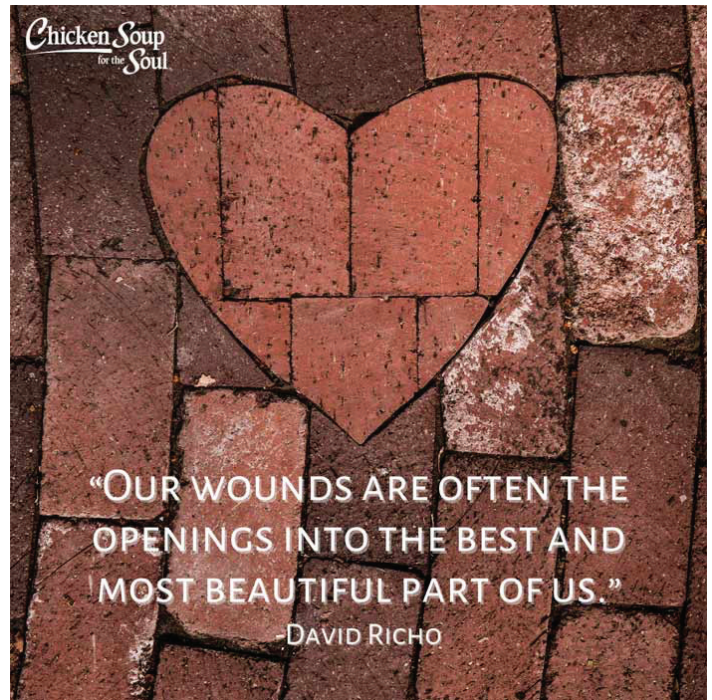


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The volleyball team went to Milbank last night and finished WIN WEEK with a 3-1 win over the Bulldogs. An additional volleyball match has been scheduled. Groton Area will travel to Wilmot next Thursday with a JV and varsity match.

The Region 1A Cross Country Meet was held Thursday in Webster where Isaac Smith placed third. Smith will now qualify for the state meet.

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.

The Life of Dr. T.J. Johnson

Memorial services for Dr. T.J. Johnson, 38, of Groton will be 10:30 a.m., Saturday, October 17th at the Groton High School Arena. Rev. Brandon Dunham will officiate. Arrangements are under the direction of Paetznick-Garness Funeral Chapel, Groton.

The service will be broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM and will also be broadcast on GDIRADIO at 89.3 FM, available within 1 mile of Groton.

T.J. passed away Tuesday, October 13, 2020 at his home.

Taylor Jay Johnson was born on September 1, 1982 in Tracy, Minnesota to Jay and Linda (Friske) Johnson. He attended school in Groton and from a very early age developed a love for the outdoors and sports of all kinds. He played hockey as a first grader with fellow friends from Groton and coincidentally visited the chiropractor for the first time that same year. He knew from that moment on that was what he was going to do when he grew up. As the years passed, T.J. excelled in athletics, playing football, basketball, baseball and running track. Following his graduation from Groton High School in 2001, he continued his education at Northern State University where he played collegiate football and served as Co-Captain. After earning his Bachelors of Science Degree in Biology he continued on at Northwestern School of Science in Bloomington, Minnesota where he earned his Doctorate in Chiropractic. On August 30, 2014, he was united in marriage with Samantha Oeltjen in Lowry Township, Minnesota. Together, the couple made their home in Aberdeen, later moving to the family farm site, and were blessed with two sons. T.J. purchased Dr. Tom Ivey's Chiropractic business and re-named it Living Life Chiropractic.

T.J. enjoyed spending time outside, sports of all kinds, hunting and fishing. He was active in several clubs, including the Sertoma Club, Chiropractors Association, Fellowship of Christian Athlete's, where he had served as President and Ducks Unlimited.

Grateful for having shared in his life is his wife, Samantha, their sons, Titan and Gauge, his parents, Jay & Linda Johnson of Groton, his brother, J.R. (Paula) Johnson and nephews, Ryder & Asher all of Groton, maternal grandfather, Robert Friske of Aberdeen, parents-in-law, Lawrence & Jeanne Hvezda of Lowary, MN, sister-in-laws, Melissa (Coleman) Scott of Oceanside, CA, Heather (Aaron) Zabel of Eden Prairie, MN and many aunts, uncles and cousins.

Preceding him in death were his paternal and maternal grandparents.



The Life of Grant Richmond

Grant "Scooby" Richmond, 50, of Groton passed on Monday, October 12, 2020 at his home. He will be deeply missed. His loved ones are inviting friends and family to his celebration of life from 2-5 p.m. on Saturday, October 17th at 407 North Main Street, Groton. He was preceded in death by his parents Robert and Jessie (Riddle) Richmond and his two older brothers. Scooby is survived by his fiancé, Linda Himanga, sister, Vickie Weifenbach, two nieces, Brina Chriss & Narissa Barton and five great-nephews.



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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
	Oct. 14	Oct. 15	Oct. 16				
Minnesota	114,574	115,763	117,106				
Nebraska	53,543	54,467	55,428				
Montana	19,611	20,210	20,933				
Colorado	80,085	80,777	81,918				
Wyoming	6,740	6,914	7,089				
North Dakota	28,245	28,947	29,653				
South Dakota	29,339	30,215	31,012				
United States	7,859,365	7,917,223	7,980,899				
US Deaths	215,914	216,904	+217,717				
Minnesota	+1,135	+1,189	+1,343				
Nebraska	+704	+924	+961				
Montana	+486	+599	+723				
Colorado	+1,048	+692	+1,141				
Wyoming	+112	+174	+175				
North Dakota	+508	+702	+706				
South Dakota	+414	+865	+797				
United States	+54,722	+57,858	+63,676				
US Deaths	+825	+990	+813				

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October 15th COVID-19 UPDATE

Groton Daily Independent from State Health Lab Reports

South Dakota recorded 15 deaths and North Dakota had five. In South Dakota, Minnehaha County had three, Meade and Jerauld each had two and Beadle, Brule, Gregory, Lincoln, Oglala Lakota and Pennington each had one. There were five females and eight males. Eight were in the 80+ age group, three in their 70s, and one each in the 60s and 40s.

Locally, Brown had 24 positive and 18 recovered, leaving 312 active cases. Day had 3 positive, 0 recovered leaving 27 active cases. Edmunds had 0 positive, 1 recovered, and 10 active; Marshall had 0 positive, 1 recovered, 12 active; McPherson had 2 positive, 0 recovered, 12 active; Spink had 5 positive, 1 recovered, 44 active.

A question posed yesterday: Is there someplace we can get Covid tested if we don't have symptoms??? S.D. is on the list of states whose residents are being required to quarantine when visiting other states, unless we can show a negative test result within 72 hours of travel.

The answer from Derrek Haskins from the DOH: The best place for individuals to start for questions regarding testing is their primary care provider or local clinics in the area. If travel testing is not available locally, a mail-in testing service such as Vault Health may be an option. (I checked on Vault Health. It

is \$150 for the test and results are available 48-72 hours after they receive the specimen.)

Positive cases in the under 18 group was 21, those in the teens was 87, 20s was 133, 30s was 129, 40s was 108, 50s was 138, 60s was 98, 70s was 44 and 80+ was 39.

Brown County:

Total Positive: +24 (1,650) Positivity Rate: 21.6%

Total Tests: +111 (15,128)

Recovered: +18 (1,334)

Active Cases: +6 (312)

Ever Hospitalized: +1 (83)

Deaths: +0 (4)

Percent Recovered: 80.8

South Dakota:

Positive: +797 (31,012 total) Positivity Rate: 18.7%

Total Tests: 4,254 (347,216 total)

Hospitalized: +37 (2,000 total). 304 currently hospitalized +1)

Deaths: +13 (304 total)

Recovered: +256 (23,576 total)

Active Cases: +528 (6,604)

Percent Recovered: 76.0%

Staffed Hospital Bed Capacity: 12% Covid, 55% Non-Covid, 32% Available

ICU Bed Capacity: 21% Covid, 39% Non-Covid, 41% Available

Ventilator Capacity: 7% Covid, 18% Non-Covid, 75% 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: +5 positive, +3 recovered (62 active cases)

Beadle (12): +22 positive, +7 recovered (180 active cases)

Bennett (4): +5 positive, +2 recovered (40 active cases)

Bon Homme (1): +9 positive, +2 recovered (88 active cases)

Brookings (2): +24 positive, +18 recovered (234 active cases)

Brown (4): +33 positive, +20 recovered (309 active cases)

Brule (2): +3 positive, +2 recovered (49 active cases)

Buffalo (3): +2 positive, +4 recovered (21 active cases)

Butte (3): +5 positive, +4 recovered (60 active cases)

Campbell: +1 positive, +1 recovered (24 active cases)

Charles Mix: +12 positive, +7 recovered (100 active cases)

Clark: +2 positive, +0 recovered (21 active cases)

Clay (8): +10 positive, +0 recovered (107 active cases)

Codington (10): +29 positive, +7 recovered (249 active cases)

Corson (1): +4 positive, +0 recovered (23 active cases)

Custer (3): +8 positive, +2 recovered (52 active case)

Davison (4): +20 positive, +12 recovered (254 active cases)

Day: +3 positive, +0 recovered (27 active cases)

Deuel: +4 positive, +2 recovered (33 active cases)

Dewey: +12 positive, +0 recovered (104 active cases)

Douglas (2): +6 positive, +1 recovered (60 active

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cases)

Edmunds: +0 positive, +1 recovered (10 active cases)

Fall River (6): +6 positive, +2 recovered (49 active cases)

Faulk (1): +6 positive, +1 recovered (49 active cases)

Grant (2): +9 positive, +2 recovered (71 active cases)

Gregory (8): +4 positive, +2 recovered (29 active cases)

Haakon (1): +2 positive, +0 recovered (22 active case)

Hamlin: +5 positive, +2 recovered (38 active cases)

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

Hanson (1): +5 positive, +0 recovered (23 active cases)

Harding: +6 positive, +0 recovered (12 active cases)

Hughes (5): +17 positive, +5 recovered (142 active cases)

Hutchinson (2): +7 positive, +3 recovered (60 active cases)

Hyde: +1 positive, +0 recovered (8 active cases)

Jackson (1): +5 positive, +0 recovered (29 active cases)

Jerauld (6): +2 positive, +2 recovered (20 active cases)

Jones: +1 positive, +0 recovered (4 active cases)

Kingsbury: +11 positive, +2 recovered (42 active cases)

Lake (8): +9 positive, +1 recovered (61 active cases)

Lawrence (5): +15 positive, +9 recovered (144 active cases)

Lincoln (11): +46 positive, +12 recovered (502 active cases)

Lyman (4): +1 positive, +2 recovered (22 active cases)

Marshall: +0 positive, +1 recovered (12 active cases)

McCook (1): +1 positive, +2 recovered (54 active cases)

McPherson: +2 positive, +0 recovery (12 active case)

Meade (8): +15 positive, +6 recovered (156 active cases)

Mellette: +2 positive, +0 recovered (10 active cases)

Miner: +11 positive, +1 recovered (46 active cases)

Minnehaha (91): +134 positive, +53 recovered (1521 active cases)

Moody (1): +5 positive, +4 recovered (52 active cases)

Oglala Lakota (5): +22 positive, +2 recovered (171 active cases)

Pennington (43): +86 positive, +33 recovered (758 active cases)

Perkins: +4 positive, +0 recovered (19 active cases)

Potter: +1 positive, +1 recovered (22 active cases)

Roberts (2): +6 positive, +2 recovered (39 active cases)

Sanborn: +3 positive, +1 recovered (21 active cases)

Spink (1): +5 positive, +1 recovered (44 active cases)

Stanley: +2 positive, +0 recovery (18 active cases)

Sully: +0 positive, +1 recovered (7 active cases)

Todd (5): +23 positive, +7 recovered (120 active cases)

Tripp (1): +3 positive, +1 recovered (42 active cases)

Turner (8): +20 positive, +2 recovered (126 active cases)

Union (10): +21 positive, +8 recovered (168 active cases)

Walworth (1): +16 positive, +2 recovered (81 active cases)

Yankton (5): +13 positive, +5 recovered (136 active cases)

Ziebach (1): +3 positive, +0 recovered (14 active case)

AGE GROUP OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Age Range	# of Cases	# of Deaths
0-9 years	965	0
10-19 years	3476	0
20-29 years	6654	2
30-39 years	5192	7
40-49 years	4224	11
50-59 years	4320	23
60-69 years	3263	46
70-79 years	1679	57
80+ years	1239	158

SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths
Female	16349	137
Male	14663	167

North Dakota Dept. of Health Report
COVID-19 Daily Report, October 15:

- 8.2% rolling 14-day positivity
 - 10.5% daily positivity
 - 705 new positives
 - 6,746 susceptible test encounters
 - 138 currently hospitalized (+6)
 - 4,947 active cases (+159)
- Total Deaths: +5 (370)

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County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Persons	Deceased	Community Spread	% RT-PCR Test Positivity
Aurora	145	85	667	0	Substantial	18.32%
Beadle	1016	832	3636	12	Substantial	12.32%
Bennett	119	80	877	4	Substantial	15.69%
Bon Homme	191	102	1339	1	Substantial	23.91%
Brookings	1085	834	5523	2	Substantial	18.72%
Brown	1650	1334	8102	4	Substantial	20.10%
Brule	189	139	1332	2	Substantial	25.66%
Buffalo	187	166	816	3	Substantial	39.73%
Butte	184	124	1930	3	Substantial	15.38%
Campbell	57	35	164	0	Substantial	26.92%
Charles Mix	289	194	2810	0	Substantial	8.99%
Clark	61	42	639	0	Moderate	3.55%
Clay	677	565	2968	8	Substantial	14.93%
Codington	1180	947	5899	10	Substantial	15.73%
Corson	125	99	762	1	Moderate	35.90%
Custer	242	188	1540	3	Substantial	20.49%
Davison	635	379	4111	4	Substantial	18.04%
Day	118	91	1140	0	Substantial	11.00%
Deuel	137	99	713	0	Substantial	15.63%
Dewey	252	142	3295	0	Substantial	11.29%
Douglas	142	82	656	2	Substantial	10.26%
Edmunds	113	103	679	0	Moderate	2.34%
Fall River	149	96	1661	6	Substantial	15.84%
Faulk	145	95	505	1	Substantial	22.22%
Grant	237	169	1389	2	Substantial	14.66%
Gregory	170	135	727	8	Substantial	15.15%
Haakon	57	32	401	1	Substantial	5.66%
Hamlin	144	106	1126	0	Substantial	6.44%
Hand	81	63	535	1	Substantial	16.85%
Hanson	61	37	398	1	Moderate	8.47%
Harding	16	4	103	0	Minimal	33.33%
Hughes	684	546	3483	5	Substantial	13.71%
Hutchinson	174	112	1439	2	Substantial	5.56%

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Hyde	30	23	287	0	Moderate	15.38%
Jackson	69	39	709	1	Substantial	21.88%
Jerauld	153	124	367	6	Substantial	11.11%
Jones	24	18	117	0	Minimal	5.56%
Kingsbury	118	78	958	0	Substantial	12.66%
Lake	279	207	1677	8	Substantial	16.09%
Lawrence	611	472	4985	5	Substantial	14.49%
Lincoln	2022	1471	12059	11	Substantial	16.76%
Lyman	205	183	1364	4	Substantial	11.73%
Marshall	54	42	720	0	Moderate	5.36%
McCook	164	107	1024	1	Substantial	6.86%
McPherson	51	38	368	0	Moderate	4.05%
Meade	752	606	4557	8	Substantial	13.29%
Mellette	46	38	544	0	Moderate	11.11%
Miner	84	36	397	0	Substantial	18.26%
Minnehaha	8531	6853	47596	91	Substantial	13.69%
Moody	156	104	1012	1	Substantial	23.40%
Oglala Lakota	488	306	5184	5	Substantial	10.97%
Pennington	3378	2602	22297	43	Substantial	13.63%
Perkins	58	42	421	0	Moderate	15.22%
Potter	79	57	569	0	Substantial	6.83%
Roberts	264	222	3048	2	Substantial	13.17%
Sanborn	65	42	401	0	Substantial	10.53%
Spink	202	150	1579	1	Substantial	11.27%
Stanley	63	45	489	0	Moderate	13.51%
Sully	24	18	152	0	Moderate	26.92%
Todd	287	175	3256	5	Substantial	19.15%
Tripp	221	177	1079	1	Substantial	11.88%
Turner	335	190	1689	8	Substantial	27.56%
Union	620	433	3708	10	Substantial	18.14%
Walworth	213	132	1227	1	Substantial	15.09%
Yankton	578	428	5434	5	Substantial	7.02%
Ziebach	76	61	560	1	Moderate	5.56%
Unassigned	0	0	2028	0		

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South Dakota

New Total Cases Today

797

New Confirmed Cases

700

New Probable Cases

97

Currently Hospitalized

304

Active Cases

7,132

Recovered Cases

23,576

Total Cases

31,012

Total Confirmed Cases

30,220

Total Probable Cases

792

Ever Hospitalized

2,000

Total Persons Tested

224,239

Total Tests

347,216

Deaths

304

% Progress (September
Goal: 44,233 Tests)

216%

% Progress (October Goal:
44,233 Tests)

130%

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Brown County

New Total Cases Today	New Confirmed Cases	New Probable Cases
24	24	0
Currently Hospitalized	Active Cases	Recovered Cases
14	312	1,334
Total Cases	Total Confirmed Cases	Total Probable Cases
1,650	1,646	4
Ever Hospitalized	Total Persons Tested	Total Tests
83	9,752	15,128
Deaths	% Progress (September Goal: 44,233 Tests)	% Progress (October Goal: 44,233 Tests)
4	216%	130%

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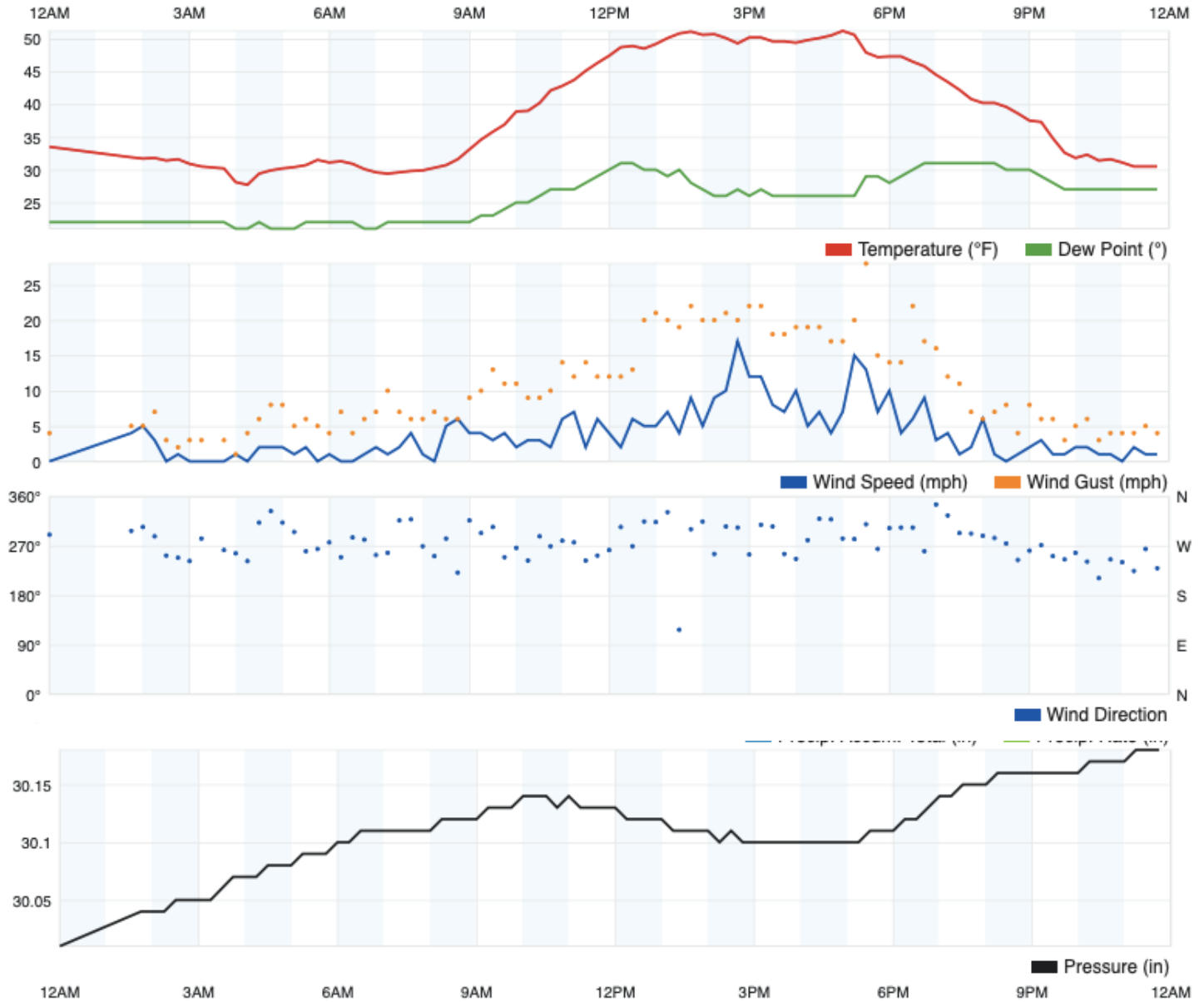
Day County

New Total Cases Today	New Confirmed Cases	New Probable Cases
3	3	0
Currently Hospitalized	Active Cases	Recovered Cases
1	27	91
Total Cases	Total Confirmed Cases	Total Probable Cases
118	118	0
Ever Hospitalized	Total Persons Tested	Total Tests
14	1,258	2,055
Deaths	% Progress (September Goal: 44,233 Tests)	% Progress (October Goal: 44,233 Tests)
0	216%	130%

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Yesterday's Groton Weather



Broton Daily Independent

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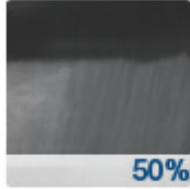
Today



Increasing
Clouds

High: 49 °F

Tonight



Chance
Showers

Low: 35 °F

Saturday



Partly Sunny
then Partly
Sunny and
Breezy

High: 40 °F

Saturday
Night



Partly Cloudy

Low: 20 °F

Sunday



Mostly Sunny

High: 37 °F

National Weather Service Aberdeen, SD
weather.gov/abr



<p>Today</p> <p>Partly To Mostly Cloudy</p> <p>Isolated evening showers and possible snow flurries</p>  <p>Highs: 45-55</p>	<p>Saturday</p> <p>Mostly Cloudy</p> <p>Mostly dry, wind gusts 30-40 mph possible</p>  <p>Windy</p> <p>Highs: Low to upper 40s</p>	<p>Sunday</p> <p>Partly Cloudy</p> <p>Breezy, snow flurries possible in central SD</p>  <p>Highs: 35-40</p>
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Graphic Created
10/16/2020 5:19 AM

An active and cold weekend is expected, with potential precipitation this evening into Saturday morning, and again Sunday morning. While mostly rain is expected, some light snow flurries may happen in the colder hours.

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Today in Weather History

October 16, 1980: A squall line packing damaging winds developed across portions of central South Dakota and raced into Minnesota during the afternoon and evening. The line of thunderstorms developed around 2 pm CDT and moved east and northeast at over 50 miles an hour. A large portion of southeast South Dakota was belted with winds of 50 to 70 miles an hour. Yankton reported winds of 60 to 70 mph while Sioux Falls was hit with a 62 mile an hour gust. Considerable damage was done in southeast South Dakota to trees, farm structures, and small buildings. Damage estimates were 100 to 200 thousand dollars. By late afternoon the thunderstorms were roaring through southwest Minnesota. Numerous outbuildings and many trees were downed or damaged. In Redwood County, two combines and a 24-foot travel trailer were tipped over and damaged.

1944: The 1944 Cuba – Florida hurricane, also known as the Pinar del Rio Hurricane, struck western Cuba on this day as a Category 4. This storm killed an estimated 300 people in Cuba and nine in Florida. This hurricane is currently the 7th costliest U.S. Atlantic hurricane, with an estimated \$46.9 billion (2015 USD) in damages.

1988: An F2 tornado carved a 6 mile long, east-northeast path through a mostly rural area of north-central Indiana. The extremely slow-moving tornado touched down 1.5 miles north of Nappanee, just 300 yards north of a high school, and shortly after that moved through a subdivision where 11 homes sustained damage.

1999: Hurricane Irene moved across the Florida Keys producing heavy rainfall, strong winds, and high waves. A gust 102 mph was reported in Big Pine Key.

2007: A blinding sandstorm in the high desert north of Los Angeles wreaks havoc with local traffic causing a highway pileup involving dozens of vehicles. Two people die, and 16 are injured as a result of the storm, which reportedly raised dust to 1000 foot high.

2015: A well-defined waterspout was visible from Marquette, Michigan.

1913 - The temperature in Downtown San Francisco soared to 101 degrees to equal their record for October. (The Weather Channel)

1937 - An unlikely winter-like storm produced as much as ten inches of snow in Minnesota and Iowa.

1987 - Ten cities in the southeastern U.S. reported record low temperatures for the date. The low of 34 degrees at Augusta GA marked their third straight morning of record cold. A cold front brought showers and thunderstorms to parts of the central U.S. Lightning struck a bull and six cows under a tree near Bat-tiest OK. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Late afternoon thunderstorms produced severe weather in southwestern Lower Michigan and northern Indiana. One thunderstorm spawned a tornado north of Nappanee IN which caused half a million dollars damage. Six cities in California reported record high temperatures for the date. The afternoon high of 100 degrees at Red Bluff CA was the latest such reading of record for so late in the autumn season. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Heavy snow blanketed the foothills of Colorado. Up to three inches was reported around Denver. Echo Lake was buried under nineteen inches of snow. Temperatures again warmed into the 80s and lower 90s in the eastern and south central U.S. Thirteen cities reported record high temperatures for the date, including Atlantic City NJ with a reading of 84 degrees. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

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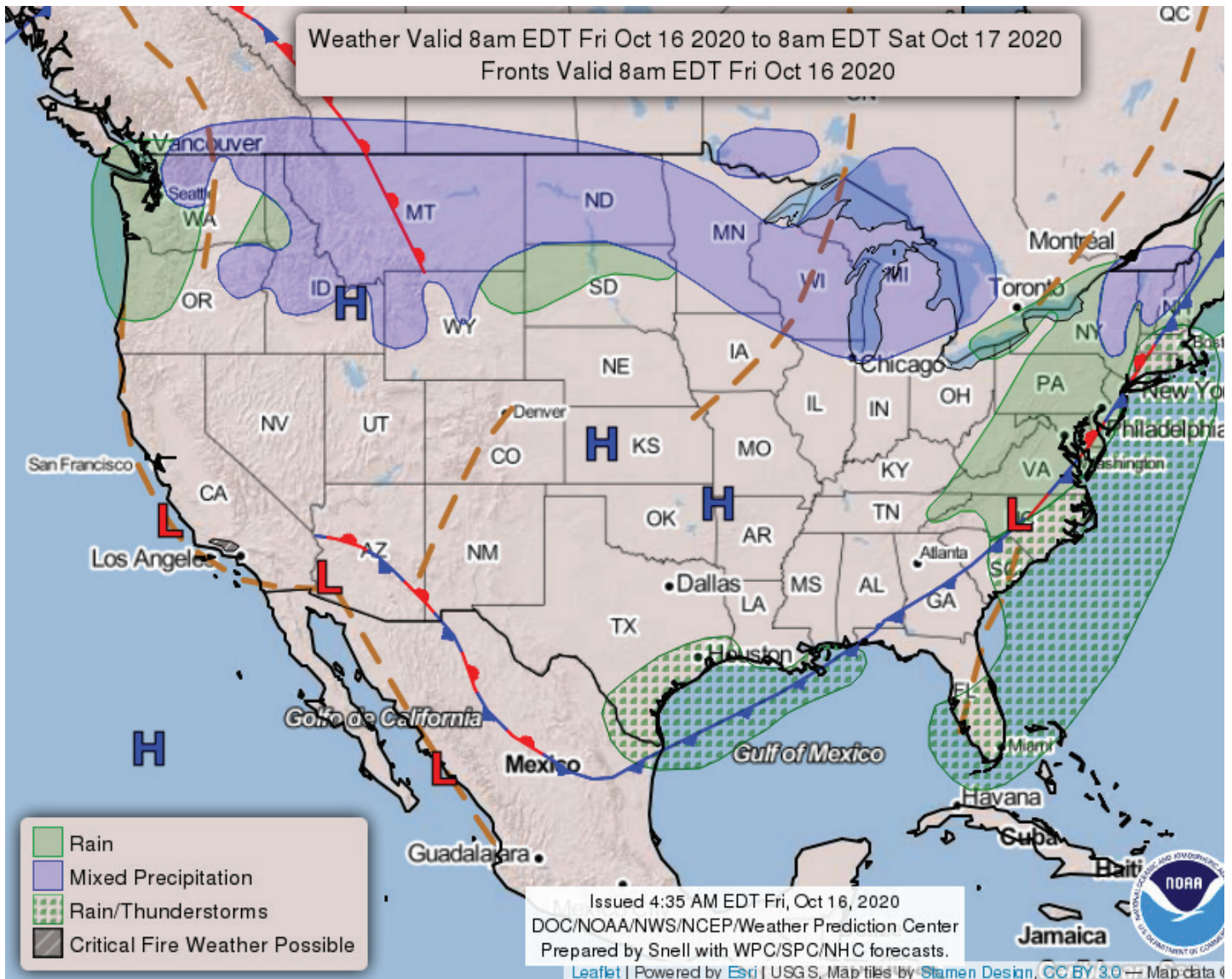
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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 51 °F at 1:33 PM
Low Temp: 27 °F at 4:08 AM
Wind: 28 mph at 5:24 PM
Precip: .00

Today's Info

Record High: 90° in 1991
Record Low: 19° in 1976
Average High: 58°F
Average Low: 33°F
Average Precip in Oct.: 1.09
Precip to date in Oct.: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 19.57
Precip Year to Date: 15.28
Sunset Tonight: 6:46 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:53 a.m.



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“ WHY DO SOMETHING FOR OTHERS?”

Alfred Adler is known as one of the “founding fathers” of modern psychology. He is remembered mostly for his analysis of the impact of “birth order” – the “position” or “place” we have with our siblings, and how that influences our personality. He also developed what he called his “Fourteen-Day Cure Plan.”

He claimed that this plan could cure anyone of mental illness in just fourteen days if they would just do exactly as he told them to do. For example - one day, a woman who was extremely depressed came to see him. He told her, “I can cure you of your depression in just fourteen days if you follow my advice.”

“ What do you want me to do?” she asked.

“ If you do one thing for someone else every day for fourteen days, at the end of that time, your depression will be cured,” he told her.

She objected, “Why should I do something for someone else when no one ever does anything for me?”

Jokingly he responded, “Well, I guess because you are different, it will take you twenty-eight days. Adler realized that because she was so self-centered, there was little hope for her to change her behavior, and think of others rather than herself, and find relief.

Paul said that we are to “share each other’s problems and troubles.” Christians must never develop an attitude that entertains the idea that we are not responsible for helping others in their times of need. It is sometimes difficult to think of “service before self.” But that is the way Jesus lived and died. As His disciples, can we do less?

