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Governor Noem to be in Groton today

South Dakota Governor Kristi Noem will be in Groton for a short stop. She will be in Aberdeen today at the ribbon cutting ceremony for the new addition to the 3M facility. According to Ian Fury from the governor's office, as long as Noem was in this part of the state she wanted to visit other communities as well. She will meet with Superintendent Joe Schwan, Mayor Scott Hanlon and a Groton Chamber representative during lunch time and then will visit a couple of businesses.



OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

Deer Hunters in Central South Dakota May Return Licenses Due to Disease Outbreak

PIERRE, S.D. – Due to an outbreak of epizootic hemorrhagic disease (EHD) the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) is offering hunters in Aurora, Faulk, Hand, Hughes, Hyde, Jerauld, Potter and Sully counties the opportunity to voluntarily return their deer licenses.

License returns are being accepted for East River Deer tags only, from the above listed hunting units and do not apply to archery, apprentice, mentored, or muzzleloader licenses. If you hunt private land, it can be helpful to contact the landowner for more information on local conditions before making a decision about returning your tag.

This disease is common in white-tailed deer and is typically detected in late summer or early fall. Minor deer losses to EHD can occur in any given year in South Dakota, but weather and habitat conditions will dictate the severity of the disease. EHD is not infectious to humans. For more information on the EHD virus visit gfp.sd.gov/epizootic-hemorrhagic-disease.

Any hunter voluntarily returning their license will receive a full refund and retain their preference point for any licenses returned. Licenses returned to GFP will not be reallocated.

EHD outbreaks can be locally severe, but rarely affect a high proportion of the deer population in a management unit. In 2016, the disease affected deer populations in certain areas of eastern South Dakota and license adjustments were made in some management units due to these unforeseen mortality events. Deer can continue to succumb to this disease until a hard freeze reduces the midge populations that carry the disease.

Licenses should be sent to:

GFP Licensing Office, 20641 SD Hwy 1806, Fort Pierre, SD 57532.

Individuals should include a note saying they are wanting a refund on the included license.

Groton Prairie Mixed

Shih Tzus 3, Chipmunks 2, Cheetahs 2, Jackelopes 1

High game: Men – Brad Waage 196, Roger Spanier 173, Ron Belden 170

Women – Darci Spanier 180, Sue Stanley 147, Lori Wiley 145, Brenda Madsen 145

High series: Men – Roger Spanier 493, Mike Siegler 461, Randy Stanley 457

Women – Darci Spanier 478, Karen Spanier 395, Brenda Waage 390

#256 in a series

Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

Oh, man! It's getting worse, precisely as every single expert warned it would. 117,300 new cases today, a 1.2% increase and our worst day of this pandemic so far—likely worse days are ahead, so brace yourselves. This rate of increase would put us on track to add a million new cases every 8.5 days. That is truly horrifying. We now have 9,689,200 cases reported in the US, and if we continue at this pace, we'll be over 10 million sometime this weekend, which would set a land speed record. Looks like Texas will have identified a million cases within the next week, another milestone no one wanted to hit.

Twenty states set new-case records today; several others were near records. These span New England, the Midwest, the Great Plains, and the Pacific Northwest as this latest surge engulfs the country. We're doubling hospitalizations every two to three weeks in many parts of the Midwest and setting records as well. Ryan Mielke, director of public affairs at University Medical Center in El Paso, Texas, said, "At the end of October, we were right around 30 inpatients. Yesterday, we had 225. In October, we had one floor dedicated to covid-19 patients. Now we have multiple floors, wholly dedicated to covid-19 patients." How long do you think that can continue? The University of Nebraska Medical Center is setting records every day. James Lawler, infectious-diseases specialist at the Medical Center says mortality rates can rise if hospitals are overwhelmed. "If your ventilators are being run by a dermatologist, your outcomes are not going to be good." Public health authorities are continuing to urge us to use the measures we already have to mitigate transmission; failure to do so means things will get a lot uglier. Lawler adds, "People think there's some magical ceiling we're going to hit. There is no ceiling. Not until we hit herd immunity. And that's not going to be a pretty picture." We've had that conversation here, and he's right. It wouldn't be pretty at all.

We're up to 235,255 deaths. We added 1059 new death reports today, a 0.5% increase. Today was our third consecutive day with over 1000 deaths reported. Expect a great many more such before we're out of this thing. And please, don't wait until those numbers include someone dear to you to exercise every precaution. We have much darker days ahead.

I've been doing some reading about vaccination strategies. This is not purely theoretical anymore as we move closer—we hope—to having an effective vaccine to distribute while knowing that, for some time, the supply is going to be quite limited; that means deciding who's first in line, second in line, etc., to receive it. The CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) met Friday to hash out some of the considerations; their goal is to have a framework ready so that they can fairly rapidly make decisions about the details once they have an approved vaccine ready to go. They can't finalize a plan until we know which vaccine we're looking at because some elements in a strategy are going to depend on the specific characteristics of the particular vaccine being distributed. For example, a vaccine which is largely ineffective in the elderly is going to have a different distribution plan than one which does have good efficacy in this group. The number of doses needed and the quantities projected to be available will also have an impact on the decisions made. The goal of the ACIP at the moment is to have in place a set of guidelines which can be used as a roadmap through the decision process once those blanks are filled in so that matters can proceed apace.

There are many factors to be considered in designing a distribution plan when we know not everyone who needs the vaccine is going to be able to get it. And the first factor is goals. Of course, your overall goal is to produce immunity in enough people that a disease can't easily spread among a population, but we know that's not a realistic goal for a while—there simply will not be enough to go around at first. And we want to reduce both morbidity (sickness) and mortality (deaths) from the disease. But what's the best way to accomplish that? For example, with Covid-19, it might seem reasonable to target those most likely to become seriously ill and to die from the virus; that seems like a good way to reduce both morbidity and mortality. But that vulnerable population might include people who aren't out spreading the virus that much, so maybe it makes more sense to target those most likely to transmit the virus—older children and younger adults. Those folks aren't very likely to become severely ill, but they are responsible for a lot

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of transmission—and shutting down transmission would slow the pandemic by a lot, thereby potentially preserving the health and lives of more people.

It doesn't help that we're still not quite 100% on exactly what are the most frequent means for spread or on who is the most likely to transmit virus. For many respiratory viruses, children are the greatest transmitters. We haven't seen that for sure with Covid-19, but it's hard to tell whether that's because schools were shut down during the spring peak and are taking more precautions than some other segments of society. It is also difficult to factor in the fact that young people, feeling safe because they do not become very ill, are not taking as many precautions as other groups. At any rate, it's a consideration.

Other factors to be considered include the precise effect of a vaccine. Some vaccines might mitigate symptoms without reducing the recipient's infectiousness, which could backfire, causing infected people to be less cautious and thereby increasing spread. Another vaccine might reduce infectiousness even if it doesn't entirely prevent disease. Molly Gallagher of Emory University, in a paper on vaccine distribution, makes the point that a vaccine which is only 30% effective at preventing symptoms but reduces how likely you are to infect others by 70% could actually prevent more overall cases than a highly effective vaccine that permits more transmission. And then there are considerations like whether you should be focusing solely on reducing deaths or reducing the number of hospitalizations to prevent strain on the health care system and on reducing the burden on communities like racial and ethnic minorities who have borne a disproportionate burden from the disease already. There are a lot of societal and ethical considerations which make this whole planning process a great deal more complicated than it appears on the surface.

It looks like the ACIP has agreed their guiding principles will be maximizing benefits and minimizing harms, promoting justice, and mitigating health inequities in determining early allocation groups. They discussed four groups at high risk that might be prioritized depending on the characteristics of the vaccine and number of doses available. The groups under consideration include health care personnel—not just doctors and nurses, but also others who would be exposed to patients or infectious materials; workers in other essential areas—food, agriculture, transportation, education, and law enforcement; those with health conditions that place them at higher risk; and older adults, including those in long-term care facilities. The goals established are to reduce transmissions, illness, and deaths. Within the framework this establishes, they would then be prepared to get specific once they understand the particular vaccine under consideration. Turns out this stuff gets complicated fast.

We have information from a small study published in the journal *Nature Immunology* that looks at antibody responses in children. The research team analyzed antibodies in four groups of patients: adult convalescent plasma donors who recovered without being hospitalized, adults who were hospitalized with acute respiratory distress syndrome, children who were hospitalized with multi-system inflammatory syndrome (MIS-C), and children who did not develop MIS-C. Individuals in all of the groups produced antibodies, just as you'd expect with any virus, but the children in this study did not produce the range of antibodies adults did. They made primarily antibodies in the IgG class against spike proteins of the virus. Adults, however, made several types of antibodies to the spike protein and to other viral proteins, and these were more effective antibodies for neutralizing virus. What is apparently going on in children is that their relatively more powerful innate immunity is eliminating the virus before it gets a foothold in their bodies; this prevents much of an adaptive immune response because the virus is gone too quickly to stimulate the initiation of adaptive responses. Their conclusion is that children have less of a protective adaptive immune response and one with less breadth because they're taking care of the virus before this develops. This fits with the fact that so few children develop much in the way of symptoms, and it may support the contention that children may be less likely to spread the virus. This is just one more step in understanding this virus.

