Biden campaign has increased advertising in Ohio lately, even as Trump has scaled back his efforts in the state and elsewhere. Biden's perceived increases in support have largely come as the president has seen his backing slip in cities — but he is looking to cancel that out by further expanding his already strong support among voters in rural areas.

"We are thrilled to see Joe Biden wasting a valuable day on the campaign trail visiting a state he cannot win," Trump campaign spokesperson Tim Murtaugh said Monday.

Biden argued that Trump has mishandled the coronavirus pandemic, exacerbating the resulting economic fallout. He said the Trump administration "squandered" the strong economy it inherited from the Obama



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White House four years ago, and he promised to create new, high-paying union jobs once the country gets the virus under control.

"He turned his back on you," Biden said of Trump. "I promise you, I will never do that."

Congresswoman Marcia Fudge said early and absentee voting numbers are already high in her district that includes Cleveland, a strong city for Democrats.

"I am seeing numbers that I can only dream of," Fudge said.

The traveling press that accompanies Biden on campaign trips remained grounded in Delaware for hours on Monday, missing his event in Toledo because of mechanical problems on the aircraft it was assigned. Reporters use a separate plane than the candidate, a setup the campaign attributes to the coronavirus.

The campaign eventually procured a new plane so the press pool could attend Biden's rally later Monday in Cincinnati. There, Biden continued his focus on struggling Americans.

"They see the people at the top doing better and better even in the midst of this god-awful recession," he said. "They've got to wonder: Who's looking out for me? That's Donald Trump's presidency."

Biden also seized on Trump's coronavirus diagnosis, saying the president's "reckless personal conduct since his diagnosis" has been "unconscionable."

"The longer Donald Trump is president," Biden added, "the more reckless he gets."

Weissert reported from Washington. Associated Press writer Kathleen Ronayne contributed to this report from Sacramento, Calif.

## Big turnout as early in-person voting starts in Georgia

By KATE BRUMBACK and SUDHIN THANAWALA Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — The chance to cast ballots on Georgia's first day of in-person early voting Monday had thousands of people waiting for hours to make their voices heard.

Eager voters endured waits of six hours or more in Cobb County, which was once solidly Republican but has voted for Democrats in recent elections, and joined lines that wrapped around buildings in solidly Democratic DeKalb County. They also turned out in big numbers in north Georgia's Floyd County, where support for President Donald Trump is strong.

With record turnout expected for this year's presidential election and fears about exposure to the coronavirus, election officials and advocacy groups have been encouraging people to vote early, either in person or by absentee ballot.

Many answered the call on Monday, showing up in numbers that overwhelmed some locations.

Cobb County Elections and Registration Director Janine Eveler said the county had prepared as much as it could, "but there's only so much space in the rooms and parking in the parking lot."

"We're maxing out both of those," she said. "People are double parking, we have gridlock pretty much in our parking lot," she added.

Hundreds of people slowly moved along a line that snaked back and forth outside Cobb's main elections office in a suburban area northwest of Atlanta. Good moods seemed to prevail, even though some people said at 1 p.m. that they'd been waiting for six hours. A brief cheer went up when a pizza deliverer brought a pie to someone in line.

Steve Davidson, who is Black, said the late U.S. Rep. John Lewis and others had fought too long and hard to secure his place at the polls for him to get tired and leave.

"They've been fighting for decades. If I've got to wait six or seven hours, that's my duty to do that. I'll do it happily," Davidson said.

At least two counties briefly had problems with the electronic pollbooks used to check in voters. The issue halted voting for a while at State Farm Arena, where the NBA's Atlanta Hawks play. Technicians resolved the problem and the lines soon cleared at the arena, which is Georgia's largest early voting site, with 300 voting machines.

"We're disappointed that it happened," Hawks CEO Steve Koonin told reporters, but he noted that there



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are still plenty of days left. Early in-person voting runs through Oct. 30 in Georgia.

Problems with the electronic pollbooks — along with high turnout, the consolidation of polling places and shortages of poll workers — bedeviled Georgia's primary in June. The dysfunction renewed questions about Georgia's ability to conduct fair elections, two years after the state drew heavy scrutiny during a closely watched gubernatorial election that also saw long waits and other problems.

While voters must vote at their assigned polling place on Election Day, they can vote at any voting site in their county during early voting. Some people lined up before dawn Monday to be among the first to vote. Turnout also may have also been boosted because Monday is a federal holiday, so some people were off work.

Natalie Rawlings, 49, had prepared to vote absentee but didn't trust the postal service, so she turned in the blank absentee ballot to poll workers before voting in person Monday.

She went first to a library in Atlanta, but there was no parking and a long line, so she went to State Farm Arena, where the line didn't move for 45 minutes. A handful of people left after someone announced that there was a "known software issue." But most stayed. In the end, it took her about 90 minutes to vote.

"I'm outside. It's a nice day. They're giving water away. There are worse things. And everybody is appropriately socially distanced," Rawlings said.

Rawlings, a Democrat, said she was motivated by the "coarseness" of President Donald Trump's language and his seeming lack of respect for other branches of government and world leaders: "It's gotta end."

A problem with the electronic pollbooks also slowed things initially at the two early voting locations in Floyd County, but it was resolved within about an hour, said Robert Brady, the county's chief election clerk.

"Typically in Floyd County, you have a line that lasts five minutes. Today it's taking up to 30 minutes," Brady said around 11:30 a.m. "It's because of the huge — and I'm talking about huge — turnout."

But Lesli Terrell-Payne, who celebrated her 51st birthday Monday by taking the day off to vote, said she waited for more than three hours after arriving at Garden Lakes Baptist Church in Rome around 10:30 a.m. There was only one electronic pollbook to check people in, which seemed to cause a bottleneck, she said.

Brady didn't immediately return a phone message seeking comment on the long lines later in the day.

In Macon, Seth Clark arrived to vote at the main election office at about 9:30 a.m. and found a U-shaped line wrapping around the parking lot. It ended up taking him three hours to vote.

"I've never seen this many people on the first day of early voting," said Clark, who won election over the summer to a nonpartisan seat on the Macon-Bibb County commission.

The long line was in part caused by coronavirus precautions. People stood 6 feet apart and wore masks, Clark said. Some brought along folding chairs and books.

"It seems to be going smoothly," Clark said. "It's just a lot."

With Georgia emerging as a battleground, both the Republican and Democratic presidential campaigns sent surrogates to the state Monday.

Jill Biden, wife of former vice president and Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden, planned to appear in DeKalb County with prominent state Democrats before traveling to Columbus to meet with military and veteran families.

Meanwhile, Donald Trump Jr. was set to rally Republican voters in Savannah near the coast and Kenesaw, just outside Atlanta.

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Associated Press contributors include Brynn Anderson and Ben Nadler in Atlanta, Ron Harris in Marietta, and Russ Bynum in Savannah.

## UK unveils 3-level lockdown plan; Liverpool at highest risk

By JILL LAWLESS and SYLVIA HUI Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — The British government carved England into three tiers of coronavirus risk on Monday in a bid to slow a resurgent outbreak, putting the northern city of Liverpool into the highest-risk category and shutting its pubs, gyms and betting shops.

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Prime Minister Boris Johnson said the three-level national system was designed to “simplify and standardize” a confusing patchwork of local rules, as the country enters a “crucial phase.” Johnson said hospitals are now filling up with more COVID-19 patients than in March, when he ordered a national lockdown.

“These figures are flashing at us like dashboard warnings in a passenger jet, and we must act now,” he said during a televised news conference.

Johnson told lawmakers that the goal of the new system was to save lives without “shuttering our lives and our society” through a new national lockdown. While the measures curb social interactions and the leisure industry, Johnson said shops, schools and universities will remain open in all areas.

Some scientists questioned whether the restrictions went far enough. Minutes published Monday from meetings of the government’s Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies showed the body recommended three weeks ago that the government consider stricter measures including a short “circuit-breaker” lockdown.

The government rejected the idea.

“I and other people who were advocating for quite stringent severe local interventions where necessary three to four weeks ago, our fear is that we’re in another place now,” said Calum Semple, professor of outbreak medicine at the University of Liverpool and a member of the the advisory committee.

After falling during the summer, coronavirus cases are rising in the U.K. as winter approaches, with northwest and northeast England seeing the steepest increases. Liverpool has one of the country’s most severe outbreaks, with about 600 cases per 100,000 people, even more than the hard-hit European cities of Madrid and Brussels.

Under the new measures, areas in England are classified at medium, high or very high risk, and placed under restrictions of varying severity.

Areas in the lowest tier will follow existing national restrictions, including a 10 p.m. curfew on pubs and restaurants and a ban on more than six people gathering. In areas at high risk, members of different households are barred from meeting indoors.

The “very high” risk tier will face restrictions including closing pubs — apart from those that serve meals — and, if local authorities want, other venues such as gyms and casinos.

Liverpool was the only area put into the top category Monday, but Johnson said authorities were still talking with other local leaders across the north of England.

Pubs, gyms, leisure centers, betting shops and casinos in Liverpool will close beginning Wednesday.

Liverpool Mayor Joe Anderson said local authorities supported tougher restrictions as long as they were accompanied by improved test-and-trace measures to suppress clusters of infections — something he said the government had agreed to.

“As well as protecting lives and doing things to tackle the virus, we also need to protect livelihoods, so we argued really strongly for a stronger financial package,” said Anderson, a member of the opposition Labour Party. “Unfortunately, that wasn’t listened to.”

The government has announced a support package to pay two-thirds of the salaries of employees of companies that are told to close, but many in the pub and restaurant sector say that is not enough to save already struggling businesses.

Labour Party leader Keir Starmer said he doubted the new measures would go far enough to “get control of this virus, to protect jobs or retain public trust.”

The U.K. has experienced Europe’s deadliest outbreak, with an official death toll of 42,875. Health officials say Britain is at a tipping point in the outbreak, with strong action needed to prevent hospitals being overwhelmed at a time when they are already at their busiest with flu and other winter illnesses.

Stephen Powis, medical director of the National Health Service in England, said three temporary COVID-19 hospitals in northern England that were mothballed when the outbreak receded over the summer are being readied to admit patients once again in the coming weeks.

England’s deputy chief medical officer, Jonathan Van-Tam, said Monday that while northern England has the highest infection rates, cases are on the rise across the country. Infections have risen most rapidly among older teenagers and young adults, who generally suffer mild symptoms, but are spreading to older

and more at-risk groups.

"This is a nationwide phenomenon now," Van-Tam said.

Bar and restaurant owners pushed back against the new restrictions, saying the government has not shared any evidence backing up the claim that they are the major transmission sources of the virus.