Prayer: Lord, may we move from an attitude of self-centeredness to one of other-centeredness and see, hear, feel, and meet the needs of others as Your Son did. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Share each other’s burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ. Galatians 6:2

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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

Thursday's Scores

By The Associated Press

PREP VOLLEYBALL=

Aberdeen Christian def. Leola/Frederick

Aberdeen Roncalli def. Britton-Hecla, 25-4, 25-6, 25-7

Arlington def. Deubrook, 25-15, 25-11, 20-25, 25-19

Avon def. Centerville, 25-10, 25-11, 25-23

Bridgewater-Emery def. Gayville-Volin, 24-26, 25-21, 25-18, 22-25, 15-6

Brookings def. Madison, 25-23, 25-27, 25-21, 23-25, 15-11

Burke def. Gregory, 25-15, 25-16, 25-22

Castlewood def. Estelline/Hendricks, 21-25, 25-17, 17-25, 25-9, 15-11

Colome def. White River, 25-13, 16-25, 25-23, 25-22

Edgemont def. Hulett, Wyo., 18-25, 25-14, 25-16, 25-14

Elk Point-Jefferson def. Irene-Wakonda, 25-14, 18-25, 25-22, 25-17

Elkton-Lake Benton def. Florence/Henry, 25-11, 25-17, 25-14

Garretson def. Tea Area, 25-15, 25-18, 25-14

Groton Area def. Milbank, 25-20, 26-24, 19-25, 25-22

Hitchcock-Tulare def. Ipswich, 25-13, 26-24, 26-24

Kadoka Area def. Jones County, 25-20, 25-27, 20-25, 25-21, 15-8

Menno def. Mitchell Christian, 22-25, 25-18, 25-14, 25-22

Mobridge-Pollock def. Sully Buttes, 25-12, 25-17, 25-15

Mt. Vernon/Plankinton def. West Central, 25-22, 17-25, 26-24, 21-25, 18-16

North Central Co-Op def. Lower Brule, 25-8, 25-10, 25-8

Northwestern def. Potter County, 25-10, 25-7, 25-15

Philip def. Lyman, 25-13, 25-11, 25-12

Platte-Geddes def. Chamberlain, 25-11, 25-15, 25-17

Rapid City Christian def. New Underwood, 25-20, 25-12, 25-15

Redfield def. Clark/Willow Lake, 25-12, 25-12, 17-25, 25-13

Sioux Falls Christian def. Harrisburg, 25-13, 25-10, 25-18

Sioux Falls Washington def. Pierre, 25-12, 25-10, 25-12

Stanley County def. Dupree, 26-24, 25-17, 22-25, 25-19

Sturgis Brown def. Lead-Deadwood, 23-25, 25-10, 25-10, 25-9

Wagner def. Andes Central/Dakota Christian, 25-7, 25-17, 25-15

Warner def. Faulkton, 25-20, 25-17, 21-25, 25-19

Watertown def. Sioux Falls Roosevelt, 25-15, 15-25, 25-17, 25-20

Waverly-South Shore def. Iroquois, 25-16, 23-25, 25-11, 25-19

Webster def. Tiospa Zina Tribal, 25-18, 25-21, 19-25, 25-22

Wilmot def. Great Plains Lutheran, 25-14, 25-19, 25-8

Winner def. Corsica/Stickney, 25-23, 25-17, 25-22

Wolsey-Wessington def. Wessington Springs, 25-15, 25-15, 25-8

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

South Dakota man gets probation in eagle trafficking case

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota man accused in a widespread case involving the illegal trafficking of eagles and other protected birds has been sentenced to five years of probation and order to pay thousands of dollars to a wildlife group.

Troy Fairbanks, 57, of Rapid City, was among 30 people and pawn shops indicted in 2017 as part of a two-year federal investigation, dubbed Project Dakota Flyer, into the black market trade of eagle carcasses, eagle parts and feathers. He pleaded guilty in December to wildlife trafficking conspiracy.

Prosecutors say they found more than 100 eagle carcasses or eagle parts in Fairbanks' home.

Eagle heads or wings can fetch hundreds of dollars, though sellers sometimes exchange the eagle parts for other animal parts, such as bear claws, buffalo horn caps or animal hides. The eagle parts are often used in Native American-style handicrafts.

Undercover investigators say the suspects purchased protected bird parts from suspects in South Dakota, Wyoming, Montana, Nebraska and Iowa.

U.S. District Judge Jeffrey Viken last week ordered Fairbanks to pay nearly \$16,000 to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, on top of a \$10,000 fine he has already paid, the Rapid City Journal reported.

As part of the plea deal, prosecutors dropped charges of breaking the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, the Lacey Act, and seven counts of violating the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act.

The Latest: NCarolina virus numbers head in wrong direction

By The Associated Press undefined

RALEIGH, N.C. — North Carolina's top public health official is warning that the state's coronavirus numbers are heading in the wrong direction as the Democratic governor considers whether to tighten restrictions or reopen more of the economy.

The governor's decision, which is expected to be announced next week, comes at a time when the state has struggled to get those with COVID-19 to help reduce transmission by answering questions about who they've come into contact with.

"About half of folks are not responding to calls that we are making," said Mandy Cohen, secretary of the state Department of Health and Human Services, at a Thursday news conference.

President Donald Trump held a campaign rally in Greenville earlier in the day where, despite the fact that cases have continued to increase nationwide in recent weeks, Trump claimed the virus is "going to peter out."

On Thursday, North Carolina saw its highest single-day COVID-19 case count yet, with 2,532 people testing positive for the virus. Hospitalizations earlier this week reached their highest levels in the last two months, and the percentage of cases coming back positive has slowly increased but remained relatively stable between 5% and 7%.

"We're reporting our highest day of cases since this pandemic has begun," Cohen said. "It doesn't feel like petering out to me."

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

- Dr. Fauci criticizes 'herd immunity'; suggests people rethink Thanksgiving travel
- France sets curfew at 9 p.m. Friday; health workers march in Paris
- More Swiss Guards, who attend to the Pope, test positive at Vatican
- Coronavirus cases around world climb to all-time highs of more than 330,000 per day, with surges across Europe and outbreaks in U.S.
- Kamala Harris suspends in-person events until Monday after two people associated with the U.S. vice presidential nominee's campaign tested positive for coronavirus.
- Queen Elizabeth II carries out her first public engagement outside of a royal residence since early March.
- Follow AP's pandemic coverage at <http://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

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HERE'S WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING:

EL PASO, Texas — Tighter virus restrictions are coming for the El Paso area in an effort to shrink the “unprecedented number” of newly reported COVID-19 cases, local officials said Thursday, making it the first major county in Texas to scale back since Gov. Greg Abbott loosened rules in September.

Visitors to facilities that care for the elderly will not be allowed, and businesses not considered essential must cut back to 50% of their capacity from 75%, El Paso Mayor Dee Margo said. Restaurants will be limited to take-out and drive-thru service after 9 p.m., and home gatherings also are temporarily banned.

Bars, which had not been allowed to reopen, will remain closed.

The number of new daily COVID-19 cases recorded in El Paso soared Thursday to a record-breaking 717. The 6,887 active infections in the area make up more than 20% of the total cases seen in El Paso since the pandemic began. El Paso's hospitalization is now 28%, the highest so far.

“This unprecedented number of new cases has left us no other option than to implement restrictions to slow the spread of the virus,” Margo said in a tweet.

HELENA, Mont. — The increasing number of cases of COVID-19 in Montana is stretching the state's health care system, a hospital's chief medical officer said Thursday, as she urged residents to take the virus seriously.

“I will put this very simply,” said Dr. Bridget Brennan with Benefis Health System in Great Falls. “We are experiencing a public health crisis. The number of positive COVID cases is rising so quickly that it is threatening to overwhelm the health care resources here in the state.”

In recent weeks, the state has experienced drastic increases in the numbers of COVID-19 positive patients and hospitals are reaching or exceeding the capacity of their intensive care units, Brennan said.

“At Benefis Health System we began to see an increase not only in the number of hospitalized patients from Great Falls and our usual region, but we were also seeing an increase in the number of patients transferred to us from other parts of the state where ICUs were full,” Brennan said.

Chief medical officers of the state's largest hospitals are now holding daily conference calls to share information and work to use their resources more efficiently, she said.

Montana reported a record 735 newly confirmed COVID-19 cases on Thursday, raising the state's total to nearly 21,000 in the past seven months. More than 300 people are hospitalized and 230 have died.

HARTFORD, Conn. -- Connecticut prison officials on Thursday were monitoring a coronavirus outbreak at a Hartford jail where 56 inmates recently tested positive after two staff members contracted the virus.

All 56 inmates, who were not showing symptoms and are now separated from the general population, were detained in the units where the two employees worked, prison officials said.

“The facility is on lockdown status for deep cleaning,” Department of Correction spokeswoman Karen Martucci said in a statement.

The two employees reported testing positive for the virus recently, which prompted routine contact tracing that identified the 56 inmates who tested positive, Martucci said.

Connecticut has seen an uptick in virus cases in communities across the state over the past few weeks. But on Thursday, the statewide positive test rate dipped to 1.3%, down from 2% Wednesday and 2.4% Tuesday. More than 62,000 people in the state have contracted the virus and more than 4,500 have died since the pandemic began. More than 190 people were hospitalized, the highest number in several months.

In prisons across the state as of Thursday, there were 80 inmates who had the coronavirus including eight who were experiencing symptoms. Twenty-nine staff are currently recovering from the virus. More than 1,600 inmates have tested positive since the pandemic began and seven have died.

COLUMBUS, Ohio -- State senators in Ohio moved Thursday to lift a 10 p.m. curfew on alcohol sales at bars and restaurants, aiming to boost an industry devastated by the coronavirus pandemic even as daily

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reported cases of COVID-19 set a new record.

A bill to repeal the curfew imposed on July 31 was introduced in the Republican-controlled Ohio Senate with strong bipartisan support. It is championed by Senate President Larry Obhof and his No. 2, Sen. Bob Peterson, and co-sponsored by 22 of 33 senators.

The move came the same day that Republican Gov. Mike DeWine said the state set a new record for reported virus cases in a single day, 2,178 compared to the earlier record of 2,172 set April 16.

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. — South Dakota on Wednesday broke its record for coronavirus hospitalizations and new cases, and the state has already had more deaths from the disease less than halfway through October than it had in any other month.

Despite the grim prognosis — South Dakota had the nation's highest rate of positive tests over the last 14 days, according to the COVID Tracking Project — Republican Gov. Kristi Noem has resisted pressure to step up the state's response to the disease, explaining Tuesday that the surge in case numbers was "expected" because the state was conducting more tests.

Secretary of Health Kim Malsam-Rysdon said she thinks the state is doing a good job conducting enough tests to detect outbreaks.

However, the COVID Tracking Project says South Dakota's 14-day average positivity rate of nearly 24% is more than four times the national average of 5.1%.

State Epidemiologist Josh Clayton said that the increase in testing led to more positive cases being identified. But he also acknowledged that infections are spreading in communities across the state.

The state's hospitals are feeling the effects, with some seeking backups. Roughly 34% of general care beds and 39% of intensive care units statewide remain available, according to the Department of Health.

CIUDAD DEL ESTE, Paraguay — Brazil and Paraguay reopened their borders Thursday after more than six months shut due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Brazil's Foreign Relations Ministry said in a statement that international traffic on the Friendship Bridge between Foz do Iguacu in Brazil and Paraguay's Ciudad del Este is the first step in a gradual plan to lift restrictions.

Foz do Iguacu saw some 5,700 jobs lost as a result of the pandemic-driven border closings, while 18,000 positions were furloughed or had reductions in salaries or hours, according to the city's commercial and business association.

"Thank God they reopened the bridge," said Maicon Santana, a Brazilian tourist in Ciudad del Este. "Each country depends on the other, and we hope they never close again."

DES MOINES, Iowa — Iowa set a record Thursday for people being treated in hospitals for the coronavirus, but Republican Gov. Kim Reynolds said the health care system was managing well and there was no need for new actions to slow the virus' spread.

The number of people hospitalized rose to 482 as the state reported 1,410 new confirmed cases over the past 24 hours. There were 13 more deaths, raising the state's death toll to 1,505 since the pandemic began.

Despite the increasing hospitalization numbers and persistently high number of cases, Reynolds said hospitals hadn't sought additional help and that she doesn't plan to re-impose restrictions that she has eased in recent months.

Reynolds took questions from reporters a day after participating in an outdoor rally for President Donald Trump at the Des Moines airport. Thousands of supporters packed closely together for several hours, and while masks were given to participants, many didn't appear to wear them.

The governor said she wore a mask most of the time but occasionally removed it.

Asked why she would promote and attend an event that appeared to violate her own health emergency proclamation against large gatherings, Reynolds said her orders were never intended to keep people from

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exercising their First Amendment rights to peaceably gather.

MADISON, Wis. — Wisconsin hit a new daily high for confirmed coronavirus cases on Thursday for the second time this week, a surge that the state's chief health officer called a crisis.

There were 3,747 newly confirmed COVID-19 cases reported Thursday, breaking the record of 3,279 set on Tuesday. To date, the state has had more than 162,000 confirmed cases and 1,553 deaths from the disease since the start of the pandemic. Hospitalizations were at a daily high of 1,017 on Wednesday, the same day the state opened a field hospital outside of Milwaukee to handle overflow patients.

Department of Health Services Secretary Andrea Palm said the field hospital had yet to admit anyone as of Thursday.

Wisconsin's surge began in early September when the seven-day average of new cases was around 700. Palm said two weeks later, that had doubled and it is now 2,927.

Wisconsin's death toll is the nation's 29th highest and the 42nd highest per capita. Over the past two weeks, the rolling average number of daily new cases has increased by nearly 22%. There were nearly 625 new cases per 100,000 people in Wisconsin over the past two weeks, which was the fourth-highest of any state.

ATLANTA — Election officials said nearly a quarter of the workers in a warehouse where election supplies are kept and voting equipment is readied for Georgia's most populous county have tested positive for the coronavirus.

But Fulton County Elections Director Rick Barron said Thursday that the positive COVID-19 tests for 13 of the 60 workers at the county election preparation center shouldn't delay election operations.

Barron said the county is working to hire replacement staff and implement more mitigation measures, including daily rapid testing.

The state Department of Public Health said Georgia had 1,686 cases and 23 deaths reported Thursday.

JACKSON, Miss. — Mississippi reported more than 1,000 new coronavirus cases Thursday for the first time since mid-August, after Gov. Tate Reeves instituted a statewide mask mandate.

The day of high case numbers comes just two weeks after the Republican governor repealed that same statewide mask mandate, citing declining numbers of virus cases.

For most of the last two months, Mississippi has seen lower infection numbers, ranging between around 200 to 800 cases a day. In mid-to-late July, the state was regularly reporting between 1,000 and 1,500 cases a day on average.

The count has slowly been rising again. The state health department reported more than 1,300 new cases Thursday. Mississippi has had more than 108,000 virus cases and at least 3,152 virus-related deaths.

COVID-19 hospitalizations were also rising slightly, with 500 people reported to be hospitalized in the state on Tuesday, compared to 393 on Oct. 3. Mississippi's state health officer Dr. Thomas Dobbs said Monday that six hospitals have no beds available in their intensive care units.

OKLAHOMA CITY — The Oklahoma Employment Security Commission reported Thursday that the state's four-week average of unemployment claims has fallen below 100,000 for the first time since the jobless rate skyrocketed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The rolling average for the week ending Oct. 10 was 90,445, down from 100,464 the previous week and the unadjusted number of initial claims was 4,840, down by 940 from the prior week's revised total 5,780.

A record of more than 182,000 continuing claims were reported in late June as the state reopened following Gov. Kevin Stitt's shutdown of many businesses to stem the spread of the virus.

The state health department on Thursday reported 1,221 additional virus cases and 11 more deaths due to COVID-19, the illness caused by the disease, for a total of 103,836 cases and 1,143 deaths since the pandemic began.

O'FALLON, Mo. — The number of people hospitalized for the coronavirus in Missouri reached another record Thursday, and the seven-day average positivity rate was more than triple the benchmark suggested by the World Health Organization.

The state health department's COVID-19 dashboard showed other alarming numbers, too: 1,875 new confirmed cases and 22 deaths. According to the dashboard, Missouri ranks fourth nationally in reported deaths over the past seven days, and eighth in the number of new cases. All told, Missouri has reported 150,554 confirmed cases and 2,442 deaths since the pandemic began.

The state's seven-day positivity rate was 17.9%. Johns Hopkins University data shows the national seven-day positivity rate was at 5.1%. The WHO has set 5% as the benchmark.

Meanwhile, 1,443 people were hospitalized in Missouri on Wednesday, setting a new record for the third straight day. Hospitalizations have risen dramatically since the state loosened restrictions in mid-June. On June 16, 626 people were hospitalized, and that number dropped to 375 on July 7. It has nearly quadrupled since then.

Dr. Marc Larsen, who oversees the COVID-19 response at Kansas City-based St. Luke's Health System, said the system's rural hospitals are seeing surges just as bad as the hospital on the Plaza in Kansas City.

MADRID — Spain added more than 13,000 coronavirus cases on Thursday.

Spain's health ministry reported 6,603 new infections diagnosed in the previous 24 hours. The other cases were diagnosed in recent days but not reported until now by regional officials.

The government's top virus expert, Fernando Simón, says while "no province is where we want it to be" in terms of infections, "we have the sensation that we are in a process of stabilization."

Spain leads Europe with 921,374 confirmed cases. It's recorded 33,553 deaths. However, health experts believe the actual number is higher due to a shortage of tests early in the pandemic.

Authorities seize 24 dogs after animal neglect complaint

WHITEWOOD, S.D. (AP) — Authorities say they rescued 24 dogs after responding to a complaint at a home near Whitewood, in far western South Dakota.

The Lawrence County Sheriff's Office says deputies discovered several neglected animals at the residence on Tuesday and eventually seized two dozen of the dogs. There were also dogs on the property that had already died.

The Western Hills Humane Society in Spearfish is providing the rescued dogs with shelter and medical care.

Authorities said the investigation is ongoing. No arrests have been announced.

Noem campaigns in New Hampshire as virus surges at home

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem hit the campaign trail on Thursday in New Hampshire, making appearances without wearing a mask, even as her state witnessed a new highpoint for coronavirus cases.

Active cases of the COVID-19 virus on Thursday topped 7,000 for the first time in South Dakota and hospitalizations inched to a new high for the third-straight day. With the virus surging across the state, the Department of Health reported 797 new cases, bringing the number of people with active infections to 7,132.

The Republican governor has vaulted to national prominence among conservatives who have praised her hands-off approach to the pandemic. She is now working as a surrogate for President Donald Trump. But as she made numerous campaign stops in New Hampshire, considered to be a proving ground for presidential hopefuls, the health crisis in her home state continued to escalate.

Health officials reported one of the highest single-day death tolls of the virus to date — 13 new deaths.

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Roughly halfway through October, the state has already had more deaths from COVID-19 than it has any other month. Health officials reported 81 people died this month so far, bringing the total number to 304.

The governor has defended her decision to continue campaigning despite the virus surge.

"If we do not focus on the election as well, and President Trump is not in office, there are consequences to that for our state of South Dakota," she said this week. "We will be back facing regulations."

She said that President Donald Trump's rollback of environmental and workplace safety regulations, as well as tax cuts, have helped the state.

Noem appears eager to follow in Trump's footsteps. In a photo tweeted by Nina McLaughlin, communications director for the Maine GOP, Noem chose the same seat at the Red Arrow Diner in Manchester, New Hampshire, as Trump did in 2016. She was also sitting across from the same man — senior Trump advisor Corey Lewandowski.

Lewandowski has been advising the governor, helping orchestrate her national rise.

Noem has yet to be seen wearing a mask on the campaign trail — a move that has frustrated doctors in South Dakota. On Thursday, she appeared in a photo alongside two people wearing masks who appear to be restaurant workers.

Medical experts say that wearing a mask helps protect other people from catching the virus if the person wearing a mask has an infection, but the benefits of wearing a mask for personal protection are unclear. Noem has repeatedly cast doubt on a wide consensus among medical experts that wearing masks can help prevent infections from spreading.

The governor's spokesman Ian Fury said, "She's taking appropriate precautions."

Noem also blamed the record case numbers on an increase in testing, but hospitals in the state bear evidence of the surge in infections. They are caring for 304 COVID-19 patients, the highest number reported to date.

Hospitals are also handling an increase in patients who have health needs besides COVID-19. About 32% of hospital beds and 41% of intensive care units statewide remain available.

Both of the largest hospital systems said they are adjusting their elective procedures to prepare for a possible surge in patients. Sanford Health will not be scheduling elective procedures next week that require an overnight stay. Avera Health relocated some surgeries to another facility after it faced a shortage of staff.

Avera spokesman Jake Iversen said, "What we are really trying to stress is that we are trying to push masks as much as possible."

Bankers survey sees surge in rural parts of 10 states

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Bankers in rural parts of 10 Plains and Western states are showing more enthusiasm for the state of their local economies than they have since the coronavirus pandemic began, according to a new monthly survey of bankers in the region.

The Rural Mainstreet Survey's overall index surged to 53.2 in October, up from 46.9 in September and well ahead of the 35.5 reading in March, when the index bottomed out as the outbreak began. Any score above 50 suggests a growing economy, while a score below 50 suggests a shrinking economy.

Creighton University economist Ernie Goss, who oversees the survey, credited recent improvements in agriculture commodity prices, federal farm support, and the Federal Reserve's record low interest.

"Still, more than one-third, or 35.5%, of bank CEOs reported their local economies were experiencing recessionary economic conditions," Goss said.

Bankers were also asked this month to identify the industry in their area most harmed by the pandemic. More than eight of 10, named restaurants and bars as experiencing the greatest negative effects from the pandemic.

More bankers showed optimism about the economy's outlook over the next six months, with the survey's confidence index rising to 51.6 from September's 50.

Bankers from Colorado, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Da-

kota and Wyoming were surveyed.

AP FACT CHECK: Rhetoric from Trump, Biden in the non-debate

By CALVIN WOODWARD and HOPE YEN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump and Democratic rival Joe Biden faced inquisitive voters on separate stages in different cities in a substitute for the debate that was meant to be.

Here's how some of the rhetoric Thursday night compared with the facts in the prime-time events and a day of campaigning:

ECONOMY

TRUMP, answering questions in Miami on NBC: "We had the greatest economy in the history of our country."

THE FACTS: The numbers show it wasn't the greatest in U.S. history.

Did the U.S. have the most jobs on record before the coronavirus pandemic? Sure, the population had grown. The 3.5% unemployment rate before the recession was at a half-century low, but the percentage of people working or searching for jobs was still below a 2000 peak.

Nobel Prize-winning economist Paul Romer looked at Trump's economic growth record this month. Growth under Trump averaged 2.48% annually before the pandemic, only slightly better than the 2.41% gains achieved during Barack Obama's second term. By contrast, the economic expansion that began in 1982 during Ronald Reagan's presidency averaged 4.2% a year.

So Trump is wrong.

ELECTION FRAUD

TRUMP: "When I see thousands of ballots dumped in a garbage can and they happen to have my name on it? I'm not happy about it." — from Miami.

THE FACTS: Nobody has seen that. Contrary to Trump's repeated, baseless attacks on voting security, voting and election fraud is vanishingly rare. No cases involving thousands of ballots dumped in the trash have been reported in this election.

Trump has cited a case of military ballots marked for him being thrown in the trash in Pennsylvania as evidence of a possible plot to steal the election. But he leaves out the details: County election officials say that the seven ballots, along with two unopened ones, were accidentally tossed in an elections office in a Republican-controlled county by a contract worker and that authorities were swiftly called.

The Brennan Center for Justice in 2017 ranked the risk of ballot fraud at 0.00004% to 0.0009%, based on studies of past elections.

In the five states that regularly send ballots to all voters, there have been no major cases of fraud or difficulty counting the votes.

CRIME

BIDEN, answering questions in Philadelphia on ABC: "The crime bill itself did not have mandatory sentences, except for two things, it had three strikes and you're out, which I voted against in the crime bill."

THE FACTS: That's misleading. He is understating the impact of the bill and the influence he brought to bear in getting it passed into law.

Biden wrote and voted for that sweeping 1994 crime bill, which included money for more prisons, expanded the use of the federal death penalty and called for a mandatory life sentence for three-time violent offenders — the so-called three strikes provision.

He did call the three-strikes rule "wacko" at one point, even as he was helping to write the bill. Whatever his reservations about certain provisions, he ultimately voted for the legislation, which included the three-strikes rule and has come to be seen in the Black Lives Matter era as a heavy-handed and discriminatory tool of the justice system.

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TROOPS

BIDEN in Philadelphia, on U.S. troops in Afghanistan: "They have more people there now, by the way, than when I left, when we left in Afghanistan."

THE FACTS: Not so.

The U.S. now has about 5,000 troops in Afghanistan. The troop level did not dip below 8,400 before President Barack Obama left office. The U.S. had about 8,500 troops in Afghanistan during Trump's first several months in office.

The number of troops in Afghanistan reached 100,000 in 2010, before Obama took office. Obama did withdraw thousands of troops during his two terms, but he was unable to fulfill promises to decrease the number of troops to 5,500 toward the final years of his presidency.

CORONAVIRUS

TRUMP: "Just the other day they came out with a statement that 85% of the people that wear masks catch it so ... that's what I heard and that's what I saw." — town hall event in Miami.

TRUMP, on his rallies: "What I do is outside is a big thing. And if you look at those, people, they really are wearing masks. I'll tell you, I looked last night in Iowa — there were many, many people wearing masks. But then you see CDC comes out with a statement that 85% of the people wearing masks catch it." — Fox Business interview.

TRUMP, looking out over his crowd: "Look at all the masks. You know, they keep saying, 'nobody wears a mask, wear the mask.' Although then they come out with things today. Did you see CDC? That 85% of the people wearing a mask catch it, OK?" — remarks at rally during the day in Greenville, North Carolina.

THE FACTS: He's botching the study's findings, repeatedly. The study cited, by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, did not find that 85% of mask wearers catch COVID-19. If that were the case, the majority of Americans would be infected.

It found something quite different: that 85% of the small group of COVID-19 patients surveyed — about 150 on this question — reported they had worn a mask often or always around the time they would have become infected.

The group's exposure to potentially infected people in the community varied. Most reported shopping or being in a home with multiple people. But they were twice as likely to have eaten at a restaurant, where masks are set aside for the meal, than were uninfected people in a control group.

Most studies have shown that wearing masks reduces the transmission of the virus by blocking respiratory droplets. Several studies have also shown that masks could offer some protection for the people who wear them.

The findings were in a CDC Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, published last month.

TRUMP, reacting to the news that people associated with the Biden campaign on a recent flight with Harris tested positive for COVID-19: "We extend our best wishes, which is more than they did to me, but that's OK." — Greenville rally.

THE FACTS: That's false.

Hours after Trump's early morning announcement on Oct. 2 that he had tested positive, both Biden and Harris sent their wishes for a quick recovery via Twitter.

"Jill and I send our thoughts to President Trump and First Lady Melania Trump for a swift recovery," Biden wrote. "We will continue to pray for the health and safety of the president and his family."

Harris tweeted a similar message "wishing President Trump and the First Lady a full and speedy recovery. We're keeping them and the entire Trump family in our thoughts."

The Biden campaign at the time also announced it would stop running negative ads, with the candidate tweeting that "this cannot be a partisan moment" after the news that Trump was going to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center for treatment of his coronavirus infection. Biden's camp resumed the advertising after Trump was released from Walter Reed.

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At least three people connected to Biden's campaign have tested positive for the coronavirus, leading the campaign to suspend in-person events for Harris through Monday.

Associated Press writers Amanda Seitz, Josh Boak, David Klepper, Darlene Superville and Kevin Freking contributed to this report.

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

Find AP Fact Checks at <http://apnews.com/APFactCheck>.

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AP-NORC poll: Voters see the nation as fundamentally divided

By STEVE PEOPLES and HANNAH FINGERHUT Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The overwhelming majority of voters believe the nation is deeply divided over its most important values, and many have doubts about the health of the democracy itself. And supporters of President Donald Trump and Joe Biden alike think the opposing candidate will make things even worse if elected, according to a new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

Overall, 85% of registered voters describe Americans as being greatly divided in their values, and only 15% say that democracy in the United States is working extremely or very well. The poll shows voters overall are especially pessimistic about the impact of Trump's reelection: 65% say divisions would worsen if the Republican president were reelected, a number that includes a quarter of his supporters.

Thirty-five percent of voters believe Biden would divide the country further should he win the presidency. More, 47%, think the country would be unified if the Democrat were elected.

"Somebody's got to unite our country," said Gary Conard, a 64-year-old Republican who lives in Clever, Missouri. "I just think our society is confused and in trouble."

The poll offers a window into the depth of the division and chaos shaping the American electorate less than three weeks before Election Day. Voters are sharply divided over several major issues based on their partisan lenses, including their personal safety during the coronavirus pandemic, the value of diversity and the health of American democracy.

The cavernous rift represents a daunting challenge for the winner of the November election, as voters from each side seem to agree only on one thing: the extent of their divisions.

Fully 88% of Biden supporters and 80% of Trump supporters view Americans as greatly divided on important values. Supporters for both candidates think a win for the opposing side will worsen those divisions: 76% of Trump supporters say this of Biden, and 91% of Biden backers say this of Trump.

About half of all voters say that democracy in the United States is not working well, and about another third think it's working only somewhat well. Roughly twice as many Biden supporters as Trump supporters have a pessimistic view of the health of democracy. Still, 3 in 10 Trump supporters say democracy isn't working well. And at least 8 in 10 on both sides say the other candidate's election would weaken democracy.

While Republicans fear the possibility of what Trump predicts without evidence will be a rigged election, Democrats are worried that inconsistent election laws, voter intimidation and Republican lawsuits will make it more difficult for their supporters to cast ballots given heightened health concerns during the pandemic.

The poll finds fewer than half of voters say they are highly confident that votes in the election will be counted accurately, but more Biden supporters than Trump supporters say that, 53% vs. 28%.

There also are dramatic differences in concerns about the pandemic — and views of Trump's response to it — based on political leanings.

Nearly 6 in 10 Biden supporters report being very worried that they or someone in their family will be infected with the coronavirus, compared to just about 2 in 10 Trump supporters. Close to half of Trump supporters say they are not worried.

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Linda Railey, a 73-year-old Republican who lives in rural Alexander City, Alabama, said she's not worried about the pandemic because she and her husband are taking precautions like washing their hands, limiting contact with other people and wearing masks when they are in public. They only go to the grocery store and church, she said.

"I worry about it for other people," Railey said, noting that she lives in a rural area about 15 minutes outside the nearest town. "We stay home as much as we can."

And as the nation struggles through intense clashes over civil rights, the poll highlights different views on the value of diversity.

Half of Trump supporters said that the nation's diverse population "of many different races, ethnicities, religions, and backgrounds" makes the country stronger. About 3 in 10 Trump supporters said such diversity doesn't strengthen or weaken the nation, while about 2 in 10 say it makes the country weaker.

Among Biden supporters, 75% believe that diversity makes the country stronger.

Overall, Biden has an advantage over Trump as the candidate trusted to handle the coronavirus pandemic (52% to 28%), race relations (53% to 28%) and Supreme Court nominations (45% to 34%). Biden and Trump are competitive on the economy, gaining the trust of 43% and 42%, respectively. But each camp overwhelmingly trusts its own candidate over the other to handle key issues.

Noah Talbott, a 22-year-old unaffiliated voter who lives outside Richmond, Virginia, and works at Chick-fil-A, criticized Trump's leadership on several issues and blamed him for exacerbating political and racial divisions.

"I wouldn't say I'm proud to be an American right now," he said. "We're way too divided."

Talbott didn't vote four years ago but said he would vote for Biden this fall — a decision he described as "more of a vote against Trump" than for his Democratic challenger.

For all their differences, the poll found that both Biden and Trump supporters are about equally engaged in the campaign.

Conard, of Missouri, said he doesn't see an end to the divisions plaguing America, but he said it's in Trump's best interests to unify the nation. He plans to vote for the president on Election Day, believing that Biden has already had a chance after spending almost a half-century in Washington.

"One man had 47 years and he didn't get it done so you've got to look somewhere else," Conrad said. "Trump wants the country to do well. For it to do well and for him to look good, he's got to bring people together. And he can do it — at least, I hope he can."

Fingerhut reported from Washington.

The AP-NORC poll of 1,121 adults was conducted Oct. 8-12 using a sample drawn from NORC's probability-based AmeriSpeak Panel, which is designed to be representative of the U.S. population. The margin of sampling error for all respondents is plus or minus 4 percentage points.

Online:

AP-NORC Center: <http://www.apnorc.org/>.

Twitter changes hacked content rules after Biden story furor

Twitter said late Thursday it was changing its policy on hacked content after an outcry about its handling of an unverified political story that prompted cries of censorship from the right.

The social media company will no longer remove hacked material unless it's directly shared by hackers or those working with them, the company's head of legal, policy, trust and safety, Vijaya Gadde, said in a Twitter thread.

And instead of blocking links from being shared, tweets will be labeled to provide context, Gadde said.

"We want to address the concerns that there could be many unintended consequences to journalists, whistleblowers and others in ways that are contrary to Twitter's purpose of serving the public conversa-

tion," she said.

Twitter and Facebook had moved quickly this week to limit the spread of the story published by the conservative-leaning New York Post, which cited unverified emails from Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden's son that were reportedly discovered by President Donald Trump's allies. The story has not been confirmed by other publications.

Twitter initially responded by banning users from sharing links to the article in tweets and direct messages because it violated the company's policy prohibiting hacked content. But it didn't alert users about why they couldn't share the link until hours later.

Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey tweeted that it was "unacceptable" the company hadn't provided more context around its action. A little over 24 hours later, Gadde announced the company was making changes after receiving "significant feedback (from critical to supportive)" about how it enforced the policy.

The company said the link to the New York Post story will still be blocked under a policy prohibiting sharing personal information. However, users were widely sharing the story on Friday and it wasn't clear why they were able to do so.