Pedro Reid's had a rough time for a long time. Born to a very young single mother, he was raised by his mom and grandmother. Despite their best efforts, he struggled, according to his mother. "He was a perfect son and an A student in school," but as he got older, "he was hanging out with all the wrong people and getting into trouble." Once he started drinking, he spiraled downward. He went to live with his aunt in California, but things got worse, and soon he was living on the streets, trapped in drug and

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alcohol addiction. There were scrapes with the law. He didn't have any identification, so he couldn't get a job. He sorted out his problems, but he was still alone. And his family wondered, his mom saying, "I prayed for him every night For years I was thinking he died, and no one knew."

For 20 years he never slept inside a building, and for 10 years he had not been in touch with his family. He was an avid reader, reading whatever came his way; but he was alone. About his family, Reid said, "I lost all contact with them too. I didn't know where anybody was, and I had no idea that anyone was looking for me. I was all alone." They, meanwhile, had been looking for him, calling detention centers and shelters hoping to find him. They never tracked him down, and he never knew they were looking.

Until this summer when Randi Emmans heard him talking to himself one day on the street as she walked her dog. "He was saying things like 'Everyone just stares at me. I'm an educated man, but all they see is a person who doesn't have a home and doesn't have anyone to call.'" She got her boyfriend, and they struck up a conversation. The couple wanted to help, so they gave him a backpack filled with food, water, and other essentials left over from Emmans' charity that helped homeless people over the holidays. "But we wanted to do more," so they put out a request for donations on Facebook. Her hope was to pay for a night or two in a hotel and some food. In three days, they had enough for a week in a hotel, to buy him a cell phone, and to replace his clothes.

They hoped to do one more thing for Reid: find his family if there was anyone left. So they went to work, focusing on Charleston, Reid's home town. Knowing it was a long shot with the information they had, they went to work on the Internet, checking out names associated with his former address and calling wrong numbers until they landed Reid's uncle's ex-wife. She put them in touch with the uncle, who was thrilled, "For over 20 years, we had been praying and believing that one day we would find him, and the day finally came. This is a miracle."

And using money from the fundraising, Reid's uncle was able to fly to Los Angeles to pick him up. The money also paid for Covid-19 tests for everyone involved before they traveled and reunited. And after 20 years on the streets, alone, and 10 years without contact, he is back with family in his hometown. He's been in touch with his mom by phone; a reunion with her will have to wait until travel is safer. In the meantime, he is looking to further his education and find a stable job so that he can someday "help a lot of people that are still in the position that I was in." And to make the couple who helped him proud. "Their names will forever be etched on my heart. I'm indescribably thankful that they cared enough to get me home."

These people did care enough to look at what we generally overlook, see what our eyes usually skip right over, and do what they could to help, even when it was a long shot. If we all apply those tools, there's no telling what we can accomplish, even in the middle of a pandemic; and the world we will thereby create for ourselves will be here well after this virus is finished. That's a good goal.

Take care. We'll talk again.

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Area COVID-19 Cases

	Nov. 4	Nov. 5	Nov. 6
Minnesota	156,313	160,070	164,865
Nebraska	74,060	75,888	78,012
Montana	35,159	35,955	36,968
Colorado	114,709	117,637	121,006
Wyoming	12,399	12,675	12,954
North Dakota	47,187	48,301	49,837
South Dakota	48,854	49,791	51,151
United States	9,385,324	9,488,591	9,610,965
US Deaths	232,635	233,734	234,944

Minnesota	3,379	3,757	+4,795
Nebraska	1,440	1,828	+2,124
Montana	+907	+796	+1,013
Colorado	+2,562	+2,928	+3,369
Wyoming	+340	+276	+279
North Dakota	+1,172	1,114	+1,536
South Dakota	+1,004	+937	+1,360
United States	+92,043	+103,267	+122,374
US Deaths	+1,069	+1,099	+1,210

	Oct. 28	Oct. 29	Oct. 30	Oct. 31	Nov. 01	Nov. 02	Nov. 3
Minnesota	137,536	139,444	142,311	145,465	148,472	150,672	152,934
Nebraska	65,376	66,545	68,150	69,645	70,732	70,732	72,620
Montana	29,346	29,966	30,853	31,916	32,801	33,495	34,252
Colorado	98,733	100,208	102,014	104,426	107,350	109,910	112,147
Wyoming	10,035	10,288	10,589	11,020	11,276	11,638	12,059
North Dakota	39,130	39,907	41,130	42,483	43,916	45,043	46,015
South Dakota	39,494	40,589	41,507	44,559	45,992	47,324	47,850
United States	8,779,794	8,859,432	8,947,862	9,048,430	9,127,108	9,208,876	9,293,281
US Deaths	226,728	227,703	228,675	229,711	230,566	231,003	231,566

Minnesota	+2,164	1,908	+2,867	+3,154	+3,007	+2,200	2,262
Nebraska	+877	1,169	+1,605	+1,495	+1,087	----	1,888
Montana	+845	+620	+887	+1,063	+885	+694	+757
Colorado	+1,433	1,475	+1,806	+2,412	+2,924	2,560	2,237
Wyoming	+252	+253	+301	+431	+256	+362	+421
North Dakota	+896	+781	1,222	+1,353	+1,434	+1,128	+972
South Dakota	+984	+1,095	+918	+1,560	+1,433	+1,332	+529
United States	+74,667	+79,638	+88,430	+100,568	+78,678	+81,768	+84,405
US Deaths	+989	+975	+972	+1,036	+855	+437	+563

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November 5th COVID-19 UPDATE

Groton Daily Independent from State Health Lab Reports

The reduction in number of hospital beds being occupied probably coincides with the high number of deaths recorded today, which is 22. Eight females and 14 males died with 8 in the 80+ age group, 9 in their 70s, 4 in their 60s and 1 in their 50s. Counties affected are: Aurora-1, Bon Homme-2, Brookings-1, Brule-1, Davison-1, Day-1, Kingsbury-1, Lincoln-3, McCook-2, Minnehaha-2, Moody-1, Oglala Lakota-1 Roberts-1, Turner-1, Union-2, Yankton-1.

The number of recovered cases outpaced positive cases today, 1636-1390.

Glacial Lakes hospital beds being occupied by COVID-19 patients as well as Minnehaha and Pennington counties: Walworth: 5 (-2) Occupied Beds.; Potter: 2 (-5) Occupied Beds; Hughes: 13 (0) Occupied Beds, 6 (0) ICU Beds, 2 (-1) Ventilation; Faulk: 2 (+1) Occupied Beds; Edmunds: 5 (+1) Occupied Bed; Brown: 16 (+1) Occupied Beds, 4 (+1) ICU, 0 (0) Ventilation; Spink: 4 (0) Occupied Beds; Day: 3 Occupied Beds; Marshall: 0 (-3) Occupied Beds; Grant: 2 (-1) Occupied Beds; Codington: 22 (+3) Occupied Beds, 2 (-5) ICU, 0 (0) Ventilation; None (some counties have no hospitals): Clark, Hand, Hyde, Stanley, Sully, Campbell, McPherson, Roberts; Minnehaha: 215 (-21) Occupied Beds, 51 (+3) ICU, 51 (-10) Ventilation; Pennington: 67 (-2) Occupied Beds, 14 ICU, 7 (0) Ventilation

Brown County:

Total Positive: +46 (2,376) Positivity Rate: 10.8%

Total Tests: +426 (19,664)

Recovered: +19 (1,844)

Active Cases: -10 (470)

Ever Hospitalized: +6 (127)

Deaths: +0 (6)

Percent Recovered: 77.6%

Hospital Reports:

Avera St. Luke's: Covid-19 Occupied 13 (+1); ICU 4 (+1), Ventilation 0 (0).

Sanford Aberdeen: Covid-19 Occupied 3 (0).

Sanford Webster: Covid-19 Occupied 3 (0).

Marshall County Healthcare: Covid-19 Occupied: 0 (-3).

South Dakota:

Positive: +1360 (51,151 total) Positivity Rate: 23.0%

Total Tests: 5909 (456,340 total)

Hospitalized: +82 (2,955 total). 475 currently hospitalized -8)

Deaths: +22 (482 total)

Recovered: +1636 (37,059 total)

Active Cases: -298 (13,610)

Percent Recovered: 72.4%

Total COVID-19 Occupied Beds: 475 (-8), Black Hills Region 105 (+2), Glacial Lakes Region 76 (-4) Sioux Empire Region 236 (-14), South Central Plains 58 (+8).

ICU Units: Total 92 (+1), BH 16 (0), GL 12 (-4), SE 53 (+3), SCP 11 (+2).

Ventilation: Total 61 (-10), BH 7 (0), GL 2 (-1), SE 51 (-10), SCP 1 (+1).