Manchester City Council leader Richard Leese said data from the city's public health officials "seems to demonstrate that there is not a particular connection between bars and restaurants and the transmission of COVID."

But Semple, the government scientific adviser, said "most of the outbreaks are happening within and between households, and then after that, it's in the retail and hospitality sector."

The measures announced Monday apply to England. The rest of the U.K. is under similar, and sometimes tougher, restrictions. In Scotland's two biggest cities, Glasgow and Edinburgh, pubs have been closed for 16 days to suppress the outbreak.

Danica Kirka contributed to this story.

Follow AP coverage of the virus outbreak at <https://apnews.com/hub/virus-outbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

## Roberta McCain, John McCain's mother, dies at 108

PHOENIX (AP) — Roberta Wright McCain, the mother of the late Sen. John McCain who used her feisty spirit to help woo voters during his 2008 presidential campaign, has died. She was 108.

A spokesperson for daughter-in-law Cindy McCain says Roberta McCain died Monday. A cause of death was not immediately released.

"It is with great sadness that I announce the death of my wonderful Mother In-law, Roberta McCain," Cindy McCain posted on Twitter. "I couldn't have asked for a better role model or a better friend."

In a tweet, granddaughter Meghan McCain thanked her "Nana" for teaching her how to live life with "grit, conviction, intensity and love."

"There will never be another one like you, you will be missed every day. I wish my daughter had gotten to meet you," said McCain, who gave birth to her first child last month.

At 96, Roberta McCain became the Republican senator's secret weapon at campaign stops as evidence that voters need not worry about her son's age — then past 70 — as he sought the presidency.

She once said her son liked to hold her up as an example of "what he hopes his lifespan will be."

In August 2018, however, it was the mother who ended up mourning the son when John McCain died of brain cancer. Despite being slowed by a stroke, Roberta McCain attended the memorial and burial services in Washington and Maryland for the middle son she called "Johnny."

She remained energetic and active into her 90s, traveling often with her identical twin sister Rowena, who died at age 99. She attended the 2008 Republican National Convention, where her son credited "her love of life, her deep interest in the world, her strength, and her belief we are all meant to use our opportunities to make ourselves useful to our country."

It was 1933 when a 20-year-old Roberta Wright defied her family and eloped with John McCain Jr. Documents released in 2008 showed that as a young ensign, John Jr. got into trouble when the couple decided to marry and he left his ship without permission.

"I got married young," she told The Muskogee Phoenix in her native Oklahoma in 2008. "I was 20 years old, and it was the best decision I ever made."

She married into a storied military family — her husband retired in 1972 with the rank of four-star admiral, the same rank held by his father, John S. "Slew" McCain Sr. Her son was held as a prisoner-of-war in Vietnam even as his father was commander in chief of Pacific forces in the late 1960s.

Roberta McCain was a young woman when her three children were born, later telling the Oklahoma paper that she was "too young and irresponsible to know you were supposed to worry about them. I just

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let them go. I got a kick out of watching them.”

The senator said in 2008 that his “father was often at sea, and the job of raising my brother, sister and me would fall to my mother alone.”

Her other son, Joe, told The Associated Press in 2007 that the family had endless dinner-table discussions about history, politics and legislation led by their mother.

“We were all basically on the same side of the fence,” Joe McCain said. “But it was like Talmudic scholars arguing about a single word or an adjective in the Testament.”

Joe McCain was at his mother’s side at her Washington home when she died, according to a statement from Cindy McCain. Roberta McCain’s daughter, Jean McCain, died last year.

When Sen. John McCain wrote a memoir about his experience as a POW for nearly six years in a north Vietnamese prison, he described times when he swore in English at his Vietnamese guards, who didn’t understand.

His mother later told him: “Johnny, I’m going to come over there and wash your mouth out with soap.”

Meghan McCain recalled her grandmother’s strong will and sense of duty in a 2012 column for The Daily Beast website, writing that Roberta McCain did not have “a lot of patience for excuses, especially from my father when he was growing up and acting out.”

“She once hit him over the head with a thermos in the back of a car because he was acting up so badly on a road trip,” Meghan McCain wrote.

The McCain matriarch’s spunky personality became the stuff of stories for the family — and among those in their circle of Washington society.

“Last Christmas, she wanted to drive around France. So she flew to Paris and tried to rent a car,” the senator once joked. “They said she was too old, so she bought one and drove around France.”

Cindy McCain wrote Monday that “Roberta was the liveliest presence in every room she graced, an irresistible force of nature.”

Roberta Wright was born Feb. 7, 1912, in Muskogee, Oklahoma, where her father was a businessman whose varied, colorful enterprises included bootlegging and oil wildcatting. The family moved to Los Angeles in the mid-1920s.

Her husband commanded submarines in World War II and was second in command of the cruiser St. Paul during the Korean War. He later held key posts including the Navy’s chief of congressional liaison, and died in 1981.

In 1934, when a fitness report deemed him underweight, the future admiral wrote: “My wife doesn’t know how to cook, and my meals are very irregular.”

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This story contains biographical material compiled by former AP reporter Polly Anderson.

## 2 Stanford economists win Nobel prize for improving auctions

By DAVID KEYTON, FRANK JORDANS and PAUL WISEMAN Associated Press

STOCKHOLM (AP) — Auctions are everywhere in today’s economy. They determine how Google sells ads, what price consumers end up paying for electricity, and the way governments sell off the public airwaves to telecom companies and broadcasters.

For helping make auctions run more efficiently, two Americans on Monday won the Nobel prize for economics.

The discoveries of Paul R. Milgrom and Robert B. Wilson, both of Stanford University, “have benefited sellers, buyers and taxpayers around the world,” the Nobel Committee said.

Wilson, 83, was once Milgrom’s Ph.D. adviser, and the two also happen to be neighbors. Reached by phone at his home in California, Milgrom, 72, said he received news of their win “in a strange way.”

“I got a knock at my door from Bob Wilson,” he told The Associated Press.

Security camera footage at Milgrom’s home captured the moment. Wilson knocked on Milgrom’s door in the dead of night and spoke into the intercom. “Paul,” he said. “It’s Bob Wilson. You’ve won the Nobel



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Prize." Awakened, Milgrom stammered for a moment and then said: "Wow."

The two men tackled the tricky problem of making auctions work efficiently. The committee said Wilson's work showed "why rational bidders tend to place bids below their own best estimate of the common value" — which could mean the item goes for less than it's worth and perhaps not to the buyer who most wants it, neither of which is supposed to happen if the auction is working properly.

"Auctions ask and answer the most fundamental questions in economics: Who should get the goods and at what prices?" said economist Peter Cramton, a former student of Wilson's now at the University of Maryland and the University of Cologne in Germany. The winners' work provides guidance about "how to price and allocate scarce goods -- radio spectrum, electricity, financial securities, and many more."

The effects of their work can be seen all around.

"Online advertising is sold at auction," said David Warsh, who tracks economic research at his blog Economic Principals. "That Google was able to adopt the method so quickly and seamlessly depended entirely on theory developed by Milgrom and his competitors and their students."

The work is about more than money. Some governments, for example, auction off the right to pollute in hopes of reducing emissions; cleaner companies can resell unneeded rights to dirtier ones, creating a financial incentive for companies to make their operations greener. "The objective is not always to maximize the revenue for the seller but also can have a societal objective," said Nobel Committee member Ingrid Werner.

One problem in auctions is the so-called winner's curse. If buyers are vying to purchase, say, fishing rights, they have to make bids without knowing what the price of fish will be in the future. They run the risk of winning the auction only by overpaying. To compensate, they tend to shave their bids.

A solution, according to the research by Wilson and Milgrom, is for the seller to provide as much information as possible before the bidding begins, perhaps providing an independent appraisal of the item being sold. Solving the problem doesn't just help the seller get a better price; it helps make sure the item being auctioned goes to the bidder likely to make the most efficient use of it — a key goal of economic policy.

Their research has had a big impact on the telecommunications industry, where private companies seek government licenses to use publicly owned radio frequencies for everything from mobile phone calls to internet payments.

Before the 1990s, the U.S. government essentially conducted "beauty contests" to hand out the frequencies, letting companies make their case for getting the licenses. The approach encouraged aggressive lobbying but didn't raise much money for the Treasury.

In 1994, the U.S. government turned to auctions. Milgrom and Wilson (with help from Preston McAfee, now at Google) designed an auction format in which all the licenses were sold in one go. That format discourages speculators from buying up frequencies in a specific geographic area and then reselling them to big telecommunications companies seeking to patch together national or regional networks.

The auction raised \$617 million — selling frequencies that previously were handed out for virtually nothing — and became a model for countries from Canada to India. The format has also been used to auction off electricity and natural gas.

Speaking to reporters in Stockholm by phone after learning of his win, Wilson struggled to think of a recent auction he himself had participated in. But then added: "My wife points out to me that we bought ski boots on eBay."

Americans have figured prominently among this year's Nobel winners. Leaving aside the peace prize, which went to the U.N.'s World Food Program, seven of the 11 laureates have been Americans.

Goran Hansson, secretary-general of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences who announced the award, said that reflected American investment in research after World War II. "And we'll see how that trend may change," he added.

Wilson said that, given the coronavirus pandemic, he had no immediate plans for what to do with his share of the the 10 million krona (\$1.1 million) cash prize that comes with the award, along with a gold medal.

"Probably I'll just save it for my wife, my children," he said.

Last year's award went to three researchers whose work focused on efforts to reduce global poverty.



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Unlike the other Nobel prizes, the economics award wasn't established in the will of Alfred Nobel but by the Swedish central bank in his memory in 1968, with the first winner selected a year later. It is the last prize announced each year.

Last week, the Nobel Committee awarded the prize for physiology and medicine for discovering the liver-ravaging hepatitis C virus. The prize for physics honored breakthroughs in understanding black holes, and the chemistry prize went to scientists behind a powerful gene-editing tool.

The literature prize was awarded to American poet Louise Glück. The World Food Program won the peace prize for efforts to combat hunger.

Jordans reported from Berlin, Wiseman from Washington. Associated Press writers Desiree Seals in Smyrna, Georgia, and David Runk in Grosse Pointe Farms, Michigan, contributed.

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

## Takeaways: Coronavirus at center of Supreme Court hearings

By LAURIE KELLMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The coronavirus won't surrender the national stage to anyone — not to President Donald Trump, Judge Amy Coney Barrett or majority Republicans holding the power to confirm nominees to the Supreme Court.

The disease that's killed more than 213,000 people in the United States dominated the Senate hearings that opened Monday in Washington. From the start, Republicans on the Judiciary Committee were on the defensive about rushing Barrett's confirmation before the Nov. 3 election. Yet they appeared to have enough votes to elevate Barrett to the high court.