Facebook said it was "reducing" the story's distribution on its platform while waiting for third-party fact-checkers to verify it, something it regularly does with material that's not banned outright from its service, though it risks spreading lies or causing harm in other ways.

Thai PM rejects calls to resign, faces renewed protests

By JERRY HARMER Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — Thailand's prime minister rejected calls for his resignation Friday, while his government failed to stop student-led protesters from rallying again in the capital in defiance of a strict state of emergency.

More than 1,000 protesters gathered in torrential monsoon rains to push their core demands, including that Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha leave office, the constitution be amended and the nation's monarchy undergo reform.

It was the second day they defied an order not to gather, imposed after some demonstrators heckled a royal motorcade, an unprecedented development in Thailand, where the monarchy is normally held in reverence.

Police had earlier closed roads and put up barricades around a major Bangkok intersection where some 10,000 protesters defied the new decree Thursday. Police in riot gear secured the area, while malls in the normally busy shopping district closed early. Nearby mass transit stations were closed to stop crowds of protesters from getting near the area.

The student protesters, however, simply moved down the street to another large intersection.

Prayuth's government declared a strict new state of emergency for the capital on Thursday, a day after the heckling of the motorcade.

The state of emergency outlaws public gatherings of more than five people and bans the dissemination of news that is deemed to threaten national security. It also gives authorities broad powers, including detaining people at length without charge.

A number of protest leaders have already been rounded up since the decree went into effect. On Friday another two activists were arrested under a law covering violence against the queen for their alleged part in the heckling of the motorcade. They could face up to life in prison if convicted.

The protest movement was launched in March by university students and its original core demands were new elections, changes in the constitution to make it more democratic, and an end to intimidation of activists.

The protesters charge that Prayuth, who as army commander led a 2014 coup that toppled an elected government, was returned to power unfairly in last year's general election because laws had been changed to favor a pro-military party.

But the movement took a stunning turn in August, when students at a rally aired unprecedented criticism

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of the monarchy and issued calls for its reform. Using direct language normally expressed in whispers if at all, the speakers criticized the king's wealth, his influence and that he spends much of his time outside the country.

Thailand's royal family has long been considered sacrosanct and a pillar of Thai identity. King Maha Vajiralongkorn and other key member of the royal family are protected by a lese majeste law that has regularly been used to silence critics who risk up to 15 years in prison if deemed to have insulted the institution.

Conservative royalist Thais accuse the protest movement of seeking to end the monarchy, an allegation its leaders deny.

Wednesday's incident with the royal motorcade was stunned many Thais. Video that circulated widely showed members of a small crowd heckling a motorcade carrying Queen Suthida and Prince Dipangkorn as it slowly passed. Security personnel stood between the vehicles and the crowd and there was no visible violence and none was described by witnesses.

It normal in Thailand for those waiting for a royal motorcade to sit on the ground or prostrate themselves. Prayuth's declaration of a state of emergency said the measure was necessary because "certain groups of perpetrators intended to instigate an untoward incident and movement in the Bangkok area by way of various methods and via different channels, including causing obstruction to the royal motorcade."

Prayuth said Friday that he had no plans to resign as he had done nothing wrong. He said his government hopes it can drop the state of emergency ahead of its normal 30-day duration "if the situation improves quickly."

The legal aid group Thai Lawyers for Human Rights said at least 51 people have been arrested since Tuesday in connection with the protests.

Police on Friday went to search the offices of the Progressive Movement, a group formed by former lawmakers from a reform-minded political party that was controversially dissolved by the Constitutional Court.

The two activists charged over the incident with the queen are Ekachai Hongkangwan and Paothong Bunkueanum.

Ekachai is a veteran activist who has been physically attacked several times, in apparent response to his criticism of the military. Paothong, a university student, has been involved in organizing the protests.

The Wednesday incident in which the two were allegedly involved was stunning to most Thais, because by tradition and law, members of the royal family are treated with the utmost respect.

"We were not notified by the police of the upcoming royal motorcade in which we had no way of knowing because they were not informing us," Paothong told reporters Friday.

"Once we knew that there was a motorcade of the queen and the heir presumptive to the throne I tried to break away from the line and use my megaphone to have everyone move away from the police barriers so the motorcade can pass through easily," he said.

The Ministry of Digital Economy, meanwhile, announced it would file complaints with police covering five Twitter accounts and five Facebook accounts inviting people to attend Friday's rally. Such posting could be deemed illegal under the state of emergency, as well as other laws.

Avalanche of early votes transforming 2020 election

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI and ANGELIKI KASTANIS Associated Press

More than 17 million Americans have already cast ballots in the 2020 election, a record-shattering avalanche of early votes driven both by Democratic enthusiasm and a pandemic that has transformed the way the nation votes.

The total represents 12% of all the votes cast in the 2016 presidential election, even as eight states are not yet reporting their totals and voters still have more than two weeks to cast ballots. Americans' rush to vote is leading election experts to predict that a record 150 million votes may be cast and turnout rates could be higher than in any presidential election since 1908.

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"It's crazy," said Michael McDonald, a University of Florida political scientist who has long tracked voting for his site ElectProject.org. McDonald's analysis shows roughly 10 times as many people have voted compared with this point in 2016.

"We can be certain this will be a high-turnout election," McDonald said.

So far the turnout has been lopsided, with Democrats outvoting Republicans by a 2-1 ratio in the 42 states included in The Associated Press count. Republicans have been bracing themselves for this early Democratic advantage for months, as they've watched President Donald Trump rail against mail-in ballots and raise unfounded worries about fraud. Polling, and now early voting, suggest the rhetoric has turned his party's rank and file away from a method of voting that, traditionally, they dominated in the weeks before Election Day.

That gives Democrats a tactical advantage in the final stretch of the campaign. In many critical battleground states, Democrats have "banked" a chunk of their voters and can turn their time and money toward harder-to-find infrequent voters.

But it does not necessarily mean Democrats will lead in votes by the time ballots are counted. Both parties anticipate a swell of Republican votes on Election Day that could, in a matter of hours, dramatically shift the dynamic.

"The Republican numbers are going to pick up," said John Couvillon, a GOP pollster who is tracking early voting. "The question is at what velocity, and when?"

Couvillon said Democrats can't rest on their voting lead, but Republicans are themselves making a big gamble. A number of factors, from rising virus infections to the weather, can impact in-person turnout on Election Day. "If you're putting all your faith into one day of voting, that's really high risk," Couvillon said.

That's why, despite Trump's rhetoric, his campaign and party are encouraging their own voters to cast ballots by mail or early and in-person. The campaign, which has been sending volunteers and staffers into the field for months despite the pandemic, touts that it has registered more voters this year than Democrats in key swing states like Florida and Pennsylvania — a sharp reversal from the usual pattern as a presidential election looms.

But it's had limited success in selling absentee voting. In key swing states, Republicans remain far less interested in voting by mail.

In Pennsylvania, more than three-quarters of the more than 437,000 ballots sent through the mail so far have been from Democrats. In Florida, half of all ballots sent through the mail so far have been from Democrats and less than a third of them from Republicans. Even in Colorado, a state where every voter is mailed a ballot and Republicans usually dominate the first week of voting, only 19% of ballots returned have been from Republicans.

"This is all encouraging, but three weeks is a lifetime," Democratic data strategist Tom Bonier said of the early vote numbers. "We may be midway through the first quarter and Democrats have put a couple of points on the board."

The massive amount of voting has occurred without any of the violent skirmishes at polling places that some activists and law enforcement officials feared. It has featured high-profile errors — 100,000 faulty mail ballots sent out in New York, 50,000 in Columbus, Ohio, and a vendor supplying that state and Pennsylvania blaming delays on sending ballots on overwhelming demand. But there's little evidence of the mass disruption that some feared as election offices had to abruptly shift to deal with the influx of early voting.

But there have been extraordinary lines and hours-long wait times in Georgia, Texas and North Carolina as they've opened in-person early voting. The delays were largely a result of insufficient resources to handle the surge, something advocates contend is a form of voter suppression.

Republicans argue that these signs of enthusiasm are meaningless — Democratic early voters are people who would have voted anyway, they say. But an AP analysis of the early vote shows 8% of early voters had never cast a ballot before, and 13.8% had voted in half or fewer of previous elections for which they were eligible.

The data also show voters embracing mail voting, which health officials say is the safest way to avoid

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coronavirus infection while voting. Of the early voters, 82% cast ballots through the mail and 18% in person. Black voters cast 10% of the ballots cast, about the same as their share of the national electorate, according to the AP analysis of data from L2, a political data firm. That's a sign that those voters, who have been less likely to vote by mail than white people and Latinos, have warmed to the method.

Mail ballots so far have skewed toward older voters, with half coming from voters over age 64. Traditionally, younger and minority voters send their mail ballots in closer to Election Day or vote in person.

The mail ballots already returned in several states dwarf the entire total in prior elections. In Wisconsin, more than five times as many mail ballots have been cast compared with the entire number in 2016. North Carolina has seen nearly triple the number so far.

In-person early voting began this week in several major states and also broke records, particularly in crowded, Democratic-leaning metropolitan areas. In Texas, Houston's Harris County saw a record 125,000 ballots cast. In Georgia, hours-long lines threaded from election offices through much of the state's urban areas.

Tunde Ezekiel, a 39-year-old lawyer and Democrat who voted early in Atlanta on Thursday, said he wanted to be certain he had a chance to oust Trump from office: "I don't know what things are going to look like on Election Day. ... And I didn't want to take any chances."

The obvious enthusiasm among Democrats has cheered party operatives, but they note that it's hard to tell which way turnout will eventually fall. Republicans may be just as motivated, but saving themselves for Election Day.

"High turnout can benefit either side," Bonier said. "It just depends."

Associated Press writers Kate Brumback in Atlanta and Pia Deshpande in Chicago contributed to this report.

Election 2020 Today: Trump, Biden spar from afar; vote surge

By The Associated Press undefined

Here's what's happening Friday in Election 2020, 18 days until Election Day:

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

ON THE TRAIL: President Donald Trump will be in Florida and Georgia; Democratic challenger Joe Biden will be in Michigan.

TODAY'S TOP STORIES:

TRUMP, BIDEN GO AT IT: President Donald Trump and Democrat Joe Biden showed striking differences in temperament, views on racial justice and approaches to the pandemic that has reshaped the nation in dueling televised town halls. Trump was defensive about his administration's handling of the coronavirus. Trump also refused to denounce the QAnon conspiracy group, and only testily did so regarding white supremacists. Biden, for his part, denounced the White House's handling of the virus.

EARLY VOTE: A record-setting amount of early voting has changed the 2020 election. More than 17 million people have voted so far, which is about 12% of all votes cast in 2016. Experts predict there may be higher turnout in this election than in any presidential contest since 1908. Democrats so far are overwhelmingly more engaged than Republicans. That does not necessarily mean Democrats will win the election, because most Republicans are expected to vote on Election Day.

TWITTER CHANGES RULES: Twitter said late Thursday it was changing its policy on hacked content after an outcry about its handling of an unverified political story that sparked cries of censorship from the right. Twitter and Facebook had moved quickly this week to limit the spread of a New York Post story citing unverified emails from Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden's son. An executive tweeted that the social media company will no longer remove hacked material unless it's directly shared by hackers or those working with them. And instead of blocking links from being shared, tweets will be labeled to provide context.

TRUMP'S DOCKET: Controversial Trump administration policies on the census, asylum seekers and the

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border wall, held illegal by lower courts, are on the Supreme Court's agenda. The most pressing case before the justices is the administration's appeal to be allowed to exclude people living in the U.S. illegally from the census, which will be used to allocate seats in the House of Representatives. The administration wants the court to hear arguments in December and decide the case before Trump's Jan. 10 deadline to send the figures to Congress.

DISCOUNT CARDS: Trump's plan to mail millions of seniors a \$200 prescription savings card has hit legal and budget roadblocks, making it unlikely the government can carry it out before Election Day. Democratic lawmakers have raised questions about whether the administration has the authority to order on its own billions of dollars in unanticipated Medicare spending for what the Democrats say are political reasons.

BLACK VOTERS: A group of U.S. Black scholars, activists, and writers has launched a new project to combat misleading information online around voting, reparations and immigration. The recently launched "National Black Cultural Information Trust" seeks to counter fake social media accounts and Twitter trolls that often discourage Black voters from participating in elections.

QUOTABLE: "And then they talk, 'Will you accept a peaceful transfer?' And the answer is, 'Yes, I will.' But I want it to be an honest election, and so does everybody else." — Trump during his town hall event in Miami.

ICYMI:

AP-NORC poll: Americans critical of Trump handling of virus

GOP pushes Barrett toward court as Democrats decry 'sham'

Biden campaign flips COVID-19 threat into new Trump contrast

Trump, Biden go at it — from a distance — in town halls

By JONATHAN LEMIRE, WILL WEISSERT and DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump and Democrat Joe Biden squared off, in a way, in dueling televised town halls that showcased striking differences in temperament, views on racial justice and approaches to a pandemic that has reshaped the nation.

Coming just two and a half weeks before Election Day, the events Thursday night offered crystalizing contrasts and a national, if divided, audience. But it seemed unlikely to have produced a needed moment for a president running out of time or opportunities to appeal beyond his core base.

He was defensive about his administration's handling of the coronavirus, which has claimed more than 217,000 lives in the United States, and evasive when pressed about whether he took a required COVID-19 test before his first debate with Biden. Angry and combative, Trump refused to denounce the QAnon conspiracy group — and only testily did so regarding white supremacists.

The Republican president also appeared to acknowledge revelations from a recent New York Times report that he was in debt and left open the possibility that some of it was owed to a foreign bank. But he insisted that he didn't owe any money to Russia or any "sinister people" and suggested that \$400 million in debt was a "very, very small percentage" compared to his overall assets.

Biden denounced the White House's handling of the virus, declaring that it was at fault for closing a pandemic response office established by the Obama administration in which he served. Though vague at times, he suggested he will offer clarity on his position on expanding the Supreme Court if Trump's nominee to the bench is seated before Election Day.

After Biden's 90-minute town hall event formally concluded, the candidate spent another half-hour taking questions from those in the audience who didn't get an opportunity during the televised program.

Trump and Biden were supposed to spend Thursday night on the same debate stage in Miami. But that faceoff was scuttled after Trump's coronavirus infection, which jolted the race and threatened the health of the American president.

Trump wouldn't say whether he had tested negative on the day of his first debate with Biden on Sept. 29, allowing only, "Possibly I did, possibly I didn't." Debate rules required that each candidate, using the honor system, had tested negative prior to the Cleveland event, but Trump spoke in circles when asked

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when he last tested negative.

The presidential rivals took questions in different cities on different networks: Trump on NBC from Miami, Biden on ABC from Philadelphia. Trump backed out of plans for the presidential faceoff originally scheduled for the evening after debate organizers said it would be held virtually following his COVID-19 diagnosis.

The town halls offered a different format for the two candidates to present themselves to voters, after the pair held a chaotic and combative first debate late last month. The difference in the men's tone was immediate and striking.

Trump was Trump. He was loud and argumentative, rebuking his FBI director, fighting with the host, Savannah Guthrie, complaining about the questioning — and eventually saying for the first time that he would honor the results of a fair election, but only after casting an extraordinary amount of doubt on the likeliness of fairness.

"And then they talk, 'Will you accept a peaceful transfer?'" Trump said. "And the answer is, 'Yes, I will.' But I want it to be an honest election, and so does everybody else."

He again sought to minimize revelations from a New York Times investigation that he has more than \$400 million in debt and suggested that reports are wrong that he paid little or no federal income taxes in most years over the past two decades.

Biden, meanwhile, took a far different, softer approach with audience questions. The former vice president, who struggled growing up with a stutter, stuttered slightly at the start of the program and at one point squeezed his eyes shut and slowed down his response to clearly enunciate his words. At times his answers droned on.

Holding a white cloth mask in one hand, the Democratic nominee brought a small card of notes onstage and referred to it while promising to roll back tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans. He said doing so would save, as he consulted his notes, "let me see ... \$92 billion."

Biden vowed to say before Election Day whether he will support expanding the number of justices on the Supreme Court if Democrats win the presidency and the Senate and hold the House after November.

He has for weeks refused to answer the question but went further Thursday night. He said, "I'm still not a fan" of expanding the court, but said his ultimate decision depended on how the confirmation of Amy Coney Barrett to the Supreme Court "is handled" and "how much they rush this."

Biden also blasted Trump's foreign policy, declaring that "America first" has made "America alone" and "This president embraces all the thugs in the world." He turned introspective when asked what it would say if he lost.

"It could say that I'm a lousy candidate, that I didn't do a good job," Biden said. "But I think, I hope that it doesn't say that we're as racially, ethnically and religiously at odds as it appears the president wants us to be."

Biden said he plans to participate in next week's debate but he would ask Trump to take a COVID-19 test before arriving. "It's just decency" for everyone around him, including non-candidates like camera operators, Biden said.

The two men are still scheduled to occupy the same space for a debate for a second and final time next week in Nashville.

Lemire reported from New York. Additional reporting by Associated Press writers Bill Barrow in Wilmington, Delaware, and Zeke Miller and Alexandra Jaffe in Washington.

Virologist: Milan surge spreading to at-risk populations

By COLLEEN BARRY Associated Press

MILAN (AP) — Italy has two weeks to stop the rising rate of transmission of coronavirus or it risks "following in the footsteps" of European neighbors where exponential spreads have ushered back harsh restrictions, a virologist on the front lines says.

Italian health officials have declared that the resurgence of COVID-19 has reached an "acute phase."

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Massimo Galli, the director of infectious diseases at Milan's Luigi Sacco hospital, said Italy's surge — which hit pandemic highs of new daily infections this week — is not the result of record testing, as policy makers have suggested, but a sign of a real return among the population most at risk.

It only takes a look at Sacco's COVID-19 ward, a few steps from Galli's office, to raise the alarm.

"We have a situation that reminds one quite distressingly of the one that we already have experienced," Galli told The Associated Press, referring to the peak in March and April when the surge in infections resulted in a one-day record of 969 deaths.

Already in Milan, he said, the number of elderly patients or those with other risk factors is growing, indicating a spread beyond the expansion seen in late September, when most new positives were among people caught by contact tracing and screenings, for example people returning from vacation.

"The trend is already there, and it is frankly alarming," he said, adding that "it is not a generalized situation, it is not all of Italy."

But he fears that new nationwide restrictions adopted over the past two weeks — including mandatory masks outdoors, a ban on pick-up sports and restaurant closures at midnight — are not enough.

"If we don't in 15 days ... have an indication of being able to control all of the major outbreaks, there won't be a choice but to enter another phase of limiting activities," Galli said.

On Friday, the region of Campania, which includes Naples and which has been under pressure since early September, closed schools until the end of the month — angering the government in Rome.

That came after Italy reported a new daily record of confirmed virus cases — 8,804 — on Thursday, including more than 2,000 in Lombardy and 1,000 in Campania. After hovering around 40 for days, the death toll surged to 83, one-third of those in Lombardy.

Newly confirmed cases have also reached record levels in the Czech Republic, which also shut schools, and Poland, which has limited restaurant hours and closed gyms and schools. France, meanwhile, has imposed a 9 p.m. curfew in Paris and other big cities.

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

Virus curbs widen England's north-south rift, stir animosity

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LIVERPOOL, England (AP) — Liverpool, the English port city that gave the world the Beatles, weathered decades of industrial decline before becoming a celebrated symbol of urban renewal. Now, the coronavirus is putting the city's hard-won revival in jeopardy, and raising tensions between the north of England and the wealthier south.

Scarred by abandoned buildings and government neglect during the 1980s, Liverpool made itself vibrant again by promoting local culture, nightlife, soccer and ties to the Fab Four. However, Liverpudlians retained their mistrust of London politicians, and the virus pandemic has brought it to the surface.

As the first area in England slapped with strict new restrictions to curb the resurgent coronavirus that have shuttered pubs and imperiled thousands of jobs, Liverpool again feels it's being punished by policies made in Britain's capital, 180 miles (290 kilometers) to the south.

"At the beginning, when we all went into lockdown, it made sense. We were all doing it for a reason, and that was fine," said pub owner Fiona Hornsby, who reluctantly shuttered her Bridewell bar in accordance with new curbs on business and socializing the government imposed this week.

With the complex localized restrictions, "it's almost like we're being separated, divided. It just doesn't feel right at all," she said.

Liverpool is not alone. As a patchwork of city- and region-specific measures replaces Britain's nationwide lockdown, the pandemic has highlighted the gap in wealth and health between the relatively affluent south of England and the post-industrial north that also includes the cities of Manchester, Newcastle and Leeds.

Manchester — once an engine of the Industrial Revolution and now a hub for Britain's music and creative

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industries — also is likely to fall under the government's new restrictions. Mayor Andy Burnham is holding out for more financial support before consenting.

Burnham, a member of the left-of-center Labour Party that is in the opposition at the national level, accused the government Thursday of treating people in northern England as "second-class citizens" by imposing "a punishing lockdown without proper support for the people and businesses affected."

When the coronavirus first hit the U.K. this year, the government told all but essential workers to stay home and ordered most businesses to close. The wide lockdown slowed the spread of the virus, but not before the country racked up Europe's highest COVID-19 death toll. It currently stands at more than 43,200, though all such official figures are likely an underestimate.

The surge in new confirmed cases since shops, restaurants and other businesses reopened during the summer and students returned to schools and universities in the fall is more uneven than the U.K.'s first wave; infection rates currently are much higher in northern England than they are in the south.

In response, the U.K. government this week adopted a three-tier system that ranks cities and regions in England as medium, high or very high risk. Only the Liverpool region of 1.6 million people was immediately placed in the top tier, which requires pubs to shut and bars households from mixing.

Authorities in northern England agree on the need to act. With more than 600 cases per 100,000 people and its intensive care units 90% full, Liverpool is one of Europe's worst-hit cities at this stage of the pandemic.

But there is also resentment over what many see as the government moving too quickly to lift the national lockdown restrictions and failing to create an efficient test-and-trace system to contain new outbreaks.

"The embers of the infection here were never extinguished and they burned brighter up here than they did elsewhere in the country," Paul Brant, a Labour Party member of the Liverpool City Council, said.

"Unfortunately, policy in this country is too often directed as a result of what happens in the capital rather than the local conditions that are taking place here in the north," Brant said.

Liverpool's public officials want more say in controlling the city's outbreak, an exit strategy for lifting the restrictions and money to make up for years of government spending cuts that have left public services in Britain's less affluent areas threadbare.

The north-south tensions that the pandemic stirred up are never far from the surface. David Jeffrey, a lecturer in British politics at the University of Liverpool, said Liverpool's 1980s clashes over money and policy with the Conservative government of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher fostered a "them versus us" narrative toward London.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson, a Conservative like Thatcher, is especially unpopular in the city. Liverpool natives, commonly known as Scousers, still remember that years ago a magazine Johnson edited accused them of "wallowing" in victimhood.

"In Liverpool, this idea of 'Scousers don't trust Tories' ties in to trust in the government and their corona message," Jeffrey said. "So if there's no trust in the competency of the government, people aren't going to follow the rules."

Video footage showing young revelers partying in the city's street with little regard for social distancing on Tuesday night, hours before the new restrictions took hold, drove home that point.

Before the pandemic, that image would have been seen as a sign of the city's success. Liverpool's docks on the River Mersey, left abandoned as ships moved elsewhere in the late 20th century, have been regenerated with restaurants and museums, including an international slavery museum and a Tate art gallery.

Four universities give the city a youthful, lively population, and Premier League soccer teams Liverpool and Everton support thousands of jobs. Tourists come from around the world to see the houses where the city's most famous sons, the Beatles, grew up and the Cavern Club where they honed their craft.

All that is on hold now.

"The football, the nightlife, people coming into town — it's all gone," said John Ambrose, a guide with the Beatles-themed Fab4 Taxi Tours. "We used to do about 4,000 tours a year. We probably only did about 12% of that this year."

Government scientific advisers have suggested the current restrictions may not be enough and there will have to be even tougher measures, maybe a total lockdown, to bring the outbreak under control.

Some fear that the gains of northern cities like Liverpool and Manchester could be undone.

"Liverpool fought, everyone fought, to get into a position now where we were all actually looking forward to 2020," John Hughes, the head of local industry group Liverpool Pubwatch, said. "But the situation we are in now is, we're going to go back to them dark days of the '80s."

Local business owners say the support offered by the government — paying two-thirds of the salaries of workers in businesses forced to close — isn't enough to prevent widespread hardship this winter.

"I think if they came up and spoke to us, actually came and talked to us, then maybe they'd understand and maybe think about things a little differently," said pub owner Hornsby, who has laid off 20 staff members. "But they don't, do they?"

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White House puts 'politicals' at CDC to try to control info

By JASON DEAREN, MIKE STOBBE and RICHARD LARDNER undefined

NEW YORK (AP) — The Trump White House has installed two political operatives at the nation's top public health agency to try to control the information it releases about the coronavirus pandemic as the administration seeks to paint a positive outlook, sometimes at odds with the scientific evidence.

The two appointees assigned to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Atlanta headquarters in June have no public health background. They have instead been tasked with keeping an eye on Dr. Robert Redfield, the agency director, as well as scientists, according to a half-dozen CDC and administration officials who spoke to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity to discuss internal government affairs.

The appointments were part of a push to get more "politicals" into the CDC to help control messaging after a handful of leaks were "upsetting the apple cart," said an administration official.

When the two appointees showed up in Atlanta, their roles were a mystery to senior CDC staff, the people said. They had not even been assigned offices. Eventually one, Nina Witkofsky, became acting chief of staff, an influential role as Redfield's right hand. The other, her deputy Chester "Trey" Moeller, also began sitting in on scientific meetings, the sources said.

It's not clear to what extent the two appointees have affected the agency's work, according to interviews with multiple CDC officials. But congressional investigators are examining that very question after evidence has mounted of political interference in CDC scientific publications, guidance documents and web postings.

The White House declined to comment. A CDC spokesperson confirmed that Witkofsky and Moeller were working at the agency reporting to Redfield, but did not comment further.

Moeller said in an email to The AP, "I work for Dr. Redfield who is 100% committed to the science and the thousands of incredibly dedicated employees at the CDC working on behalf of the American people."

During previous pandemics such as Ebola or SARS, the CDC was the public face of the U.S. response, offering scientifically driven advice to doctors and patients alike. The agency played the same role at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, but stumbled in February when a test for the virus sent to states proved to be flawed. Then, in late February, a top CDC infectious disease expert, Dr. Nancy Messonnier, upset the administration by speaking frankly at a news conference about the dangers of the virus when the president was still downplaying it.

Within weeks, the agency was pushed offstage as President Donald Trump and other administration officials, during daily news briefings, became the main sources of information about the U.S. epidemic and the attempts to control it.

Still, CDC persisted in assembling science-based information that conflicted with the White House narra-

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tive. In May, a series of leaked emails and scientific documents obtained by The AP detailed how the White House had buried CDC's detailed guidelines for communities reopening during a still-surging pandemic. The emails revealed that the administration was vetting CDC's science through the Office of Management and Budget, rather than relying on its medical experts on the White House coronavirus task force. The resulting news stories of the shelving of the documents angered the administration, and sparked renewed efforts to exert control over CDC, according to current and former officials.

On a Monday in June, the new faces arrived at CDC's Atlanta offices. One was Witkofsky, who according to federal election records had a minor role in Trump's presidential campaign.

Witkofsky was installed initially as a senior adviser to Redfield. In a few weeks, she would take over as the agency's acting chief of staff and gradually become the person at CDC headquarters who has the most daily interactions with him, the CDC officials said.

Senior CDC staff found out about the appointments the week before they happened, according to a CDC official who also spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss internal agency affairs. They had no office, and no one knew their role.

"They just showed up on a Monday," the official said.

Presidential administrations appoint CDC directors. And there's nothing new about a White House seeking a better handle on information released by the CDC, said Glen Nowak, a University of Georgia professor who ran the agency's media relations for more than a dozen years. But past administrations placed overtly political appointees at HHS in Washington; the Trump administration has taken it to a new level by placing other people in CDC's Atlanta headquarters, Nowak said.

Before Witkofsky and Moeller, the Trump administration had appointed others at CDC in Atlanta who were viewed by staff with some suspicion. But none of the predecessors' roles was so clearly to report internal agency business up to Washington, according to officials who talked to The AP.

And Witkofsky seemed a particularly strange fit for the nation's top public health agency. She studied finance and business administration in college and graduate school, and at one point worked as a publicist and talent booker for Turner Broadcasting's Cartoon Network. Her political work included being an events director during the George W. Bush 2000 presidential campaign. As a State Department official, she developed an international engagement program for U.S. athletes and coaches.

Her lack of familiarity with the CDC, and how it worked, quickly became clear in meetings, according to multiple agency officials. At one, Witkofsky expressed surprise that the CDC had a supporting foundation, one agency official recalled.

Though Witkofsky was largely unknown, she had met a few CDC workers months earlier. In March, on behalf of the administration, she had worked communications when Trump visited a CDC lab. Clad in a red "Keep America Great" baseball cap, Trump had praised the CDC and assured the public "we're prepared for anything." Trump asserted that he has a terrific grasp of public health. "Maybe I have a natural ability," he boasted.

In her new role, Witkofsky communicated regularly with Michael Caputo, chief of communications for CDC's parent agency, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, two administration officials said. At the time Caputo's office was attempting to gain control over the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, or MMWR, a CDC scientific weekly known for publishing authoritative and unvarnished information about disease-fighting efforts, according to multiple accounts.

Witkofsky's deputy, Moeller, who began work on the same day, is a longtime GOP supporter who worked on the Bush-Cheney presidential campaign in 2004. The most recent post on his Facebook page was a "Make America Great Again" Trump campaign banner.

They wanted him to sit in meetings and "listen to scientists," said a former CDC official.

Witkofsky was added to CDC's website when she became acting chief of staff, but Moeller's name appears nowhere on either the HHS or CDC sites.

An HHS spokesperson said both Witkofsky and Moeller report to Redfield but refused to comment further on personnel matters.

Some CDC officials noted that a pandemic like this involves many parts of the government, and the

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political people sent to Atlanta have at times helped speed the flow of information coming to the agency from Washington.

But there has been a huge downside, public health experts and former CDC staffers say: damage to the once-venered CDC.

The agency's guidance for how to reduce viral infections has been largely ignored by the Trump White House, where officials have refused to wear masks and continued to hold large gatherings with few protective measures.

Witkofsky and Moeller are among officials the House Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis is seeking to interview as part of a probe it launched in mid-September into allegations the Trump administration blocked the CDC from publishing accurate scientific reports during the pandemic.

The subcommittee's investigators want to know more about Witkofsky and Moeller's roles in reported attempts by Caputo and administration officials to gain editorial control over the MMWR and other CDC publications. The investigators are also interested in whether Witkofsky and Moeller were involved in making changes to CDC COVID-19 guidance for schools, as well as agency information that has been changed multiple times on how the virus spreads through the air.

Caputo took a leave of absence from HHS after he described government scientists as the "resistance" against Trump in a video posted online. In an HHS podcast, Caputo accused Democrats in the government, along with the news media, of not wanting a vaccine so as to punish the president. After the incidents gained news coverage, one of Caputo's top advisers, Dr. Paul Alexander, resigned.

The apparent meddling and political pressure from the Trump White House, and from HHS, have caused even scientific experts to question some CDC decisions. And they have made an already trying job of responding to the worst pandemic in a century even harder, according to multiple CDC officials who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

"I don't trust the (political appointees) that they've dropped into the CDC," said Dr. Rick Bright, a federal vaccine expert who filed a whistleblower complaint alleging he was reassigned to a lesser job because he resisted political pressure to allow widespread use of hydroxychloroquine, a malaria drug pushed by Trump as a COVID-19 treatment. Bright said CDC scientists should be the face of the federal response, as has been the tradition, and the absence of their counsel to the public has contributed to confusion.

"That is absolutely frightening," he said. "(It) leads to the mixed signals to the public. And I think that is increasing the magnitude and duration of this entire pandemic."

Bright resigned last week from his post at the National Institutes of Health, saying his superiors had ignored a national coronavirus testing strategy he'd developed.

All of the added political pressure is contributing to a high burnout rate for CDC scientists working on the coronavirus response. One agency official said it "creates distractions from the real threat" of the virus, and extra work.

From March through September, there has been a constantly changing organizational structure and leadership in CDC's COVID response, according to internal organizational charts obtained by The AP.

In a chart from March, Messonnier was listed as a "Senior Official," one step below the director, Redfield. But in the following chart, posted weeks after the press conference that angered the White House, her name disappeared completely from the top ranks. A new box had appeared on next to Redfield's name: the White House Coronavirus Task Force led by Vice President Mike Pence.