Staffed Hospital Bed Capacity: 17% Covid, 51% Non-Covid, 32% Available

ICU Bed Capacity: 31% Covid, 40% Non-Covid, 30% Available

Ventilator Capacity: 15% Covid, 14% Non-Covid, 72% Available

Beadle (16) +51 positive, +34 recovered (405 active cases)

Brown (6): +46 positive, +56 recovered (470 active cases)

Clark (1): +2 positive, +7 recovered (59 active cases)

Clay (8): +11 positive, +27 recovered (155 active cases)

Codington (15): +63 positive, +40 recovered (422 active cases)

Davison (11): +36 positive, +39 recovered (438 active cases)

Day (3): +5 positive, +6 recovered (40 active cases)

Edmunds (1): +3 positive, +4 recovered (42 active cases)

Faulk (2): +7 positive, +11 recovered (50 active cases)

Grant (3): +7 positive, +7 recovered (67 active cases)

Hanson (1): +6 positive, +4 recovered (48 active cases)

Hughes (8): +30 positive, +17 recovered (184 active cases)

Lawrence (7): +47 positive, +24 recovered (408 active cases)

Lincoln (25): +76 positive, +127 recovered (978 active cases)

Marshall (2): +1 positive, +1 recovered (10 active cases)

McCook (3): +8 positive, +17 recovered (114 active cases)

McPherson (1): +0 positive, +4 recovery (9 active case)

Minnehaha (120): +276 positive, +420 recovered (3420 active cases)

Potter: +3 positive, +1 recovered (62 active cases)

Roberts (7): +6 positive, +7 recovered (85 active cases)

Spink (1): +8 positive, +16 recovered (118 active cases)

Walworth (10): +7 positive, +8 recovered (52 active cases)

NORTH DAKOTA

COVID-19 Daily Report, Nov. 5:

- 13.1% rolling 14-day positivity
- 1,540 new positives
- 8,982 susceptible test encounters
- 231 currently hospitalized (+11)
- 9,224 active cases (+653)
- 596 total deaths (+29)

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County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Persons	Deceased	Community Spread	% RT-PCR Test Positivity
Aurora	220	162	726	1	Substantial	32.35%
Beadle	1530	1109	4100	16	Substantial	29.07%
Bennett	241	146	962	5	Substantial	30.38%
Bon Homme	1132	626	1642	3	Substantial	55.73%
Brookings	1635	1285	6731	8	Substantial	19.72%
Brown	2376	1900	8882	6	Substantial	27.09%
Brule	357	246	1443	3	Substantial	36.05%
Buffalo	291	243	805	4	Substantial	46.99%
Butte	465	265	2166	3	Substantial	27.13%
Campbell	84	70	168	1	Moderate	23.68%
Charles Mix	492	339	3075	1	Substantial	15.32%
Clark	155	95	703	1	Substantial	32.88%
Clay	925	758	3481	8	Substantial	23.02%
Codington	1818	1381	6637	16	Substantial	29.43%
Corson	258	167	795	2	Substantial	67.01%
Custer	361	285	1796	4	Substantial	21.48%
Davison	1238	797	4663	11	Substantial	31.08%
Day	189	146	1236	3	Substantial	26.88%
Deuel	212	173	808	1	Substantial	28.41%
Dewey	460	272	3415	1	Substantial	29.36%
Douglas	201	146	710	5	Substantial	16.28%
Edmunds	170	127	752	1	Substantial	8.12%
Fall River	245	184	1859	6	Substantial	18.89%
Faulk	237	185	525	2	Substantial	11.76%
Grant	348	278	1532	3	Substantial	15.04%
Gregory	278	189	873	10	Substantial	33.10%
Haakon	107	77	423	2	Substantial	5.22%
Hamlin	247	185	1287	0	Substantial	15.77%
Hand	176	97	581	1	Substantial	44.78%
Hanson	125	76	468	1	Substantial	35.94%
Harding	63	39	113	0	Substantial	59.09%
Hughes	982	790	3913	8	Substantial	16.97%
Hutchinson	283	193	1646	2	Substantial	12.09%

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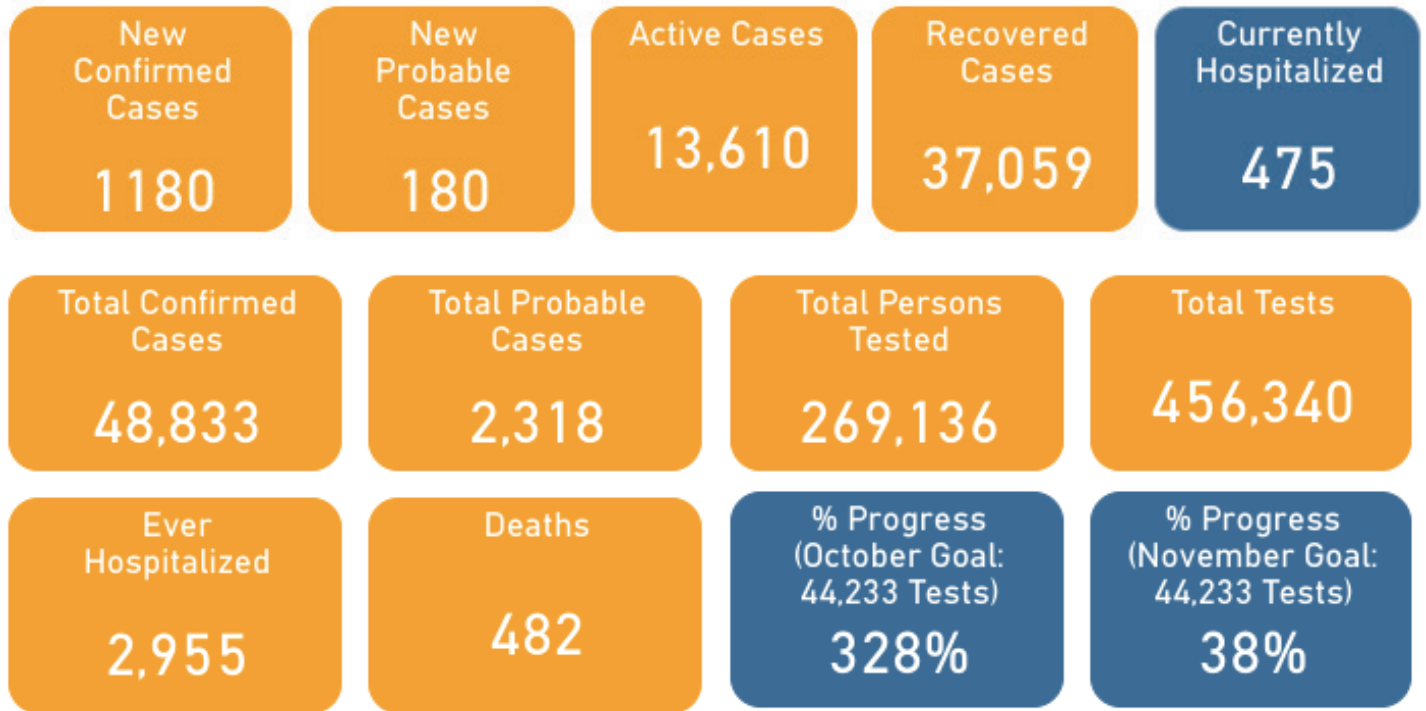
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Hyde	57	41	307	0	Moderate	23.68%
Jackson	147	93	771	3	Substantial	30.77%
Jerauld	176	143	389	13	Moderate	25.93%
Jones	39	30	133	0	Moderate	26.67%
Kingsbury	246	149	1091	4	Substantial	20.74%
Lake	490	340	1958	9	Substantial	36.59%
Lawrence	1202	787	5708	7	Substantial	27.21%
Lincoln	3443	2440	13720	25	Substantial	31.31%
Lyman	309	245	1444	6	Substantial	21.83%
Marshall	72	58	786	2	Moderate	9.30%
McCook	332	215	1132	3	Substantial	31.25%
McPherson	73	61	415	1	Moderate	4.46%
Meade	1127	876	5291	10	Substantial	24.64%
Mellette	105	77	571	1	Substantial	47.22%
Miner	151	109	429	2	Substantial	6.45%
Minnehaha	13462	9922	54563	120	Substantial	28.77%
Moody	263	186	1123	4	Substantial	34.21%
Oglala Lakota	1153	661	5672	10	Substantial	33.07%
Pennington	5377	3917	26220	51	Substantial	19.26%
Perkins	85	66	481	0	Moderate	17.86%
Potter	154	92	613	0	Substantial	17.89%
Roberts	412	310	3336	7	Substantial	23.31%
Sanborn	132	72	463	1	Substantial	28.57%
Spink	364	245	1667	1	Substantial	16.81%
Stanley	110	84	551	0	Substantial	20.34%
Sully	54	35	174	0	Moderate	35.29%
Todd	561	420	3473	6	Substantial	46.36%
Tripp	305	254	1171	2	Substantial	12.45%
Turner	574	387	1881	22	Substantial	38.89%
Union	843	683	4230	14	Substantial	19.68%
Walworth	297	235	1330	10	Substantial	14.05%
Yankton	1015	715	6366	7	Substantial	10.57%
Ziebach	120	80	579	2	Substantial	32.26%
Unassigned	0	0	1031	0		