Here are some takeaways from the first of four days of Barrett's confirmation hearings.

### SETTING THE TONE

Other than Trump, no one has more riding on the success of the hearings than their chairman, Sen. Lindsey Graham. And it seemed he felt he had some explaining to do about why he was holding the hearings during the pandemic.

The South Carolina Republican is in the reelection race of his life against Democrat Jaime Harrison, who has shattered fundraising records. Graham has linked himself to Trump after years of mocking the president. And he said in the past that he would not consider Supreme Court nominations in presidential election years.

Yet there he was, gavel in hand, refusing to get tested just beforehand or to enforce a mask-wearing rule for those in the cavernous hearing room. Trump and a circle of supporters who attended a recent Rose Garden ceremony for Barrett had been infected. At least two members of Graham's committee, Sens. Thom Tillis and Mike Lee, have also tested positive.

Tillis participated remotely. Lee attended the hearing and did not always wear a mask, but provided a doctor's note clearing him to participate.

Graham, who did not wear a mask at his seat, said he tested negative on Oct. 2 after "brief contact" with Lee. He displayed documents he said attested to the safety of the hearing room setup.

"You make it as safe as possible, you manage the risk and you go to work" like millions of Americans, Graham said. "I'm not going to be told to be tested by political opponents."

### CHANGING THE SUBJECT

Republicans — not Democrats — opened the hearing by making Barrett's Catholicism an issue.

One by one, GOP committee members used their time to make opening statements to predict that the panel's Democrats would overstep on the issue.

The Republican strategy was rooted in Barrett's 2017 confirmation hearing for an appeals court judge-

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ship, when Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., told Barrett that "the dogma lives loudly within you." But as this week's hearing opened, Democrats stuck to their plan to make the confirmation battle about health care and Roe vs. Wade, not Barrett's religious beliefs.

That did not stop Republicans from decrying what they called religious bias by Democrats.

Iowa Republican Joni Ernst, who is facing an unexpectedly tough reelection fight, suggested that critics would cast Barrett as a "TV or cartoon version of a religious radical."

Texas Sen. John Cornyn and Missouri Sen. Josh Hawley were among the Republicans warning that the Constitution bars religious tests for public office. Hawley criticized Democratic vice presidential nominee Sen. Kamala Harris of California for asking past judicial nominees about their membership in the Knights of Columbus, a lay Catholic fraternal organization.

Harris said last week that she and Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden "are both people of faith, and it's insulting to suggest that we would knock anyone for their faith." Biden, who is Catholic, said Monday that Barrett's faith "should not be considered" and urged a focus on her approach to a pending high court challenge to the Affordable Care Act.

## HEALTH CARE AND CORONAVIRUS

Committee Democrats, with virtually no power to stop Barrett's confirmation, did some subject-changing of their own.

"Why are we here?" said Sen. Chris Coons, D-Del. "It's because the Affordable Care Act is on the ballot and on the docket."

They consistently linked the nomination to the coronavirus pandemic, criticizing the safety precautions taken by Republicans and noting that the court, with Barrett on it, could rule to remove health care protections.

Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse, D-R.I., called the hearing an "irresponsible botch" because of the lack of contract tracing after the two Republicans on the panel tested positive for the virus. "The irony is that this slapdash hearing targets the Affordable Care Act," he said.

Sen. Patrick Leahy of Vermont said the Senate "is wearing blinders to the grim realities facing Americans." New Jersey Sen. Cory Booker said that "instead of doing anything to help people who are struggling right now, we are here."

Democrats also told their own personal stories. Minnesota Sen. Amy Klobuchar talked about her husband and her father's bouts with coronavirus. Sen. Mazie Hirono of Hawaii spoke of her own cancer battle.

Hirono noted that Graham had been compassionate to her during her health struggles. She said this could be a "moment" for Graham to show the same compassion to "the American people terrified about losing their health care."

## THE RACE FOR PRESIDENT

Among the first cases confronting Barrett on the Supreme Court could be a challenge to the presidential election.

Democrats warn that President Donald Trump wants his nominee in place to help resolve any election disputes. Some are saying she must recuse herself from any such cases.

"It's a break-glass moment," said Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn.

Blumenthal told Barrett her participation in election cases would do "explosive, enduring harm to the court's legitimacy and your own credibility."

He said, "You must recuse yourself."

Trump has suggested he might not abide by the results of the election or the nation's tradition of a peaceful transfer of presidential power if he is defeated by Democrat Joe Biden.

The president has repeatedly questioned the validity of mail-in ballots, even though election experts say fraud is so minimal there's a greater chance of being struck by lightning. Vote by mail is surging as voters avoid polling places during the COVID-19 crisis.

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Republicans have sought to tamp down on voting concerns, offering assurances that the ballots are legitimate and that the results will be honored, whichever party wins the presidency.

There's a high chance the results will not be known on Election Day as states take extra time to tally all the ballots.

Sen. Richard Durbin, D-Ill., said Trump has "made it clear" he wants another of his appointees on the court as he anticipates court challenges to the vote.

Associated Press writers Mary Clare Jalonick and Lisa Mascaro in Washington and Elana Schor in New York contributed to this report.

## **Belarus ramps up crackdown on protests, detains over 700**

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Authorities in Belarus said Monday they detained 713 people during mass protests a day earlier against the reelection of the country's authoritarian leader in a disputed election — the harshest crackdown in weeks on demonstrators.

The Interior Ministry reported that out of those detained Sunday, 570 of them were still in custody awaiting a court hearing. In a separate statement, the ministry threatened to use firearms against the protesters "if need be," saying that the rallies "have become organized and extremely radical."

Despite the detentions, protests in Belarus continued Monday, with the elderly taking to the streets in several Belarusian cities, demanding Lukashenko's resignation. More than 2,000 people marched through Minsk, chanting "Go away!" and carrying signs saying "Grandmothers (stand) with the people" and "Our souls are scarred with terror." Several people were detained.

The protests demanding the resignation of President Alexander Lukashenko spanned several cities on Sunday, with the largest crowds gathering in the capital, Minsk. The Viasna human rights center estimated that around 100,000 people took part in the Minsk rally. Police quickly moved to disperse the protest with water cannons, stun grenades and truncheons, preventing groups of people in different parts of the city from merging into one large gathering.

Dozens of people sustained injuries in what human rights advocates said was the harshest dispersal of a Sunday demonstration since August.

Mass protests have rocked Belarus since Aug. 9, when the results of the presidential election handed Lukashenko a victory with 80% of the vote and his main challenger Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya only 10%. Tsikhanouskaya and her supporters refused to recognize the results of the vote, saying it was riddled with fraud, and some poll workers have backed up that claim.

Both the European Union and the United States have said that presidential election was neither free nor fair.

In the first days of the protests, Belarusian authorities cracked down brutally on protesters, with police detaining thousands and beating scores.

The violent response to the rallies prompted international outrage. The EU and the United States slapped dozens of Belarusian officials with sanctions for their roles in the alleged vote-rigging and the crackdown on protesters, but didn't target Lukashenko, who has run the country for 26 years with an iron fist.

The government has since scaled back on the violence but has maintained the pressure, detaining hundreds of protesters and prosecuting top activists. Prominent members of the opposition's Coordination Council, which was formed to push for a transition of power, have been arrested or forced to leave the country.

Over 40 journalists were detained over the weekend, 25 of them in Minsk, the Belarusian Association of Journalists said. Fifteen Belarusian journalists in Minsk face up to 15 days of administrative arrest for disobeying police officers. Many had their equipment seized.

"The authorities are trying to prevent coverage of the protests by beating up and detaining journalists, withdrawing their accreditation and creating catastrophic working conditions," Andrei Bastunets, head of the journalists' association, told The Associated Press.

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Earlier this month Belarusian authorities rescinded the accreditation of all journalists working for foreign news outlets and said they must apply for new credentials, which some foreign outlets received last week. In September, the authorities also suspended the media credentials of the most popular independent Belarusian news site that has been extensively covering the protests.

Tsikhanouskaya, who is currently in exile in Lithuania after leaving Belarus under pressure from authorities, urged the EU to expand sanctions against Lukashenko and his allies.

"Yesterday we have seen the escalation of violence on the part of the authorities. Once again, hundreds of people are detained, beaten up, injured and crippled. Despite the peaceful nature of the protests, repressions are intensifying," Tsikhanouskaya told the AP on Monday.

Lukashenko and his associates need to be added to the sanctions list along with law enforcement officers who take part in crackdowns on protesters, she added.

"I call on our European partners to act quickly and decisively," Tsikhanouskaya said.

EU officials on Monday said they saw no improvement in Belarus and were ready to impose further sanctions on top Belarus officials, including Lukashenko.

EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said a meeting of foreign ministers of the bloc that there has been "a complete lack of will from Lukashenko's side to engage in negotiations, contacts on anything that could bring a democratic, a peaceful solution to the situation in Belarus."

The ministers warned that "the EU stands ready to take further restrictive measures, including against entities and high-ranking officials, including A. Lukashenko."

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, meanwhile, was "concerned by some of the violence that we've seen" and "has said on a number of occasions it's very important that there be an inclusive democratic dialogue involving all stakeholders in Belarus to try to get out of this crisis," U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric said.

"It's imperative that people have the right to demonstrate freely, that security services need to show restraint to ensure people can exercise the right to demonstrate freely," he said.

Dujarric said that since the beginning of the protests, the U.N. team on the ground in Belarus "has been urging the authorities to release everyone who has been detained for exercising their human rights and to stop torture and other forms of ill-treatment of detainees."

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Follow all AP stories about developments in Belarus at <https://apnews.com/Belarus>

## Facebook bans Holocaust denial, distortion posts

By MATT O'BRIEN AP Technology Writer

Facebook is banning posts that deny or distort the Holocaust and will start directing people to authoritative sources if they search for information about the Nazi genocide.

Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg announced the new policy Monday, the latest attempt by the company to take action against conspiracy theories and misinformation ahead of the U.S. presidential election three weeks away.

The decision comes amid a push by Holocaust survivors around the world who lent their voices to a campaign targeting Zuckerberg beginning this summer, urging him to take action to remove Holocaust denial posts from the social media site.

Coordinated by the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, the #NoDenyingIt campaign used Facebook itself to make the survivors' entreaties to Zuckerberg heard, posting one video per day urging him to remove Holocaust-denying groups, pages and posts as hate speech.

The testimonials coincided with an advertising boycott by companies pushing Facebook into taking a stronger stand against various forms of hate speech and extremism around the world.

Facebook said Monday that the new policy "is supported by the well-documented rise in anti-Semitism globally and the alarming level of ignorance about the Holocaust, especially among young people." Surveys have shown some younger Americans believe the Holocaust was a myth or has been exaggerated.