In previous pandemics and outbreaks like Ebola that lasted for months or years, records and interviews show that the CDC's leadership remained largely stable to create a consistency that staff could rely upon.

The appearance of political interference and disarray are hurting the agency's standing, experts say. "There's a cumulative effect. And each one of them is doing its own damage to the agency's credibility," Nowak said.

Lardner reported from Washington.

To contact AP's investigative team, email investigative@ap.org

Braves 1 win from WS after 10-2 win over Dodgers in NLCS G4

By STEPHEN HAWKINS AP Baseball Writer

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP) — Marcell Ozuna and the Atlanta Braves turned things around in a hurry, and now are one win from ending a two-decade World Series drought.

Ozuna homered twice, rookie right-hander Bryse Wilson made his postseason debut by outpitching a three-time Cy Young Award winner Clayton Kershaw and the Braves bounced back from a lopsided loss with a rout of their own, beating the Los Angeles Dodgers 10-2 on Thursday night.

"Feels good, feels really good," Braves manager Brian Snitker said. "Still have a lot of work to do, you know how quick things can turn. I was really proud of the guys, how they bounced back."

The Braves took a 3-1 lead in the NL Championship Series, a night after a 15-3 loss. Atlanta will try to reach its first World Series since 1999 when it plays Game 5 Friday night.

Atlanta became the first team in MLB history to have back-to-back games in a single postseason where they lost by at least eight runs and then won by at least eight runs, according to STATS.

Dustin May, the 23-year-old Texan who has thrown 4 2-3 scoreless innings in three appearances this postseason, will start for the Dodgers with them facing potential elimination. Atlanta will likely go with a bullpen day.

Ozuna had four hits and drove in four runs. It was 1-all in the sixth when the Braves scored six times, with MVP candidate Freddie Freeman hitting a tiebreaking double and Ozuna following with an RBI double that chased Kershaw.

A night after the Dodgers had a record 11-run first, they managed only one hit — a solo homer by Edwin Ríos — over six innings against the 22-year-old Wilson.

"He was in complete control. ... He had a really good look about him. He had good tempo, and the stuff was live," Snitker said. "It was huge, a huge effort by him."

Ronald Acuña Jr. led off the decisive six-run sixth with an infield single on a play that ended with him, Kershaw and second baseman Kiké Hernández all on the ground. They all took tumbles because of their effort, and weren't knocked down by the sometimes bothersome breezy conditions in the new Texas ballpark with the roof open.

Kershaw fell down after coming off the mound while reaching up to try to field the high chopper. Hernández went to the ground after grabbing the ball and making a sidearm throw then went wide while Acuña tumbled after passing the base and landed awkwardly on his left wrist that was irritated twice during the regular season. Acuña went to second base because of the errant throw after being tended to for several moments.

After trying glasses in the field and getting eyedrops early in the game, Freeman apparently had no problems seeing when he doubled home Acuña for a 2-1 lead before Ozuna followed with another double. Reliever Brusdar Graterol got the first out before giving up three consecutive hits, including Dansby Swanson's two-run double and Austin Riley's RBI single. Rookie Cristian Pache capped the inning with an RBI single that made it 7-1.

"They're similar to us as far as they build on momentum really well," Kershaw said. "It just seems like they have that domino effect when one thing gets going. They just continue to build on that. And they've got great hitters, too."

Freeman and Ozuna each added RBI singles in the eighth.

"We have fun today," Ozuna said. "Yesterday, before we start, we were on a little streak. Today, we come in with the same energy and give our best."

Atlanta had gotten even 1-1 in the fourth when Ozuna turned an 86 mph slider from Kershaw into a 109 mph rocket that went 422 feet to left for his second postseason homer. Ozuna went even deeper in the seventh, a 434-foot shot to straightaway center.

Wilson became the third-youngest pitcher to allow one or no hits over at least six innings in a postseason game. He struck out five and walked one, starting with a 1-2-3 first on 10 pitches.

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"Once I got out there and threw the first pitch I felt calm, cool and collected," Wilson said. "We were able to stick to the game plan and that helped a bunch to execute pitches."

Kershaw, scratched from his scheduled start in Game 2 two days earlier because of back spasms, struck out four, walked one and allowed four runs on seven hits in five-plus innings. He is now 11-12 with 4.31 ERA in postseason, as opposed to his 175-76 record and 2.43 ERA in the regular season during his 13 years in the big leagues.

Ríos, batting seventh and the fourth left-hander in a row in the Dodgers starting lineup against Wilson, homered to right leading off the third.

After being left off the NL Division Series roster because of a groin injury, and not playing in the NLCS opener, Ríos homered when starting the last two games. He had one of the Dodgers' postseason record five on Wednesday night.

"It's tough. We've got three left," Ríos said. "We've just got to win 'em."

WIND BLOWN

Major League Baseball said it wanted to keep the roof open at \$1.2 billion Globe Life Field — barring rain — when the agreement was reached for the new home of the Texas Rangers to host three rounds of the playoffs in the pandemic-shortened season. Fox reported during the telecast that Roberts told umpire Cory Blaser between innings that Kershaw and first baseman Max Muncy were having trouble seeing. The reported wind speed at the start of the game was 6 to 15 mph.

TOP OF THE ORDER

Acuña, Freeman and Ozuna — batting 1-2-3 for the Braves — were a combined 8 for 14, driving in six runs and scoring six.

"Coming off the game we had last night, we might have thought we needed an offensive day and those guys took care of business," Snitker said.

GIVING 'EM UP

Kershaw has now allowed 27 postseason homers, second most in history behind Andy Pettitte (31).

More AP MLB: <https://apnews.com/MLB> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

DEA recruits cite 'monkey noises' among claims of racism

By JIM MUSTIAN Associated Press

At the Drug Enforcement Administration's Training Academy in Virginia last year, an instructor on the firing range called out a name that was shared by two trainees, one Black and one white.

When both responded, the white instructor clarified, "I meant the monkey."

That behavior, as alleged in an internal complaint, didn't stop there. The instructor also was accused of going on the loudspeaker in the tower of the outdoor firing range to taunt black trainees by making "monkey noises."

"We were like, 'It's 2019. That shouldn't even be a thing that we're dealing with,'" said Derek Moise, who did not hear the noises himself but recalled the discomfort they caused his fellow Black trainees who did. "Everybody knows what those sounds and noises stand for."

As the DEA continues a decades-long struggle to diversify its ranks, it has received a string of recent complaints describing a culture of racial discrimination at its training academy in which minorities are singled out, derided with insults and consistently held to a higher standard than their white counterparts, according to interviews with former recruits and law enforcement officials and records obtained by The Associated Press.

In one case, a Black recruit was told his skin color made him a surefire candidate for undercover work. In another, a Hispanic woman, chatting in Spanish with a fellow trainee, was admonished to "speak English, you are in the United States." At least two of the complaints prompted internal DEA investigations, one of which remains ongoing.

The complaints, which are not typically made public, offer a rare window into the frustration minorities have voiced about their treatment at DEA since the filing of a 1977 civil rights lawsuit that remains

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unresolved despite a series of court orders governing the agency's hiring and promotion practices. Last year, a federal judge ruled that DEA had run afoul of court orders intended to remove subjectivity from agent promotions.

Like other federal law enforcement agencies, including the FBI, the DEA has struggled to fill its ranks with minorities. Of the agency's 4,400 special agents, just 8% are Black and 10% are Hispanic.

The DEA said it could not immediately provide a racial breakdown of recent graduates of the Quantico, Virginia, academy, which puts through multiple classes a year of about 50 to 60 trainees each.

"DEA takes allegations of misconduct very seriously and will not tolerate discriminatory behavior of any kind," the agency said in a statement. "DEA is committed to recruiting, retaining and promoting a workforce that reflects the diversity of our country and the people we serve."

In the case of the firing range instructor making "monkey noises," at least two Black trainees raised their concerns to a DEA supervisor, who sent them up the chain of command, prompting Special Agent Jay Mortenson to be removed from his post on the firing range. But to the disappointment of the recruits, he was not disciplined before retiring.

The DEA told AP the instructor was "promptly reassigned" after agency leadership learned of the alleged "inappropriate behavior." The agency said it has "no authority to pursue an administrative action" because its internal affairs arm, the Office of Professional Responsibility, was still investigating when Mortenson retired last year. His retirement ended that probe.

Contacted by AP by telephone, Mortenson called the allegations "incorrect" but said "I'm not going to talk to you about it" before hanging up.

The recruits who originally accused Mortenson are still employed by the DEA and not permitted to speak publicly about the incidents.

Former recruits who spoke to AP said racism permeated their time at the academy from their first day of basic training, alleging exceptions were routinely made for underperforming white trainees while Blacks were held to an appreciably higher standard.

"They weren't going to let me graduate and become an agent no matter what," said Theo Brown, a Black recruit from Marietta, Georgia, who contends he was unfairly dismissed in early 2018. "They put you in situations where they can fail you at something subjective, and it's basically your word against theirs."

Brown said he was pepper-sprayed three times in a single training exercise while other trainees were sprayed once. It got to the point, he said, that other trainees didn't want to work near him because of the "special attention" he was receiving.

Academy instructors maintained Brown fell short short in several disciplines, citing his "lack of enthusiasm" and issues with his report writing, according to DEA records. They denied that discrimination played a role in his dismissal.

More recently, the DEA opened an internal investigation into claims brought by Saudhy Bliss, a Hispanic woman from Orlando, Florida, who says she was dismissed from the academy last year after being treated in a "hostile manner." She alleges she was called a "f---up" in front of her colleagues, "required to drag a 220-pound-plus male across a great distance" and even struck in the forehead by a simulation round that caused her to bleed profusely.

DEA instructors said Bliss was dismissed for failing handgun qualifications and raid trainings.

"There is compelling evidence that a number of the individuals assigned to train this particular class were openly discriminatory towards African-Americans, Hispanics and female trainees," Bliss' attorney, Louis F. Robbio, wrote in a letter last year to the DEA's acting administrator, referring as well to the incident involving the monkey noises on the firing range.

Moise, who earned a master's degree in criminology and played wide receiver at Florida Atlantic University, said he wanted to work for the DEA from the time he was 6 years old when he witnessed a drug raid at a neighbor's home in Miami.

"My mom felt that much more comfortable letting me play outside after that," he recalled. "I saw those yellow DEA letters and thought they were the coolest people on Earth."

Moise says he never tried drugs and stayed out of trouble because he always planned to apply for DEA.

But from the moment he arrived at the academy, he said, it was clear he would be judged on a different scale.

Moise said he ultimately was dismissed after instructors determined he used excessive force by firing one too many rounds at an assailant during a simulation. At the same time, he said, the academy graduated white trainees who, instead of saving their partner in the same simulation, "threw their gun under the bed and just froze."

"There was never any praise for anything that we did as minorities, and we were always being made examples of," said Moise, who has since taken a state government job. "You can't tell me that there's not more Black people who qualify."

Mustian reported from New York.

Thousands arrive in Hawaii on first day pre-travel testing

By CALEB JONES The Associated Press

Honolulu (AP) — About 8,000 people landed in Hawaii on the first day of a pre-travel testing program that allowed travelers to come to the islands without quarantining for two weeks if they could produce a negative coronavirus test.

Angela Margos was among the first passengers in San Francisco to get on a plane to Hawaii Thursday morning.

"Vacation, peace of mind," said Margos, a nurse from San Carlos, California, of why she's flying to Hawaii. "I need time to relax, unwind."

The new testing program is an effort to stem the devastating downturn the pandemic has had on Hawaii's tourism-based economy. Officials had touted the mandatory quarantine rule as an integral part of Hawaii's early success in keeping the coronavirus at bay.

But gaps in the pre-travel testing program coupled with increasing cases of COVID-19 across the U.S. have raised questions about whether Hawaii is ready to safely welcome back vacationers.

And when local restrictions were eased before summertime holidays, community spread of the disease spiked to alarming levels, forcing a second round of stay-at-home orders for residents and closures for non-essential businesses.

Margos ran into hiccups with getting her test. She first did it at the hospital where she works, only to find out it wasn't an approved site for United Airlines and the state of Hawaii. She then paid \$105 for a drive-thru test, but she was later informed there was an error with that test.

Margos ultimately paid \$250 for a fast-result test Thursday at the airport in San Francisco, which came back negative.

Opponents of the testing program have said a single test 72 hours before arrival — especially when coupled with the option to fly without a test and still quarantine — is not enough to keep island residents safe.

Kathleen Miyashita and her husband were among those who came to Hawaii Thursday without getting tested. They said they plan to quarantine at their family's farm on Oahu.

"We chose to do the 14-day quarantine," Miyashita said. "We have no issues with having food being brought in. It's like a quarantining haven in terms of having fresh fruits and vegetables at home."

She said she and her husband were "not at all" concerned about being asymptomatic carriers of the disease.

"We've been traveling, and we just take precautions," she said, adding that they had already done one quarantine in Hawaii about two months ago.

Hawaii's economy is almost entirely built around tourism, and local families who rely on the sector to survive need to return to work.

More than 100 of Hawaii's approximately 4,000 restaurants, bakeries and caterers have closed permanently and more than 50% predict they will not survive the coming months, officials have said.

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Monica Toguchi Ryan, whose family has owned and operated The Highway Inn restaurant on Oahu for over 70 years, said the lack of tourism has been crippling.

"The restaurant and service industry has suffered so much during this pandemic," Toguchi Ryan said. "Restaurants have not received any federal relief since the spring and are struggling to pay their expenses. Some restaurants have closed entirely, unable to pay for their rent, food supplies and staff wages."

Toguchi Ryan joined Democratic Gov. David Ige on Wednesday to talk about a new restaurant debit card that will give some unemployed Hawaii residents \$500 to spend at local restaurants over the next 60 days. The \$75 million program is being funded by federal CARES Act money and is aimed at stimulating the local economy.

"When restaurants like us have more customers, we buy more from our suppliers and we reinvest the money several times over in our local economy," Toguchi Ryan said.

Hawaii, which has about 1.4 million residents, reported 10 additional coronavirus deaths and more than 100 newly confirmed cases on Wednesday. On Oahu, home to the famed Waikiki Beach and the state's most populated island, the positivity rate was nearly 4%.

County mayors have criticized the state's plan for a single test prior to flying and want a mandatory second test for all arriving passengers.

Kauai island Mayor Derek Kawakami said last week that his initial proposal for secondary testing was rejected by the governor.

Big Island Mayor Harry Kim said his county would opt out of the pre-travel testing program entirely and continue to require all arriving visitors to quarantine for two weeks. Both now have different plans.

The governor said this week that mayors could implement certain secondary testing measures on their respective islands, but the cost and logistics of running such programs would be left to the counties.

Maui and Kauai counties decided on voluntary secondary testing for visitors. The Big Island will require secondary rapid screening upon arrival for visitors to avoid quarantine. Oahu officials have said they want to put in place another layer of screening but do not yet have the testing capacity.

The mixed bag of county and state rules could create chaos for vacationers who have not properly prepared for the various screening requirements, especially those traveling to the Big Island.

"This second test upon arrival to Hawaii island will provide an extra layer of protection for our community," Kim said in a statement Monday. "Virtually, all medical and coronavirus experts agree for the necessity of more than one test."

Those arriving on the Big Island — home to Hawaii's active volcanoes and the site of a 2018 eruption that wiped out entire neighborhoods — will take a mandatory rapid antigen test when they land.

Results will be available in about 15 minutes, and travelers who test negative will not be required to quarantine. People who test positive will be required to immediately get a more accurate PCR test and then quarantine until their results are available, usually within 36 hours.

People who test positive in the state, whether on vacation or at home, are required to isolate and cannot fly until they no longer have the virus.

Associated Press journalist Haven Daley in San Francisco contributed to this report.

Power still out to thousands in California to prevent fires

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Thousands of people in Northern California remained without power Friday after a utility cut off service to prevent powerful winds from damaging equipment and sparking wildfires amid a fall heat wave.

Restorations began Thursday afternoon, and by evening Pacific Gas and Electric said about 30,000 customers were still in the dark — down from about 45,000 the previous night. All electricity was expected to be restored by late Friday after the second round of hot, dry gusts this week moved through the region and raised the risk of fires, PG&E said.

It has been a disastrous wildfire season in California, with more than 8,500 blazes burning more than

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6,400 square miles (16,000 square kilometers) since the start of the year.

The Trump administration this week rejected California's request for disaster relief funds aimed at cleaning up the damage from six recent fires.

Gov. Gavin Newsom formally submitted a letter to the White House on Sept. 28 asking for a major disaster declaration, said Brian Ferguson, with the governor's Office of Emergency Services.

Ferguson could not provide a reason for the federal government's denial.

A major disaster declaration allows for cost-sharing for damage, cleanup and rebuilding between the state and federal governments. It also activates relief programs led by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

California did not ask for a specific dollar amount because damage estimates are not complete, Ferguson told the Los Angeles Times on Thursday.

Meanwhile, winds in the Sierra Nevada foothills and San Francisco Bay Area topped 55 mph (89 kph), and humidity levels plummeted, making for critical fire conditions, said Scott Strenfel, the utility's senior meteorologist.

"Fuels are drying out, and they're just very susceptible to any fire ignition, just given these levels of dryness that we're seeing," Strenfel said Thursday.

PG&E began cutting power Wednesday evening as the first wind event began. Many in the wine country north of San Francisco were feeling drained by what seems like a never-ending wildfire season.

Kathleen Collins has had to evacuate her home in the mountains of Napa County four times in the past five years because of fires. This summer, she lived in a motel for two weeks after leaving her home when a massive cluster of fires reached her tiny community of Pope Valley.

"It's all very stressful. People are not happy, but there's not much they can do about it," said Collins, assistant manager at Silverado Ace Hardware store in Calistoga, the town of 5,000 people who were allowed to return home just last week after the Glass Fire forced them out in September. The blaze that ravaged areas of Napa and Sonoma counties was contained Wednesday after destroying more than 1,500 homes and other buildings.

People have been buying generators, electrical cords, flashlights, batteries, gas cans and other supplies to help them deal with the latest outage, expected to last through Friday evening, Collins said.

The utility better targeted outages this time after it was criticized in 2019 for cutting power to about 800,000 customers and leaving about 2 million people in the dark for days.

Most of this year's fires have occurred since mid-August. Thirty-one people have died, and more than 9,200 buildings have been destroyed.

Smoke from the huge Creek Fire burning since Sept. 4 in the central part of the state was still affecting air quality as far south as Los Angeles, the National Weather Service said. The weather service issued heat advisories through Friday, with temperatures expected to reach triple digits in many parts of the state.

In Southern California, a brush fire Thursday near Redlands triggered a small evacuation as it grew to more than 100 acres (40 hectares). It was about 50% contained.

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

Ex-Mexico army chief arrested in LA on drugs, money charges

By E. EDUARDO CASTILLO and STEFANIE DAZIO Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Former Mexican defense secretary Gen. Salvador Cienfuegos, who led the country's army for six years under ex-President Enrique Peña Nieto, has been arrested on drug trafficking and money laundering charges at Los Angeles International Airport, U.S. and Mexican sources said Thursday.

Two people with knowledge of the arrest said Cienfuegos was taken into custody on a U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration warrant. One of the people said the warrant was for drug trafficking and money laundering charges. Both spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized

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to discuss the case publicly.

The DEA declined to comment Thursday night.

Mexico's Foreign Minister, Marcelo Ebrard, wrote on his Twitter account that U.S. Ambassador Christopher Landau had informed him of the retired general's arrest and that Cienfuegos had a right to receive consular assistance.

A senior Mexican official, who also spoke on the condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to give details of the case, said Cienfuegos was arrested when he arrived at the Los Angeles airport with his family. His family members were released and he was taken to the Metropolitan Detention Center.

Cienfuegos served from 2012 to 2018 as secretary of defense under Peña Nieto. He is the highest-ranking former Cabinet official arrested since the top Mexican security official Genaro Garcia Luna was arrested in Texas in 2019. Garcia Luna, who served under former President Felipe Calderón, has pleaded not guilty to drug trafficking charges.

Cienfuegos is 72 years old and has retired from active duty. Mexico's Defense Department had no immediate reaction to the arrest.

Mike Vigil, the DEA's former chief of international operations, said when he was in Mexico in 2012 he heard corruption allegations about Cienfuegos.

"There were always allegations of corruption, nothing we could sink our teeth into. That was kind of unheard of because Mexico has always put the military on a pedestal," said Vigil, author of the book "The Land of Enchantment Cartel."

"The corruption is just coming to roost, because individuals who were once untouchable are now getting arrested," Vigil said. "If they cooperate (with U.S. prosecutors) there are others who are going to be falling, noting U.S. officials 'usually don't want to trade down, they usually trade up,' seeking evidence against equal or higher-ranking officials. 'It's really a precarious situation for Mexico to have two Cabinet-level officials arrested in the U.S.'"

Whatever the charges, it will be a tough blow for Mexico, where the army and navy are some of the few remaining respected public institutions.

While current President Andrés Manuel López Obrador has vowed to go after corruption and lawbreaking under past administrations, he has also relied more heavily on the army — and charged it with more tasks, ranging from building infrastructure projects to distributing medical supplies — than any other president in recent history.

Under Cienfuegos, the Mexican army was accused of frequent human rights abuses, but that was true of both his predecessors and his successor in the post.

The worst scandal in Cienfuegos' tenure involved the 2014 army killings of suspects in a grain warehouse.

The June 2014 massacre involved soldiers who killed 22 suspects at the warehouse in the town of Tlatlaya. While some died in an initial shootout with the army patrol — in which one soldier was wounded — a human rights investigation later showed that at least eight and perhaps as many as a dozen suspects were executed after they surrendered.

Dazio reported from Los Angeles. Associated Press Writer Mark Stevenson contributed from Mexico City.

3 key Trump policies teed up for Supreme Court action

By MARK SHERMAN and JESSICA GRESKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Controversial Trump administration policies on the census, asylum seekers and the border wall, held illegal by lower courts, are on the Supreme Court's agenda Friday.

The most pressing case before the justices when they meet privately, and by telephone because of the coronavirus pandemic, involves the census. They are considering the Trump administration's appeal to be allowed to exclude people living in the U.S. illegally from the population count that will be used to allocate seats in the House of Representatives — and by extension the Electoral College — among the states for the next 10 years.

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The administration wants the court to hear arguments in December and decide the case before Trump's Jan. 10 deadline to send the figures to Congress. The justices could reveal their plans as early as Friday.

If the court adopts the proposed timetable and Senate Republicans succeed in confirming President Donald Trump's nominee, Amy Coney Barrett, to the court quickly, she would be able to take part in arguments in the case.

With a vote on Barrett's confirmation expected before the end of October, Friday's meeting could be the court's last with one seat vacant since the death of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg last month.

The high court could also announce that it will review an administration policy that makes asylum-seekers wait in Mexico for U.S. court hearings, which has forced tens of thousands of people to return to Mexico since it was announced early in 2019.

Known informally as "Remain in Mexico," the policy became a key pillar of the administration's response to a surge of asylum-seeking families from Central America at the southern border. It also drew criticism for having people wait in dangerous cities.

Also on the agenda is the administration's appeal of a ruling that Defense Department officials exceeded their authority when they transferred money in the Pentagon budget to border wall construction, despite Congress' refusal to give Trump all the money he wanted for the project.

Lower courts sided with states and environmental groups that challenged the transfer as a violation of the Constitution's provision giving Congress the power to determine spending. A separate suit from members of Congress also is making its way to the court.

The justices blocked the court rulings in both the asylum seekers and border wall cases, leaving the policies in effect. Arguments wouldn't heard before next year and the issues would have much less significance if Joe Biden were to become president. He could rescind Trump's policy forcing asylum seekers to wait in Mexico, for example.

The outcome of the census case, though, could affect the distribution of political power for the next 10 years. The census also helps determine the distribution of \$1.5 trillion in federal funding annually.

In early September, a panel of three federal judges in New York said Trump's order was unlawful because those in the country illegally qualify as people to be counted in the states they reside.

The administration told the court that the president retains "discretion to exclude illegal aliens from the apportionment based on their immigration status."

The American Civil Liberties Union, representing a coalition of immigrant advocacy groups, said Trump's violation of federal law is "not particularly close or complicated."

The Supreme Court separately allowed the administration to end the actual census count this week, blocking a court order that would have kept the count going until the end of the month.

Lives Lost: A woman of uncommon kindness, unshackled again

By MATT SEDENSKY AP National Writer

She was the little girl whose vocabulary burgeoned as she devoured book after book, and the student who earned a degree and went back for one more. She was the woman who children flocked to and teens turned to for mentoring or tutoring or to be spoiled with clothes and sneakers.

And time and again, Saferia Johnson was the fast friend, who followed a chance encounter with an outflow of kindness that ensured would-be strangers instead lived lives forever intertwined.

There was a confounding story that would be told about Johnson that ultimately would upend her life, but those who knew her have others they want heard: Of a Georgia woman so generous, of an old soul wise beyond her years, of someone whose goodness seemed to have no limits.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is part of an ongoing series of stories remembering people who have died from the coronavirus around the world.

Tywanne Floyd met Johnson at training for a customer service job and before long, Johnson was so

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key in the life of her new friend's 3-year-old daughter, she was like a second mom.

"That smile," she says in awe, trailing off as she hints at the magnetism of her friend.

James Moye was adjusting to life as a single father, sitting in a stairwell at his apartment building, trying to braid his daughter's hair when Johnson happened to pass by. She took over the girl's hair and soon was watching her on weekends, helping her with schoolwork and signing her up for gymnastics.

"You don't find genuine love like that," he says.

Nikki Brown met her in their college dorm and by the time she fretted about being pregnant a few years later, there was no one besides Johnson she'd want accompanying her to the doctor. After the child arrived, she was the ever-present godmother, showering the baby in gifts.

"The smartest girl I've ever known," she says. "The sweetest soul."

And so it repeated: Glowing words of the Thomasville, Georgia, native as a churchgoing, mild-mannered woman who had been a motherly figure to so many and who now doted on two of her own.

Until the U.S. government had words of its own.

The indictment came just before Christmas four years ago. Prosecutors claimed Johnson, her boyfriend and another man ran a fraud scheme, filing fake tax returns and collecting the refunds.

All told, the government would eventually claim, it was scammed of nearly \$1.5 million, with almost \$500,000 going to accounts in the names of the three defendants.

Johnson told few what she was accused of and to those she did, it seemed puzzling.

Her mother, Tressa Clements, wondered how it could be true, when she was helping pay her daughter's bills and she had to rely on a public defender because there was no money for another attorney. Floyd thought of her friend's beat-up car, of the modest home she rented, how she never spent lavishly on clothes or wore a ring on fingers she complained were too chubby.

"It just didn't make sense," Floyd said.

Johnson didn't absolve herself completely from the charges, her friends and family say, but maintained she wasn't guilty of everything. More than anything, she felt she'd been conned by the father of her children. For their sake, she saw one path forward.

"The only way I'm going to get beyond this is to plead to this and get it over with," her mother said she told her.

She entered a plea agreement that brought a 70-month sentence. A woman whose mother called her Rabbit and who neighborhood children knew as Ferry now would be known as Inmate #00313-120.

When she arrived at prison in Marianna, Florida, one other new inmate awaited processing and Johnson again made a new friend. Scarlett King remembers the anxiety that day, how Johnson introduced herself and conversation bloomed.

King, too, had never been in trouble before getting caught up in a fraud scheme with her boyfriend. She spoke of a daughter she'd just dropped off at college; Johnson told her of two young sons she left behind. Johnson talked of her work with juveniles in the justice system. They both expressed fear about what came next.

Johnson grabbed her hand and held it: "We're going to be fine," she said. "It's going to be OK."

When the process was over, the two learned they were bunkmates and, through subsequent transfers that brought the women to two other prisons, they remained close friends.

Johnson prayed at Sunday services and showed up to Bible studies and prayer sessions and worked prison jobs as an orderly and in the laundry and in a warehouse driving a forklift.

She stayed in touch with those she mentored and found ways to make sure they felt her love, even enlisting another inmate to knit baby clothes she sent to an expectant mother. She helped tutor some inmates pursuing high school diplomas and scurried to help others when they needed a hand carrying a heavy load from the commissary.

Johnson even came to peace with the man she blamed for her incarceration, writing a letter to the father of her children that King said expressed forgiveness for what had happened.

When the pandemic began, Johnson worried what could happen knowing her diabetes and other medical

issues could add to her risk. She told her mother she applied for compassionate release but was denied by the warden. She tested positive on July 19 and filed paperwork 10 days later seeking an attorney to pursue her release. By then, she was hospitalized and worsening.

On August 2, her mother stood outside the window of her ICU unit. A nurse took pity on her, sneaking a cell phone in a surgical glove inside so she could speak to her only child. She told her Rabbit she loved her. She prayed to God she'd be healed.

By morning, Johnson was dead at 36. When the news reached King, she fell to her knees. Clements went home to her two grandsons, 5-year-old Kyrei and 7-year-old Josiah, and told them their mother caught the virus and was going away to be with the Lord. At the funeral, Moyer brought his two daughters to the gravesite and they stayed late, sobbing.

All of them think of what might have been for this woman who dreamed of her release, of earning a doctorate, of rebuilding what was broken and, more than anything, returning to her boys to be the mom they deserved.

"Her life was gonna be beautiful," Clements says.

Sedensky can be reached at msedensky@ap.org and <https://twitter.com/sedensky>.

Court hearing resumes in plot to kidnap Michigan governor

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (AP) — Five of the men accused in a plot to kidnap Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer will return to federal court Friday as a hearing on whether there is enough evidence to charge them continues.

A federal judge also plans to consider whether two of the men, including the Michigan man described by federal authorities as the ringleader of the effort, should remain in jail before trial.

U.S. Magistrate Judge Sally Berens on Tuesday ordered Kaleb Franks, Daniel Harris and Brandon Caserta held without bond until trial, saying their repeated participation in discussions about abducting Michigan's Democratic governor and surveillance of Whitmer's vacation home validated the decision. Berens is scheduled to make bond decisions Friday for Adam Fox and Ty Garbin.

A sixth man, Delaware resident Barry Croft, was separately ordered to be transferred to Michigan earlier this week.

The preliminary hearing began Tuesday and featured hours of testimony by a lead FBI agent on the Michigan case, revealing new detail about investigators' use of confidential informants, undercover agents and encrypted communication to thwart the purported scheme.

Agent Richard Trask also said members of anti-government paramilitary groups from several states discussed abducting Whitmer or Virginia's Democratic governor, Ralph Northam, during a June meeting in Ohio.

Fox and Croft were among those who attended that session, according to testimony and federal court documents. But it was not clear if talk of targeting Northam went beyond that meeting, and nothing from the complaint or Trask's testimony indicated that anyone had been charged with a plot involving Northam.

The men could get up to life in prison if convicted.

Several of their defense attorneys implied during questioning on Tuesday that their clients were "big talkers" who did not intend to follow through with action.

Prosecutors, though, said some of the men conducted surveillance of Whitmer's northern Michigan house in August and September and four of the men had planned to meet last week to pay for explosives and exchange tactical gear.

Seven other men purportedly linked to an extremist paramilitary group called the Wolverine Watchmen were charged in state court last week with providing material support for terrorist acts and possession of a firearm while committing a felony. Michigan's attorney general charged an eighth person — a Wisconsin man — in that case on Thursday.

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Trump, Biden go at it — from a distance — in town halls

By JONATHAN LEMIRE, WILL WEISSERT and DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump and Democrat Joe Biden squared off, in a way, Thursday night in dueling televised town halls that showcased striking differences in temperament, views on racial justice and approaches to a pandemic that has reshaped the nation.

Coming just two and a half weeks before Election Day, the night offered crystalizing contrasts and a national, if divided, audience. But it seemed unlikely to have produced a needed moment for a president running out of time or opportunities to appeal beyond his core base.

He was defensive about his administration's handling of the coronavirus, which has claimed more than 215,000 American lives, and evasive when pressed about whether he took a required COVID-19 test before his first debate with Biden. Angry and combative, Trump refused to denounce the QAnon conspiracy group — and only testily did so regarding white supremacists.

The president also appeared to acknowledge revelations from a recent New York Times report that he was in debt and left open the possibility that some of it was owed to a foreign bank. But he insisted that he didn't owe any money to Russia or any "sinister people" and suggested that \$400 million in debt was a "very, very small percentage" compared to his overall assets.

Biden denounced the White House's handling of the virus, declaring that it was at fault for closing a pandemic response office established by the Obama administration in which he served. Though vague at times, he suggested he will offer clarity on his position on expanding the Supreme Court if Trump's nominee to the bench is seated before Election Day.

After Biden's 90-minute town hall event formally concluded, the candidate spent another half-hour taking questions from those in the audience who didn't get an opportunity during the televised program.