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South Dakota



AGE GROUP OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Age Range	# of Cases	# of Deaths
0-9 years	1572	0
10-19 years	5302	0
20-29 years	10299	2
30-39 years	8723	7
40-49 years	7277	15
50-59 years	7303	36
60-69 years	5593	69
70-79 years	2903	92
80+ years	2179	261

SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths
Female	26328	230
Male	24823	252

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Brown County

New Confirmed Cases

44

New Probable Cases

2

Active Cases

470

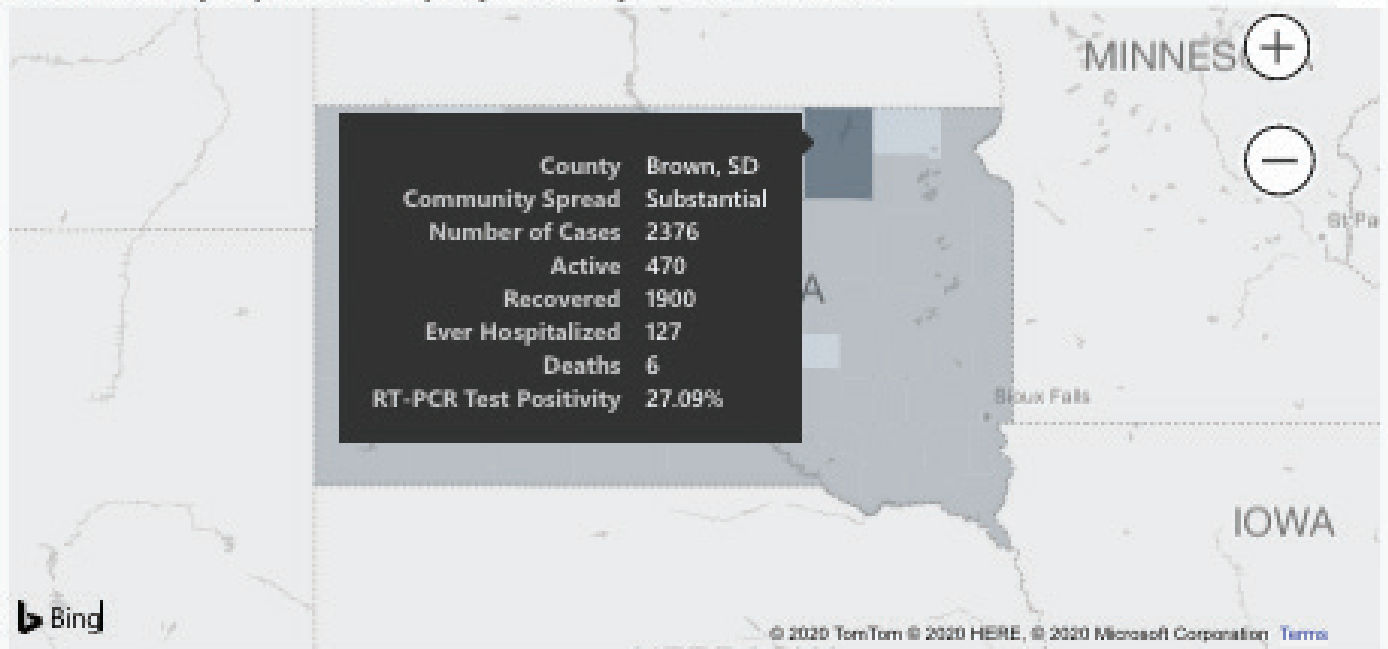
Recovered Cases

1,900

Currently Hospitalized

475

Community Spread Map by County of Residence



Hover over a county to see its details, or click county to update the orange boxes.

Total Confirmed Cases

2,339

Total Probable Cases

37

Total Persons Tested

11,258

Total Tests

19,664

Ever Hospitalized

127

Deaths

6

% Progress
(October Goal:
44,233 Tests)

328%

% Progress
(November Goal:
44,233 Tests)

38%

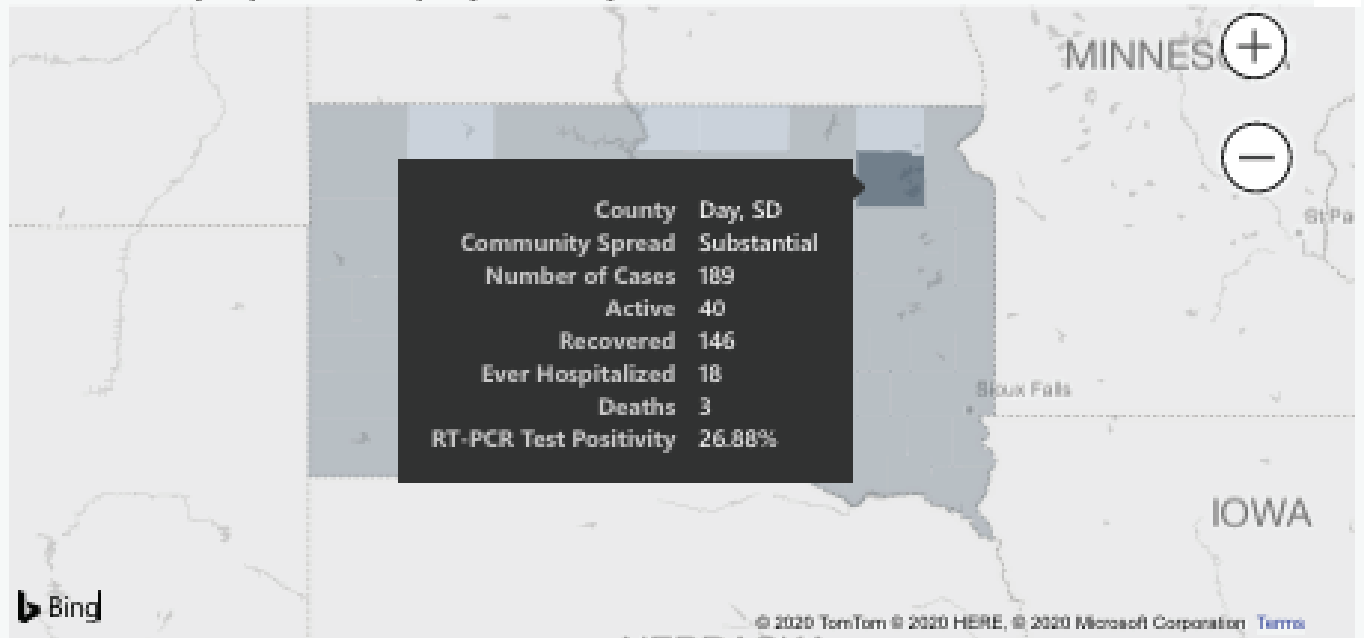
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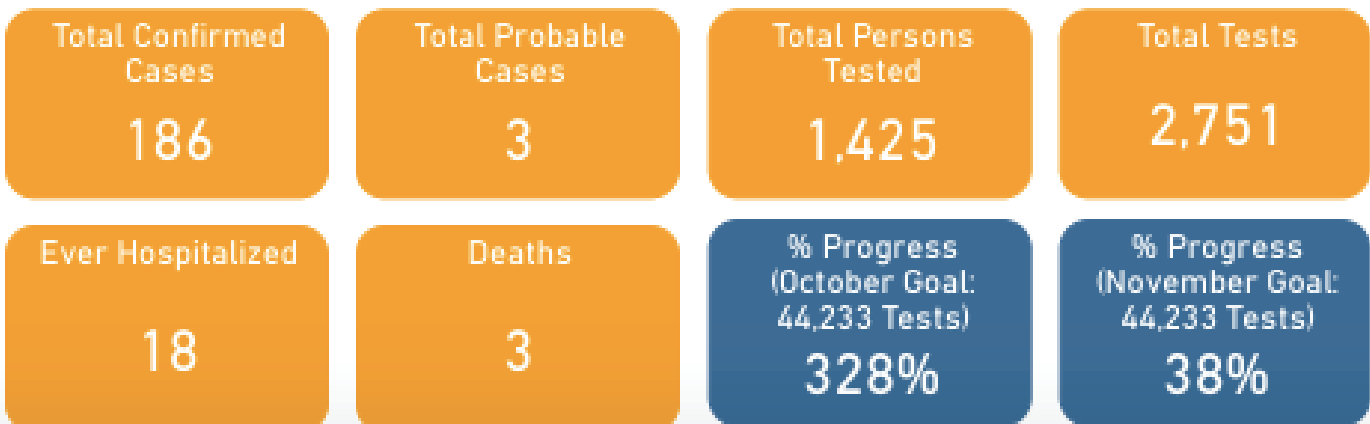
Day County