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Tech companies began promising to take a firmer stand against accounts used to promote hate and violence after a 2017 rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, where a self-described white supremacist drove into a crowd of counterprotesters. Yet Facebook and other companies have been slower to respond to posts that amplify false information, but don't pose an immediate threat of violence or other physical harm.

Zuckerberg said in a blog post Monday that he believes the new policy strikes the "right balance" in drawing the lines between what is and isn't acceptable speech.

"I've struggled with the tension between standing for free expression and the harm caused by minimizing or denying the horror of the Holocaust," he wrote. "My own thinking has evolved as I've seen data showing an increase in anti-Semitic violence, as have our wider policies on hate speech."

Zuckerberg had raised the ire of the Claims Conference, based in New York, and others with comments in 2018 to the tech website Recode that posts denying the Nazi annihilation of 6 million Jews would not necessarily be removed. He said he did not think Holocaust deniers were "intentionally" getting it wrong, and that as long as posts were not calling for harm or violence, even offensive content should be protected.

After an outcry, Zuckerberg, who is Jewish himself, clarified that while he personally found "Holocaust denial deeply offensive" he believed that "the best way to fight offensive bad speech is with good speech."

The Anti-Defamation League said it was relieved by Monday's shift but criticized Facebook for taking nearly a decade after the New York-based group first began to publicly call on the company to curb Holocaust denial in 2011. The group tracked more anti-Semitic incidents in the U.S. last year than at any time over the past four decades, and has said it continues to find Holocaust denial groups on Facebook, some hidden and most private.

"While Facebook has made numerous positive changes to its policies since that time, it stubbornly had held onto this outrageous platform policy, even in the face of the undeniable threat of growing antisemitism and antisemitic violence around the world," the group's CEO, Jonathan Greenblatt, wrote in a blog post.

The Claims Conference on Monday said it welcomed Zuckerberg's changed approach and the company's decision to take action after its campaign of survivor testimonials.

"It's a very important statement and it's a building block toward ensuring that this sort of anti-Semitism is not amplified," said Greg Schneider, the group's executive vice president.

The group on Sunday posted its 75th video from a Holocaust survivor appealing directly to Zuckerberg. Fred Kurz, an American who was born in Austria in 1937, described losing both of his parents in concentration camps.

Zuckerberg never met directly with the group but Schneider said he believes the voices of survivors and their "moral authority" made a difference.

"Honestly, I'm a little surprised it took 75 days, but I'm glad it happened," he said.

Facebook said Monday it would immediately begin removing Holocaust denial posts from Facebook and Instagram, which it owns, but it could take some time to train the company's technical systems and human moderators to enforce it on a global scale.

Several other groups that had pushed for Facebook to take a stricter line on Holocaust denial said Monday's move was an important step.

"Facebook is showing that it recognizes Holocaust denial for what it truly is — a form of antisemitism and therefore hate speech," Ronald Lauder, president of the World Jewish Congress, said in a prepared statement.

Yad Vashem, Israel's national Holocaust memorial, said it supports Facebook's new initiative to direct its users to "credible and fact-based" information about the Holocaust, such as the memorial's website.

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Associated Press writers David Rising in Berlin and Josef Federman in Jerusalem contributed to this report.

## Trump vs. Biden: Where they stand on health, economy, more

By BILL BARROW and AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Amid the tumult of the 2020 presidential campaign, one dynamic has remained



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constant: The Nov. 3 election offers voters a choice between substantially different policy paths.

President Donald Trump, like many fellow Republicans, holds out tax reductions and regulatory cuts as economic imperatives and frames himself as a conservative champion in the culture wars. The president has offered few details about how he would pull the levers of government in a second term. His most consistent argument focuses on stopping Democratic opponent Joe Biden and his party from pushing U.S. policy leftward.

Biden, for his part, is not the socialist caricature depicted by Trump. But he is every bit a center-left Democrat who frames the federal government as the force to combat the coronavirus, rebuild the economy and address centuries of institutional racism and systemic inequalities. The former vice president and U.S. senator also offers his deal-making past as evidence he can do it again from the Oval Office.

A look at where the rivals stand on key issues:

## ECONOMY, TAXES

Low unemployment and a soaring stock market were Trump's calling cards before the pandemic. While the stock market has clawed its way back after cratering in the early weeks of the crisis, unemployment stands at 7.9%, and the nearly 10 million jobs that remain lost since the pandemic began exceed the number that the nation shed during the entire 2008-2009 Great Recession.

Trump has predicted that the U.S. economy will rebound in the third and fourth quarters of this year and is set to take off like a "rocket ship" in 2021. He promises that a coronavirus vaccine or effective therapeutics will soon be available, allowing life to get back to normal. His push for a payroll tax cut over the summer was thwarted by stiff bipartisan opposition. But winning a second term — and a mandate from voters — could help him resurrect the idea.

First and foremost, Biden argues that the economy cannot fully recover until COVID-19 is contained. For the long-term recovery, he pitches sweeping federal action to avoid an extended recession and to address longstanding wealth inequality that disproportionately affects nonwhite Americans.

His biggest-ticket plans include a \$2 trillion, four-year push to eliminate carbon pollution in the U.S. energy grid by 2035 and a new government health insurance plan open to all working-age Americans (with generous subsidies). He proposes new spending on education, infrastructure and small businesses, along with raising the national minimum wage to \$15 an hour.

Biden would cover some but not all of the new costs by rolling back much of the 2017 GOP tax overhaul. He wants a corporate income tax rate of 28% (lower than before but higher than now) and broad income and payroll tax hikes for individuals with more than \$400,000 of annual taxable income. All that would generate an estimated \$4 trillion or more over 10 years.

Biden frames immigration as an economic matter as well. He wants to expand legal immigration slots and offer a citizenship path for about 11 million residents who are in the country illegally but who, Biden notes, are already economic contributors as workers and consumers.

## EDUCATION

Trump has pushed for schools to fully reopen for in-person learning and announced that the federal government will begin distributing millions of rapid coronavirus tests to states. He urged governors to use them to reopen schools for students in kindergarten through 12th grade.

Trump has also used his call for schools to fully reopen as an opportunity to spotlight his support for charter schools and school choice. Education Secretary Betsy DeVos, a longtime proponent of charter schools and school voucher programs, has suggested that families be allowed to take federal money allotted to school districts that don't open and spend it on private schools that do open. For most of Trump's first term, his administration sought major increases to federal charter school grant aid. Congress responded with relatively small increases.

With higher education, Trump has repeatedly complained that campuses are beset by "radical left indoctrination." He has threatened to defund universities and said he would ask the Treasury Department to reexamine the tax-exempt status and federal funding of unspecified schools.

Biden wants schools to get more federal aid for pandemic-related costs through the same federal law used after national disasters like hurricanes and wildfires.

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Beyond COVID, Biden wants the federal government to partner with states to make public higher education tuition-free for any student in a household earning up to \$125,000 annually. The assistance would extend to everyone attending two-year schools, regardless of income. He also proposes sharply increasing aid for historically Black colleges. His overall education plans carry a 10-year price tag of about \$850 billion.

He calls for universal access to prekindergarten programs for 3- and 4-year-olds; tripling Title I spending for schools with higher concentrations of students from low-income households; more support for non-classroom positions like on-campus social workers; federal infrastructure spending for public school buildings; and covering schools' costs to comply with federal disability laws. Biden also opposes taxpayer money being routed to for-profit charter school businesses, and he's pledged that his secretary of education will have classroom teaching experience.

## HEALTH CARE

As a candidate for the White House, Trump promised that he would "immediately" replace President Barack Obama's health care law with a plan of his own that would provide "insurance for everybody." Americans are still waiting for his plan.

Trump recently returned to health care amid disapproval of his administration's handling of the coronavirus pandemic and growing uncertainty about the future of the Affordable Care Act, which his administration is asking the Supreme Court to overturn. He is reiterating his 4-year-old promises for quality health care at affordable prices, lower prescription drug costs, more consumer choice and greater transparency.

He also announced executive orders calling for an end to surprise medical bills and declaring it the policy of the U.S. government to protect people with preexisting conditions, even if Obamacare is struck down. However, protections for preexisting conditions are already the law, and Trump would have to go to Congress to cement a new policy through legislation. In the first presidential debate, Trump also held out the repeal of Obamacare's individual mandate to have health insurance as significant progress, while ignoring questions about his lack of a comprehensive plan.

Biden wants to expand Obama's law to provide more generous coverage to a greater number of people and add a "Medicare-like public option" that would compete with private insurers and be available to working-age Americans. Biden estimates that would cost about \$750 billion over 10 years. That positions Biden between Trump, who wants to scrap the 2010 law, and progressives, who want a single-payer system to replace private insurance altogether. Biden sees his approach as the next step toward universal coverage and one he could get through Congress.

Biden also has sought to turn the current Supreme Court vacancy into a health care matter, noting that the late liberal Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg was a key vote in upholding the 2010 health care law, while Trump's nominee, federal appellate Judge Amy Coney Barrett, has criticized the court's reasoning in that decision.

## CORONAVIRUS

Over the course of the summer, Trump went from acknowledging that the pandemic may "get worse before it gets better" to declaring that the U.S. is "rounding the corner" on the crisis. Then he tested positive for the virus himself.

The pandemic remains the biggest obstacle for his reelection hopes, and his bout with the virus just weeks before Election Day only brightened the spotlight on the issue.

Roughly 7 in 10 Americans think the nation is on the wrong track, and just 39% of Americans approve of Trump's handling of the crisis that has killed more than 207,000 people in the U.S., according to a recent poll The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

Congress approved about \$3 trillion in coronavirus relief in March and April, and Democrats and the White House have been at loggerheads over another significant round of funding, with Trump sending mixed messages on what he wants.

Trump has largely placed responsibility with governors for leading the response.

Biden draws some of his sharpest contrasts with Trump on the pandemic, arguing that the presidency and federal government exist for such crises and that Trump has been an abject failure responsible for

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tens of thousands of preventable deaths.

Biden endorses generous federal spending to help businesses and individuals, along with state and local governments. He's also promised aggressive use of the Defense Production Act, a wartime law a president can use to direct certain private-sector activity. Additionally, Biden promises to elevate the government's scientists and physicians to communicate a consistent message to the public, and he would have the U.S. rejoin the World Health Organization. He's also willing to use executive power for a national mask mandate, but whether that is enforceable is questionable.

## ABORTION

Years before his run for the White House, Trump described himself as a strong abortion rights proponent. But since coming to Washington, he has been cheered by anti-abortion groups for his administration's efforts to restrict access to the procedure.