Trump and Biden were supposed to spend Thursday night on the same debate stage in Miami. But that faceoff was scuttled after Trump's coronavirus infection, which jolted the race and threatened the health of the American president.

Trump wouldn't say whether he had tested negative on the day of his first debate with Biden on Sept. 29, allowing only, "Possibly I did, possibly I didn't." Debate rules required that each candidate, using the honor system, had tested negative prior to the Cleveland event, but Trump spoke in circles when asked when he last tested negative.

The presidential rivals took questions in different cities on different networks: Trump on NBC from Miami, Biden on ABC from Philadelphia. Trump backed out of plans for the presidential faceoff originally scheduled for the evening after debate organizers said it would be held virtually following his COVID-19 diagnosis.

The town halls offered a different format for the two candidates to present themselves to voters, after the pair held a chaotic and combative first debate late last month. The difference in the men's tone was immediate and striking.

Trump was Trump. He was loud and argumentative, rebuking his FBI director, fighting with the host, Savannah Guthrie, complaining about the questioning — and eventually saying for the first time that he would honor the results of a fair election, but only after casting an extraordinary amount of doubt on the likelihood of fairness.

"And then they talk, 'Will you accept a peaceful transfer?'" Trump said. "And the answer is, 'Yes, I will.' But I want it to be an honest election, and so does everybody else."

He again sought to minimize revelations from a New York Times investigation that he has more than \$400 million in debt and suggested that reports are wrong that he paid little or no federal income taxes in most years over the past two decades.

Biden, meanwhile, took a far different, softer approach with audience questions. The former vice president, who struggled growing up with a stutter, stuttered slightly at the start of the program and at one point squeezed his eyes shut and slowed down his response to clearly enunciate his words. At times his answers droned on.

Holding a white cloth mask in one hand, the Democratic nominee brought a small card of notes onstage

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and referred to it while promising to roll back tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans. He said doing so would save, as he consulted his notes, "let me see ... \$92 billion."

Biden vowed to say before Election Day whether he will support expanding the number of justices on the Supreme Court if Democrats win the presidency and the Senate and hold the House after November.

He has for weeks refused to answer the question but went further Thursday night. He said, "I'm still not a fan" of expanding the court, but said his ultimate decision depended on how the confirmation of Amy Coney Barrett to the Supreme Court "is handled" and "how much they rush this."

Biden also blasted Trump's foreign policy, declaring that "'America first' has made 'America alone'" and "This president embraces all the thugs in the world." He turned introspective when asked what it would say if he lost.

"It could say that I'm a lousy candidate, that I didn't do a good job," Biden said. "But I think, I hope that it doesn't say that we're as racially, ethnically and religiously at odds as it appears the president wants us to be."

Biden said he plans to participate in next week's debate but he would ask Trump to take a COVID-19 test before arriving. "It's just decency" for everyone around him, including non-candidates like camera operators, Biden said.

The two men are still scheduled to occupy the same space for a debate for a second and final time next week in Nashville.

Lemire reported from New York. Additional reporting by Associated Press writers Bill Barrow in Wilmington, Delaware, and Zeke Miller and Alexandra Jaffe in Washington.

The Latest: Trump raises \$247.8M in Sept., far behind Biden

WASHINGTON (AP) — The latest on the presidential campaign (all times local):

11:10 p.m.

President Donald Trump's campaign and Republicans raised \$247.8 million in September — better than the month before, but still lagging far behind his Democratic challenger Joe Biden, who raised \$383 million over the same stretch.

Trump's campaign, the Republican National Committee and its joint fundraising committees finished the month with \$251.4 million cash on hand — dramatically less than the \$432 million Biden reported having in the bank just weeks before the Nov. 3 election.

Trump campaign spokesman Tim Murtaugh nonetheless insists the president is hitting the "final stretch with strength, resources, record & huge ground game needed to spread message and secure re-election."

Trump and Republicans jointly raised \$210 million in August, a robust sum dwarfed by the record \$364.5 million raised by Democrats and Biden.

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

President Donald Trump traveled to North Carolina and Florida on Thursday and participated in an NBC town hall from Miami at 8 p.m. Eastern. His Democratic challenger, Joe Biden, participated in an ABC town hall from Philadelphia at the same time.

Read more:

- Trump and Biden compete for TV audiences in dueling town halls.
- Poll by AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research finds majorities of Americans are highly critical of Trump's handling of the coronavirus pandemic and his own illness.
- Democratic vice presidential candidate Kamala Harris temporarily suspends in-person events after two campaign associates test positive for coronavirus.

HERE'S WHAT ELSE IS GOING ON:

10:10 p.m.

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A spokesperson for President Donald Trump's campaign is declaring that the president "defeated" town hall moderator, Savannah Guthrie, and derided the NBC "Today" host as a "surrogate" for Democrat Joe Biden's campaign.

Campaign communications director Tim Murtaugh also said after Thursday's event that the president "masterfully handled Guthrie's attacks and interacted warmly and effectively with the voters in the room."

The statement follows a contentious hourlong town hall during which Trump largely dodged tough questions from Guthrie and voters alike about his struggle to control the pandemic, his refusal to release his tax returns, his vague promises to fix the nation's health care system and his reluctance to condemn white supremacists and a conspiracy-theory group that believes Trump's critics are violent child molesters.

The president was visibly upset at times with Guthrie and said more than once that they were "on the same side." Trump has cast himself as a victim of media bias for years.

Biden had a separate town hall at the same time on ABC News.

9:50 p.m.

Democrat Joe Biden says President Donald Trump has not been "chastened" by the claims of racial injustice that have marked his presidency.

Asked what he would do if he lost the election, Biden said Thursday that he hopes that if he fails to beat Trump, then it doesn't mean "we are as racially, ethnically and religiously at odds with one another as it appears the president wants us to be."

Biden says if he loses he will return to teaching at the University of Pennsylvania. However, he also said he would continue to press for racial justice, deferring to the leaders such as the late Georgia Rep. John Lewis as having made a bigger impact than he ever would.

Biden says, "People need hope." He adds: "We're a diverse country. And unless we are able to treat people equally, we're never going to reach our potential."

9:35 p.m.

Joe Biden says there should be "zero discrimination" against transgender people and he promised to restore protections for them that President Donald Trump has sought to remove.

At his ABC News town hall Thursday, Biden said he would reverse Trump's moves to revoke protections for transgender people against sex discrimination in health care and restrict military service by transgender men and women. He also condemned violence against transgender women of color.

He told an anecdote about his late son, Beau Biden, helping pass a transgender protection law in Delaware while serving as state attorney general, an effort inspired by a worker in the attorney general's office.

The former vice president also recounted a story from his youth where he witnessed two men kissing and said his father turned to him and said, "Joey, it's simple: They love each other."

9:25 p.m.

Joe Biden is putting distance between his clean energy goals and the Green New Deal, saying the policy plan popular with progressives isn't achievable within the timeframes it has laid out.

At a Thursday town hall, he pointed to a piece of the deal that calls for 100% renewable and zero-emission energy sources by 2030. Biden says that "you can't get there" and that the country needs more time to invest in technologies that will eventually lead to net-zero emissions.

He's detailing his own climate plan that includes ending subsidies and tax breaks for oil companies, putting more land into conservation, planting more trees and plants to absorb carbon from the air and even finding more creative ways to use animal manure. Biden also says the country needs to ramp up its efforts around expanded use of electric vehicles.

His campaign website calls the plan a crucial framework for meeting the nation's climate challenges.

"My deal's a crucial framework, but not the New Green Deal," Biden said, misstating the plan's name.

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9:20 p.m.

President Donald Trump tried to end his contentious town hall meeting on a positive note.

Asked what he'd say to undecided voters, the Republican president declared Thursday night that he's "done a great job" in his first term and predicted that "next year is going to be better than ever before."

Trump's upbeat final answer followed an intense hourlong session in which voters and moderator Savannah Guthrie pressed him repeatedly on difficult topics. Trump was sweating at times and appeared visibly angry about the aggressive questions, especially early in the session.

In the end, Trump dodged specific questions about the timing of his personal coronavirus testing, his plans for the nation's health care and his tax returns. He also faced tough questions about white supremacy, conspiracy theories and his reluctance to embrace face masks during the pandemic.

Thursday's event was held in place of the second presidential debate, which was canceled after Trump's coronavirus diagnosis. He's scheduled to face Democrat Joe Biden next week for the final debate before Election Day.

9:15 p.m.

President Donald Trump demurred when asked whether he supports overturning Roe v. Wade.

Trump was asked Thursday about the ruling establishing abortion rights nationwide during a town hall in Florida. He said, "I don't want to do anything to influence anything right now."

Trump, who nominated Amy Coney Barrett to serve on the Supreme Court, says he worries that discussing his viewpoint could be seen as "trying to give her a signal" on how to rule.

Trump says that he didn't tell Barrett what decision to make and that he didn't want to do anything to influence her. He says he wants Barrett to get approved and "then I want her to go by the law, and I know she's going to make a great decision for our country."

Barrett has presented herself to senators as a judge committed to a strict reading of the Constitution, holding deep personal and religious beliefs but vowing to keep an open mind on what would be a 6-3 conservative-majority court if she is approved.

9:10 p.m.

Joe Biden says he is willing to take a position before Election Day on the idea of expanding the Supreme Court "depending on how" Republicans handle Judge Amy Coney Barrett's nomination.

Biden has refused to answer the question directly, calling it a distraction from Republicans' rush to confirm Barrett before Election Day.

His latest answer Thursday in an ABC News town hall suggests Biden might be willing to consider some Democrats' call to expand the court as a counter to GOP powerplays on the court in recent years.

Biden repeated Thursday that he's "not a fan" of so-called court packing. But he also said he believes Republicans are violating the spirit of the Constitution with a confirmation process while people are already voting in the presidential election.

Republicans four years ago refused to consider President Barack Obama's nomination of Judge Merrick Garland to succeed conservative Justice Antonin Scalia, who died in February of that presidential election year.

9:05 p.m.

Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden is failing to acknowledge the criticisms of the 1994 crime bill, which he as a member of the Senate helped write and pass and which has been used to illustrate systemic racism in the nation.

However, last year Biden publicly accepted responsibility for his part in the passage of the legislation, especially that which toughened sentences for crack cocaine possession, calling it a "big mistake" for its damage to the Black community.

He notes that members of the Congressional Black Caucus supported it, although today Black members of Congress, including his running mate California Sen. Kamala Harris, had previously criticized Biden for

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his part in it.

Biden notes his lead role in writing the Violence Against Women Act as part of the bill, but not the wholesale incarceration of Black men that mandatory minimum sentencing provisions, allowed by the bill, led to.

"The mistakes came in terms of what the states did locally," he says.

9:03 p.m.

President Donald Trump says he didn't ask Supreme Court nominee Amy Coney Barrett whether she'd rule in his favor should the Supreme Court have to decide the 2020 election.

Trump and Republicans have cited the election as one reason they've rushed to seat Barrett on the court. Trump said he does not know whether she'd rule in his favor in any litigation over the vote.

Trump said Thursday at his town hall event: "It would be totally up to her."

The president acknowledged he changed his standard for court appointments this year. In 2016, he argued that President Barack Obama should not be able to fill an empty seat eight months before the election. This year he is pushing Barrett through less than three weeks before Election Day.

Trump said the reason was Democratic opposition to his last nominee, Justice Brett Kavanaugh, who was accused of sexual harassment in his 2018 confirmation. "The whole ballgame changed when I saw the way they treated Judge Kavanaugh," Trump said. "I have never seen a human being treated so badly."

9 p.m.

President Donald Trump is acknowledging he may owe \$400 million as part of his business dealings, but he's not saying to whom he owes money.

Trump on Thursday night was pressed on a New York Times report citing tax returns showing he has business debts exceeding \$400 million.

He insisted that he didn't owe any money to Russia or any "sinister people."

He described his debts as a "very very small percentage." He said: "\$400 million is a peanut."

The president suggested repeatedly Thursday night that he would be willing to release details about his debts, but it's unclear when that might happen. He again repeated his refusal to release his tax returns more than four years after he first promised he would.

8:55 p.m.

President Donald Trump did not give a direct answer to a woman who identified herself as the mother of a Black son who asked him to describe his plan to protect Black and Latino males from police brutality.

Questioned Thursday during an NBC News town hall in Miami, Trump fell back on his oft-repeated claim that he's done more for the African American community than any president except Abraham Lincoln, who signed the Emancipation Proclamation.

He talked about criminal justice reform legislation he signed into law, opportunity zones, funding for historically Black colleges and universities.

Trump didn't say so Thursday, but he has made it clear that he stands with the police. He says the majority of police are good people whose profession is tarnished by a few "bad apples."

8:53 p.m.

Joe Biden is giving a winding explanation about why he should get the votes of young Black people who may not be enthusiastic about supporting him.

Biden initially touched on the criminal justice system during his ABC News town hall Thursday night, suggesting it needed to be made "fair" and "more decent" before moving on to an assortment of economic and educational policies.

He said Black Americans need to be given tools to help generate wealth, including increased loans for Black-owned businesses and homeowners.

The former vice president said America also needs to increase its funding for schools with lower-income families and suggesting adding more school psychologists in schools. He also proposed adding \$70 billion to historically Black colleges and universities.

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At the end of his five-minute answer, he offered to provide "a lot more" information to the young Black man who asked the question.

8:50 p.m.

The first half of President Donald Trump's NBC News town hall was dominated by testy exchanges with "Today" anchor Savannah Guthrie after she pushed him on a variety of issues.

Under the intense questioning Thursday, Trump told Guthrie "we should be on the same side."

Guthrie pressed Trump to say when he last tested negative for the coronavirus before his positive diagnosis earlier this month. He did not say.

She pressed him on his prolific tweeting, telling him he's not someone's "crazy uncle" who can tweet whatever they want. He said the tweet she focused on was a retweet.

Guthrie also challenged Trump on his dubious claims about mask-wearing, telling the president that his own government experts are "all in unison" on their benefits.

At one point she exclaimed, "I don't get it."

8:47 p.m.

President Donald Trump inaccurately contends there is a tremendous problem with voter fraud and takes issue with FBI Director Christopher Wray saying last month that he has not seen evidence of a widespread issue.

Trump said at a town hall event in Miami: "Well, then, he's not doing a very good job."

Trump has baselessly claimed voter fraud is widespread even though studies show it is rarer than being struck by lightning. He has also augmented routine election mishaps to sow distrust in the outcome of the coming election.

The president claimed that pro-Trump ballots were being dumped in garbage cans, an apparent reference to nine military ballots accidentally being thrown out in an elections office in a GOP-controlled Pennsylvania county. He also rattled off several examples of erroneous mail ballots being sent without noting they had all been corrected.

8:45 p.m.

President Donald Trump is insisting he's going to implement an improved and more affordable health care system, but he's refusing to give any details.

Trump attacked the Affordable Care Act over and over again when asked about his own plans to lower health care costs Thursday night at a town hall. He claimed, incorrectly, that he's already lowered health care costs. And while he's been making similar promises for more than four years, he has yet to outline a specific plan.

In the town hall, he said only that he would implement "much better health care under a much better price."

Trump also repeated his pledge to protect people with preexisting conditions, even though his administration is trying to overturn the Affordable Care Act -- and its protection for people with preexisting conditions -- at the Supreme Court.

8:40 p.m.

Democrat Joe Biden is hedging on whether he would mandate that all Americans be vaccinated against COVID-19.

Biden said Thursday during a town-hall-style event in Philadelphia that it would depend on the reliability of the vaccine.

He says that it would "have to have a very positive impact and how you can affect positively 85% of the American public," and that he would likely receive the vaccine if it met that criteria.

Biden says we "should be talking about" mandating the vaccine, knowing that it's difficult to enforce. But

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likewise, he says, it's difficult to enforce a mask mandate, though scientists suggest they slow the spread. "You can go to every governor and get them in a room," he says. "The words of a president matter, no matter whether they're good, bad or indifferent, they matter."

8:35 p.m.

Democrat Joe Biden says he doesn't plan to eliminate all the tax cuts enacted by President Donald Trump, just those that apply to the top earners.

Referencing tax cuts for the top 1%, Biden said Thursday at an ABC town hall: "That's what I'm talking about eliminating, not all the tax cuts that are out there."

His running mate, Sen. Kamala Harris, said in the vice presidential debate that Biden would repeal the tax bill passed by Congress and signed by Trump "on day one" but also that he wouldn't raise taxes on people making less than \$400,000. Vice President Mike Pence pointed out repealing the entire tax bill would eliminate tax cuts for lower earners.

He referred to a card he pulled from his pocket with facts and figures on how much money would be raised through certain tax rates.

Biden says raising taxes on corporations and high-income earners would bring in a lot of money to invest in programs that can "make your life easier."

Correa hits walkoff homer to keep Astros alive in ALCS

By BERNIE WILSON AP Sports Writer

SAN DIEGO (AP) — Before Carlos Correa headed to the plate in the ninth inning of Game 5 of the AL Championship Series, he told Dusty Baker, "Walkoff."

The 71-year-old manager replied, "Go ahead, man," and then said a quick prayer to his father and brother.

If the Houston Astros had been forced to go extra innings against the Tampa Bay Rays, Baker thought, he'd have to burn Framber Valdez, his projected Game 6 starter.

Baker's prayer was answered with a loud crack.

Correa homered with one out in the ninth, and the Astros beat the Rays 4-3 Thursday behind sensational pitching from five rookies, closing to 3-2 in the series.

Correa drove a fastball at the letters from Nick Anderson just past the palm trees to the right of the batter's eye at Petco Park, watched the ball for a few steps and then flung his bat. He was greeted at home by his ecstatic teammates and had a long hug with Baker.

"I don't mean no disrespect when I call my shot," said Correa, who added that he went to the indoor cage after his second and third at-bats to work with hitting coach Alex Cintron and make adjustments.

"We felt it and it was like, 'Wow. This feels good,'" the shortstop said.

He passed on his positive view to teammate Altuve after the eighth.

"I told Altuve walking off the field, 'I'm going to end it,'" Correa recalled. "I could feel that my swing was in sync, I could feel that my rhythm was good, I could feel that I wanted to drive the ball. When he threw me the fastball I swung good and got exactly what I wanted."

Correa is only 3 for 18 in the series, but two of the hits are homers.

Houston won a second straight elimination game thanks in large part to starter Luis Garcia and four fellow rookies, who combined to hold the Rays to two runs and four hits through 6 2/3 innings before Baker finally turned to a veteran, Josh James. Ryan Pressly, the seventh Astros pitcher, got the victory.

The Astros forced Game 6 on Friday, a rematch of the first game started by left-handers Blake Snell of Tampa Bay and Valdez.

In the ALCS for a fourth straight year, the Astros are trying to join the 2004 Boston Red Sox as the only teams to come back from a 3-0 deficit in a best-of-seven series. The Red Sox beat the New York Yankees in the ALCS and went on to win their first World Series in 86 seasons.

Otherwise, big league clubs leading 3-0 in a best-of-seven postseason series are 37-1.

"Boy, that will go down as one of greatest games in history and hopefully go down as one of greatest

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comebacks in history after two more games," said Baker, the first manager to take five different teams to the playoffs. "That's as big a game as I've been involved in. That's one of the reasons that I came back."

The Astros, who got into the playoffs with a 29-31 regular-season record, are trying to reach the World Series for the third time in four years. They are attempting to get there in a year when they have been criticized for their role in a cheating scandal en route to the 2017 title that was uncovered last offseason.

Correa also hit a walkoff homer in Game 2 of the 2017 ALCS off Aroldis Chapman of the New York Yankees. "I still made a good pitch, and he wasn't coming off the heater," Anderson said. "I don't think anybody is worried."

George Springer homered on opener John Curtiss' first pitch and Michael Brantley broke a tie with a two-run single. Houston became the first team with a leadoff and walk-off home run in a postseason game.

"You go from feeling pretty good about our chances to knowing the game was over a short time after that," Rays outfielder Kevin Kiermaier said.

Tampa Bay's Ji-Man Choi tied the game with a homer leading off the eighth.

Rookie Randy Arozarena continued his remarkable postseason by hitting his sixth homer in 12 games and Brandon Lowe also connected for the Rays, who need one more win to reach the Fall Classic for the second time.

Springer led off the bottom of the first by sending Curtiss' first pitch onto the second balcony of the Western Metal Supply Co. Building in the left field corner. On Wednesday night, he drove a two-run shot onto the third balcony to break a tie and lead the Astros to a 4-3 win.

It was his fourth homer this postseason and 19th of his career, the most in franchise history and tying Albert Pujols for fourth all-time.

After Lowe homered off Blake Taylor leading off the third to tie the game, Brantley hit a two-run single against Josh Fleming.

Arozarena pulled the Rays to 3-2 with an opposite-field shot to right-center off Enoli Paredes with one out in the fifth. Arozarena homered for the second straight game, third time this series and sixth time this postseason, tying the rookie record set by Tampa Bay's Evan Longoria in 2008.

His 20 postseason hits are two shy of Derek Jeter's rookie record in 1996.

Garcia held Tampa Bay hitless in two innings while striking out two and walking one. Taylor allowed one hit and one run in two-thirds of an inning, Paredes allowed one run and one hit in 1 2/3 innings, Andre Scrubb gave up two hits in 1 1/2 innings and Brooks Raley worked a scoreless inning with two strikeouts, including fanning Arozarena leading off the seventh.

Garcia, making his first postseason appearance, got out of a bases-loaded jam in the second. Paredes got consecutive strikeouts with runners on first and second in the fourth. Scrubb came on with a runner on first and one out in the fifth and struck out Yandy Diaz before allowing Ji-Man Choi's single. He got Manuel Margot to hit a grounder to third baseman Alex Bregman, who bare-handed it and threw him out to end the inning.

Baker's instincts won out again when he decided to leave in Garcia with two on and two out in the second. After a visit by pitching coach Brent Strom, Garcia walked Willy Adames and retired Mike Zunino on a flyout to the warning track.

Taylor took over opening the third and gave up Lowe's leadoff homer.

"We get to play another day," Baker said. "Tomorrow is huge. I mean, we're one step closer to getting over that mountain, and that hurdle that seemed way off in the distance a couple days ago."

TRAINER'S ROOM

Rays: Kiermaier was out of the starting lineup a second straight day after getting hit by a pitch on the left hand on Tuesday night. He pinch ran in the ninth.

UP NEXT

Astros: Valdéz lost the ALCS opener 2-1.

Rays: Snell pitched five innings to win the opener.

GOP pushes Barrett toward court as Democrats decry 'sham'

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

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republicans powered Supreme Court nominee Amy Coney Barrett closer to confirmation Thursday, pushing past Democratic objections and other priorities during the COVID-19 crisis in the drive to seat President Donald Trump's pick before the Nov. 3 election.

The Senate Judiciary Committee set Oct. 22 for its vote to recommend Barrett's nomination to the full Senate, with a final confirmation vote expected by month's end.

"A sham," said Sen. Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn. "Power grab," protested Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn. "Not normal," said Sen. Dick Durbin, D-Ill.

"You don't convene a Supreme Court confirmation hearing, in the middle of a pandemic, when the Senate's on recess, when voting has already started in the presidential election in a majority of states," declared Sen. Chris Coons, D-Del.

Republicans eager to fill the seat of the late Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg countered that Trump is well within bounds to fill the vacancy, and they have the votes to do it. Relying on a slim Senate majority, Trump's Republicans are poised to lock a 6-3 conservative court majority for years to come.

Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, said he understands Democrats' "disappointment." He said, "Their loss is the American people's gain."

Barrett's confirmation would bring the most pronounced ideological change on the court in 30 years, from the liberal icon Ginsburg to the conservative appeals court judge from Indiana. The shift is poised to launch a new era of court rulings on abortion, voting rights and other matters that are now open to new uncertainty.

The 48-year-old Barrett was careful during two days of public testimony not to tip her views on many issues, or take on the president who nominated her. Facing almost 20 hours of questions from senators, she declined to offer specifics beyond a vow to keep an open mind and take the cases as they come.

"It's not the law of Amy," the mother of seven told the senators at various times.

Barrett wasn't present for Thursday's hearing, the last of the week's sessions as the coronavirus pandemic hangs over the country. Two GOP senators on the committee tested positive for the virus and two campaign staff members for Democratic Sen. Kamala Harris, the vice presidential nominee, also tested positive, grounding her travel Thursday, the campaign announced.

Stakes are high for all sides. Liberals pounced when top Democrat Sen. Dianne Feinstein of California hugged the chairman, Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., as days of hearings closed, praising his handling of the process. They called for her immediate removal from leadership.

Among those testifying Thursday in support of Barrett's nomination, retired appellate court Judge Thomas Griffith assured senators that Barrett would be among justices who "can and do put aside party and politics."

But a coalition of civil rights groups opposed her nomination. Kristen Clarke, the president of the Lawyers Committee on Civil Rights, said the judge's unwillingness to speak forcefully for the Voting Rights Act and other issues should "sound an alarm" for Americans with a case heading to the high court.

"Our nation deserves a justice who is committed to preserving the hard-earned rights of all Americans, particularly the most vulnerable," Clarke testified.

Trump's Republican allies, led by Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, are reshaping the judiciary, having changed Senate rules at the start of the president's term to allow 51 votes, rather than the traditional 60, to advance Supreme Court nominees. With a slim 53-47 majority, her confirmation is almost assured. Two Republican senators, Alaska's Lisa Murkowski and Maine's Susan Collins, are opposed to voting before the election, but no others objected. Sen. Mitt Romney, R-Utah, said Thursday he will vote to confirm Barrett. She would be Trump's third justice on the high court.

A former Notre Dame Law School professor, Barrett would be the only one of her Supreme Court colleagues not groomed in the Ivy League. She had little courtroom experience when the Senate confirmed

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her to the federal bench in 2017, but quickly became a rising conservative star.

At the high court, she may be quickly called on, if confirmed, to consider the GOP-backed challenge to the Affordable Care Act in a case coming before the court Nov. 10, as well as any election-related challenges between Trump and Democrat Joe Biden in the heated presidential campaign.

"Amy's doing a fantastic job," Trump said at the White House before heading out to a Wednesday night campaign rally.

Trump has publicly stated he wants a justice swiftly seated for both situations. The president has said on Twitter he wants a justice who would rule differently than Chief Justice John Roberts, who helped preserve the law in previous cases. And he said he wants a justice in place for any disputes arising from the election, particularly concerning the surge of mail-in ballots expected during the pandemic.

Barrett frustrated senators during two days of public hearings by declining to disclose views on those matters, and many others, despite a collection of public statements and writings against abortion and the court's decisions on the health care law.

She brushed past Democrats' pressing questions about ensuring the date of next month's election or preventing voter intimidation, both set in federal law, and the peaceful transfer of presidential power. She also refused to express her view on whether the president can pardon himself.

When it came to major issues that are likely to come before the court, including abortion and health care, Barrett repeatedly promised to keep an open mind and said neither Trump nor anyone else in the White House had tried to influence her views.

Nominees typically resist offering any more information than they have to. But Barrett is the most open opponent of abortion nominated to the Supreme Court in decades. She refused to say whether the 1973 landmark *Roe v. Wade* ruling on abortion rights was correctly decided, though she has signed two ads against it.

"What was the point of the hearing if we don't know what she thinks about any issues?" Durbin asked at Thursday's final session.

Durbin said even if Barrett won't disclose her views, "We get direct answers every day from the president."

Republicans focused intently on her Catholic faith and what Graham called Barrett's "unashamedly pro-life" views as a role model for conservative women.

Others testifying Thursday included Laura Wolk, the first blind woman to be a law clerk for the Supreme Court, who told senators that Barrett's encouragement and support were life-changing.

"Her brilliance is matched only by her compassion," said Wolk, who also spent a year as a law clerk for Barrett.

But Crystal Good, a writer from West Virginia, shared the very personal story of seeking an abortion as an abused teen-ager. "Hear us when we ask you not to approve this nomination," she implored the senators.

Associated Press writers Matthew Daly and Jessica Gresko in Washington, Elana Schor in New York and Aaron Morrison contributed to this report.

Christie says he was wrong not to wear mask in White House

By ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie said Thursday that he was wrong not to wear a mask at the White House, after he and President Donald Trump both came down with the coronavirus.

Christie, in a statement, said he has recovered from COVID-19 after a weeklong stay in a hospital's intensive care unit. He called on all political leaders to advocate for face coverings, with the practice becoming increasingly politicized even as the pandemic has killed more than 217,000 Americans.

"I believed that when I entered the White House grounds, that I had entered a safe zone, due to the testing that and I and many others underwent every day," Christie said. "I was wrong."

Christie, who was at the White House for the announcement of Judge Amy Coney Barrett as the president's nominee to the Supreme Court and to a participate in several rounds of Trump's debate prep, seemingly

chided the president's attitude toward the disease.

"No one should be happy to get the virus and no one should be cavalier about being infected or infecting others," Christie said.

Trump has since called his illness as "a blessing from God," arguing it exposed him to promising therapeutics. He has also been an inconsistent advocate for mask wearing, holding large rallies of thousands of people where many of his supporters do not follow public health guidance to cover their faces.

At a town hall in Miami on Tuesday night, Trump said of Christie's statement, "He has to say that." The president insisted he supports masks and called Christie "a friend of mine."

Christie said, "Every public official, regardless of party or position, should advocate for every American to wear a mask in public, appropriately socially distance and to wash your hands frequently every day."

Black man's family views graphic video of in-custody death

By JIM MUSTIAN and MELINDA DESLATTÉ Associated Press

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) — Family members viewed long-secret body-camera video this week of a Black man who died in Louisiana State Police custody, their attorney calling it damning footage that shows troopers choking and beating the man, repeatedly jolting him with stun guns and dragging him face-down across the pavement.

Ronald Greene's mother and sister wailed "like they were at a funeral" Wednesday after meeting with Gov. John Bel Edwards and watching a half-hour of the footage of the May 2019 encounter that is now the subject of a federal civil rights investigation, their attorney told The Associated Press.

"This family has been lied to the entire time about what happened," said civil rights attorney Lee Merritt, who also viewed the footage. "The video was very difficult to watch. It's one of those videos like George Floyd and even Ahmaud Arbery where it's just so graphic."

The video, which police have refused to release publicly, only added to persistent questions about Greene's death, such as why State Police initially blamed it on a car crash and why they waited more than a year to discipline one of the responding officers. Master Trooper Chris Hollingsworth died in a single-car crash last month just hours after learning he had been fired over his role in the incident.

The meeting followed AP's disclosure of a 27-second audio clip from Hollingsworth's body-camera in which he can be heard telling a colleague, "I beat the ever-living f--- out of him," and of graphic pictures of Greene's body released by his family showing deep bruises to his face and cuts on his head.

Greene's family on Wednesday heard that exchange and a string of "abusive language" the troopers used during the arrest, Merritt said, even though Greene made no effort to flee following a high-speed chase.

At one point, an officer is seen placing a foot on Greene "while another hogties him," he said. One trooper can be heard calling Greene a "stupid son of a b---," Merritt said, while another cautions that "we shouldn't tase him any more."

"Ronald immediately surrendered at his first contact with law enforcement. When the vehicle stopped, he put his hands up and said, 'I'm sorry,'" Merritt said. "His dying words were, 'I'm sorry.'"

The AP also has obtained a medical report showing even an emergency room doctor doubted the initial police account of Greene's death from the moment he arrived dead at the hospital, bruised and bloodied with two stun-gun prongs in his back.

The medical report — cited in a federal wrongful death lawsuit but not previously made public — has been held up by Greene's family as evidence that troopers were actively engaged in a cover up.

"Does not add up," Dr. Omokhuale Omokhodion wrote.

Police initially told Greene's family he had "died on impact" after crashing into a tree, the doctor wrote.

But in an addendum to his report, Omokhodion wrote that law enforcement ultimately told him Greene "had been involved in a fight and struggle with them where he was tased three times." Two taser probes remained in Greene's back even after he arrived at Glenwood Regional Medical Center in West Monroe.

"History seems to be disjointed," Omokhodion wrote in his report. "Different versions are present."

The steady drumbeat of revelations has brought national exposure to the case and turned up the pres-

sure on Edwards, a Democrat, to order the release of the full body-cam videos from the six troopers on the scene.

The Louisiana Legislative Black Caucus, usually closely allied with Edwards, has called on the governor to release the footage.

"While the video may fall within the exception of Louisiana's public records law, it is imperative that in an effort of full transparency and public trust the video be released immediately," the caucus said in a statement.

State and federal prosecutors deemed it appropriate for the family to watch the video, Edwards said Thursday, but they believe it "would be detrimental for that video to be made public while it is in fact evidence that they are considering."

"I'm simply not going to sit here and characterize the video for you," the governor told reporters.