Community Spread Map by County of Residence



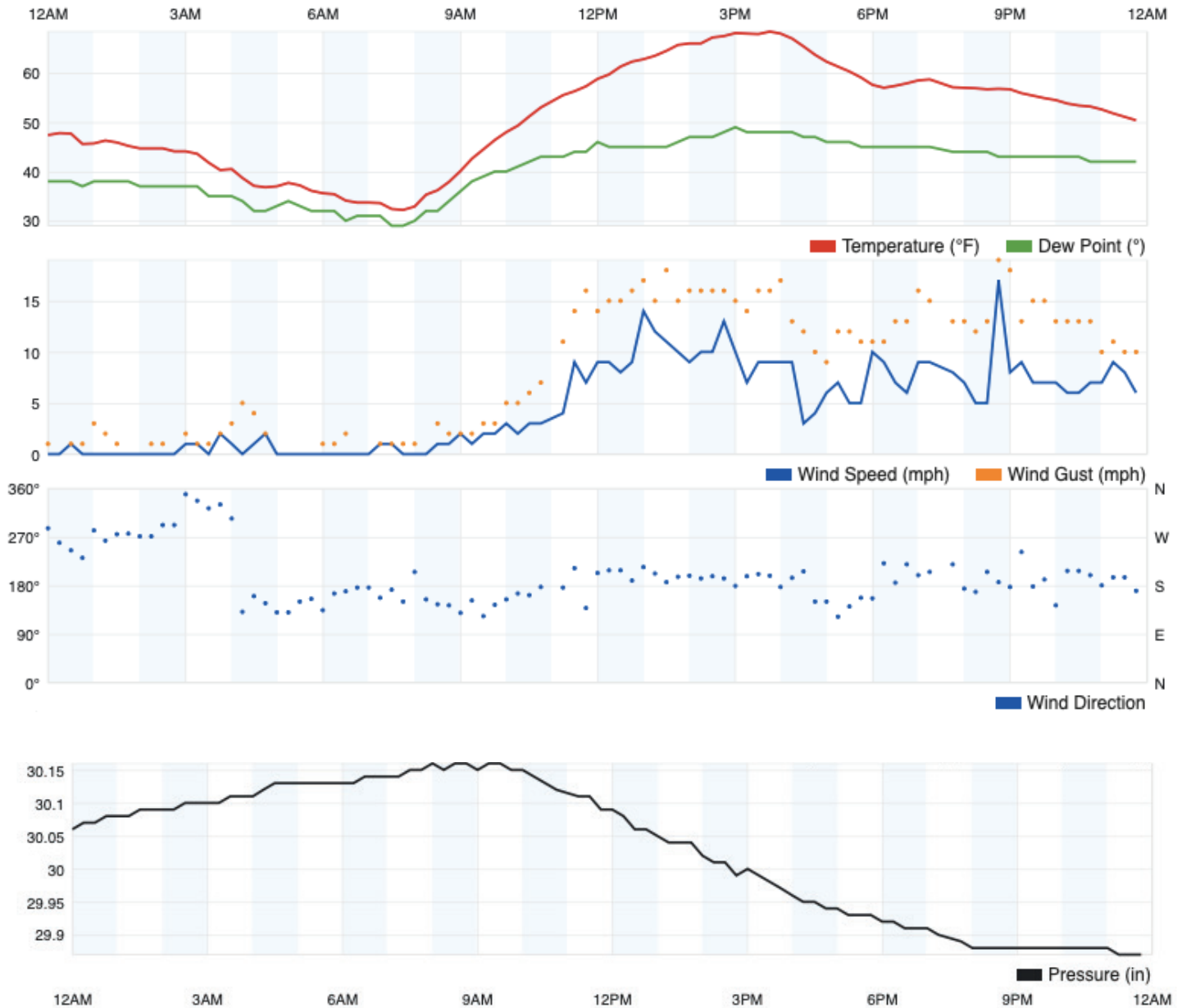
Hover over a county to see its details, or click county to update the orange boxes.



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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today	Tonight	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday
				
Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy then Mostly Cloudy and Breezy	Chance Rain and Breezy
High: 76 °F	Low: 45 °F	High: 66 °F	Low: 56 °F	High: 69 °F



Tonight
38-48°F

Friday
70-82°F
Breezy

Warm Temps Continue Into the Weekend

Aberdeen, SD
Updated: 11/5/2020 2:38 PM Central



Shorts weather continues to start the weekend! Dry and breezy conditions are expected Friday, with highs in the 70s and possibly low 80s for some areas.

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Today in Weather History

November 6, 1959: A strong cold front that brought near blizzard conditions and freezing temperatures on the 5th continued to bringing a record or near-record lows during the morning hours on this day. Some low temperatures include; -13 in Murdo; -12 in Eureka; -11 in Britton; -10 in Castlewood; -9 near McIntosh and Redfield; -8 in Andover; -7 in Clear Lake and Kennebec; -6 degrees in Aberdeen; -5 in Watertown; and -4 in Pierre.

November 6, 2008: An area of low pressure moving across South Dakota and into Minnesota brought widespread rain, freezing rain, and snow to central, north-central, and northeast South Dakota. Much of the freezing fell across central and north-central South Dakota west of the Missouri River. As the freezing rain changed over to snow and the winds increased, the ice and snow buildup on the power lines and poles caused hundreds of power poles to break across Jones, Stanley, Dewey, and Corson counties. East of the Missouri River, the colder air, and stronger winds moved in, changing the rain over to snow. High winds of 30 to 45 mph with gusts near 60 mph brought widespread blizzard conditions to all of the areas.

Ice buildup ranged from a tenth to as much as an inch for counties west of the Missouri River. Snowfall amounts across the entire area ranged from 2 to 8 inches, with a 15-inch amount recorded in southwest Corson County. Other snowfall amounts include 3 inches in Eagle Butte, Blunt, Kennebec, Mission Ridge, and Onida; 4 inches in Pollock, Gettysburg, and Bowdle; 5 inches south of Harrold, Iona, and near McIntosh; 6 inches in Mobridge; 7 inches in Murdo; 8 inches in McLaughlin, and 15 inches southwest of Keldron.

All 4,600 customers of the Moreau-Grand Electric Company lost power due to the storm. The last time this occurred was during the winter of 1967-68. The monetary loss to this cooperative and other electric cooperatives for Jones, Stanley, Corson, and Dewey counties was in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. Over 100 line workers were working countless hours with crews coming as far away as Nebraska and Iowa to assist in the power recovery. Over 1,000 customers were without power for an extended period. Cell phone coverage was also knocked out for parts of the West River area due to downed towers.

The blizzard resulted in numerous school, business, and road closures along with flight cancellations. Interstate 90 was shut down from Mitchell, South Dakota, to the Wyoming border from Thursday the 6th until Friday evening of the 7th. In the early afternoon hours of Friday, the 7th, slippery roads, high winds, and low visibilities contributed to the rollover of a passenger van carrying seven students. The passenger van rolled several times, causing severe injuries to three of the students. The Governor declared a state of emergency on the 7th, and President Bush declared South Dakota a disaster area.

1977: Several possible causes lead to the collapse of the Kelly Barnes Dam in Georgia to give way. The failure allowed a 40-acre lake to flood the Toccoa Falls College, killing 39 people and injured 60 more.

2005: The deadliest tornado to strike Indiana since April 3, 1974, occurred around 2 am. A single F3 tornado inflicted 24 fatalities, 238 injuries, and nearly 90 million dollars in damage with a path length of 41 miles. This storm moved in a northeasterly direction from just north of Smith Mills Kentucky to Gentryville, Indiana, and crossed the Ohio River three times. Most of the damage occurred as the tornado passed southeast of the city of Evansville, Indiana.

2016: An EF2 tornado hit Cesano, Rome, Italy.