As a candidate and as president, Trump has consistently expressed his opposition to the landmark *Roe v. Wade* decision that legalized abortion nationwide and said the issue should be decided by states.

He has expressed support for the Hyde Amendment, which prohibits Medicaid from being used to pay for abortions in most circumstances, and he's sought to restrict access to two drugs that are used to induce abortions in the first 10 weeks of pregnancies.

In his Republican National Convention speech in August, Trump declared that "children, born and unborn, have a God-given right to life." Nominating Barrett, a 7th Circuit Court of Appeals judge, has the anti-abortion movement hopeful that the high court — should she win confirmation — will tilt decisively to the right and pave the way for the court to eventually overturn the *Roe* case.

Biden has declined to offer his own list of prospective Supreme Court nominees, but he's said repeatedly that he supports *Roe v. Wade*'s finding that the Constitution establishes a woman's right to terminate a pregnancy. He's endorsed calls for Congress to codify that right, a move that would keep abortion legal statutorily even if the court struck down the constitutional protections.

A practicing Catholic, Biden talked publicly for years of his personal struggle over abortion as a moral issue. He cited that as a reason he supported the Hyde Amendment ban on federal taxpayer funding for abortion services. But he reversed that position early in his 2020 campaign after coming under pressure from women's groups and Democratic activists. Biden said he wasn't bowing to pressure but instead argued that Republican legislatures around the country had restricted abortion access to the point that the Hyde Amendment had become an untenable barrier for poor or working-class women to access a constitutional right.

## TRADE

Trump views the signing of two major trade deals — an updated pact with Mexico and Canada and Phase 1 of a China agreement — as signature achievements of his presidency. U.S. and China signed Phase 1 in January, less than two months before the pandemic put an enormous strain on U.S.-China relations. Trump says Phase 1 led to China buying roughly \$200 billion over two years in U.S. agricultural products, energy and other American products. In return, the U.S. canceled planned U.S. tariffs on Chinese-made smartphones, toys and laptop computers. The U.S. also cut in half, to 7.5%, the tariff rate levied on \$120 billion in other China imports.

Phase 2 of the deal is expected to focus on some tougher issues between the countries, including Trump's wish to get China to stop subsidizing its state-owned enterprises. But for Trump, who has come to frequently refer to the coronavirus as the "China virus," it remains to be seen whether he will be able to effectively reengage Beijing on trade. Trump recently said he's currently "not interested" in talking to China.

Biden has joined a growing bipartisan embrace of "fair trade" abroad — a twist on decades of "free trade" talk as Republican and Democratic administrations alike expanded international trade. Biden wants to juice U.S. manufacturing by directing \$400 billion of federal government purchases to domestic firms (part of that for buying pandemic supplies) over a four-year term.

He wants \$300 billion in new support for U.S. technology firms' research and development. Biden says the new domestic spending must come before he enters into any new international trade deals. He pledges tough negotiations with China, the world's other economic superpower, on trade and intellectual property

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matters. China, like the U.S., is not yet a member of the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the multilateral trade agreement that Biden advocated for when he was vice president.

## FOREIGN POLICY

During his first term, Trump built his foreign policy around the mantra of "America First."

But in the final lap before Election Day, Trump has been offering himself as an international peacemaker for nudging the Gulf monarchies of Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates to sign agreements with Israel opening business and diplomatic relations. Trump says other Arab nations are on the cusp of opening formal relations with Israel.

He also counts as major achievements building more than 200 miles (320 kilometers) of his promised wall along the U.S.-Mexico border, cajoling more NATO members to fulfill their pledge to spend 2% of their gross domestic product on defense spending and reducing the U.S. military footprint in Afghanistan and other hot spots. He also announced his intended withdrawal from the Paris climate accord.

Trump can officially withdraw the U.S. from the Paris agreement — it sets the goal of holding global warming below 3.6 degrees Fahrenheit — as an example of an agreement that "disadvantages the United States to the exclusive benefit of other countries." The deal, which was signed by Obama, stipulates that no nation can leave until four years after it signed on. For the U.S., that's Nov. 4 — one day after the U.S. election.

The president has also made clear his desire to leave Afghanistan sooner than the timeline laid out in the Feb. 29 peace agreement with the Taliban, which set the path for U.S. troops to leave the country in 12 to 14 months if the insurgent group met certain conditions. There are currently about 4,500 U.S. troops in Afghanistan, and Trump has said he wants them all to be withdrawn by the end of the year.

Trump also counts his engagement with North Korea's Kim Jong Un as a monumental achievement. The president has not been able to prod Kim to give up his nation's nuclear program, but he has met Kim three times — something Trump critics say has only legitimized the authoritarian leader.

Biden says he would begin "the day after the election" rebuilding relationships with allies ruffled by Trump's approach, which Biden mocks as "America alone." Biden's top priority is reestablishing the foundations of NATO, the post-World War II alliance of Western powers that Biden said is necessary to counter Russia's aggressive, expansionist aims in eastern Europe and Asia.

Biden also says he would immediately confront Russian President Vladimir Putin about his country's interference in U.S. elections. Biden pledges to "end forever wars" but clarifies that U.S. special forces — as opposed to large-scale ground missions — remain a vital part of world stability. He calls for rebuilding a decimated U.S. diplomatic corps, rejoining the Paris climate accord and pushing China and other large economies to reduce carbon pollution.

## Stocks are soaring, and most Black people are missing out

By STAN CHOE AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Americans who own stocks are pulling further away from those who don't, as Wall Street roars back to record heights while much of the economy struggles. And Black households are much more likely to be in that not-as-fortunate group that isn't in the stock market.

Only 33.5% of Black households owned stocks in 2019, according to data released recently by the Federal Reserve. Among white households, nearly 61% did so. Hispanic and other minority households also are less likely than white families to own stock.

Many reasons are behind the split. Experts say chief among them is a longstanding preference by many Black investors for safer places to put their money — the legacy, some say, of decades of discrimination and fear. Also, many were never taught what they were missing out on.

"We didn't have a grandfather or aunt or uncle or mom and dad educating us on the markets because they didn't benefit from it because of historical discrimination in this country," said John Rogers, founder and co-CEO of Ariel Investments.

Black people have also often lacked the opportunity to build up wealth, park it in the market and watch it grow over time. In general, they have lower incomes, which leaves less money to invest after paying



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bills. Many also work jobs that don't offer retirement plans like a 401(k).

But researchers say that even wealthier Black households are much less likely to own stocks than their white counterparts. That means they missed out on the roughly 260% returns for S&P 500 funds over the last decade, and the resulting chance to see their wealth grow.

Lower rates of stock ownership are a small reason for the wealth gap between Black and white families. The most important may be the restricted access Black borrowers had to mortgages and affordable housing through decades of redlining and other discriminatory practices, said Raphael Bostic, president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, in a recent speech.

Researchers say increased investment by racial minorities in the stock market, carried through future generations, could help narrow the wealth gap. Toward that end, industry groups are trying to encourage more Black people to become financial planners, who could then draw in potential investors.

Instead of stocks, wealthier Black households are more likely to own safer investments, such as bonds, life insurance or real estate, said Tatjana Meschede, associate director at Brandeis University's Institute on Assets and Social Policy.

The largest bond fund has returned less than 40% over the last decade. That's far below the nearly 257% that the largest stock fund has delivered over the same time. Real estate has also had slower gains.

Malcolm Ethridge, a financial adviser in the Washington area, regularly sees a reluctance to invest in stocks among Black people with enough money to do so.

"My personal opinion is Black Americans tend not to trust things that are not tangible because of our history in this country and things being taken away," Ethridge said. "It gets passed on to you from generation to generation: to only trust and believe in things you can actually touch."

"A house, I can put my hands on that and believe in that, whereas a stock is just whatever someone else tells me it's worth, and I just have to take your word for it."

Bob Marshall, a banking executive in northern Virginia who is Black and does invest in stocks, said differences in financial literacy education may be one factor. Or, he said, because fewer Black families have wealth that has carried through generations, they may be more wary of risky investments.

Even though the S&P 500 recently returned to a record level, it lost more than a third of its value in less than five weeks before that. That's part of the implicit bargain in investing in higher-risk, higher-return investments.

"There isn't a passing down of knowledge from generation to generation," said Rogers, who founded Ariel Investments in 1983. "It's the opposite of what I hear from Warren Buffett about the magic of compound interest and how much wealth has been created since he was born. Those kinds of stories don't happen in Black communities."

Rogers had a different experience in part because his father introduced him as a kid to a Black stockbroker, who became a role model. Decades later, though, Black people are still rare as financial executives or financial planners. That may make potential Black investors feel that buying stocks is not for them.

Financial advisers say they are seeing a greater interest in stocks among younger Black clients. More of those Buffett-like conversations may be happening around dinner tables.

Gary Simms Sr., a global information security strategist in Manassas, Virginia, began investing in stocks a couple decades ago after a friend pushed him to do better with his money. He was reluctant at first, but now he talks about stocks often with his son, a teenager with his own portfolio.

"Culturally, I think African Americans are not raised to build equity," he said, "but I do think the tide is turning."

## Black churches mobilizing voters despite virus challenges

By AARON MORRISON Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — For the Rev. Jimmy Gates Sr., the 2008 presidential election year was one to remember — and not just because it yielded a historic result as the nation elected its first Black president.

The pastor of Zion Hill Baptist Church in Cleveland recalls how, on the last Sunday of early voting before



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the general election, he and his congregation traveled in a caravan of packed buses, vans and cars to the city's Board of Elections office and joined a line of voters that seemed to stretch a mile.

"What a sight to see," Gates said. "Seniors, middle-aged people, young people."

In recent election cycles, Black church congregations across the country have launched get-out-the-vote campaigns commonly referred to as "souls to the polls." To counteract racist voter suppression tactics that date back to the Jim Crow era, early voting in the Black community is stressed from pulpits nearly as much as it is by the candidates seeking their support.

But voter mobilization in Black church communities will look much different in 2020, due in large part to the coronavirus pandemic that has infected millions across the U.S. and has taken a disproportionate toll on Black America.

Churches have organized socially distant caravans with greatly reduced transportation capacity for early voting and Election Day ballot-casting. Church volunteers are phone-banking and canvassing the homes of their members to ensure mail-in and absentee ballots are requested and hand-delivered to election board offices or drop boxes before the deadlines.

But outreach has been complicated because many churches have been holding services virtually for months, with some having only recently resumed worship in-person.

Black Voters Matter, a national voting rights group that organizes in 15 states, is trying to help churches assist people who count on a "souls to the polls" ride on or before Election Day.

"It's not whether there are enough votes out there," said Cliff Albright, a co-founder of the group. "It's whether we have the strategy, the resources and the election protection to make sure that the voters who want to show up are actually able to do so and be counted."