Greene's death, which followed a chase near Monroe over an unspecified traffic violation, was ruled accidental and attributed to cardiac arrest, said Renee Smith, the Union Parish coroner who was not in office when that determination was made.

Omokhodion's medical report noted that Greene, a 49-year-old barber, was "said to have been intoxicated" and "driving in excess of 110 mph" before losing control of his vehicle and driving off the road. It added that Greene had no chronic health problems.

The report's timeline also differs slightly from the one spelled out in a State Police crash report that omits any mention of troopers using force or even taking Greene into custody. The State Police report refers to Greene crashing into a tree as the "the most harmful event" in the crash.

Mustian reported from New York.

Biden campaign flips COVID-19 threat into new Trump contrast

By BILL BARROW Associated Press

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP) — Confronted with its first known coronavirus scare, Joe Biden's presidential campaign turned the threat into another contrast with President Donald Trump in the closing weeks of a general election battle dominated by how the Republican incumbent has handled the pandemic and his own COVID-19 diagnosis.

According to Biden's campaign manager, Jen O'Malley Dillon, the campaign learned late Wednesday that two people associated with the operation had tested positive for the coronavirus. By 10 a.m. Thursday, O'Malley Dillon had publicly identified a top aide to vice presidential nominee Kamala Harris as having contracted the virus and confirmed that the campaign would suspend travel temporarily for the California senator and her husband, Doug Emhoff.

Before the end of the day, the campaign announced a third positive case linked to Biden's campaign plane and up-to-date negative COVID-19 tests for Biden and Harris, along with medical experts' explanations of why they believed Biden was never exposed and wouldn't have to cancel upcoming travel.

With the election quickly approaching, the episode was another example of how Biden and Trump are responding in vastly different ways to the pandemic. While Trump's aides offered shifting and sometimes contradictory explanations following a White House coronavirus outbreak, Biden's team offered more specifics. And as Trump returns to aggressive campaign travel before massive, often unmasked crowds, the Biden campaign reinforced its commitment to following public health guidelines.

"It is because of the protocols that we have in place that we have been able to get this information, that we were able to identify what's happening here," O'Malley Dillon said, noting the campaign's regular testing for Biden, Harris and those who travel with them, along with strict enforcement of masks and social distancing at all events.

As Biden's campaign conducted contact tracing and made public disclosures, Trump traveled to North Carolina — where Harris was supposed to be on Thursday — for another rally. He greeted a tightly packed, mostly unmasked crowd there to hear a president who still isn't offering the public a detailed timeline

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of any COVID-19 tests or his treatment course since a three-day stay at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center after he announced on Oct. 2 that he had contracted the virus that has killed more than 217,000 Americans.

Biden has sought to make Trump's handling of the pandemic a pillar of his argument that Trump is irresponsible, unfit to lead and has cost American lives. A new Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research survey suggests many voters agree with the Democratic challenger.

The AP-NORC poll found 65% of respondents think Trump has not taken the coronavirus outbreak in the U.S. seriously enough. The poll, which was taken a week after Trump disclosed his own COVID-19 diagnosis, also shows that 54% of Americans disapprove of how the White House handled the episode.

Harris worked from her Washington home Thursday, according to an aide who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the senator's plans. She will campaign virtually through the weekend.

During a virtual fundraising call Thursday, Harris emphasized the contrast with Trump, telling donors that the Biden campaign's reaction "obviously stands in stark contrast to you-know-who."

The president disclosed his diagnosis via Twitter, but only after Bloomberg News confirmed that one of his top aides, Hope Hicks, had tested positive and was symptomatic after traveling that week aboard Air Force One.

Since then, the White House has repeatedly declined to say how many staffers have tested positive, citing privacy concerns. But reporters have brought additional cases to light.

The White House has not notified reporters, Secret Service agents or Trump campaign staffers who may have been exposed during the outbreak.

Trump's diagnosis came days after he mocked the 77-year-old Biden for his COVID-19 protocols as the two stood on the debate stage together for more than 90 minutes.

"I don't wear masks like him," Trump said. "Every time you see him, he's got a mask. He could be speaking 200 feet away from it — he shows up with the biggest mask I've ever seen."

Biden countered that the 74-year-old president has "been a fool" on masks.

Some basic questions remain about Trump's illness, including when he last tested negative before his diagnosis and what his lung scans revealed.

The White House also didn't reveal that the president's youngest son, Barron, tested positive for the coronavirus after first testing negative — as they had originally announced. The first lady finally disclosed that information Wednesday, after he had tested negative again.

The Democratic ticket's campaign events are socially distanced and require participants to wear masks. Staff often set chairs inside white plastic circles to denote 6 feet (1.8 meters) of distance. During a recent indoor speech at a North Carolina event for Harris, reporters were given and asked to wear KN95 masks. Staff for Biden's Florida campaign distributed N95 masks at a recent event at a Florida community center for seniors.

Biden and Harris typically keep their masks on when speaking indoors. Both travel on planes with a small number of staff and Secret Service. For Harris' travel, a second plane carries the rest of the staff. For Biden, a second plane carries the traveling press corps.

Biden's relative transparency on the coronavirus doesn't always extend to other details about his health.

Biden said during an NBC News town hall on Oct. 5, after Trump had been discharged from Walter Reed, that "you have to tell the whole truth" about your health as president but not necessarily "moment to moment" as a health scare plays out.

He referred to the 1981 assassination attempt of President Ronald Reagan. "They were transparent," Biden said, but added that Americans didn't get a play-by-play of the president's care.

Asked whether he'd ever hold back some part of his health status, Biden said, "Only on the margins and only for the moment."

Associated Press writers Jill Colvin in Washington and Kathleen Ronayne in Sacramento, Calif., contributed to this report.

On #MeToo anniversary, leaders say focus is on inequality

By KAT STAFFORD ASSOCIATED PRESS

DETROIT (AP) — When #MeToo movement founder Tarana Burke thinks about the group's future as the world celebrates its anniversary, her vision is clear.

It predates the moment that most people know — when the #MeToo hashtag went viral three years ago on Oct. 15, 2017, sparking a global conversation about sexual harassment and assault.

For her, that mission emerged years earlier — in 2006, when Burke, after a career of community service, began working directly with survivors, many of whom were young Black girls and children of color.

"It sort of triggered something in me because I had experienced sexual violence myself as a child," Burke said. "What would my life have been like if somebody had intervened at 12, 14 or 16, even just to say that I deserve healing, and that I deserve wellness and wholeness and joy?"

"And so it started off trying to bring those messages, that idea of healing into these young women's lives and using the power of empathy," she said.

As the #MeToo movement marks the third year since it received global recognition, Burke is working to make sure it remains inclusive and reclaims its original intent: A focus on marginalized voices and experiences.

She sees that path forward through Dani Ayers, a 39-year-old Black woman who quietly, yet with a bold vision, transitioned into becoming the movement's CEO in July after joining the organization in 2018.

In a year marked by a nationwide reckoning over systemic racism and inequities that have disproportionately impacted Black Americans, the #MeToo movement is now jointly led by two Black women keenly aware of the inequality that has long existed in America — something they find both empowering and challenging.

"I think it's a testament and it's a representation of the fact that there are many movements that have been started by Black women. The Black Lives Matter movement was also started by Black women," Ayers told the Associated Press in her first joint interview with Burke.

"It's an opportunity to shine a light. We are absolutely centering Black women and girls, people of color, queer, trans, disabled folks in our work because we know that solving and interrupting the issue of sexual violence in those communities means ending sexual violence everywhere."

Several events are planned to mark the third anniversary, including the announcement of the new leadership structure and a survey of survivors that Burke and Ayers expect will reignite momentum behind the movement. Their goal is to create a global network of organizations united behind the movement to end sexual violence.

But after a groundswell of support from celebrities, politicians, marches and more, they said it's been challenging to keep the spotlight on the need for funding to continue the fight against sexual violence.

As Black women, they said it's frustrating that many don't see the intersection of race and the sexual violence women of color endure.

"We've got to make that connection clear for folks," Ayers said. "We've seen money start to be pushed to Black-led organizations and it needs to happen, but sexual violence has not seen that same funding support. And I think it's because folks don't automatically understand the intersection of sexual violence and structural racism. And so we really have a lot of work to do."

They also noted the Breonna Taylor case and the #SayHerName campaign, which brings attention to Black women like Taylor whose cases go unheard or are silenced.

Burke said she herself has dealt firsthand with the erasure that Black women often endure, when people failed to acknowledge the #MeToo movement was started and led by Black women and people of color.

"I've heard people ... not acknowledge that there is a Black woman right now trying to hold this narrative, hold this work and push a narrative forward that is opposite of what we've heard in the news, about it being about Hollywood and white women, powerful white men, or powerful men, period," Burke said.

"So as a Black woman, I feel both the pride and the burden of carrying this kind of work forward," she said.

The coronavirus pandemic has also presented unique challenges for the movement.

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During the pandemic, the group has seen a 20% rise in intimate partner violence and increased concerns about child sexual assaults, Ayers said, so they've shifted toward offering virtual resources and programming, including a survey that revealed stark disparities.

"We're hearing Black survivors say, 'I don't have money to eat,'" Ayers said. "The disparity is just growing as a result of the pandemic and we need to be able to talk about that, not only in a qualitative way but we need the data to be able to help those who have money understand where we need to be pushing resources and why."

Ayers and Burke also recognize the power that survivors hold — especially in this moment as the nation is just weeks away from selecting its next president after a campaign fraught with divisiveness.

Burke late last year launched #MeTooVoter as a way to galvanize the millions who have supported the movement. Both Burke and Ayers view survivors as a significant voting bloc whose voices deserve to be heard.

While the group has not officially endorsed either candidate, the women said they have serious concerns about what another four years of President Donald Trump would mean for survivors of sexual violence.

"I think we are in a critical moment and survivors' voices in this moment should be the loudest," Burke said.

"If we look at the two candidates, for a lot of people, neither of them are their top choice," she said. Trump has faced multiple accusations of assault and harassment, all of which he denies. Earlier this year, a former Senate staffer accused Democrat Joe Biden of sexually assaulting her in 1993, which Biden has denied.

"But this fight that we have will continue, not just for the next four years, it will continue for the next four decades. We have a person right now who won't even get in the fight, who won't even engage in the conversation," Burke said. "I think survivors are lined up to get Trump out of office."

But beyond the election, Ayers is hopeful about the work that remains.

"The survivors, they inspire me every day," she said. "We're creating a culture inside this organization that gives people the space to be who they are and to show up as their full selves. There are so many people working to end sexual violence and watching their work inspires me. So there is hope."

Kat Stafford is a member of The Associated Press' Race and Ethnicity team. Follow her on Twitter at https://twitter.com/kat__stafford.

DOJ charges Texas billionaire in \$2 billion tax fraud scheme

By JANIE HAR Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Federal prosecutors charged Texas billionaire Robert Brockman on Thursday with a \$2 billion tax fraud scheme in what they say is the largest such case against an American.

Department of Justice officials said at a news conference that Brockman, 79, hid capital gains income over 20 years through a web of offshore entities in Bermuda and Nevis and secret bank accounts in Bermuda and Switzerland. Prosecutors announced that the CEO of a private equity firm that aided in the schemes would cooperate with the investigation.

The 39-count indictment unsealed Thursday charges Brockman, the chief executive officer of Ohio-based software company Reynolds and Reynolds Co., with tax evasion, wire fraud, money laundering, and other offenses.

Prosecutors also announced that Robert F. Smith, founder and chairman of Vista Equity Partners, will cooperate in the investigation and pay \$139 million to settle his own tax probe. Smith, 57, stunned a senior class last year when he promised to wipe out the student loan debt of the entire graduating class at Morehouse, a historically Black all-male college.

"Complexity will not hide crime from law enforcement. Sophistication is not a defense to federal criminal charges," said David L. Anderson, U.S. attorney for the Northern District of California. "We will not hesitate to prosecute the smartest guys in the room."

Brockman appeared in federal court from Houston via Zoom Thursday. He entered a plea of not guilty

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to all counts and was released on \$1 million bond, said Abraham Simmons, spokesman for the Northern District of California.

"Mr. Brockman has pled not guilty, and we look forward to defending him against these charges," said his attorney, Kathryn Keneally, in an email.

Prosecutors said Brockman used encrypted emails with code names, including Permit, Snapper, Redfish and Steelhead, to carry out the fraud and ordered evidence to be manipulated or destroyed.

Brockman, a resident of Houston and Pitkin County, Colorado, is chairman and CEO of Reynolds and Reynolds, a 4,300-employee company near Dayton, Ohio, that sells accounting, sales and management software to auto dealerships. The software helps set up websites, including live chats with potential customers, find loans and calculate customer payments, manage payroll and pay bills.

Reynolds & Reynolds issued a statement saying the allegations were outside Brockman's work with the company and that the company is not alleged to have participated in any wrongdoing.

In 2013, a charitable trust set up by Brockman's late father withdrew a pledged \$250 million donation to Centre College, a small liberal arts school in Danville, Kentucky, where Brockman attended class and once served as chairman of the board of trustees.

At the time the school said it was due to a "significant capital market event" that didn't pan out. A spokesman for Reynolds and Reynolds said in 2013 that the event was a proposed refinancing deal involving Vista Equity Partners, Smith's company.

According to the indictment, Brockman gave an unnamed individual detailed instructions regarding the proposed gift to the college, including talking points, and directed the person to threaten to pull out if his demands were not met. In August, he instructed the person to cancel the gift.

Prosecutors say that Smith used about \$2.5 million in untaxed funds to buy and upgrade a vacation home in Sonoma, California; purchase two ski properties in France; and spend \$13 million to buy a property and fund charitable activities at his property in Colorado.

Anderson applauded Smith for stepping up, despite the serious nature of his crimes, which occurred from 2000 to mid-2015.

"Smith's agreement to cooperate has put him on a path away from indictment," he said.

In 2019, Smith announced to the graduating class at Morehouse College that he would pay off the student loan debt of the entire class, saying that he expected the graduates to "pay it forward." The estimated cost was \$40 million.

Forbes lists Smith as #461 on its billionaires list, with a net worth of more than \$5 billion.

He founded the tech investment firm Vista in 2000 and Forbes reports that it now has over \$50 billion in assets and is "one of the best-performing private equity firms, posting annualized returns of 22% since inception." Vista has offices in San Francisco and Oakland.

Vista did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Associated Press writers Tom Krisher in Detroit, Juliet Williams in San Francisco and Jake Bleiberg in Dallas contributed to this story.

Rethinking the holidays: Traditions, change are on the table

By MELISSA RAYWORTH Associated Press

Nina Bryant will cook a feast for Thanksgiving this year, as always.

Bryant works as an executive chef. But in her own family, she's the one everyone depends on to prepare her grandmother's recipes, which spark memories at the holidays. So along with a turkey, Bryant will make her grandmother's sweet potato souffle, and fingerling potatoes with tender asparagus.

This time, because of the pandemic, she'll do it all several days before Thanksgiving, then ship portions from her home in Florida to her family around the country.

That same week, Jeannine Thibodeau plans to go all out as well. She'll bake brownies three days in advance. Then she'll roast a turkey, along with "about 5 pounds of mashed potatoes and gravy and stuff-

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ing and green beans and cranberry sauce.”

Since she can't welcome the friends she'd normally invite, she'll pack ample portions in gift bags with handwritten notes, then place the bags on her stoop for contactless pickup on Thanksgiving Day.

Once mealtime arrives, Bryant and Thibodeaux both plan to fire up digital devices and connect with loved ones over Zoom. Family and friends will eat together, apart, sharing in the communal experience of a holiday meal without being able to ask each other to pass the gravy.

If ever there were a year when people could use the comfort of a big holiday dinner, this is it. Yet in 2020, a joyful, multigenerational meal around a crowded, indoor dinner table is a potentially high-risk activity.

“My Thanksgiving is going to look very different this year,” Dr. Anthony Fauci told CBS Evening News this week. The infectious-disease expert said his children won't be coming in from out of town “out of concern for me and my age.”

Fauci said he understands the emotional attachment people have to Thanksgiving and holiday gatherings, but urged everyone to be careful this year. Evaluate the risks, especially with relatives who arrived on airplanes, and protect the elderly and people with underlying conditions.

What does it look like when when longstanding holiday traditions can't happen?

Ritual celebrations have been with us since the beginning, but there has always been room for improvisation, says Hanna Kim, department chair of anthropology at Adelphi University in Garden City, N.Y.

She points to recent New York Times wedding announcements as an example of how people can rethink traditional celebrations. The announcements “show the range of ways in which those getting married have in fact drilled down to what is most of significance for them -- and with no homogeneity.”

We can bring that same creativity to Thanksgiving and other holidays this year, says Catherine Sanderson, professor of psychology at Amherst College.

“Rituals make the ordinary extraordinary,” says Sanderson. “A pumpkin pie on a random day in October is just a pumpkin pie. But a pumpkin pie on the fourth Thursday of November is not just pumpkin pie: It's part of Thanksgiving. Our intentions, coupled with the season, elevate it.”

And that's true even if the ritual has been moved because of unique circumstances.

Jennifer Fliss will serve dessert in her Seattle driveway under a pop-up tent this Thanksgiving. She already tested out the process by sharing a socially distanced Rosh Hashanah dinner there with another family.

“Traditions are great,” Fliss says. “But it's OK if you do something different.”

She's wondering if this disrupted holiday season will give rise to new traditions. In the future, she says, families might say, “Oh, we started this tradition of eating dessert outside because of that one year we ate it outside.” This crisis, she says, “could be the entryway into something.”

History offers plenty of examples of this, says Jodi Eichler-Levine, a professor of Religion Studies at Lehigh University.

During the era of mass migration from Europe to the United States, people who'd emigrated suddenly had no way to celebrate major holidays with those they'd left behind. So Jewish families began creating elaborate postcards to celebrate Rosh Hashanah.

“They were this gorgeous new art form,” Eichler-Levine says. “People could share their sentiments even though they could not physically be there with their loved ones.”

The key this year, Sanderson says, may be accepting that things need to evolve -- and avoiding comparisons with celebrations from years past. If you try to replicate past holidays exactly, it's likely that this year's will feel inferior.

But if we can embrace changes, we might really enjoy it. Liz Devitt's Christmas celebration this year is a prime example.

Devitt knew that outdoor meals in Massachusetts would be easier in September than on Christmas Day, and it seemed wise to get together with her elderly parents before COVID cases likely rise this winter.

So in mid-September, Devitt locked up her home in St. Louis and made the 20-hour trek to Boston. Soon she was filling Christmas stockings at her mother's home and admiring sentimental ornaments on a tree at her Dad's house.

Her family has a slew of favorite traditions. They incorporated the ones they could: Along with giving

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each other piles of scratch-off lottery tickets, "we had the stockings. We had the Christmas cards. We had the Christmas music and the candles," she says. "And we had our sappy Hallmark Christmas romance movies."

And they skipped those that were impossible, like cutting down a Christmas tree together at a farm near her father's house.

It wasn't normal, she says, celebrating Christmas on Sept. 27 with her dad and Oct. 3 with her mom. But it was kind of wonderful.

Bree Carroll, an Air Force spouse, is hoping she'll have the same sort of different-but-wonderful holiday season this year.

Carroll is an event planner. Last year, she helped Every Warrior Network stage a Thanksgiving feast for 1,000 airmen and their families at a convention center in Shreveport, Louisiana -- something now unimaginable during the pandemic.

So this year, from her new home at Minot Air Force Base in North Dakota, Carroll is organizing families to each share their Thanksgiving holiday with one or two of the single airmen who live on base. It's the perfect year to "give them a place to call home," she says, because they won't be able to travel to see their own relatives.

"Traditions are something that we should hold dear and hold close," Carroll says. "But also, there are opportunities to do some different things and share in other people's traditions and cultures."

A pandemic "doesn't have to be like a deal-breaker when it comes to holidays like this," she says. "You just have to get creative and just focus on the heart of the why. Why are we getting together for these holidays?"

Melissa Rayworth writes about lifestyles topics for The Associated Press. Follow her on Twitter @mrayworth.

Georgia's McBath seeks 2nd win in once-famed GOP district

By JEFF AMY Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Karen Handel is looking for Republicans to mobilize in Georgia's 6th District, once an incubator of high-profile Republicans. But Democrat Lucy McBath, who unseated Handel in 2018, is trying to show that Atlanta's wealthiest suburbs have changed.

The rematch in the district, covering parts of Cobb, Fulton and DeKalb counties, is being fought on a nationalized stage, with arguments about health care, abortion, support for police and gun control.

It's a seat held by Newt Gingrich when he was House speaker, Johnny Isakson before he became a U.S. senator, and Tom Price before he became U.S. Health and Human Services secretary.

Jon Ossoff, now running for Senate, nearly battered down the Republican fortress in 2017 in the nation's most expensive U.S. House election. Ossoff fell just short, with Handel going to Washington for almost two years. But McBath, who became a gun control advocate after her son was fatally shot, closed the deal for Democrats in 2018, edging out Handel.

McBath crafts an image as a bipartisan worker. She points to a law she authored that President Donald Trump signed that protects veterans' benefits from being seized in bankruptcy.

"There's a lot of negativity and partisanship in America right now," McBath said in a debate Tuesday. "That's exactly what I'm running against."

McBath refused requests from The Associated Press for an interview.

Handel, a former Georgia secretary of state, disputes McBath's self-portrait of bipartisanship.

"She misled the voters of Georgia 6," Handel said. "She said she was going to be a moderate. She has been anything but."

Some independent ratings show McBath as more liberal than the median member of the House, but more conservative than most Democrats.

Handel bets Republican turnout was abnormally depressed in 2018 and that the prospect of voting for

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Trump's reelection will energize GOP voters. "He is going to drive turnout," Handel said.

But McBath is hitting Handel with a range of attacks, with the most concerted sparring around health care. "My opponent's record on health care is absolutely dismal," McBath said. "Karen Handel supported bills that would actually raise the cost of health care and treatment and prescription drugs."

Handel favors market-based approaches sought by most Republicans, saying the cost of coverage is "not affordable" for people who pay full price for government-certified plans. Poorer people get large subsidies. Handel would let insurers offer less comprehensive coverage.

"We need more options, not fewer options and that means opening up the private market further than we have," Handel said.

The Republican says she favors a separate stand-alone law to protect people from being denied coverage because of preexisting conditions, but Democrats deride that proposal as a sham.

Gun control has been McBath's signature issue. She and other Democrats claimed a victory last year when, for the first time in two decades, Congress provided funds to study ways to prevent gun injuries and deaths.

Handel says McBath is much less effective on other issues, arguing she's inaccessible to local groups.

"Right now we have a single-issue, completely disengaged member of Congress representing this congressional district," Handel said.

McBath says she's been far more accessible than her predecessors, including Handel.

"I've held the first in-person town halls that this district has seen in decades, and I've worked tirelessly to ensure my constituents have had access to vital information and resources that they've needed during this pandemic," she said.

McBath is again winning hefty financial support from Everytown for Gun Safety, with the group partly financed by Michael Bloomberg pledging \$3 million on ads. More than \$4 million in outside money has already been spent in the race, about evenly split, according to the Center for Responsive Politics. McBath is vastly out-raising Handel for direct spending, though, taking in more than \$5 million compared to Handel's roughly \$2 million.

Handel has a long history of opposing abortion rights, while McBath favors them, pledging to ensure that a "woman has the ability to choose what's best for her body with her healthcare provider." In the debate, after McBath hit Handel for working for an anti-abortion group, Handel elided her position, saying "that's a really emotional and personal issue for everyone, and there's very different opinions."

She then attacked McBath as the extremist for not supporting a proposal making it a crime not to provide medical care when an attempted abortion results in a child born alive. Opponents of the GOP measure say births during attempted abortions are extremely rare, generally occurring when doctors determine that a child won't survive and parents opt to spend time with him or her before death.

Follow Jeff Amy on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/jeffamy>.

'Jagged Little Pill' leads Tony Awards nominations with 15

By MARK KENNEDY AP Entertainment Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The sobering musical "Jagged Little Pill," which plumbs Alanis Morissette's 1995 breakthrough album to tell a story of an American family spiraling out of control, earned a leading 15 Tony Award nominations Thursday, as the Broadway community took the first steps to celebrate a pandemic-shortened season that upended the theater world.

There are three best musical nominees: "Jagged Little Pill," "Moulin Rouge: The Musical" and "Tina — The Tina Turner Musical." And there are five best play nominees: "Grand Horizons," "The Inheritance," "Sea Wall/A Life," "Slave Play" and "The Sound Inside."

Tom Kitt, honored for orchestrations for "Jagged Little Pill," thanked Morissette and his collaborators, but also graciously nodded to the more than a dozen shows that were unable to open due to the pandemic.

"I also want to acknowledge all of the shows that were not able to open, so today I'm thinking of all of

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the great artists who were supposed to be a part of the '19-'20 season, and I can't wait to see all of their beautiful work when Broadway returns," he said in a statement.

Nipping on the heels of "Jagged Little Pill" for overall numbers of nominations is "Moulin Rouge!," a juke-box adaptation of Baz Luhrmann's hyperactive 2001 movie about the goings-on in a turn-of-the-century Parisian nightclub, that got 14 nods.

"It's definitely bittersweet," said Carmen Pavlovic, a lead producer of "Moulin Rouge!" "It's obviously not the year any of us imagined. At the same time I feel honored to have the opportunity to be part of such a history-making moment — I think we will all remember this year for many decades to come."

Two very different offerings are tied with 12: "Tina — The Tina Turner Musical," which tells the rock icon's life with songs that include "Let's Stay Together" and "Proud Mary," and "Slave Play," Jeremy O. Harris' ground-breaking, bracing work that mixes race, sex, taboo desires and class. The dozen nods make "Slave Play" the most nominated play in Tony history.

"The Inheritance" by Matthew Lopez nabbed 11 nominations. It's a two-part, seven-hour epic that uses "Howards End" as a starting point for a play that looks at gay life in the early 21st century.

"Theater, at its best, helps call us to those better instincts of our nature. I look forward to the day we can all return safely, joyfully to those sacred spaces and to tell each other stories of our lives and of our nation," Lopez said.

The nominations were pulled from just 18 eligible plays and musicals, a fraction of the 34 shows the season before. During most years, there are 26 competitive categories; this year there are 25 with several depleted ones.

The category for best performance by an actor in a leading role in a musical had just one actor — Aaron Tveit from "Moulin Rouge!" One category — best musical revival — had no eligible shows at all and was cut.

Pavlovic joked that Tveit deserved the Tony because he's "in a class all of his own anyway." She added: "It's his moment, for sure."

In another sign of a strange season, the best score category — an honor for original music and lyrics that is usually dominated by musicals — is filled this year with five plays. It was a slap in the face for the sole original musical theater score that managed to open, "The Lightning Thief: The Percy Jackson Musical."

In the performance categories, Adrienne Warren got a best leading actress in a musical nomination for inhabiting the lead character in "Tina — The Tina Turner Musical." She is joined by Elizabeth Stanley for playing a woman battling addiction in "Jagged Little Pill" and Karen Olivo for bringing down the house with Katy Perry's "Firework" in "Moulin Rouge! The Musical."

"I am humbled to be telling the messy story of a fierce mother, a fighter, a survivor, and an addict," said Stanley. "I feel very proud to be a part of a production that is doing what I think art does best: helping us see ourselves and encouraging us to heal — which feels more necessary than ever."

In the best actress in a drama category, Mary-Louise Parker earned a nod with "The Sound Inside" and is joined by Laura Linney, who is looking for her first Tony win with the solo show "My Name Is Lucy Barton," and Joaquina Kalukango, who gave a wrenching performance in "Slave Play." Six-time Tony winner Audra McDonald wasn't denied a spot because her revival of "Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune" closed early.

"I am so proud to be amongst a small handful of great actresses representing the past Broadway season, truncated as it was," said Linney. "Now more than ever, we need to value the power and necessity of the performing arts, especially the theater, in American culture."

Some Hollywood actors got to celebrate Thursday, with Blair Underwood, David Alan Grier, Jake Gyllenhaal, Tom Hiddleston and Tom Sturridge all getting nominations. Broadway mainstays like Danny Burstein and John Benjamin Hickey also were recognized.

Broadway theaters abruptly closed on March 12, knocking out all shows — including 16 that were still scheduled to open in the spring. The cutoff for eligibility for all shows was set at Feb. 19.

Grier got his fourth nomination, this time for playing a tough military man in a revival of "A Soldier's Play." The COVID-19 shutdown came two days before the end of the play's run and he wasn't sure what

the future for theater was going to be.

"We made it this far," he said by phone Thursday. "We're not back yet but I feel the world, especially the theater world, the arts community, needs this, as some little boost of something. Just to tell the universe that we're still alive."

The nominations were drawn from 10 new plays, four new musicals and four play revivals. Two high profile shows — "Freestyle Love Supreme" and "David Byrne's American Utopia" — did not provide free tickets for Tony voters and weren't eligible.

The 2020 Tony Awards ceremony will be broadcast digitally and take place later this year, at a date still to be announced. It's one of few bright spots for theater fans — Broadway will be shut down until at least May 30.

"Theater will survive," James Monroe Iglehart, the Tony-winning nominations host, promised during Thursday's announcement.

AP National Writer Jocelyn Noveck contributed to this report

Mark Kennedy is at <http://twitter.com/KennedyTwits>.

YouTube follows Twitter and Facebook with QAnon crackdown

By BARBARA ORTUTAY AP Technology Writer

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP) — YouTube is following the lead of Twitter and Facebook, saying that it is taking more steps to limit QAnon and other baseless conspiracy theories that can lead to real-world violence.

The Google-owned video platform said Thursday it will now prohibit material targeting a person or group with conspiracy theories that have been used to justify violence.

One example would be videos that threaten or harass someone by suggesting they are complicit in a conspiracy such as QAnon, which paints President Donald Trump as a secret warrior against a supposed child-trafficking ring run by celebrities and "deep state" government officials.

Pizzagate is another internet conspiracy theory — essentially a predecessor to QAnon — that would fall in the banned category. Its promoters claimed children were being harmed at a pizza restaurant in Washington, D.C. A man who believed in the conspiracy entered the restaurant in December 2016 and fired an assault rifle. He was sentenced to prison in 2017.

YouTube is the third of the major social platforms to announce policies intended rein in QAnon, a conspiracy theory they all helped spread.

Twitter announced in July a crackdown on QAnon, though it did not ban its supporters from its platform. It did ban thousands of accounts associated with QAnon content and blocked URLs associated with it from being shared. Twitter also said that it would stop highlighting and recommending tweets associated with QAnon.

Facebook, meanwhile, announced last week that it was banning groups that openly support QAnon. It said it would remove pages, groups and Instagram accounts for representing QAnon — even if they don't promote violence.

The social network said it will consider a variety of factors in deciding whether a group meets its criteria for a ban. Those include the group's name, its biography or "about" section, and discussions within the page or group on Facebook, or account on Instagram, which is owned by Facebook.

Facebook's move came two months after it announced softer crackdown, saying said it would stop promoting the group and its adherents. But that effort faltered due to spotty enforcement.

YouTube said it had already removed tens of thousands of QAnon-videos and eliminated hundreds of channels under its existing policies — especially those that explicitly threaten violence or deny the existence of major violent events.

"All of this work has been pivotal in curbing the reach of harmful conspiracies, but there's even more we can do to address certain conspiracy theories that are used to justify real-world violence, like QAnon,"

the company said in Thursday's blog post.

Experts said the move shows that YouTube is taking threats around violent conspiracy theories seriously and recognizes the importance of limiting the spread of such conspiracies. But, with QAnon increasingly creeping into mainstream politics and U.S. life, they wonder if it is too late.

"While this is an important change, for almost three years YouTube was a primary site for the spread of QAnon," said Sophie Bjork-James, an anthropologist at Vanderbilt University who studies QAnon. "Without the platform Q would likely remain an obscure conspiracy. For years YouTube provided this radical group an international audience."

Europe, US reel as virus infections surge at record pace

By DAVID CRARY, CARLA K. JOHNSON and GEIR MOULSON Associated Press

Coronavirus cases around the world have climbed to all-time highs of more than 330,000 per day as the scourge comes storming back across Europe and spreads with renewed speed in the U.S., forcing many places to reimpose tough restrictions eased just months ago.

Well after Europe seemed to have largely tamed the virus that proved so lethal last spring, newly confirmed infections are reaching unprecedented levels in Germany, the Czech Republic, Italy and Poland. Most of the rest of the continent is seeing similar danger signs.

France announced a 9 p.m. curfew in Paris and other big cities. Londoners face new restrictions on meeting with people indoors. The Netherlands closed bars and restaurants this week. The Czech Republic and Northern Ireland shut schools. Poland limited restaurant hours and closed gyms and pools.

In the United States, new cases per day are on the rise in 44 states, with many of the biggest surges in the Midwest and Great Plains, where resistance to masks and other precautions has been running high and the virus has often been seen as just a big-city problem. Deaths per day are climbing in 30 states.