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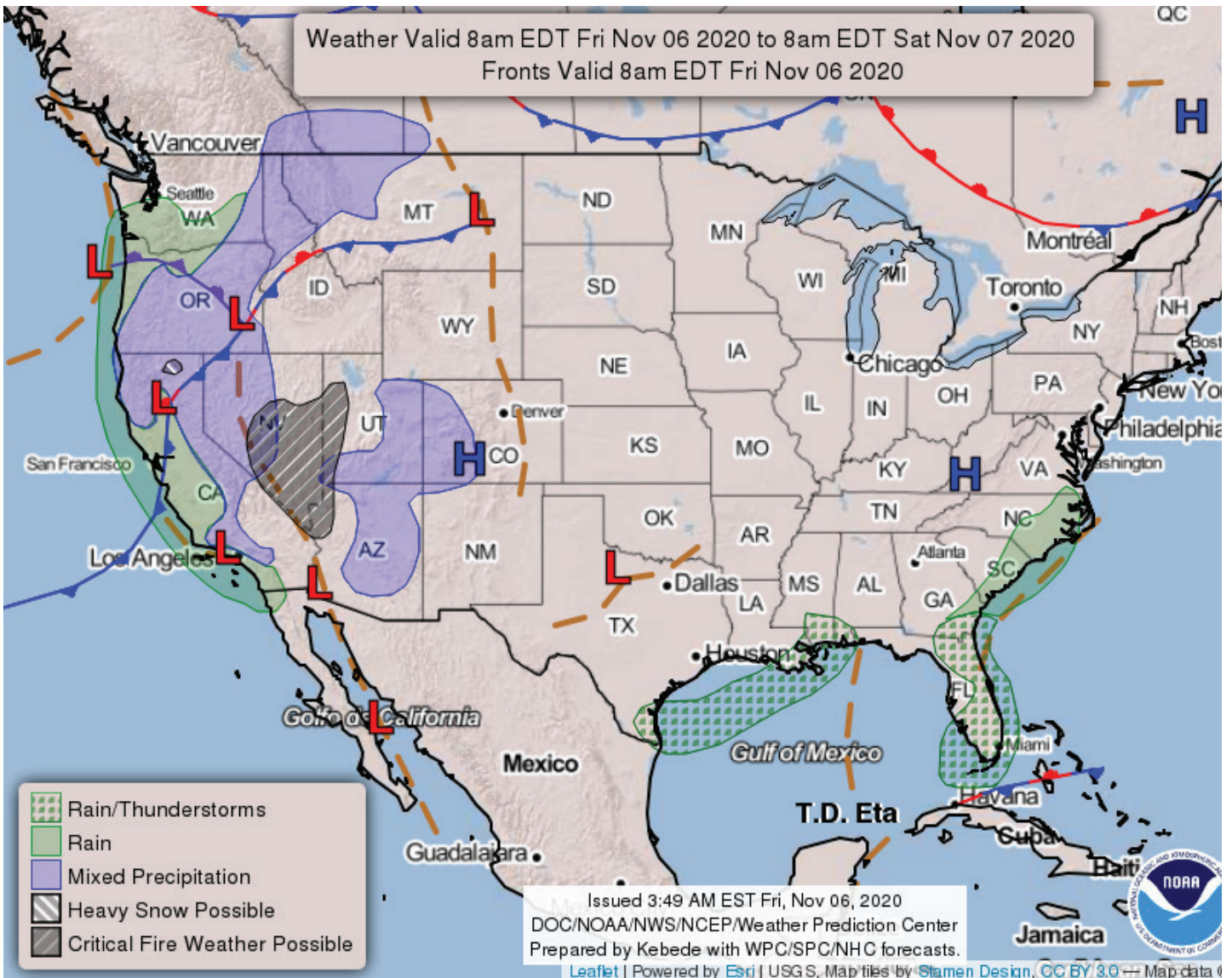
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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 68 °F at 3:37 PM
Low Temp: 32 °F at 7:34 AM
Wind: 19 mph at 8:45 PM
Precip: .00

Today's Info

Record High: 79° in 1904
Record Low: -8° in 1991
Average High: 46°F
Average Low: 24°F
Average Precip in Nov.: 0.15
Precip to date in Nov.: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 20.62
Precip Year to Date: 16.34
Sunset Tonight: 5:15 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:21 a.m.



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FROM HUMILIATION TO EXALTATION

One evening when my son John came home from football practice, I noticed that his arms and hands had an unusual number of cuts and bruises on them. "What happened?" I asked.

"Have you ever noticed, Dad," he replied, "that pain is optional, but suffering isn't? I wanted to be on the starting team, so I knew it would take some 'pain' on my part. I'd been 'playing,' and now I wanted the coach to know I could be a 'winner' at football."

The Psalmist reminded us that Joseph was sold as a slave, and that "They bruised his feet with shackles and that his neck was put in irons, till what he foretold came to pass, till the word of the Lord proved him true."

Tucked away in the great plan that God has for each of us is our fair share of suffering. After Joseph was sold into slavery, he did not complain about his situation. He persevered through the horrible conditions that were placed on him. By honoring and trusting God, the King of all kings honored him.

When he was tempted by King Potiphar's wife, he resisted her seductive behaviors. She did everything she could do to seduce him, but through his dependence on God, he did not give in to his passions. And, when she grabbed him physically, he was able to escape through God's strength. When she lied about him, he was thrown into prison. And, rather than becoming bitter, he became better. Because he was true to God, he triumphed and eventually became the premier of Egypt. His path to power was through suffering, pain, and imprisonment. If we are true to God in our times of trial, we will be triumphant.

Prayer: Thank you Lord for carrying us through. Help us to be faithful to You, in all things at all times. May we understand and know that temptation and suffering, are part of Your plan for us. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: They bruised his feet with shackles and that his neck was put in irons, till what he foretold came to pass, till the word of the Lord proved him true. Psalm 105:18-19

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2020 Groton SD Community Events

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

Brandon Valley def. Sioux Falls Lincoln, 23-25, 25-17, 22-25, 25-10, 15-8

Harrisburg def. Mitchell, 25-18, 25-10, 25-8

Huron def. Pierre, 25-12, 25-15, 25-14

Sioux Falls O'Gorman def. Yankton, 25-17, 25-11, 25-15

Sioux Falls Washington def. Brookings, 25-23, 25-21, 25-20

Watertown def. Aberdeen Central, 33-31, 24-26, 25-8, 25-11

Region 1A=

SoDak 16 Qualifier=

Aberdeen Roncalli def. Sisseton, 25-15, 25-16, 25-15

Redfield def. Milbank, 25-9, 25-20, 25-17

Region 2A=

SoDak 16 Qualifier=

Clark/Willow Lake def. Florence/Henry, 25-15, 25-17, 25-19

Hamlin def. Sioux Valley, 25-20, 25-23, 25-20

Region 3A=

SoDak 16 Qualifier=

Sioux Falls Christian def. Tri-Valley, 25-17, 25-11, 25-16

Region 4A=

SoDak 16 Qualifier=

Dakota Valley def. Lennox, 25-11, 25-8, 25-6

Tea Area def. Elk Point-Jefferson, 25-22, 25-15, 25-22

Region 5A=

SoDak 16 Qualifier=

Madison def. Parkston, 25-14, 25-15, 21-25, 25-16

Parker def. McCook Central/Montrose, 25-15, 25-15, 25-20

Region 6A=

SoDak 16 Qualifier=

Miller def. Chamberlain, 25-8, 25-22, 22-25, 25-14

Mobridge-Pollock def. Stanley County, 25-22, 25-13, 25-23

Regions 7A/8A=

SoDak 16 Qualifier=

Hill City def. Lead-Deadwood, 25-11, 25-11, 25-5

Rapid City Christian def. Hot Springs, 25-10, 25-16, 25-9

St. Thomas More def. Custer, 25-10, 25-22, 25-10

Winner def. Belle Fourche, 25-21, 25-18, 25-15

Region 1B=

SoDak 16 Qualifier=

Northwestern def. Aberdeen Christian, 25-11, 25-4, 25-14

Warner def. Waubay/Summit, 25-4, 25-20, 25-8

Region 2B=

SoDak 16 Qualifier=

Faulkton def. Potter County, 25-19, 25-7, 25-12

Ipswich def. Highmore-Harrold, 25-16, 25-22, 25-20

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Region 3B=

SoDak 16 Qualifier=

Castlewood def. Deubrook, 25-10, 25-22, 25-16

Hitchcock-Tulare def. Estelline/Hendricks, 25-18, 25-23, 22-25, 25-14

Region 4B=

SoDak 16 Qualifier=

Chester def. Dell Rapids St. Mary, 25-15, 25-13, 25-10

Colman-Egan def. Elkton-Lake Benton, 25-16, 25-20, 25-20

Region 5B=

SoDak 16 Qualifier=

Bridgewater-Emery def. Alcester-Hudson, 25-21, 25-19, 25-21

Region 6B=

SoDak 16 Qualifier=

Corsica/Stickney def. Platte-Geddes, 23-25, 26-24, 25-19, 25-22

Kimball/White Lake def. Avon, 25-12, 25-18, 25-16

Region 7B=

SoDak 16 Qualifier=

Kadoka Area def. White River, 24-26, 18-25, 25-21, 25-21, 15-10

Philip def. New Underwood, 25-21, 25-18, 26-24

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

Counties with worst virus surges overwhelmingly voted Trump

By CARLA K. JOHNSON, HANNAH FINGERHUT and PIA DESHPANDE Associated Press

U.S. voters went to the polls starkly divided on how they see President Donald Trump's response to the coronavirus pandemic. But in places where the virus is most rampant now, Trump enjoyed enormous support.

An Associated Press analysis reveals that in 376 counties with the highest number of new cases per capita, the overwhelming majority — 93% of those counties — went for Trump, a rate above other less severely hit areas.

Most were rural counties in Montana, the Dakotas, Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa and Wisconsin — the kinds of areas that often have lower rates of adherence to social distancing, mask-wearing and other public health measures, and have been a focal point for much of the latest surge in cases.

Taking note of the contrast, state health officials are pausing for a moment of introspection. Even as they worry about rising numbers of hospitalizations and deaths, they hope to reframe their messages and aim for a reset on public sentiment now that the election is over.

"Public health officials need to step back, listen to and understand the people who aren't taking the same stance" on mask-wearing and other control measures, said Dr. Marcus Plescia of the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials.

"I think there's the potential for things to get less charged and divisive," he said, adding that there's a chance a retooled public health message might unify Americans around lowering case counts so hospitals won't get swamped during the winter months.