The Associated Press interviewed pastors, congregants and voting rights advocates nationwide to get a sense of how efforts to mobilize Black voters would play out during a deadly pandemic when Black people have been disproportionately affected by virus-related layoffs, and issues of systemic racism are top of mind.

Black Americans have far higher rates of joblessness than the national average and the highest COVID-19 mortality rate of any racial group.

The turbulence of 2020 and fears of contracting the coronavirus have the potential to depress turnout even among reliable segments of Black voters, advocates say. So this year's voter mobilization has to succeed at a level it didn't in 2016, compared to 2008 and 2012, Gates said.

"We must vote like our life depends on it," he said. "Yes, we know God takes care of us and is the supplier of all our needs. But God has given us a will to do the right thing. You didn't listen to us in 2016. So my thing is, do you hear me now?"

Some pastors say the coast-to-coast unrest that followed the police killings of Black Americans this year have motivated their congregations. In Minneapolis, where a white officer held his knee to the neck of George Floyd, voters want to see policing reforms at the legislative level, said Bishop Divar L. Bryant Kemp, pastor of New Mount Calvary Baptist Church in North Minneapolis.

"I tell people all the time, 'Don't talk to me about what needs to be changed if you haven't voted to make a change,'" he said.

The challenge for Kemp will be getting voters to the polls safely. A church van used in previous elections recently broke down.

Kemp also understands the pandemic risks all too well. He contracted COVID-19 in July and was hospitalized for five days, forcing him to stay away from his church for three weeks.

"We considered renting a van to take them to the polls, but either way we're going to do it," Kemp said.

"Souls to the polls" as an idea traces back to the civil rights movement. The Rev. George Lee, a Black Mississippi entrepreneur, was assassinated by white supremacists in 1955, after he helped nearly 100 Black residents register to vote in the town of Belzoni. The cemetery where Lee is buried has served as a polling place.

"There was a statement that he once made advocating voting rights: 'Don't cry for my mama and my daddy. They're already gone. You need to cry for your children that will come along,'" said Wardell Walton, Belzoni's first Black mayor, who served between 2005 and 2013.

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Lee's memory should "inspire us to continue to move forward despite the obstacles," said Walton, 70. Across the U.S., early voting rules vary state-to-state, but begin for the vast majority of eligible voters in October at an average of 22 days before the election, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Initial signs suggest Black voters are indeed intent on casting a ballot this year. Steady traffic at early voting sites in states like Ohio and strong returns of mailed-in ballots in North Carolina, Georgia and elsewhere indicate an energized Black electorate.

Even without the hurdles of a pandemic, voter suppression is a persistent election year issue for Black Americans. The civil rights movement brought about passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which prohibited racial discrimination in voting.

Despite the law, efforts to thwart voting for minorities have required constant vigilance. In some states, suppression worsened because of a 2013 Supreme Court ruling that gutted a section of the law requiring states with a history of racially discriminatory voting rules to get federal approval before changing election laws.

Ahead of the 2012 general election, Republican-controlled state legislatures and local elections officials put limits on early voting periods that "souls to the polls" campaigns rely on.

Now, some Black Americans are wary of President Donald Trump's false claims of widespread mail-in voter fraud, along with reported mail delivery problems within the U.S. Postal Service. Advocates have decried the president's recent call for his most fervent supporters to monitor the polls on Election Day as an attempt at voter intimidation in the Black community, although Trump has denied this.

Jane Bonner, a 53-year-old health care administrator who attends church at Walk of Faith Cathedral in Austell, just west of Atlanta, said her 91-year-old parents can recall their own experiences with disenfranchisement. Her mother was denied voter registration when she could not tell the registrar "the number of days, hours and minutes until her next birthday," she said.

"I'm now determined more than ever to go to the polls and cast my ballot in person, as opposed to by mail," Bonner said.

Keith White, a director of social justice initiatives at Christian Cultural Center, has been petitioning New York City elections officials to allow his predominantly Black church in Brooklyn to serve as a polling location. Whether or not that happens, the church will use its van and a charter bus to shuttle early voters between now and Election Day, he said.

"People are concerned about this election and the implication that it might have for our children's future," White said. "Folks will be out early. I don't think they will be waiting until the last day before Election Day."

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Associated Press writers Skip Foreman in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, and Mohamed Ibrahim in Minneapolis contributed to this report. News researcher Jennifer Farrar in New York also contributed.

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## Iran shatters its single-day record for virus deaths, cases

By AMIR VAHDAT Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — For the second day in a row, Iran shattered its single-day record for new deaths and infections from the coronavirus, with 272 people confirmed dead among more than 4,200 new cases on Monday.

Like in many other countries, the spiraling outbreak in Iran reflects the government's contradictory virus response. This month, as the daily recorded death toll reached the triple digits, authorities announced

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tighter restrictions for the hard-hit capital of Tehran. Recently reopened universities and schools, as well as libraries, mosques, cinemas, museums and beauty salons, shut down. On Saturday, the government mandated that all Tehran residents wear face masks outdoors and in public places, warning violators would be fined. Cabinet spokesman Ali Rabiei promised those who tested positive would be closely tracked.

And yet enforcement and measures like contact-tracing in the country of 80 million remain a challenge. Those who disobey face fines of just 500,000 riyals, or \$1.60, roughly the price of a burger downtown. Many residents, tired of staying home, now ignore the rules about masks and social distancing to pack indoor cafes and restaurants. As residents defy coronavirus precautions and the government resists a lockdown to salvage its economy, Iran's caseload is skyrocketing.

Iran's health minister Saeed Namaki made an appeal on Sunday for harsher punishments, according to the state-run IRNA news agency, noting the meager fines for maskless residents would do nothing to boost vigilance. Lamenting that the health ministry's 7,000 inspectors couldn't handle the sprawling city of over 10 million, he empowered the police and Basij forces, a paramilitary wing of the Revolutionary Guard used for internal security, to help enforce pandemic rules. In the coming weeks, Namaki added, authorities plan to extend the mask mandate to other major cities.

Iran emerged early in the pandemic as a global epicenter of the virus and has since seen the worst outbreak in the Middle East, with more than 500,000 confirmed cases and 28,800 deaths. Leaders first played down the virus's risks and, as hospitals filled up, international experts suspected Iran was hiding the true number of infections and deaths. Authorities have since admitted that the outbreak is more severe than reported, with a recent parliamentary report putting the number of infections at "eight to 10 times" higher than official numbers.

Movement restrictions this spring somewhat checked the spread of the disease. Then the government swiftly reopened the country, desperate to boost its stricken economy. Since June, the case count has steadily increased — and spiked to new heights in recent weeks.

Long before the virus hit, Iran's economy was ailing, pummeled by U.S. sanctions after the Trump administration's unilateral withdrawal in 2018 from Tehran's nuclear accord with world powers. As the death toll soared on Sunday, the nation's currency plunged to its lowest level ever, following the U.S. administration's decision last week to blacklist Iranian banks that had so far escaped the bulk of re-imposed American sanctions.

As in the White House, where U.S. President Donald Trump and a growing circle of his aides and staff recently tested positive for the coronavirus, the disease has spread to the highest levels of Iran's government, even killing a senior adviser of the country's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. A number of Cabinet ministers have contracted the virus, as well as top officials including senior Vice President Eshaq Jahangiri and Vice President Massoumeh Ebtekar. The head of an Iranian government task force on the coronavirus who had urged the public not to panic over its spread was among the first officials to contract the virus in late February. On Sunday, local media reported the head of the country's atomic energy organization and the country's vice president in charge of budget and planning had also tested positive for the virus.

Iran's initial outbreak coincided with major political events — the 41st anniversary of its 1979 Islamic Revolution that brought its clerical leadership to power, as well as parliamentary elections in which the government desperately sought to boost turnout. Religious considerations also played a role in the Shiite theocracy as authorities declined for weeks to close shrines where the faithful touch or kiss the tombs' protective bars.

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Associated Press writer Isabel DeBre in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, contributed to this report.

## **As a pandemic presses on, waves of grief follow its path**

By LINDSEY TANNER AP Medical Writer

In a strong voice tinged with her Irish homeland, Fiona Prine talks hauntingly about loss. From her CO-

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VID-19 infection and isolation — self-imposed in hopes of sparing her husband, folk-country legend John Prine — to his own devastating illness and death, she's had more than her share in this year like no other.

Illness and death are the pandemic's most feared consequences, but a collective sense of loss is perhaps its most pervasive. Around the world, the pandemic has spread grief by degrees.

While less than 1% of the global population is known to have been infected, few on Earth have been spared some form of loss since the coronavirus took hold. With nearly 1 million deaths worldwide, full-blown bereavement is the most recognizable.

But even smaller losses can leave people feeling empty and unsettled.

Layoffs. Canceled visits with Grandpa. Shuttered restaurants. Closed gyms. These are losses that don't fit neatly into a "Hallmark category." But they are not insignificant — especially when anxiety is already heightened, says psychologist and grief specialist Robert Neimeyer of the Portland Institute for Loss and Transition.

Activities that are part of usual routines, that bring pleasure or purpose, give people a sense of control over their lives. Losing them can result in psychological distress and unease, he says.

In normal times, people look to families, friends, communities for support in coping with loss. But in the pandemic, "We don't have as much capacity as a human community to meet the needs. Nearly everyone has been affected," he says.

"If you were to approach anyone on the street and ask them 10 times, 'What have you lost?', you would hear some remarkable stories."

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By the time John and Fiona Prine returned home from a trip to Ireland in late February, the pandemic was spreading. Soon after, Prine had hip replacement surgery, and they hunkered down in their Nashville home for his recovery.

They'd been careful overseas and came home feeling healthy but cautious. Coronavirus tests were almost an afterthought.

"We were doing fine. Happy to be home. John was already up on his feet with a cane," Fiona Prine says.

Prine was 73, a cancer survivor with chronic lung disease, but still performing regularly. His wife and manager, 15 years younger, was protective. She often watched from backstage.

"I knew this would not be a safe virus for John," she says.

When the call came with results showing she'd tested positive, "You might as well have told me I was pregnant," Fiona Prine says. Hoping to keep her husband healthy, "I literally bolted for the bedroom and locked myself in practically."

His test results were "indeterminate." But he seemed OK.

Her quarantine was tough on both of them. They missed each other, and FaceTimed every evening. "He didn't like to be away from me," she says. Both news junkies, they followed pandemic developments.

"God, there are so many things I wish were different," she said in a selfie video while confined to that bedroom as cases mounted worldwide, musicians canceled gigs, businesses shut down and families lost livelihoods.