"I see this as one of the toughest times in the epidemic," said Dr. Peter Hotez, an infectious-disease specialist at the Baylor College of Medicine in Texas. "The numbers are going up pretty rapidly. We're going to see a pretty large epidemic across the Northern Hemisphere."

Dr. Anthony Fauci, the U.S. government's top infectious-disease expert, said Americans should think hard about whether to hold Thanksgiving gatherings.

"Everyone has this traditional, emotional, warm feeling about the holidays and bringing a group of people, friends and family, together in the house indoors," he said on ABC's "Good Morning America." "We really have to be careful this time that each individual family evaluates the risk-benefit of doing that."

Responses to the surge have varied in hard-hit states.

In North Dakota, Republican Gov. Doug Burgum raised the coronavirus risk level in 16 counties this week but issued no mandated restrictions. In Wisconsin, a judge temporarily blocked an order from Democratic Gov. Tony Evers that would limit the number of people in bars and restaurants.

South Dakota on Wednesday broke its record for COVID-19 hospitalizations and new cases and has had more deaths from the disease less than halfway through October than in any other full month. Despite the grim figures, GOP Gov. Kristi Noem has resisted pressure to step up the state's response to the disease.

Wisconsin hit a new daily high for confirmed infections for the second time this week. In Missouri, the number of people hospitalized with COVID-19 reached nearly 1,450, another record.

Dr. Marc Larsen, who oversees the COVID-19 response at Kansas City-based St. Luke's Health System, said the system's rural hospitals are seeing surges just as bad as in Kansas City.

"Early on in this pandemic, it was felt that this was a big-city problem, and now this is stretching out into the rural communities where I think there has not been as much emphasis on masking and distancing," he said.

New cases in the U.S. have risen over the past two weeks from about 40,000 per day on average to more than 52,000, according to Johns Hopkins University. (Cases peaked in the U.S. over the summer at nearly 70,000 a day.) Deaths were relatively stable over the past two weeks, at around 720 a day. That is well below the U.S. peak of over 2,200 dead per day in late April.

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Worldwide, deaths have fallen slightly in recent weeks to about 5,200 a day, down from a peak of around 7,000 in April.

Dr. Hans Kluge, the head of the World Health Organization's Europe office, urged governments to be "uncompromising" in controlling the virus. He said most of the spread is happening because people aren't complying with the safety rules.

Europe's financial markets fell sharply Thursday on concerns that the new restrictions will undercut the continent's economic recovery. Stocks were down slightly on Wall Street.

In France, which reported over 22,000 new infections Wednesday, President Emmanuel Macron put 18 million residents in nine regions, including Paris, under a curfew starting Saturday. The country will deploy 12,000 police officers to enforce it.

Italy set a one-day record for infections and recorded the highest daily death toll of this second wave, adding 83 victims to bring its count to nearly 36,400, the second-highest in Europe after Britain.

In Britain, London and seven other areas face restrictions that will mean more than 11 million people will be barred from meeting with anyone indoors from outside their households and will be asked to minimize travel starting this weekend.

European nations have seen nearly 230,000 confirmed deaths from the virus, while the U.S. has recorded over 217,000, though experts agree the official figures understate the true toll.

So far in the new surges, deaths have not increased at the same pace as infections.

For one thing, it can take time for people to get sick and die of the virus. Also, many of the new cases involve young people, who are less likely than older ones to get seriously ill. Patients are benefiting from new drugs and other improvements in treating COVID-19. And nursing homes, which were ravaged by the virus last spring, have gotten better at controlling infections.

But experts fear it is only a matter of time before deaths start rising in step with infections.

"All of this does not bode well," said Josh Michaud, associate director of global health policy with the Kaiser Family Foundation in Washington. "Rapid increases in cases like we're seeing now are always followed by increases in hospitalizations and deaths, which is what is likely to occur across much of Europe and the U.S. in the coming weeks and months."

Among the areas hit by the new surge is Gove County in Kansas, where the sheriff, the emergency management director, the CEO of the local hospital and more than 50 medical staff members have tested positive.

Dr. Doug Gruenbacher, a physician who contracted the virus in September, said people around Gove County are concerned about their personal liberty and "not wanting to be told what to do."

"That's part of the reason of why we love it here, because of that spirit and because of that independence," he said. "But unfortunately, it's something that also contributes to some of the difficulties that we're having right now."

Associated Press writers around Europe and the U.S. contributed to this report.

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

C-SPAN suspends Scully after he admits to lie about hack

By DAVID BAUDER AP Media Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — C-SPAN suspended its political editor Steve Scully indefinitely Thursday after he admitted to lying about his Twitter feed being hacked when he was confronted about a questionable exchange with former Trump aide Anthony Scaramucci.

The news came on the day of what was supposed to be a career highlight for the 30-year C-SPAN veteran. Scully was to moderate the second debate between President Donald Trump and Democrat Joe Biden, which was canceled after Trump would not agree to a virtual format because of his COVID-19 diagnosis.

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A week ago, after Trump had criticized him as a "never Trumper," Scully tweeted "@Scaramucci should I respond to Trump." Scaramucci, a former Trump communications director and now a critic of the president, advised Scully to ignore him.

Scully said that when he saw his tweet had created a controversy, "I falsely claimed that my Twitter account had been hacked."

He had been frustrated by Trump's comments and several weeks of criticism on social media and conservative news outlets about his role as moderator, including attacks directed at his family, he said.

"These were both errors in judgement for which I am totally responsible for," Scully said. "I apologize."

He said he let down his colleagues at C-SPAN, fellow news professionals and the debate commission. "I ask for their forgiveness as I try to move forward in a moment of reflection and disappointment in myself," he said.

C-SPAN said Scully confessed to lying about the hack on Wednesday.

"He understands that he made a serious mistake," the network said. "We were very saddened by this news and do not condone his actions."

Trump seized on the news, tweeting "I was right again! I was right again! Steve Scully just admitted he was lying about his Twitter being hacked. The Debate was Rigged!"

The debate commission did not immediately return a message seeking comment.

Scully has led the network's presidential election coverage since 1992, but the suspension means he won't be part of C-SPAN's election night programming. Scully has been the moderator of "Washington Journal," the weekly call-in program, and regularly hosted other C-SPAN programs.

The network said Scully has consistently demonstrated fairness and professionalism, and built a reservoir of good will.

"After some distance from this episode, we believe in his ability to continue to contribute to C-SPAN," the network said.

Kyrgyzstan's president says he's quitting to avoid bloodshed

By DARIA LITVINOVA Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — Kyrgyzstan's embattled President Sooronbai Jennbekov said Thursday he was resigning following protests over a disputed parliamentary election, the third time in 15 years that a leader of the Central Asian country has been ousted by a popular uprising.

Supporters of Jennbekov's rival, newly appointed Prime Minister Sadyr Zhaparov, rallied in the capital of Bishkek and threatened to storm government buildings if he is not elevated to acting president. Under the constitution, the speaker of parliament would be next in line, but he refused to serve as caretaker leader, according to Zhaparov, who claimed the top office.

The fast-moving events capped a government crisis that was dizzying even by Kyrgyzstan's chaotic, clan-influenced politics.

The resignations of the president and the parliament speaker's apparent refusal to succeed him followed unrest that gripped the country of 6.5 million people on the border with China since the Oct. 4 parliamentary election that was swept by pro-government parties.

Supporters of opposition groups dismissed the results, pointing at vote-buying and other irregularities, and took over government buildings hours after the polls closed. The protesters freed several opposition leaders, including Zhaparov, who was serving an 11-year jail term.

The Central Election Commission nullified the election results and rival regional clans begun jockeying for power, their supporters swarming the capital and occasionally clashing with each other, hurling stones.

Jeenbekov, who had introduced a state of emergency in Bishkek and deployed troops in the capital, dismissed calls to resign on Wednesday. But in a statement released Thursday by his office, he said that he feared violence if he stayed in power, noting that protesters were facing off against the police and the military.

"In this case, blood will be shed. It is inevitable," Jeenbekov said. "I don't want to go down in history as

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a president who shed blood and shot at his own citizens.”

Jeenbekov said the situation in Bishkek “remains tense” and that he didn’t want to escalate those tensions. He urged opposition politicians to get their supporters off the streets and “bring a peaceful life back to the people.”

Zhapparov’s supporters quickly besieged the parliament to discourage its speaker, Kanat Isayev, from taking over as acting president.

Soon after, Zhapparov told his jubilant supporters that he was now acting head of state because the speaker agreed not to become a caretaker president. The parliament is still scheduled to meet Friday to endorse the speaker’s refusal to serve as president and Zhapparov’s appointment to the post.

The curfew and the troops’ presence in Bishkek eased tensions in the city, where residents feared the violence and looting that accompanied previous uprisings and had been forming vigilante groups to protect their property. Stores and banks that were closed last week have reopened.

As in the uprisings that ousted presidents in 2005 and 2010, the current unrest has been driven by clan rivalries that dominate the country’s politics.

Kyrgyzstan, one of the poorest countries to emerge from the former Soviet Union, is a member of Russia-dominated economic and security alliances, hosts a Russian air base and depends on Moscow’s economic support. It formerly was the site of a U.S. air base that was used in the war in Afghanistan.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov on Thursday said “a certain pause” in providing support to Kyrgyzstan “makes sense” because “there is no government as such, as far as we see.”

Associated Press writer Vladimir Isachenkov contributed to this report from Moscow.

Forecasters: Drought more likely than blizzards this winter

By SETH BORENSTEIN AP Science Writer

Don’t expect much of a winter wallop this year, except for the pain of worsening drought, U.S. government forecasters said Thursday.

Two-thirds of the United States should get a warmer than normal winter, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration predicted. Only Washington, northern Idaho, Montana, the Dakotas and northwestern Minnesota, will get a colder than normal winter, forecasters said.

The forecast for winter rain and snow splits the nation in three stripes. NOAA sees the entire south from southern California to North Carolina getting a dry winter. Forecasters see wetter weather for the northernmost states: Oregon and Washington to Michigan and dipping down to Illinois, Indiana, Ohio and other parts of the Ohio Valley. The rest of the nation will likely be closer to normal, NOAA said.

For the already dry Southwest and areas across the South, this could be a “big punch,” said NOAA drought expert David Miskus. About 45% of the nation is in drought, the highest level in more than seven years.

Mike Halpert, deputy director of NOAA’s Climate Prediction Center, said he doesn’t see much relief for central and southern California, where wildfires have been raging.

What’s driving the mostly warmer and drier winter forecast is La Nina, the cooling of parts of the central Pacific that alter weather patterns worldwide, Halpert said.

For the East, big snowstorms or blizzards aren’t usually associated with La Nina. That’s more likely with its warming ocean counterpart, El Nino, he said. But he added that extreme events are not something meteorologists can see in seasonal forecasts.

Halpert also said he doesn’t expect the dreaded polar vortex to be much of a factor this year, except maybe in the Northern Plains and Great Lakes.

The vortex is the gigantic circular upper-air pattern that pens the cold close to the North Pole. When it weakens, the cold wanders away from the pole and brings bone-chilling weather to northern and eastern parts of the U.S.

While Halpert doesn’t see that happening much this winter, an expert in the polar vortex does.

Judah Cohen, a winter weather specialist for the private firm Atmospheric Environmental Research, sees

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a harsher winter for the Northeast than NOAA does. He bases much of his forecasting on what's been happening in the Arctic and Siberian snow cover in October. His research shows that the more snow on the ground in Siberia in October, the harsher the winter in the eastern United States as the polar vortex weakens and wanders south.

Snow cover in Siberia was low in early October, but it is catching up fast and looks to be heavier than normal by the end of the month, he said.

The government predictions are about increased or decreased odds in what the entire three months of weather look like, not an individual day or storm, so don't plan any event on a seasonal outlook, cautioned Greg Postel, a storm specialist at The Weather Channel. But he said La Nina is the strongest indicator among several for what drives winter weather. La Nina does bring a milder than average winter to the southeast, but it also makes the central U.S. "susceptible to Arctic blasts," he said.

La Nina also dominates the forecast by AccuWeather. That private company is forecasting mainly dry in the South, wet and snowy in the Pacific Northwest, bouts of snow and rain from Minneapolis through the Great Lakes region, big swings in the heartland and mild weather in the mid-Atlantic. The company predicts a few heavy snow events in the Midwest and Great Lakes, but less than average snow for the Northeast.

Follow Seth Borenstein on Twitter at @borenbears .

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

Harris highlights stakes of election in Barrett hearings

By KATHLEEN RONAYNE Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — Unable to block President Donald Trump's Supreme Court nominee, Sen. Kamala Harris used three days of confirmation hearings this week to remind voters of the stakes of the Nov. 3 election and how Democratic nominee Joe Biden would govern differently if he were in the White House.

The Senate Judiciary Committee's consideration of Judge Amy Coney Barrett held extra weight for Harris, a California senator who is both a committee member and Biden's running mate. Known for her tough questioning of Trump's nominees, Harris took a lower key approach and avoided sparring matches with Republicans. Her messaging was muted in part because she appeared via video conference from her office, not the Senate hearing room, due to coronavirus concerns.

Her questioning reflected a sense among Democrats that there was little to be done to prevent Barrett's elevation to the court. She focused on core elements of Biden's campaign, such as protecting health care and addressing climate change, while framing the speedy confirmation process as an inappropriate use of power.

"These proceedings, I believe, lack legitimacy in the eyes of the people of our country," she said to close out her remarks on Wednesday.

Harris chose to attend from her office after two Republicans on the committee tested positive for the coronavirus in connection with the Rose Garden event to announce Barrett's nomination. At least 11 people got sick from the event. The committee chairman, Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., ignored demands from Harris and two other Democrats to test everyone before allowing them in the hearing room.

The virus also disrupted her plans to return to campaigning on Thursday, after two people associated with the campaign tested positive for COVID-19. Harris didn't have direct contact with the two, but suspended travel through Sunday.

Harris and Biden argue that the Supreme Court seat left vacant after the death of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg should not be filled until after the winner of the presidential election is known. They also are emphasizing the court's upcoming decision on the fate of the Affordable Care Act, also known as "Obamacare."

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The Senate hearing represented an opportunity for Harris to elevate a message that could motivate the Democratic base, including on voting rights and climate change, without giving Republicans anything to rile up their supporters. She brought up abortion rights but did not make it a centerpiece of her questioning.

Republicans "see a political benefit to this theater," said Nathan Barankin, Harris' former Senate chief of staff. "Democrats are wise not to play into their hand."

Republicans took note of the disciplined approach by Harris and the Democrats.

"They have conceded the nomination to maximize their ability to win the election," said Jeff Roe, a Republican strategist working to support Barrett's nomination.

Harris, he argued, was a nonfactor.

"She walked into the hearing as a first among peers and she left as kind of forgotten in the middle," he said.

But Democrats were thrilled by her closing line of questioning in particular, when Harris delivered the rapid questions and quips that have created memorable moments in hearings past.

"Are you saying you do not agree with the fact?" she said after asking Barrett whether she agreed with a 2013 opinion from Chief Justice John Roberts in which he wrote "voting discrimination still exists." Barrett said she would not comment on "whether an opinion is right or wrong or endorse that proposition."

Later, Barrett declined to weigh in on a question about whether climate change is happening, calling it a "very contentious matter of public debate."

"You've made your point clear that you believe that this is a debatable point," Harris, a former prosecutor, shot back.

Some Republican senators were eager to focus on Harris, whom Trump has tried to tie to the "radical left" as he struggles to land effective attacks against Biden. During opening statements on the final day, Graham twice singled out Harris' remarks from the day before.

"Sen. Harris, who I respect, suggested you were not candid," he said. "Judge Barrett, I couldn't disagree more."

GOP Sen. John Kennedy of Louisiana, who was next in line for questioning after Harris on Wednesday, asked Barrett a series of questions meant to rebut Harris. In answering them, Barrett said she was not a racist, did not always support corporations over people and supports science. Kennedy then began criticizing Harris' record as a prosecutor and her home state of California, a favorite target of Republicans.

Karen Finney, a Democratic strategist who ran communications for Democratic vice presidential nominee Tim Kaine in 2016, noted the circumstances of Barrett's nomination are far different from those of now-Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh in 2018, and that Harris appropriately responded to the moment.

"She is calibrating to what the situation calls for," Finney said. On the substance, "I certainly think she was quite firm and intentional in pressing specific points."

Pandemic hammers small businesses vital to economic recovery

By PAUL WISEMAN AP Economics Writer

WINCHESTER, Va. (AP) — In a normal year, hundreds of book lovers would have descended on Winchester this summer for Shenandoah University's annual children's literature conference.

Some would have made their way to Christine Patrick's bookshop downtown. Winchester Brew Works would have rolled out kegs this month for Oktoberfest revelers. The Hideaway Café, occupying a prime location at the corner of Cork and Loudoun streets, would be advertising its monthly Divas Drag Show.

But 2020 is no normal year. The literature conference, Oktoberfest and drag shows have all been cancelled — casualties, like so much else, of COVID-19.

The pandemic has hammered small businesses across the United States — an alarming trend for an economy that's trying to rebound from the deepest, fastest recession in U.S. history. Normally, small employers are a vital source of hiring after a recession. They account for nearly half the economy's output and an outsize portion of new jobs

"Small businesses are the engine of the economy," said Ahu Yildirmaz, co-head of the ADP Research

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Institute, a think tank affiliated with the payroll processor ADP. "In past recessions, they were the ones really fueling the economy."

EDITOR'S NOTE — Small businesses around the world are fighting for survival amid the economic fallout from the coronavirus pandemic. Whether they make it will affect not just local economies but the fabric of communities. Associated Press journalists tell their stories in the series "Small Business Struggles."

Roughly one in five small businesses have closed, according to the data firm Womply. Restaurants, bars, beauty shops and other retailers that involve face-to-face contact have been hardest hit at a time when Americans are trying to keep distance from one another.

Small companies are struggling even here in a city of 28,000 that works hard to promote and preserve local enterprises. Founded in 1744 and fought over repeatedly during the Civil War, Winchester, 75 miles west of Washington, D.C., at the northern edge of the Shenandoah Valley, long ago blocked off several blocks to create a pedestrian mall downtown — a bulwark for local businesses that must compete against the big box stores on the outskirts of town.

To encourage foot traffic at local businesses, Winchester even designed traffic lights to make it easier to traverse downtown on foot than by car, sometimes to the consternation of motorists caught in stop-and-go traffic.

But city planning is no match for a global pandemic.

"We're in such a weird, weird time," said Mayor John David Smith Jr. "Small businesses and families are hurting."

Some Winchester businesses folded quietly in the spring, he said, choosing not to renew their leases. One was The German Table restaurant, which closed in April with this explanation on its Facebook page from its owner:

"I am always a happy and positive person, but I really think that this virus will be kicking a lot of small businesses in the ass!! With no positive changes in sight, reopening in maybe 4-6 months seems almost unrealistic."

Others are holding on. They're receiving government aid and loans or readjusting their operations to reach customers online. Some are now offering curbside service and deliveries or are benefiting from residents who buy local to keep cherished Winchester businesses from going under.

When the pandemic struck in early spring, the American economy fell into a sickening freefall as businesses everywhere shuttered and consumers stayed home to avoid infection. The economy's gross domestic product, the broadest measure of output, plummeted at a 31.4% annual pace from April through June. It was, by far, the worst three months on record dating to 1947.

Even though hiring partly rebounded as businesses began to reopen, the nation is still down 10.7 million jobs since February.

Lacking the credit access and cash stockpiles of larger companies, small businesses were especially vulnerable to the economy's sudden stop. In a study in April, researchers from the University of Illinois, the University of Chicago and Harvard found that three-quarters of small businesses had only enough cash on hand to get by for two months.

Many crumpled under the pressure. Yelp, which publishes reviews of restaurants, bars and other businesses online, reports that nearly 164,000 businesses on its website have closed since March 1 — 98,000 of them permanently.

Extrapolating from numbers provided by Yelp and Womply, Steven Hamilton, an economist at George Washington University, estimates that 420,000 U.S. small businesses had closed permanently by July 10.

And small businesses' troubles aren't confined to their stressed-out owners. They generate nearly 44% of U.S. economic output, according to the Small Business Administration, and account for two-thirds of new hiring. (The SBA generally defines small businesses as those that employ no more than 500 workers.)

In addition to their economic impact, small businesses define communities.

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"Let's talk about the tapestry of people and communities," said Andre Dua, a senior partner at the McK-insey consultancy, who has studied COVID-19's impact on small businesses. "What is New York without its restaurants?"

Or Brooklyn without its boutiques?

Diana Kane opened her clothing and jewelry shop on Brooklyn's Fifth Avenue in 2002, years before that New York City borough was hip.

"The rents were inexpensive," she said. "The street was quiet and a little sketchy."

But the timing was right: "Fifth Avenue grew up around me."

Suddenly, the neighborhood was bustling with shops, restaurants and bars. Then the pandemic struck, hitting New York hardest of all.

"We were the epicenter of the outbreak," Kane said. "There were sirens literally nonstop. Everything was closed. We were in the depths of it."

And it all happened during her busy spring season. Her clothing sales evaporated — down 78% in April. She couldn't persuade her landlord to agree to a rent reduction.

So she closed the Diana Kane Boutique in May.

Kane regrets the impact that her decision had on her customers, suppliers and neighbors.

"There are repercussions all the way down the supply chain," she said. "My money circulates in the community. . . The money I made went to pay for baseball, restaurants, bookstores, dry cleaning. It's devastating."

Across the country in Santa Fe, New Mexico, Leslie Moody is fighting to hold on to Rancho Gallina, the boutique hotel she opened in 2013 with her husband. In January, they were looking forward to a banner year -- forecasting \$20,000 a month in revenue from room bookings and weddings and other events.

"By the end of April, everything had cancelled or postponed," Moody said.

The rescue aid program the federal government enacted in March helped them survive. In addition to their state jobless aid, she and her husband could each collect \$600 a week in federal unemployment benefits — until that program expired July 31.

"That was the money that meant we didn't have to hold our breath every month," Moody said. "Now we're in breath-holding mode."

She, too, worries about how closing down would, in turn, hurt others.

"We bring a lot of income into the area," she said. "For instance, there's this really creative food truck company that caters all our weddings."

And they buy produce from local farmers.

"It does trickle out, even though we're a small business."

Governments at all levels did scramble to protect small businesses. In addition to the expanded unemployment aid, Congress approved the Paycheck Protection Program, which provided \$520 billion for 5 million businesses, most of them small.

In Winchester, too, the city government offered small grants — Christine Patrick's Winchester Book Gallery received \$500 — and suspended parking fees to encourage shoppers to keep visiting the downtown pedestrian mall.

But Congress has failed to agree on another financial rescue. Without further federal aid — soon—economists warn that the recovery will likely falter and intensify pressure on small businesses that are straining to survive.

"If we have to wait until January, an extremely large number of small businesses will fail," Hamilton, the George Washington University economist, said at a Brookings Institution conference last month. "In the hundreds of thousands ... We can't last until January. That would be catastrophic."

To hang on, many small businesses have tried to reinvent the way they do business.

"Change comes from desperate firms trying new things," said Giuseppe Gramigna, a small business consultant and former chief economist at the SBA.

The flexibility may be paying off for some.

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Businesses with fewer than 500 employees were hurt the most when the pandemic struck: They slashed 16.4% of their jobs between February and April, versus a 14.1% drop in employment at companies with 500 or more workers, according to ADP. But since April, employment at the smaller businesses has rebounded somewhat faster than at larger companies.

In Winchester, Emily Rhodes, owner of Polka Dot Pot, didn't wait. She knew that the pandemic, and the lockdowns it would require, could wreck her business of offering pottery-making classes. Working with a tech-savvy friend in Ohio, she and her staff created a website from scratch, started taking orders and arranged for curbside pickup.

"To-go kept us going," she said.

Rhodes also started delivering craft kits to customers. She dressed up as the Easter Bunny to take packages to children in April.

At the Hideaway Café, owner Victoria Kidd took a similar approach. The Hideaway began delivering "quarantine care packages." Adults would receive wine or beer, baked goods, a roll of toilet paper and a thank you note from Kidd's 7-year-old daughter. Children would receive sweets, delivered by café staff in costumes — a pirate, a wizard, a unicorn or Star Wars' Kylo Ren.

Kidd also had another idea: "Beverage bonds" that allowed customers to pay now for coffee they'd drink later. The drive generated \$10,000. As it turned out, few of the buyers ever redeemed their bonds; they just wanted to keep the café going.

The threat to their small businesses, it seems, evoked a protective instinct in Winchester residents. Many shared the idea, said Christine Patrick of the Book Gallery, that "If Amazon and Google own the world, we're in trouble."

Despite those efforts, Hamilton at George Washington University fears the damage will be long-lasting.

"It is much easier to close a business than to start one," he said. After the Great Recession, "it took more than a decade to get back to the number of small businesses we had in 2008."

He expects business losses this time to double the number that shuttered in the Great Recession.

"It seems clear to me that the COVID-19 crisis is going to have an extremely deep scarring effect on the small business sector," Hamilton said, "and through it the American job market and economy."

Months into pandemic, Iran sees worst wave of virus deaths

By NASSER KARIMI and ISABEL DEBRE Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — Iran's capital has run out of intensive care beds as the country confronts a new surge of infections that is filling hospitals and cemeteries alike. The single-day death toll hit a record high three times this week.

Eight months after the pandemic first stormed Iran, pummeling its already weakened economy and sickening officials at the highest levels of its government, authorities have not been able to prevent its spread. In a country devastated by American sanctions, the government considers an economic shutdown like the ones imposed in Europe and the United States impossible.

"The pandemic will not get any better in our country soon," said Mohadeseh Karim, a 23-year-old college student in Tehran. "It is only getting worse day by day."

On social media, Iranians describe chaotic scenes at overwhelmed hospitals. On state TV, gravediggers can be seen breaking new ground in vast cemeteries for virus victims, as the daily death toll shattered records Sunday, Monday and Wednesday. A top health official announced that overall hospitalizations in Tehran, the capital, were up 12% more than in even previous virus surges. Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has ordered military hospitals to boost their capacities.

"The situation is very critical," said Mino Mohraz, a member of the country's coronavirus task force who said intensive care units in the capital are full. "There is not an empty bed for any new patient."

Contradictory messages and measures have plagued the government's virus response, helping propel the country's toll of 29,600 reported deaths to No. 1 in the Middle East. At first, officials sought to play down the virus, and international experts accused them of covering up the scale of the outbreak.

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Authorities declined to close crowded shrines and instead rallied citizens for a parliamentary election and the anniversary of the 1979 Islamic Revolution in February. As infections swelled in late March, the government briefly ordered offices and nonessential businesses to shut. Roughly two weeks later, shops and restaurants reopened in major cities. Last month, the government pushed for schools — which had been closed since March — to reopen.

But more recently, authorities have introduced restrictions and delivered dramatic warnings. One hospital director told state TV the death toll could reach what Iran incurred in eight years of bloody war with Iraq in the 1980s, a conflict that killed a total of 1 million people on both sides. Deputy Health Minister Iraj Harirchi, who tested positive for the virus in March after dismissing reports of fatalities as hype, declared this week that Iran's true death toll was likely twice the official count.

The virus continues to afflict top Iranian officials, most recently the head of the country's atomic energy agency and its vice president in charge of budget and planning. In the spring, the virus killed one of Khamenei's senior advisers.

The government, however, continues to oppose a nationwide lockdown, seeking to salvage an economy buckling under unprecedented U.S. sanctions imposed after President Donald Trump withdrew from Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers.

As the government pivots back and forth, "Iranians are getting confused about what is right and what is wrong," said Kamiar Alaei, an Iranian health policy expert at California State University, Long Beach.

Ordinary Iranians, accustomed to calamity and highly skeptical of state-run news and official claims, are still packing cafes, bazaars and restaurants, throwing caution to the wind.

Reza Ghasemi, a 31-year-old cellphone salesman sitting at a crowded cafe in the capital, said he believes the virus is a conspiracy to "frighten poor people."

Still, in Tehran, a sprawling city of 10 million people where the virus has left few untouched, there are signs that fear is setting in.

Shocked by the soaring death rate, a growing number of Tehran residents have come to support tighter pandemic restrictions and obey the new mask mandate imposed this month. At a teahouse popular with laborers in the capital, an Associated Press journalist counted just 13 out of 57 customers who entered without a mask. In a suburban cafe, a mere six of 79 customers flouted the rule, a marked improvement after months of public indifference.

"We lose scores of lives every day," said Saeed Mianji, a 27-year-old car dealer at a Tehran cafe. Masks "save more lives and enable people to feel relief."

Authorities, trying to take tougher action, closed down a range of public places in Tehran early this month. Weeks after President Hassan Rouhani called in-person instruction at schools "our first priority," the government shut the newly resumed schools and universities in the capital. Beauty salons, mosques, museums and libraries have been shuttered, too. On Wednesday, the Health Ministry imposed a travel ban to and from five major cities, including Tehran and the holy city of Mashhad, ahead of a religious holiday.

Iran's health minister called on the police and Basij forces, the volunteer wing of the country's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, to help enforce virus rules.

Photo enforcement of the mask law has started at traffic lights, applying the same technology police use for the country's compulsory headscarf rule for women. In the coming days, Tehran residents caught without masks, who now get off with a warning, may get a cash fine — although at just 500,000 rials, or \$1.60, it remains symbolic. "Our main goal is not to give tickets but to raise awareness," said Ali Rabiee, the government spokesman.

While several countries are struggling with resurgences of the virus, the scale of Iran's outbreak points to "mismanagement" at the highest levels, said Abbas Abdi, a Tehran-based political analyst.

"Resolving the crisis requires unity, power, managerial efficiency and ultimately trust in policymakers and officials," Abdi said. In Iran, he added, "none of this exists."

DeBre reported from Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

US jobless claims rise to 898,000 with layoffs still high

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The number of Americans seeking unemployment benefits rose last week by the most in two months, to 898,000, a historically high number and evidence that layoffs remain a hindrance to the economy's recovery from the pandemic recession.

Thursday's report from the Labor Department coincides with other recent data that have signaled a slowdown in hiring. The economy is still roughly 10.7 million jobs short of recovering all the 22 million jobs that were lost when the pandemic struck in early spring.

Confirmed coronavirus cases have been rising again nationwide in the past month, likely causing more Americans to hold back from eating out, shopping and engaging in other commerce. Cases have spiked in Wisconsin, for example, prompting renewed restrictions on business in Milwaukee and Madison.

Across the country, applications for unemployment aid are rising while negotiations over a new stimulus package between House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin remain mired in a stalemate.

The job search website Indeed said its job postings were unchanged last week, remaining about 17% below last year's levels. Many employers still aren't confident enough in their businesses or in their view of the economy to ramp up hiring. Job postings had rebounded steadily over the summer, but the gains have slowed in the past two months.

"Further recovery looks to have stalled out," said AnnElizabeth Konkel, an economist at Indeed. "Holiday hiring is sluggish, and many businesses need to make significant changes to ride out the colder months."

California, which typically accounts for about one-fourth of the nation's jobless aid applications, has reported the same number of claims for several weeks as a placeholder. That's because it temporarily stopped processing new applications while it implements anti-fraud technology and clears a backlog of claims.

That means jobless claims rose nationally last week even though they were unchanged in the largest state. Applications rose significantly in 17 states, including Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana and Massachusetts. In Wisconsin, they increased by a quarter to nearly 15,000.

Fraud and issues around double-counting claims have caused many economists to take a more skeptical view of whether jobless aid applications are a precise barometer of layoffs. But most still see an increase in claims as a discouraging sign even if the level may be inflated by people who have filed multiple applications for different programs.

A report Thursday from Moody's Analytics, a forecasting firm, and Morning Consult, a polling outfit, found that millions of people remain dependent on government aid. Roughly half of respondents in a survey last month said they were still using their \$1,200 stimulus checks, which the government distributed in April and May, to pay for expenses. About 15% said they were relying on unemployment benefits.

More than 40% of the unemployed are also relying on financial help from relatives or friends. And 12 million households say they aren't sure they will be able to keep making their mortgage payments.

The government's report Thursday, showing that initial requests for jobless aid rose 53,000 last week, also said the number of people who are continuing to receive benefits dropped 1.2 million to 10 million. That decline signals that many of the unemployed are being recalled to their old jobs. But it also means that potentially even more people have used up their regular state benefits — which usually expire after six months — and have transitioned to extended benefit programs that last an additional three months.

Indeed, the number of people receiving extended benefits in late September, the latest data available, jumped 800,000 to 2.8 million. The government also said 373,000 people applied for jobless aid under a separate program that made the self-employed, contractors and gig workers eligible for unemployment benefits for the first time.