The electoral divide comes amid an explosion in cases and hospitalizations in the U.S. and globally.

The U.S. broke another record in the 7-day rolling average for daily new cases, hitting nearly 90,000. The tally for new cases Thursday was on track for another day above 100,000, with massive numbers reported all around the country, including a combined nearly 25,000 in Texas, Illinois and Florida. Iowa and Indiana each reported more than 4,000 cases as well.

The AP's analysis was limited to counties in which at least 95% of precincts had reported results, and grouped counties into six categories based on the rates of COVID-19 cases they'd experienced per 100,000

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residents.

Polling, too, shows voters who split on Republican Trump vs. Democrat Joe Biden differed on whether the pandemic is under control.

Thirty-six percent of Trump voters described the pandemic as completely or mostly under control, and another 47% said it was somewhat under control, according to AP VoteCast, a nationwide survey of more than 110,000 voters conducted for the AP by NORC at the University of Chicago. Meanwhile, 82% of Biden voters said the pandemic is not at all under control.

The pandemic was considered at least somewhat under control by slim majorities of voters in many red states, including Alabama (60%), Missouri (54%), Mississippi (58%), Kentucky (55%), Texas (55%), Tennessee (56%) and South Carolina (56%).

In Wisconsin, where the virus surged just before the election, 57% said the pandemic was not under control. In Washington state, where the virus is more in control now compared to earlier in the year, 55% said the same. Voters in New York and New Hampshire, where the virus is more controlled now after early surges, were roughly divided in their assessments, similar to voters nationwide.

Trump voters interviewed by AP reporters said they value individual freedom and believed the president was doing as well as anyone could in response to the coronavirus.

Michaela Lane, a 25-year-old Republican, dropped her ballot off last week at a polling site at an outdoor mall in Phoenix. She cast her vote for Trump.

"I feel like the most important issue facing the country as a whole is liberty at large," Lane said. "Infringing on people's freedom, government overrule, government overreach, chaos in a lot of issues currently going on and just giving people back their rights."

About half of Trump voters called the economy and jobs the top issue facing the nation, roughly twice the percentage who named the pandemic, according to VoteCast. By contrast, a majority of Biden voters — about 6 in 10 — said the pandemic was the most important issue.

In Madison, Wisconsin, Eric Engstrom, a 31-year-old investment analyst and his wife, Gwen, voted absentee by mail in early October.

Trump's failure to control the pandemic sealed his vote for Biden, Engstrom said, calling the coronavirus the most immediate threat the nation faces. He and his wife are expecting their first child, a girl, in January and fear "the potential of one of us or both of us being sick when the baby is born," he said.

Engstrom called Trump's response to the virus abysmal. "If there was any chance that I was going to vote for Trump, it was eliminated because of the pandemic," he said.

The political temperature has added to the stress of public health officials, Plescia said. "Our biggest concern is how long can they sustain this pace?" he said.

Since the start of the pandemic, 74 state and local public health officials in 31 states have resigned, retired or been fired, according to an ongoing analysis by AP and Kaiser Health News.

As the election mood dissipates, rising hospitalizations amid colder weather create "a really pivotal moment" in the pandemic, said Sema Sgaier, executive director of the Surgo Foundation, a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit that worked with Harvard University-affiliated Ariadne Labs to develop a tool for estimating vaccine needs in states.

"We really need to get our act together. When I say 'we' I mean collectively," Sgaier said. Finding common ground may become easier if one of more of the vaccine candidates proves safe and effective and gains government approval, she said.

"The vaccine provides the reset button," Sgaier said.

Dr. Anthony Fauci may be another unifying force. According to VoteCast, 73% of voters nationwide approve of the way Fauci, the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, has been handling the pandemic.

Even among Trump voters, 53% approve of Fauci's performance. About 9 in 10 Biden voters approve.

Johnson reported from Washington state. Deshpande reported from Chicago and Fingerhut reported

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from Washington, D.C. AP reporters Todd Richmond in Madison, Wisconsin, and Terry Tang in Phoenix contributed.

Record COVID-19 deaths recorded in grim start to November

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The first week of November has produced bleak results for cases of the coronavirus in South Dakota.

State health officials said Thursday the number of deaths due to COVID-19 in the last day reached a record high of 22, increasing the state's death toll in the first five days of November to 57. The state has recorded 482 deaths since the start of the pandemic.

The deaths included 14 men and eight women, of which eight were over 80 years old, nine were in their 70s, four in their 60s and one in their 50s.

The updated report showed 1,360 positive tests in the last day. Johns Hopkins University researchers have confirmed 1,672 new cases per 100,000 people in South Dakota over the past two weeks, which ranks second in the country behind North Dakota for new cases per capita.

North Dakota also set a record for virus deaths on Thursday with 29.

There are 475 people being treated in hospitals across South Dakota. Of those, 92 are assigned to intensive care units. About 68 percent of the hospital beds around the state are currently occupied.

For most people, the new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough that clear up in two to three weeks.

Amount of water released into Missouri River to be reduced

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — The amount of water being released into the Missouri River from a key dam on the Nebraska-South Dakota border will be reduced later this month, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at Omaha said.

The amount of water flowing out of Gavins Point Dam will be reduced starting on Nov. 22 by about 3,000 cubic feet (85 cubic meters) per second (85 cubic meters per second) each day until reaching to winter release rate of about 17,000 cubic feet (481.4 cubic meters) per second, the Corps said in a news release Thursday.

That's down significantly from the reduction seen a year earlier, after heavy rain and snow melt in the spring sent the river to record levels and flooded parts of Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas and Missouri. Last year, the Corps waited until mid-December to reduce the fall output to 27,000 cubic feet (765 cubic meters) per second.

Gavins Point Dam winter releases normally range from 12,000 to 17,000 cubic feet (340 to 481.4 cubic meters) per second.

Precipitation going into November is well-below normal in much of the upper basin, the release said, and most of the basin — from Colorado, Montana and the Dakotas to Nebraska and Iowa — is experiencing extreme to moderate drought, the Corps said.

Two killed in crash between minivan, utility vehicle

TYNDALL, S.D. (AP) — Two people have died in a collision between a minivan and a side-by-side utility vehicle in Bon Homme County, according to the South Dakota Department of Public Safety.

The drivers of both vehicles were killed in the crash on Highway 46 north of Tyndall Wednesday afternoon, according to officials. The utility vehicle was turning into a driveway when it was struck by the minivan, the Highway Patrol said. Both vehicles rolled into the ditch.

Both the 57-year-old man driving the side-by-side and the 69-year-old man driving the minivan were pronounced dead at the scene. Authorities said neither man was wearing a seat belt.

Biden eases ahead in Georgia; Trump attacks election process

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By JONATHAN LEMIRE, ZEKE MILLER and WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump is testing how far he can go in using the trappings of presidential power to undermine confidence in this week's election against Joe Biden, as the Democrat gained ground in tight contests in key battleground states — and then inched ahead in Georgia.

With his pathway to reelection appearing to shrink, Trump on Thursday advanced unsupported accusations of voter fraud to falsely argue that his rival was trying to seize power. It amounted to an extraordinary effort by a sitting American president to sow doubt about the democratic process.

"This is a case when they are trying to steal an election, they are trying to rig an election," Trump said from the podium of the White House briefing room.

The Republican president's remarks deepened a sense of anxiety in the U.S. as Americans enter their third full day after the election without knowing who would serve as president for the next four years. His statements also prompted a rebuke from some fellow Republicans, particularly those looking to steer the party in a different direction in a post-Trump era.

Neither candidate has reached the 270 Electoral College votes needed to win the White House. But Biden eclipsed Trump in Wisconsin and Michigan, two crucial Midwestern battleground states, overtook the president in Georgia early Friday and was inching closer to doing the same in Pennsylvania, where votes were still be counted.

It was unclear when a national winner would be determined after a long, bitter campaign dominated by the coronavirus and its effects on Americans and the national economy. The U.S. on Wednesday set another record for daily confirmed cases as several states posted all-time highs. The pandemic has killed more than 233,000 people in the United States.

Biden spent Thursday trying to ease tensions and project a more traditional image of presidential leadership. After participating in a coronavirus briefing, he declared that "each ballot must be counted."

"I ask everyone to stay calm. The process is working," Biden said. "It is the will of the voters. No one, not anyone else who chooses the president of the United States of America."

Biden's victories in the upper Midwest put him in a strong position, but Trump showed no sign of giving up. He was back on Twitter around 2:30 a.m. Friday, insisting the "U.S. Supreme Court should decide!"

It could take several more days for the vote count to conclude and a clear winner to emerge. With millions of ballots yet to be tabulated, Biden already had received more than 73 million votes, the most in history.

Trump's erroneous claims about the integrity of the election challenged Republicans now faced with the choice of whether to break with a president who, though his grip on his office grew tenuous, commanded sky-high approval ratings from rank-and-file members of the GOP.

Maryland GOP Gov. Larry Hogan, a potential 2024 presidential hopeful who has often criticized Trump, said unequivocally: "There is no defense for the President's comments tonight undermining our Democratic process. America is counting the votes, and we must respect the results as we always have before."