At her quarantine's end on Day 10, she zipped down the stairs, in gloves and mask, to be by Prine's side. He'd been napping more than usual, and she knew he was not OK. She grabbed their pulse oximeter, a device that clips onto a finger to measure blood oxygen levels. It showed just 82%, — too low even for someone with chronic lung disease. In healthy people, 95% and up is normal.

"I immediately drove him to the ER," she says. Leaving him at the door was agonizing; she knew instinctively that the virus had already attacked his lungs.

She saw him again almost two weeks later when a doctor called her to the hospital. The Prines spent his final 17 hours together.

Six months later, she's learning to cope. Grief counseling has helped. But there are random moments when "I'm just absolutely swept away by grief. And I've learned not to stifle it."

John Prine fans, many who've followed him for half a century, feel like family to his wife. They've reached out to console each other on social media. Alone in her big house, she reads their messages and posts



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remembrances of her own.

It is, Fiona Prine says, "a way for me to stay connected to the world."

In an impoverished mostly Black and rural Georgia county, no one knows the toll of pandemic losses better than Adrick Ingram, the coroner.

The number of COVID-19 deaths in Hancock County, 43 as of Oct. 11, is deceiving. With only 8,530 residents, that amounts to 5 deaths per 1,000 — the highest per-capita rate of any U.S. county.

"It has affected our community in a way that I consider tragic," Ingram says.

It has affected Ingram, who is used to seeing grief up close and personal in his dual jobs, declaring cause of death and running a funeral home.

"I try my best to compartmentalize, to have empathy but also to find ways to relax my mind and distance myself from my work," says Ingram, 44. "And I have to do that, because it would be way too much otherwise."

It has been way too much in 2020.

One out of every four funerals has been a COVID-19 death. Many are people he knew well. "You know their children and their wives," he says. It makes compartmentalizing "a little bit harder."

He has a wife and a 7-year-old son. They fear he'll bring the virus home.

Early on, victims were mostly residents of the county's two nursing homes. Now it's younger residents, too. Ingram sees young people in town not wearing masks and gathering in big groups, and it frustrates him.

"I see people who aren't taking it seriously, maybe because they don't see what I see. They don't get to look in people's faces when they've lost somebody."

When it all gets to be too much to bear, Ingram goes running, or escapes into Netflix.

"At some point," he says, "you do take that grief on."

Grief is an inescapable part of the job for cancer doctors. For all the recent treatment advances, many patients won't make it. Dr. Hanna Sanoff of the University of North Carolina has attended workshops and learned from patients how to deliver bad news in person and share in their grief "without losing myself."

The pandemic upended all that.

"I find myself wholly unprepared to speak of death and dying across cell phones or video links with unreliable connections," she wrote recently.

Sanoff mourns the loss of that human connection that helps her help others grieve.

"I have not yet figured out how to help guide patients' struggles' with cancer, leading them toward a death with dignity and finding personal reward in our relationship, when I cannot see them (or) hug them" she says.

In the three-dimensional intimacy of an office visit, Sanoff can see body language, make eye contact and feel other subtle cues that let her know when to pause, take a breath and give patients time to absorb the gut punch. She can wait through their tears, let them hold their loved ones, embrace them herself, and know better how to show them she wishes she could change their reality.

On a grainy computer screen, all of that is lost.

The grimness of these encounters is palpable in an essay that Sanoff wrote detailing one of them. It was published recently in the medical journal JAMA Oncology.

She knows which patients will take this news the hardest. A kindhearted woman whose pancreatic cancer was no longer treatable — "who loves life, who feels love and laughter and pain and sadness intensely" — was one of them. The patient sat next to her wife as Sanoff gently delivered the blow via laptop.

"From afar I watched grief overtake them, gutted by sorrow for the loss of love so deeply shared," she wrote.

It hit Sanoff during that awful session how travel bans, social distancing mandates and other pandemic losses have been particularly devastating for the terminally ill.

"This couple lost their final trip to 'their place'; they will not get their bittersweet final swim in the warm



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Caribbean," she wrote. These patients, she wrote, are mourning their impending death "and trying not to rage at the arbitrary injustice of a premature loss of love's shared joys."

Neimeyer, the grief psychologist, says history shows people are pretty good at adapting to loss and hardship, "even following war and conditions of famine, government breakdown and civil unrest."

"However, we would be kidding ourselves if we were to ignore the very real impact of the current situation," he says.

The pervasiveness and persistence of the pandemic could lead to a rise in what is known as prolonged grief — a kind which can be disabling and last for several months. It's most common after a loved one's death, but can happen with other losses too.

"We're soft bodies in a hard world," Neimeyer says, and sharing that vulnerability — acknowledging personal losses — can help people abide.

Music can, too. Just consider John Prine's final song, "I Remember Everything."

Written about a year before he died, it contains a sense of wonder but also loss and longing. Prine insisted that his other songs were stories about other characters. This one, though, is clearly more autobiographical — right down to its final line: "How I miss you in the morning light, like roses miss the dew."

The song, Fiona Prine says, can make her cry as she navigates a life without her husband in a loss-filled world changed forever by the pandemic that took him away.

"My heart is with every single family who has lost a loved one in the way that we have," she says. "We and our loved ones will have our own chapter in the history books yet to be written."

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## Graham's last stand? Senator leads Barrett court hearings

By LAURIE KELLMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina is wielding the gavel in the performance of his political life.

Once a biting critic of President Donald Trump, the Senate Judiciary Committee chairman on Monday launched confirmation hearings for Judge Amy Coney Barrett in a bid to seal a 6-to-3 conservative majority on the Supreme Court. Hanging in the balance could be the future of government health care during a coronavirus pandemic that's claimed more than 214,000 American lives. And Graham's own career appears in jeopardy like never before.

For Graham, the Republican Senate majority and Trump himself, the hearings three weeks before Election Day could be a last stand. The proceedings are a display for voters of what it means to control the presidency and the Senate. But they're also a real-time test of whether that's enough to counter a jaw-dropping \$57 million fundraising haul by Graham's Democratic opponent in the South Carolina race, Jaime Harrison.

"Senator, how good is your word?" Harrison, 44, asked at a recent debate.

Graham's answer is complicated by his whipsaw shifts, particularly where Trump is concerned. He's been both friend and foe of the belligerent president. Now, they play golf. He once vowed to oppose any Supreme Court confirmation hearings in presidential election years. This week, he is chairing Barrett's, and predicting she'll be confirmed to the high court this month to replace the late Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

If so, Barrett, 48, would be one of the nine justices to hear arguments on issues that affect millions of people. One is a Trump administration-backed challenge to the Affordable Care Act that's expected to come up a week after the election. Other charged topics that could be headed for the high court include abortion, immigration and gay marriage.

With early voting underway in South Carolina and many other states, Graham, 65, mounted the dais Monday amid his opponent's withering fundraising, his own statements as one of the Senate's most visible

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members, and Trump's weak standing against Democrat Joe Biden in the final stretch of the campaign. "What he's finding out is in the last four years it's come back to bite him," said Danielle Vinson, professor of politics and international affairs at Furman University. "There are lots of people who were familiar with him. He was willing to take on the party. When he changed to support Trump and embrace Trump, I really think it set some people off."

Harrison's money doesn't guarantee he'll defeat Graham. In the final fundraising period of 2018, Texas Democrat Beto O'Rourke's \$38 million topped the amount raised by Republican Sen. Ted Cruz, who won their Senate race.

And being a Republican in traditionally conservative South Carolina carries a great deal of weight. The state has not elected a Democrat to the Senate since 1998.

But the days leading up to the Barrett hearings were particularly challenging for Graham. On Friday, during a debate forum with Harrison — who is Black — Graham denied there was systemic racism in South Carolina.

"If you're a young African American, an immigrant, you can go anywhere in this state. You just need to be conservative, not liberal," Graham said.

Then on Sunday, Harrison's campaign rocked the political world with its fundraising haul, propelled by contributions from around the country.

The third-quarter amount brings Harrison's overall fundraising for the campaign to \$86 million. Attributing the success to grassroots support, Harrison's campaign said the \$57 million came in the form of 1.5 million donations from 994,000 donors. The average contribution was \$37.

Graham, acutely aware that the president won his states by double digits, tried to brush it off.

"There's not enough money in the world to convince South Carolinians to vote for the radical liberal agenda," Graham said. But weeks earlier, he'd complained on Fox News that he was "getting killed financially" by Harrison.

What Graham stands for, and who he stands with, has been an issue. From the moment he dropped the gavel at Barrett's hearing Monday, Graham will have broken his own vow to oppose Supreme Court confirmations in presidential election years. He's called Trump a "race-baiting xenophobic religious bigot" who "doesn't have a clue about anything" relating to foreign policy and "doesn't represent my party."

He and the late Sen. John McCain of Arizona, who was deeply loathed by Trump, were best friends and often delighted in mocking the president.

Yet Graham, acutely aware that Trump won his state in 2016 by 14 percentage points, has since become the president's golf-playing buddy and political ally.

It was Graham's fiery 2018 defense of Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh that helped forge his relationship with Trump, as well as renew support with some who hadn't seen Graham as conservative enough to represent South Carolina.

Graham has called Kavanaugh's confirmation the "defining moment" of the Trump presidency. At a White House event celebrating judicial appointments last year, Trump and Graham marveled at their friendship after the ferocious fight for the 2016 presidential nomination. Graham was one of more than a dozen Republicans who ran against the New York real-estate mogul.

Back then, Trump had called Graham a "lightweight" and a "liberal," and famously made public the senator's cell phone number.

"After I got beaten like a dog, which he likes hearing," Graham said of Trump, "he called me over to the White House and said, 'I'd like you to help me.' And I said, 'I'd love to help you be a great president, because you're now my president.'"

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Follow Kellman on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/APLaurieKellman>

## Asia Today: China to test 9 million after new outbreak

BEIJING (AP) — Chinese health authorities will test all 9 million people in the eastern city of Qingdao for

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the coronavirus this week after nine cases linked to a hospital were found, the government announced Monday.

The announcement broke a two-month streak with no virus transmissions reported within China, though China has a practice of not reporting asymptomatic cases. The ruling Communist Party has lifted most curbs on travel and business but still monitors travelers and visitors to public buildings for signs of infection.

Authorities were investigating the source of the infections in eight patients at Qingdao's Municipal Chest Hospital and one family member, the National Health Commission said.

"The whole city will be tested within five days," it said on its social media account.

China, where the pandemic emerged in December, has reported 4,634 deaths and 85,578 cases, plus nine suspected cases that have yet to be confirmed.

The last reported virus transmissions within China were four patients found on Aug. 15 in the north-western city of Urumqi in the Xinjiang region. All the cases reported since then were in travelers from outside the mainland.