That figure was 90,000 lower than in the previous week. These figures aren't adjusted for seasonal trends, so the government reports them separately from the traditional jobless claims.

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Nearly all jobless benefit recipients are now receiving only regular state unemployment payments because a federal weekly supplement of \$300 has ended in nearly all states. A \$600-a-week federal benefit expired over the summer.

The end of federal aid for the unemployed will likely force many of the jobless to sharply cut their spending, thereby weakening the economy. The full impact may have been delayed, though, by the fact that most of the federal aid was saved or was used to pare debt, according to research by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York.

According to the New York Fed, at the end of June nearly one-quarter of jobless aid payments had been saved. Nearly half were used to pay down debt. Just 28% of the money was spent.

And more than one-third of the \$1,200 stimulus checks that went to most adults was saved, with an additional one-third of that money used to pay off debt.

The end of the federal payments has also underscored the dramatically uneven nature of unemployment benefits across states. In Arizona, for example, the maximum weekly payment is only \$240, while in neighboring California it's \$450. In Florida and Tennessee, the maximum is just \$275. In New Jersey, the top weekly benefit is \$713.

Nationwide, on average, unemployment benefits replace about 33% of what recipients earned at their previous job. That is down from 36% in 2009.

"It is a steady downward trend," said Andrew Stettner, a senior fellow at the Century Foundation. "The formulas have gradually gotten more stingy."

Some of the lowest benefits are provided in states where Black Americans make up the largest proportion of jobless aid recipients. In Mississippi, for instance, 54% of unemployment aid recipients in August were Black, according to the Century Foundation. The maximum benefit in that state is \$235 a week. Black Americans are much more likely to work in restaurants, retail stores, hotels and other industries that have suffered enormous job cuts.

In South Carolina, more than one-third of people receiving unemployment aid are Black. The maximum benefit is \$326.

AP-NORC poll: Americans critical of Trump handling of virus

By JULIE PACE, HANNAH FINGERHUT and NATHAN ELLGREN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Less than three weeks from Election Day, majorities of Americans are highly critical of President Donald Trump's handling of both the coronavirus pandemic and his own illness, according to a new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

The survey also shows that few Americans have high levels of trust in the information the White House has released about Trump's health. Initial accounts of the president's condition were murky and contradictory, and the White House is still refusing to say when the president last tested negative for COVID-19 before his infection became public.

Trump's illness and hospitalization has refocused the critical final stretch of the presidential campaign on the pandemic, which has killed more than 216,000 people in the United States this year. Democratic challenger Joe Biden has sought to make the election a referendum on the Republican president's handling of the virus, arguing that Trump has mismanaged the pandemic and cost Americans lives.

The AP-NORC poll suggests many Americans agree with that sentiment, with 65% saying Trump has not taken the coronavirus outbreak in the U.S. seriously enough. The poll, which was taken a week after Trump disclosed his own COVID-19 diagnosis, also shows that 54% of Americans disapprove with how the White House handled the episode.

The Rev. Joseph Wiseman, a 49-year-old registered Republican and Biden supporter from Wichita, Kansas, is among them. Wiseman said he was turned off by the president's "cavalier attitude" toward the pandemic and what he saw as Trump's "disregard for the health and well-being" of people around him who were exposed to the virus at White House events, as well as when the president drove in a vehicle with Secret Service agents to greet supporters during his hospital stay.

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Trump spent four days at a military hospital just outside Washington, where he was treated with an aggressive drug regimen. On Sunday, his doctor said he was no longer contagious, and he's returned to the campaign trail this week, holding rallies in battleground states across the country.

The president was eager to return to campaigning in part to send a message to Americans that they should not allow the virus to consume their lives. It's a message that has been well-received by some of the president's supporters.

"I think that from the start to the finish that he came through quite rapidly and he's back out there," said Jim Gula, 71, a Republican and Trump supporter from Jacksonville, Florida. "And I think that's a reflection on the overall people who have come down with a positive test."

The pandemic upended Trump's plans to spend 2020 running on a strong economic record, thrusting him instead into the role of a president governing through crisis. He's repeatedly tried to downplay the impact of the virus, even after his own illness, and has opposed some of the more stringent safety measures recommended by his own administration.

With early voting already underway in much of the country, national polls show Biden leading Trump by a comfortable margin, though many battleground states remain competitive. The president is spending much of this week campaigning in states that should be comfortable territory for him, including Iowa and Georgia, which hasn't voted for a Democrat for president since 1992.

The race has remained relatively stable for weeks, with Trump unable to gain significant ground on Biden through his efforts to refocus on a "law and order" message aimed at rallying white suburban voters or through his nomination of Judge Amy Coney Barrett to the Supreme Court seat that opened after the death of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

According to the poll, which was largely conducted before Barrett's Senate hearings this week, Americans were divided over her confirmation. Thirty percent favored the confirmation, 35% opposed and 34% said they held neither opinion. Republicans were much more likely to support the confirmation than Democrats.

Trump heads into Election Day with a 39% overall approval rating from Americans, on par with his approval ratings over the course of his presidency. But there are other warning signs for him in the AP-NORC poll.

Seventy-four percent of Americans say the country is heading in the wrong direction, including half of Republicans.

And though the majority of Republicans, 83%, approve of Trump's overall job performance, fewer, 70%, are supportive of his handling of the pandemic. Republicans also showed some skepticism of the White House's handling of Trump's diagnosis, with just half saying they trusted the information provided to the public "a great deal" or "quite a bit."

The president continues to earn more praise for his handling of the economy: 49% of Americans approve, and 51% disapprove. With unemployment still high and the fate of many businesses uncertain due to the pandemic, 61% of Americans described the nation's economy as poor.

But about two-thirds of Americans say their personal financial situation is good, which has remained consistent since before the pandemic.

The AP-NORC poll of 1,121 adults was conducted Oct. 8-12 using a sample drawn from NORC's probability-based AmeriSpeak Panel, which is designed to be representative of the U.S. population. The margin of sampling error for all respondents is plus or minus 4 percentage points.

Online:

AP-NORC Center: <http://www.apnorc.org/>.

Pandemic driving children back to work, jeopardizing gains

By MARÍA VERZA, CARLOS VALDEZ and WILLIAM COSTA Associated Press

JOTOLCHEN, Mexico (AP) — The coronavirus pandemic is threatening the future of a generation of the

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world's children, depriving them of schooling and sending them to work. Across the developing world, two decades of gains against child labor are eroding.

With classrooms shuttered and parents losing their jobs, children are trading their ABC's for the D of drudgery: Reading, writing and times tables are giving way to sweat, blisters and fading hopes for a better life.

Instead of going to school, children in Kenya are grinding rocks in quarries. Tens of thousands of children in India have poured into farm fields and factories. Across Latin America, kids are making bricks, building furniture and clearing brush, once after-school jobs that are now full-time work.

These children and adolescents are earning pennies or at best a few dollars a day to help put food on the table.

"Child labor becomes a survival mechanism for many families," says Astrid Hollander, UNICEF's head of education in Mexico.

Governments are still analyzing how many students have dropped out of their school systems, but with school closures affecting nearly 1.5 billion children around the world, UNICEF estimates the numbers could be in the millions.

Experts say the longer their education is put on hold, the less likely children will return to school. The ramifications, especially for those already lagging, can be lifelong -- narrowed job opportunities, lower potential earnings and greater likelihood of poverty and early pregnancy.

"The repercussions could be felt in economies and societies for decades to come," Henrietta Fore, executive director of UNICEF, the U.N. children's agency, warned in August. For at least 463 million children whose schools closed, there is no possibility of remote learning.

It is, she said, a "global education emergency."

The same week the UNICEF report was issued, a new school year started for nearly 30 million students in Mexico. In remote places where distance learning is not feasible, teachers deliver workbooks to villages and then arrange to retrieve them later.

Joel Hernández, director of a school in Jotolchén, in the mountains of central Chiapas state, said he went to pick up the workbooks recently and only about 20% of students had completed the work.

Neither 11-year-old Andrés Gomez nor his siblings had done it. Until March, when the school closed, Andrés spent his days there learning to speak, read and write Spanish -- his native language is Tzotzil. After the bell he would follow his dad into the amber mine for a couple of hours.

Now each morning he goes to work inside that a dark, hand-carved tunnel which lacks supports or safety measures. With a flashlight lashed to his head he whips a heavy hammer back and forth over his shoulder driving a steel spike into the rock. He can't stand up. He crouches on the flakes of rock he chips away, each blow followed by a quiet grunt.

The hope is to find a piece of amber for which a middleman might pay him \$1 to \$5. The bit of petrified sap would likely end up sold as jewelry to tourists.

"What I want to learn is to read and write," he says.

Andrés could take advantage of online or televised learning, but like many others he has no access to technology; there is no computer or television in his family's two-room home, just an old stereo.

"If Dad is going to the fields, to the coffee grove, to the mine, the child is not going to stay at home with nothing to do," Hernández says. "For them, to sit around watching television, if they have it, is like wasting time."

There are seven children in Andrés' family, four of school age. An 8-year-old sister helps her pregnant mother do laundry and cook food; Andrés and an older brother work in the mine with their father

Miners pay a monthly rent to the landowner to dig for amber, a payment that comes due whether they find any or not. When Andrés is not mining he helps an uncle with livestock, cutting firewood and clearing brush. In his spare time he reverts to the boy he is, shooting marbles and laughing.

He misses school: "I learned the vowels, the teacher taught, we copied and then I went to the mine,"

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he says. His school, a single room with posters of vocabulary and historical figures on the walls and messages still on the chalkboard, sits vacant.

Mexican law prohibits children younger than 14 from working. Children under 16 can't do hazardous or unhealthy work. But children commonly work around school to help their families get by.

Mexican education officials recently said that enrollment for the new school year was down about 10%, but teachers warn that many students enrolled out of habit, but aren't participating.

"Some kids will probably drop out, maybe not in elementary school, but those who finished sixth grade this year," Hernández says. "Those probably won't continue on to middle school."

In El Alto, a suburb perched above Bolivia's capital of La Paz, five siblings between the ages of 6 and 14 years old are bundled in hats and coats against the chilly mountain air as they and their parents work all in their family's small carpentry workshop.

The youngest, 6-year-old Mariana Geovana, would have started kindergarten this year; instead, she smooths miniature furniture with scraps of sandpaper. Jonatan, 14, the most experienced, uses the electric saw to cut lengths of wood for doll-size beds and full-size chests of drawers.

"I'm frustrated not being able to go to school," he says. "You learn talking with your classmates and your teachers."

The Bolivian government decided to cancel the school year in August because it said there was no way to provide an equitable education to the country's nearly 3 million students. In a country where informal employment makes up 70% of the economy, the closure of schools immediately put more kids to work.

"We have seen new children and adolescents selling in the street," says Patricia Velasco, manager of a municipal program for at-risk people in the capital La Paz. "They've been pushed to generate income."

Watching Mariana, Jonatan and his other children at work -- and sending the older kids out into the streets to sell their pieces -- Hector Delgado, 54, knows what is at stake. "For the students the closure of the school year is a catastrophe. They're not going to make up the time and I strive for them to be more than carpenters."

But Delgado, head of the local Artisans Council in El Alto, said the family had burned through their savings and now didn't have money to buy lumber to carry on with its business.

He and his wife, María Luisa, are doing what they can to ensure their children don't fall behind. Under their mother's watchful eye, the children work through schoolbooks they were given in February at the start of the school year. Each morning in the workshop, she has them take time to study.

The family's commitment to education is most apparent in an adjacent room. There, eldest son Cristian, 21, continues his management classes online through a public university.

The dark earth bricks produced by the rustic brickyards of the small town of Tobatí, 43 miles (70 km) from Asunción, are used to construct buildings across Paraguay. Large open kilns made from those very same mud bricks stand next to almost every home; row upon row of identical bricks dry in the open air.

With the help of his 10-year-old son, Hugo Godoy shovels mounds of clay and sandy earth, preparing to make the next day's bricks.

As he leans on his spade, his son wanders off to sit with two infants by the house -- Godoy's grandchildren. His son does more than help at home; since schools stopped operating in March, Godoy had also been sending him to work at a nearby larger factory.

"I spoke to the owner and said that if he gave him light work -- moving the raw materials and things like that -- then I'd let him go," Godoy said, speaking in his native Guarani language. "There are lots of children working."

Another of Godoy's sons, who is 15, is working full time at the same factory, earning around \$10 a day loading bricks onto tall trucks. Before the pandemic he worked just part time. "I don't put the older ones to work here at home: I tell them to go and find some way to help with our situation," Godoy said.

In Paraguay, children from 12 to 14 can carry out only "light tasks" in family enterprises, while adoles-

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cents of 15 to 17 can hold jobs that do not appear on a list of the 26 "worst forms of child labor" -- as long as it does not interfere with their schooling.

Members of brickmaking families said school closures -- scheduled to last at least until December -- have led to many children and adolescents working longer hours. And these new schedules have made it difficult to complete their virtual schoolwork.

Godoy said he had discovered that his son had missed exams, and "After that, I told him to let me know when he has exams so that he doesn't have to go to work those days. Whatever happens, we'll find a way to manage and make ends meet, I told him."

Paraguay's government set up virtual classrooms for distance learning, but families cited a number of associated costs, including cell phone data plans as well as printing and copying for their children's class work. A UNICEF report said that 22% of students were participating in the virtual classrooms while 52% were trying to keep up with assignments via WhatsApp.

"I know lots of cases of 15-year-olds who have been doing well at school but haven't been able to afford the costs," said Godoy. "They stop studying and start working."

At a quarry in Nairobi, Florence Mumbua works alongside her children, ages 7, 10 and 12. Mumbua lost her cleaning job at a private school when the pandemic hit, and the family doesn't have the resources for the children to learn online. So together they crush rock, each earning about 65 cents a day.

"I have to work with them because they need to eat and yet I make little money. When we work as a team, we can make enough money for our lunch, breakfast and dinner," Mumbua said.

Child labor is illegal in Kenya. But so is child prostitution, and it too has thrived since school closed.

Mary Mugure, a former sex worker turned activist through her Night Nurse organization, says up to 1,000 schoolgirls have become sex workers in the three Nairobi neighborhoods she monitors since schools shut in March. The youngest, she said, was 11.

In India, Dhananjay Tingal fears that millions more children will "fall back into trafficking, child labor and child marriage because the economic crisis is looming large."

As executive director of the Bachpan Bachao Andolan -- a children's rights group whose founder, Kailash Satyarthi, won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014 -- Tingal has watched with horror as child labor grows in a country that already has one of the world's worst records.

A harsh nationwide lockdown imposed in March pummeled the Indian economy and pushed millions of people into poverty, forcing many poor families to put their children to work to make ends meet. When the economy opened, tens of thousands of children took jobs in farms and factories.

"This is a serious problem," he said.

Experts say in the past, most students who have missed class because of crises like the Ebola epidemic returned when schools reopened. But the longer the crisis drags on, the less likely they will go back.

Yliana Merida, a researcher at the Autonomous University of Chiapas, Mexico, said that even more than before, the pandemic has turned education into a luxury. "Many parents opt for 'you're going to work to help me at home because right now we really need it.'"

In Nuevo Yibeljoj, another community in the mountains of Chiapas, 12-year-old Samuel Vázquez watches closely as his father, Agustín, writes syllables on scraps of paper and sticks them to the wall. He sits in a small chair beside his brother, using the bed as a desk as his father kneels between them.

They had just returned from working in the fields, something the brothers used to do only on weekends. Since schools closed in March, they've worked weekdays, weeding and helping with the crops.

Samuel enjoys farm work and one day wants to grow coffee and fruit trees like his father, but he misses school. He's a good student and helps his younger siblings. "I like addition a lot and reading," he says.

Samuel is fortunate that his father makes time to help them study, though he himself has only an elementary school education.

"I try, but it's not the same as a teacher, because I'm a farmer," says Agustín, 52.

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He has 12 children, four of whom are school age. He was sick with COVID-19 and recovered. What worries him is the future.

"We aren't afraid of the coronavirus," he says. "What worries us a lot is education, which is being lost."

Valdez reported from El Alto, Bolivia and Costa reported from Tobati, Paraguay. AP writers Tom Odula in Nairobi, Kenya and Sheikh Saaliq in New Delhi, India and Christopher Sherman in Mexico City contributed to this report.

Scramble to get people counted as 2020 census winds down

By MIKE SCHNEIDER Associated Press

Census advocates across the nation made last-ditch efforts Thursday to get as many households to answer the 2020 census, which has been challenged by a pandemic, natural disasters, court fights and the Trump administration's push to have it end a month earlier than planned.

The tally was mandated to halt at 11:59 p.m. Hawaii Standard Time on Thursday — 5:59 a.m. Friday for people living on the East Coast — but questions lingered about deadlines and who gets counted when congressional seats are allotted.

Advocates are particularly worried that minorities, and people in rural and tribal areas, are going to be missed due to the rushed ending of the count, resulting in less federal funding for those communities and perhaps fewer congressional seats and electoral votes for states that have large minority populations.

Census advocates who had been planning on two more weeks to encourage people to answer the census found themselves scrambling after the Supreme Court ruled on Tuesday that the Trump administration could end the nation's head count this week.

"Everybody is leaning in hard to try to make sure they can reach as many people as possible," said Kathay Feng, an official with Common Cause, the good-government advocacy group.

In Rhode Island, advocates went to bus hubs in Providence to make sure people had filled out the forms that ask about the makeup of their households. Armed with tablets to help residents answer the questionnaire online, teams of advocates in New York City went canvassing in neighborhoods in Brooklyn and Queens. In Detroit, residents were being given the chance to win \$25 gift cards in exchange for driving to a church parking lot to fill out their census forms.

In Los Angeles, Esperanza Guevara, the census campaign manager for the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights, was leading phone-banking efforts to encourage people to fill out the census form.

"Our phone banking team scrambled to put together one final push," Guevara said.

The census is used to determine how \$1.5 trillion in federal spending is distributed annually, as well as how many congressional seats each state gets in a process called apportionment.

Tens of thousands of temporary census takers had been hired by the U.S. Census Bureau to knock on the doors of homes whose residents hadn't filled out their census forms. On Thursday, many filled out employee exit surveys and turned in the mobile devices they'd used while canvassing.

After the Supreme Court ruling, the Census Bureau said it would still be gathering data through Thursday, but it stopped some operations on the spot without taking advantage of the extra two days, according to some census takers. In Arkansas, an operation to send people into hard-to-count neighborhoods was suspended two days before the count was ending.

Thursday's deadline came after the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the Trump administration, which had argued the census needed to end immediately in order for the Census Bureau to have enough time to process the data to meet a congressionally mandated Dec. 31 deadline for turning in apportionment numbers. Associate Justice Sonia Sotomayor dissented, saying that minorities and others "will disproportionately bear the burden of any inaccuracies."

By sticking to the Dec. 31 deadline, the Trump administration would end up controlling the numbers used for apportionment, no matter who wins next month's presidential election. Opponents fear the administra-

tion will depart from past practice and leave out people who are in the U.S. illegally — Trump has directed the Census Bureau to do just that for the apportionment count, but that currently is being fought in court. The Trump administration earlier had tried to get a citizenship question on the 2020 census questionnaire but was blocked by the Supreme Court last year.

Advocates still hold out hope that Congress will pass legislation that will extend the apportionment deadline from Dec. 31 to the end of next April in order to give the Census Bureau enough time to check the quality of the data, remove duplications and fill in missing information with administrative records.

The Census Bureau originally had allotted five months for the data processing phase, but that time period shrinks to less than three months if the statistical agency tries to meet the Dec. 31 deadline. Advocates and users of census data worry that isn't enough time, and even some of the Census Bureau's top brass said this summer that it would be impossible to meet the Dec. 31 deadline. They later revised their statements to say it could be done if the count had stopped at the beginning of the month.

Also left unanswered is whether the Census Bureau will be able to come up with a methodology for figuring out who who is in the country illegally in order to carry out Trump's directive, which a panel of federal judges in New York ruled was unlawful. The Trump administration has appealed to the Supreme Court.

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

Man shelters 300 dogs from Hurricane Delta in Mexico home

By LUIS ANDRES HENAO Associated Press

LEONA VICARIO, Mexico (AP) — As the dangerous Hurricane Delta closed in on Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula, Ricardo Pimentel opened his home — to about 300 dogs.

There were plenty of other critters too: Dozens of cats were harbored in his son's room; his daughter's room served as a refuge for chicks, bunnies and even a hedgehog; a patio became a haven for a flock of sheep.

Not surprisingly, the house smelled terrible, he says. But it was worth it: All survived the storm.

"It doesn't matter if the house is dirty, it can be cleaned," he says. "The things they broke can be fixed or bought again, but what's beautiful is to see them happy, healthy and safe, without wounds and with the possibility of being adopted."

It all started with an Oct. 6 social media post. Pimentel told friends he had cut branches and boarded up windows at the Tierra de Animales (Land of Animals) shelter he founded nearly a decade ago about 20 miles (30 kilometers) southwest of Cancun, where he also lives with his family.

He warned of the hurricane's devastating power. Concerned that stores might remain shut after the storm, leading to food shortages, he asked for donations.

"If I lived with just 10 or 20 dogs, I wouldn't worry much, but here we have hundreds of animals and we can't afford the luxury of not having enough food," he said.

To keep the animals safe from the impending storm, he moved them inside. It took hours to lead the hundreds of canines indoors by leash.

A subsequent online post included photos of what looked like a carpet in his hallway. A closer look revealed that the carpet was alive — many, many dogs, crowded together. The post was shared widely on social media and grabbed headlines across the globe.

Pimentel was so busy in the midst of the storm — the hurricane downed trees, knocked out power and prompted the evacuation of thousands of residents and tourists along the Yucatan Peninsula's resort-studded coast — that he was unaware the post had gone viral.

Afterward, he was surprised by the generosity of people from around the world who donated thousands of dollars. It was, he said, perhaps the biggest fundraising moment since he founded Tierra de Animales. And local residents stepped forward to help clean up the damage at the shelter.

Pimentel has always preferred the company of animals. He dropped out of college and spent years fix-

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ing motorcycles and adopting stray dogs before fulfilling his childhood dream by starting the shelter in 2011. Today, some 500 animals live on nearly 10 acres (4 hectares) of land.

On a recent day, Clarita, a friendly, long-horned cow who loves to be petted by visitors, roamed inside a corral where a sign read: "Leave footprints of kindness for others to follow." Workers had been repairing hurricane damage to an enclosure where goats Pepito and Elvis live with Morfeo, a bull saved from the slaughterhouse. "They became his friends," Pimentel said.

Some Tierra de Animales dogs were rescued from dogfighting rings, or were left unable to stand after being brutally beaten. Over the years, many have been adopted by families in Mexico, Canada and the U.S.

Pimentel gets help from workers, volunteers and family, including 20-year-old daughter Luna, who is studying to become a veterinarian. Whenever he feels overwhelmed and needs inspiration to continue his mission, he looks at photos of rescue dogs who found a new home.

"We would like to think that thanks to all this attention, somebody would like to be part of the story and say: 'I adopted a dog saved from that famous Hurricane Delta.'"

"One Good Thing" is a series that highlights individuals whose actions provide glimmers of joy in hard times — stories of people who find a way to make a difference, no matter how small. Read the collection of stories at <https://apnews.com/hub/one-good-thing>

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

Election 2020 Today: Town hall duel; mail changes reversed

By The Associated Press undefined

Here's what's happening Thursday in Election 2020, 19 days until Election Day:

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

ON THE TRAIL: President Donald Trump will be in North Carolina and Florida; Democratic challenger Joe Biden will be in Pennsylvania.

TODAY'S TOP STORIES:

DUELING TOWN HALLS: Trump and Biden will compete for TV audiences in dueling town halls instead of meeting face-to-face for their second debate as originally planned. The two will take questions in different cities on different networks: Trump on NBC from Miami, Biden on ABC from Philadelphia. Trump backed out of plans for the presidential faceoff originally scheduled for the evening after debate organizers shifted the format to a virtual event following Trump's coronavirus diagnosis.

BARRETT'S FATE: The Senate Judiciary Committee is poised to take the first steps toward approving Supreme Court nominee Amy Coney Barrett. After the two days of questioning, the committee is scheduled to start considering the nomination. The meeting is a procedural formality and will be conducted ahead of a panel of law experts and advocates who will testify for and against Barrett's nomination. A vote by the committee isn't expected until next week.

MAIL REVERSAL: The U.S. Postal Service is resuming full operations after changes that slowed mail service nationwide. The Postal Service agreed to reverse all changes, which included reduced retail hours, removal of collection boxes and mail sorting machines, closure or consolidation of mail processing facilities, restriction of late or extra trips for timely mail delivery, and banning or restricting overtime. The agreement also requires the service to prioritize election mail.

BIDEN EXPLAINER: Looking to undermine rival Joe Biden just weeks before the election, Trump's campaign has seized on a tabloid story offering bizarre twists to a familiar line of attack: Biden's relationship with Ukraine. But the story in the New York Post raises more questions than answers, including about the authenticity of an email at the center of the story. The origins of the story also trace back to Trump lawyer Rudy Giuliani, who has repeatedly pushed unfounded claims about Biden and his son, Hunter Biden. Even if the emails in the Post are legitimate, they don't validate Trump and Giuliani's claims that

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Biden's actions were influenced by his son's business dealings in Ukraine.

IOWA RULING: Iowa's highest court upheld a state directive that was used to invalidate tens of thousands of absentee ballot requests mailed to voters pre-filled with their personal information. The court rejected a Democratic challenge that argued the directive issued by Republican Secretary of State Paul Pate was unconstitutional. Pate instructed county elections commissioners in July that all absentee ballot request forms they mailed to voters must be blank in order to ensure uniformity statewide.

VISION 2020: Can you trust the U.S. Postal Service to deliver your ballot on time? If you plan on voting by mail, election officials say it's best to do it as early as possible so your ballot gets to its destination well before Election Day. On top of that, each state has different rules on whether it accepts mail ballots that arrive after Nov. 3. Read more in Vision 2020, a new series of stories answering questions from our audience about the election.

ICYMI:

History, mistrust spurring Black early voters in Georgia

Jones: Tuberville charity filings raise questions

Battleground North Carolina begins in-person early voting

California GOP says it won't remove unofficial ballot boxes

Pence in Michigan says 'road to victory' runs through state

Space probe makes 1st Venus fly-by on way to Mercury

BERLIN (AP) — A spacecraft bound for Mercury swung by Venus on Thursday, using Earth's neighbor to adjust its course on the way to the solar system's smallest and innermost planet.

Launched almost two years ago, the European-Japanese probe BepiColombo took a black-and-white snapshot of Venus from a distance of 17,000 kilometers (10,560 miles), with some of its own instruments in the frame.

The fly-by is the second of nine so-called planetary gravity assists that the spacecraft needs for its seven-year trip to Mercury. The first, around Earth, took place in April.

The European Space Agency has described the 1.3 billion-euro (\$1.5 billion) mission as one of its most challenging yet. Mercury's extreme temperatures, the intense gravity pull of the sun and blistering solar radiation make for hellish conditions.

BepiColombo will make one more fly-by of Venus and six of Mercury itself to slow down before its arrival in 2025. Once there, the spacecraft will split in two, releasing a European orbiter nicknamed Bepi that will swoop into Mercury's inner orbit while Mio, built by the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency, gathers data from a greater distance.

Both probes are designed to cope with temperatures varying from 430 degrees Celsius (806 degrees Fahrenheit) on the side facing the sun, and -180 degrees Celsius (-292 F) in Mercury's shadow.

Researchers hope the BepiColombo mission will help them understand more about Mercury, which is only slightly larger than Earth's moon and has a massive iron core.

The last spacecraft to visit Mercury was NASA's Messenger probe, which ended its mission in 2015 after a four-year orbit. Before that, NASA's Mariner 10 flew past the planet in the mid-1970s.

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Friday, Oct. 16, the 290th day of 2020. There are 76 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Oct. 16, 1968, American athletes Tommie Smith and John Carlos sparked controversy at the Mexico City Olympics by giving "Black power" salutes during a victory ceremony after they'd won gold and bronze medals in the 200-meter race.

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On this date:

In 1793, during the French Revolution, Marie Antoinette, the queen of France, was beheaded.

In 1859, radical abolitionist John Brown led a group of 21 men in a raid on Harpers Ferry in western Virginia. (Ten of Brown's men were killed and five escaped. Brown and six followers were captured; all were executed.)

In 1901, Booker T. Washington dined at the White House as the guest of President Theodore Roosevelt, whose invitation to the Black educator sparked controversy.

In 1916, Planned Parenthood had its beginnings as Margaret Sanger and her sister, Ethel Byrne, opened the first birth control clinic in Brooklyn, New York. (The clinic ended up being raided by police and Sanger was arrested.)

In 1934, Chinese Communists, under siege by the Nationalists, began their "long march" lasting a year from southeastern to northwestern China.

In 1962, the Cuban missile crisis began as President John F. Kennedy was informed that reconnaissance photographs had revealed the presence of missile bases in Cuba.

In 1978, the College of Cardinals of the Roman Catholic Church chose Cardinal Karol Wojtyla (voy-TEE'-wah) to be the new pope; he took the name John Paul II.

In 1991, a deadly shooting rampage took place in Killeen, Texas, as a gunman opened fire at a Luby's Cafeteria, killing 23 people before taking his own life.

In 1995, a vast throng of Black men gathered in Washington, D.C. for the "Million Man March" led by Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan.

In 2002, President George W. Bush signed a congressional resolution authorizing war against Iraq. The White House announced that North Korea had disclosed it had a nuclear weapons program.

In 2009, agricultural officials said pigs in Minnesota had tested positive for the H1N1 virus, or swine flu, the first such cases in the U.S.

In 2017, Army Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl, who had been captured and held by the Taliban for five years after walking away from his post in Afghanistan, pleaded guilty to desertion and endangering his comrades. (A military judge later decided not to send him to prison.)

Ten years ago: Iran freed an American businessman jailed in Tehran for more than two years on suspicion of ties to an allegedly violent opposition group. (Reza Taghavi, 71, hadn't been charged with a crime and denied knowingly supporting the organization, known as Tondar.) Actor Barbara Billingsley, the matriarch of TV's "Leave It to Beaver," died in Santa Monica, California, at age 94.

Five years ago: Interior Secretary Sally Jewell announced that the federal government was canceling federal petroleum lease sales in U.S. Arctic waters that had been scheduled for 2016 and 2017. Four Palestinians, including one assailant, were killed by Israeli fire amid continuing widespread unrest as the U.N. Security Council convened an emergency meeting to discuss the escalation.

One year ago: President Donald Trump declared that the U.S. had no stake in defending Kurdish fighters in Syria who had died by the thousands as America's partners against Islamic State extremists; Trump's stance on the Kurds was condemned by Democrats and some Republicans who'd been staunch Trump supporters. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and other top Democrats walked out of a meeting at the White House, with Pelosi accusing Trump of having a "meltdown"; Trump replied on Twitter that it was Pelosi who had a "total meltdown" and called her a "very sick person." Bargainers for General Motors and the United Auto Workers reached a tentative contract deal to end a monthlong strike that brought the company's U.S. factories to a standstill. (Workers voted to approve the contract the following week.) Former Chicago Cubs manager Joe Maddon agreed to a three-year deal to manage the Los Angeles Angels.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Angela Lansbury is 95. Actor Peter Bowles is 84. Actor-producer Tony Anthony is 83. Actor Barry Corbin is 80. Sportscaster Tim McCarver is 79. Rock musician C.F. Turner (Bachman-Turner Overdrive) is 77. Actor Suzanne Somers is 74. Rock singer-musician Bob Weir is 73. Producer-director David Zucker is 73. Record company executive Jim Ed Norman is 72. Actor Daniel Gerroll is 69. Actor Morgan Stevens is 69. Actor Martha Smith is 68. Comedian-actor Andy Kindler is 64. Actor-director Tim Robbins

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is 62. Actor-musician Gary Kemp is 61. Singer-musician Bob Mould is 60. Actor Randy Vasquez is 59. Rock musician Flea (Red Hot Chili Peppers) is 58. Movie director Kenneth Lonergan is 58. Actor Christian Stolte is 58. Actor Todd Stashwick is 52. Actor Terri J. Vaughn is 51. Singer Wendy Wilson (Wilson Phillips) is 51. Rapper B-Rock (B-Rock and the Bizz) is 49. Rock singer Chad Gray (Mudvayne) is 49. Actor Paul Sparks is 49. Actor Kellie Martin is 45. Singer John Mayer is 43. Actor Jeremy Jackson is 40. Actor Caterina Scorsone is 40. Actor Brea Grant is 39. Actor Kyler Pettis is 28. Philadelphia Phillies outfielder Bryce Harper is 28. Tennis star Naomi Osaka is 23.