The ruling party lifted measures in April that cut off most access to cities with a total of some 60 million people including Wuhan in central China.

Qingdao is a busy port with the headquarters of companies including Haier, a major appliance maker, and the Tsingtao brewery. The government gave no indication whether the latest cases had contacts with travel or trade.

Travelers arriving from abroad in China still are required to undergo a 14-day quarantine.

In other developments in the Asia-Pacific region:

— India has reported 66,732 new coronavirus cases in the past 24 hours, driving the country's overall tally to 7.1 million. The Health Ministry on Monday also reported 816 deaths in the past 24 hours, taking total fatalities to 109,150. India is seeing fewer new daily cases of the virus since mid-September when daily infections touched a record high of 97,894 cases. It's averaging more than 70,000 cases daily so far this month. Health experts have warned that congregations during major festivals later this month and in November have the potential to spread the virus. They also caution that coming winter months are expected to aggravate respiratory ailments.

— Malaysia will restrict movements in its biggest city, Kuala Lumpur, neighboring Selangor state and the administrative capital of Putrajaya starting Wednesday to curb a sharp rise in coronavirus cases. Defense Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob says all schools in these areas will be shut and all religious, sports and social activities will be halted for two weeks. He says economic activities can continue but with strict health measures. The move comes just over four months after Malaysia lifted a three-month nationwide lockdown to control the pandemic. It has experienced a new wave of cases following increased travel for an election last month in eastern Sabah state, a hotspot on Borneo island. Several politicians, including a Cabinet minister, tested positive for the virus after returning from Sabah. Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin had to isolate himself for two weeks after coming into contact with the minister. The government earlier announced that Sabah will be placed under a restricted movement order from Tuesday. Ismail said inter-district travel is banned under the partial lockdown, except with approval. Other restrictions include a limit of two people leaving each household to purchase groceries. Malaysia has reported more than 16,000 cases with 157 deaths.

— Authorities in Indonesia's capital have moved to ease strict social restrictions despite a steady increase in cases nationwide. Jakarta imposed large-scale social restrictions from April to June, then eased them gradually. The city brought back strict restrictions last month as the virus spread. Jakarta Gov. Anies Baswedan said his administration decided to ease the restrictions from Monday because the increase in infections has stabilized. The move came days after President Joko Widodo urged local administrations to refrain from imposing lockdown measures that could cause crippling economic damage in Southeast Asia's largest economy.

— Sri Lankan officials say they have suspended the repatriation of citizens stranded overseas by the coronavirus because the country's quarantine facilities are full. Army Commander Shavendra Silva, who

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heads the task force to control the virus, says a steep rise in COVID-19 patients in the past week has filled the quarantine facilities. Sri Lanka earlier announced it had successfully contained the virus, with no local infections reported for two months. But a cluster originating in a garment factory earlier this month has resulted in 1,307 new cases in just one week. The country has reported a total of 4,791 cases, including 13 deaths.

— South Korea has confirmed 97 new cases of the coronavirus, a modest uptick from the daily levels reported last week. The increase comes as officials ease social distancing restrictions after concluding that transmissions have slowed following a resurgence in mid-August. The figures released by the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency on Monday brought the number of infections since the pandemic began to 24,703, including 433 deaths. South Korea relaxed its social distancing guidelines beginning Monday, allowing high-risk businesses like nightclubs and karaoke bars to open as long as they employ preventive measures. Spectators will also be allowed at professional sports events, although teams will initially be allowed to only sell 30% of the seats in stadiums.

## 4 Swiss Guards test positive as COVID-19 penetrates Vatican

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Four Swiss Guards have tested positive for coronavirus and were showing symptoms, the Vatican said Monday, as the surge in infections in surrounding Italy penetrates the Vatican walls.

The Swiss Guards, the world's oldest standing army, provide ceremonial guard duty during papal Masses, man the Vatican gates and help protect the 83-year-old Pope Francis.

The four are in isolation while their contacts are being traced, the Vatican said Monday. They join three other Vatican residents who tested positive in recent weeks plus the dozen or so Holy See officials who tested positive during the first wave of the outbreak.

Despite the positive cases among his own guards, Francis on Monday was seen once again without a mask. He warmly greeted Cardinal George Pell in his private studio, and neither man wore a mask. Also unmasked were Pell's secretary and the Vatican photographer.

Francis, who lost part of one lung to illness when he was a young man, has drawn sharp criticism in social media for shunning a mask during his Wednesday general audience, held last week indoors. He was seen shaking hands with clerics and otherwise mingling with the masked crowd. His bodyguards were similarly maskless.

Italy is seeing a sharp surge in COVID-19 cases, with the Lazio region around the Vatican among the worst-hit in this second wave of the pandemic. Lazio currently has more people hospitalized with the virus than any other region, at 911, with 69 in intensive care.

The Vatican last week amended its mask mandates to conform to that of Italy, requiring them indoors and out. The Vatican didn't immediately respond when asked why Francis wasn't wearing one to receive Pell.

The guards, famous for their billowy blue, red and yellow striped uniforms, are all single Swiss men under age 30 and must be upstanding Catholics. They sign up for two-year tours of duty and live communally inside the Vatican City State.

During their annual swearing in ceremony — usually held in May but postponed until Oct. 4 because of COVID-19 — none of the recruits donned a mask, even though they wear them while standing guard at the entrances to Vatican City.

Follow AP coverage of the virus outbreak at <http://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

## Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined  
Today in History



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Today is Tuesday, Oct. 13, the 287th day of 2020. There are 79 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Oct. 13, 1775, the United States Navy had its origins as the Continental Congress ordered the construction of a naval fleet.

On this date:

In A.D. 54, Roman Emperor Claudius I died, poisoned apparently at the behest of his wife, Agrippina (ag-rih-PEE'-nuh).

In 1792, the cornerstone of the executive mansion, later known as the White House, was laid by President George Washington during a ceremony in the District of Columbia.

In 1932, President Herbert Hoover and Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes laid the cornerstone for the U.S. Supreme Court building in Washington.

In 1943, Italy declared war on Germany, its one-time Axis partner.

In 1944, during World War II, American troops entered Aachen (AH'-kehrn), Germany.

In 1960, John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon held the third televised debate of their presidential campaign (Nixon was in Los Angeles, Kennedy in New York).

In 1972, a Uruguayan chartered flight carrying 45 people crashed in the Andes; survivors resorted to feeding off the remains of some of the dead in order to stay alive until they were rescued more than two months later.

In 1974, longtime television host Ed Sullivan died in New York City at age 73.

In 1999, the Senate rejected the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, with 48 senators voting in favor and 51 against, far short of the 67 needed for ratification.

In 2000, South Korean President Kim Dae-jung was named winner of the Nobel Peace Prize. Longtime American communist Gus Hall died in New York at age 90.

In 2003, the U.N. Security Council approved a resolution expanding the NATO-led peacekeeping force in Afghanistan.

In 2016, Donald Trump heatedly rejected the growing list of sexual assault allegations against him as "pure fiction," hammering his female accusers as "horrible, horrible liars." Bob Dylan was named winner of the Nobel prize in literature.

Ten years ago: Rescuers in Chile using a missile-like escape capsule pulled 33 men one by one to fresh air and freedom 69 days after they were trapped in a collapsed mine a half-mile underground. U.S. authorities announced the arrests of 73 people accused of being part of a vast network of Armenian gangsters and their associates who allegedly used phantom health care clinics and other means to try to cheat Medicare out of \$163 million.

Five years ago: Hillary Rodham Clinton and Sen. Bernie Sanders clashed over U.S. involvement in the Middle East, gun control and economic policy in the first Democratic presidential debate held in Las Vegas, but in a moment of political unity, Sanders leapt to Clinton's defense on the issue of her controversial email practices as secretary of state. Twitter announced it was laying off up to 336 employees. Playboy announced it would no longer run photos of completely naked women in its magazine. Former NBA and reality TV star Lamar Odom was hospitalized after he was found unconscious at a Nevada brothel.

One year ago: Defense Secretary Mark Esper said President Donald Trump had directed U.S. troops in northern Syria to begin pulling out "as safely and quickly as possible." Brigid Kosgei of Kenya was the first woman across the finish line in the Chicago Marathon; her time of 2 hours, 14 minutes, 4 seconds broke a women's world record. Dolly Parton performed on the Grand Ole Opry radio show in Nashville as she marked her 50th anniversary as an Opry member. Helicopters, boats and thousands of troops were deployed across Japan to rescue people stranded in flooded homes, as the death toll from a ferocious typhoon climbed past 30.

Today's Birthdays: Gospel singer Shirley Caesar is 83. Actor Melinda Dillon is 81. Singer-musician Paul Simon is 79. Actor Pamela Tiffin is 78. Musician Robert Lamm (Chicago) is 76. Country singer Lacy J. Dalton is 74. Actor Demond Wilson is 74. Singer-musician Sammy Hagar is 73. Pop singer John Ford Coley



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is 72. Actor John Lone is 68. Model Beverly Johnson is 68. Producer-writer Chris Carter is 64. Actor and former NBA star Reggie Theus (THEE'-us) is 63. Sen. Maria Cantwell, D-Wash., is 62. R&B singer Cherrelle is 61. Singer/TV personality Marie Osmond is 61. Rock singer Joey Belladonna is 60. Former White House press secretary Ari Fleischer is 60. NBA coach Doc Rivers is 59. Actor T'Keyah Crystal Keymah (tuh-KEE'-ah KRYSS'-tal kee-MAH') is 58. College and Pro Football Hall of Famer Jerry Rice is 58. Country singer John Wiggins is 58. Actor Christopher Judge is 56. Actor Matt Walsh is 56. Actor Reginald Ballard is 55. Actor Kate Walsh is 53. Rhythm-and-blues musician Jeff Allen (Mint Condition) is 52. Actor Tisha Campbell-Martin is 52. Classical singer Carlos Marin (Il Divo) is 52. Olympic silver medal figure skater Nancy Kerrigan is 51. Country singer Rhett Akins is 51. Classical crossover singer Paul Potts is 50. TV personality Billy Bush is 49. Actor Sacha Baron Cohen is 49. Rock musician Jan Van Sichem Jr. (K's Choice) is 48. Rhythm-and-blues singers Brandon and Brian Casey (Jagged Edge) are 45. Actor Kiele Sanchez is 44. Former NBA All-Star Paul Pierce is 43. DJ Vice is 42. Singer Ashanti (ah-SHAHN'-tee) is 40. R&B singer Lumidee is 40. Christian rock singer Jon Micah Sumrall (Kutless) is 40. Olympic gold medal swimmer Ian Thorpe is 38. Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y., is 31. Actor Caleb McLaughlin (TV: "Stranger Things") is 19.