But others who are rumored to be considering a White House run of their own in four years aligned themselves with the incumbent, including Sen. Josh Hawley, R-Mo., who tweeted support for Trump's claims, writing that "If last 24 hours have made anything clear, it's that we need new election integrity laws NOW."

Trump's campaign engaged in a flurry of legal activity to try to improve the Republican president's chances, saying it would seek a recount in Wisconsin and filing lawsuits in Pennsylvania, Michigan and Georgia.

Judges in Georgia and Michigan quickly dismissed Trump campaign lawsuits there on Thursday, when Trump still held a small edge in Georgia — though Biden was gaining on him as votes continued to be counted. The same was true in Pennsylvania, where Trump's lead had slipped to about 18,000 votes — and the race is destined to get tighter.

One reason is that elections officials were not allowed to process mail-in ballots until Election Day under state law. It's a form of voting that has skewed heavily in Biden's favor after Trump spent months claiming without proof that voting by mail would lead to widespread voter fraud.

Mail ballots from across the state were overwhelmingly breaking in Biden's direction. A final vote total may not be clear for days because the use of mail-in ballots, which take more time to process, has surged

as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

The Trump campaign said it was confident the president would ultimately pull out a victory in Arizona, where votes were also still being counted, including in Maricopa County, the state's most populous area. The AP has declared Biden the winner in Arizona and said Thursday that it was monitoring the vote count as it proceeded.

"The Associated Press continues to watch and analyze vote count results from Arizona as they come in," said Sally Buzbee, AP's executive editor. "We will follow the facts in all cases."

Trump's campaign was lodging legal challenges in several states, though he faced long odds. He would have to win multiple suits in multiple states in order to stop vote counts, since more than one state was undeclared.

Some of the Trump team's lawsuits only demand better access for campaign observers to locations where ballots are being processed and counted. A judge in Georgia dismissed the campaign's suit there less than 12 hours after it was filed. And a Michigan judge dismissed a Trump lawsuit over whether enough GOP challengers had access to handling of absentee ballots.

Biden attorney Bob Bauer said the suits were legally "meritless." Their only purpose, he said "is to create an opportunity for them to message falsely about what's taking place in the electoral process."

Weissert reported from Wilmington, Delaware. Associated Press writers Jill Colvin, Colleen Long and Alexandra Jaffe in Washington contributed to this report.

Pandemic heaps new fears and trauma on war-scarred Bosnians

By SABINA NIKSIC undefined

SARAJEVO, Bosnia-Herzegovina (AP) — Memories of the Bosnian War are shaping Zdenka Sutalo's perception of the coronavirus.

The 58-year-old unemployed woman attends group therapy sessions to work through the trauma of the 1992-95 conflict. As a young woman in Sarajevo, she endured bombardment, hunger, electricity shortages and was forced to break off her university studies for good. Today she sometimes has to be reminded to see the novel virus as a serious risk.

"The war was my most difficult experience in life," she said after a recent therapy session that included painting pinecones and exercising in a Sarajevo park with others.

"As for the pandemic, the world survived plague and cholera and those are now just water under the bridge."

As coronavirus cases surge in Bosnia, the pandemic is heaping more trouble on an impoverished nation that has never recovered economically or psychologically from a war that killed 100,000 people and forced 2.2 million from their homes.

Bosnian health authorities estimate that about half of the the Balkan nation's nearly 3.5 million people have suffered some degree of trauma resulting from the war.

Mental health professionals fear that the pandemic will now exacerbate mental health problems and other health risks, and are speaking of a surge of new patients coming into their practices in recent months.

Tihana Majstorovic, a Sarajevo psychologist who led the pinecone-painting session, said the war experience was leading some Bosnians to downplay the threat of the pandemic, increasing the risk of its spread.

"People who survived the war perceive danger differently. Often, if they are not hungry, cold or have mortars exploding over their heads, they do not feel they are in danger," said Majstorovic, who works for Menssana, a non-governmental mental health group in Sarajevo.

It has made them prone to "downplaying the threat, to behaving less responsibly than they should," Majstorovic said. "It is not at all a healthy mechanism for adapting to a world threatened by an invisible virus."

Remzija Setic, a clinical psychologist, said he, too, sees war survivors "recklessly" downplaying the risks of the virus.

But he also has patients who are suffering from heightened anxiety because some aspects of living

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through this pandemic are reminiscent of the war: being trapped indoors, seeing public spaces as dangerous, concern over getting food and separation from family and friends.

On top of that, pandemic fatigue is setting in.

Setic said he sees a growing number of people, including many without diagnosed mental disorders, who complain of extreme irritability and physical exhaustion. That fatigue is also leading some young Bosnians without memory of the war to be cavalier about the risk of a virus that has infected nearly 56,000 people and killed more than 1,350 in the country.

"During the past seven to eight months, our population in general has grown exhausted out of an abundance of information, so they are starting to resist," Setic said.

In some ways, Bosnia is better equipped than some other countries to handle the challenges.

Because of the trauma from the war, the past-quarter century of recovery has included creating psychological support networks for a traumatized population.

Thanks in part to initially abundant financial support from Western governments and international organizations, some 70 community-based mental health centers were established throughout the country.

"It is a fact that we have a lot of relevant experience ... and that we've learned many lessons that we could share," said Goran Cerkez, the assistant health minister in the larger of Bosnia's two highly autonomous regions.

Cerkez, who led a post-war effort to reform Bosnia's mental health care system, noted that people from the neighboring nations of Serbia and Croatia — also born from the bloody breakup of ex-Yugoslavia — have been calling Bosnian hotlines set up to help people deal with pandemic-related stress.

Based on his experiences, he expects the psychological impact of the coronavirus pandemic, both in his country and globally, to be longer and more severe than its immediate medical impact.

"Many (collective) traumatic experiences have some things in common," Cerkez said. "They produce a sense of hopelessness and insecurity, a sense of uncertainty because it is impossible to predict how long they will last."

Follow AP's coronavirus pandemic coverage at <https://apnews.com/hub/virus-outbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

The Latest: Russia under stain as it sets new virus record

By The Associated Press undefined

MOSCOW — Russia's daily number of new coronavirus infections topped 20,000 Friday, setting a new record since the beginning of the pandemic.

Russia's tally of confirmed coronavirus cases -- currently the fourth largest in the world -- has exceeded 1.7 million following a quick spread of contagion since September. The government's coronavirus task force has reported 29,887 deaths since March.

Of 20,582 new cases reported Friday, Moscow accounted for 6,253 infections, the capital's highest number since May.

Despite new daily records, authorities insist there is no need to impose a second lockdown or shut down businesses nationwide. They argue that the health care system is capable of handling a surge in infections.

Russian media, however, have reported on overwhelmed hospitals, drug shortages and inundated medical workers in some regions, indicating that the health care system is under significant strain.

GENEVA — The United States is urging the head of the World Health Organization to invite Taiwan to attend the U.N. health agency's annual assembly next week, pointing to its "resounding success" against COVID-19.

China has effectively blocked Taiwan from attending the World Health Assembly in recent years since the election of Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen. Her pro-independence administration has run afoul of Beijing, which considers Taiwan as part of China.

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The U.S. appeal to WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus comes after the Trump administration over the summer took action toward pulling the United States out of the U.N. health agency next year. Taiwan is not a U.N. member state.

Taiwan, a country of some 23 million people, has tallied just 569 confirmed COVID-19 cases and just seven deaths from the pandemic, according to a compilation of global figures by Johns Hopkins University.

LJUBLJANA, Slovenia — Slovenian police say they have detained 10 people following violent protests in the capital Ljubljana against lockdown measures designed to curb the spread of the new coronavirus.

Several hundred angry protesters on Thursday threw bottles, flares and rocks at the police who used tear gas and water cannon to disperse them in a rare riot in what in the usually calm Alpine nation.

The gather was organized in violation of a ban on gatherings that is in place in Slovenia as part of anti-virus rules. Public broadcaster RTV Slovenia says some of the protesters attacked media crews, hitting a photojournalist on the head.

Slovenia's authorities have introduced an overnight curfew and a set of restrictive rules after facing a surge in infections in the nation of 2 million people.

BERLIN — Germany's health minister has warned of hard times ahead unless the country can "break" the rising trajectory of coronavirus cases.

Jens Spahn told lawmakers in Parliament on Friday that "the situation is serious," noting that the number of COVID-19 patients being treated in the country's intensive care units has doubled in the last 10 days.

"As of today the health system can cope with this," he said. "But a doubling every 10 days is something the best health system in the world can't cope with in the long term."

Germany's disease control agency reported a new record of over 21,500 confirmed infections in the country in the past day, and 166 further deaths.

Laboratories in Germany are also warning that they are reaching capacity, and urging stricter criteria for which people can be tested.

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

- AP finds counties where virus is advancing voted for Trump at higher rate
- U.S. employers likely slowed hiring for 4th month with virus hitting records
- Indonesians collect old phones to help students get online to learn at home
- Follow AP's coronavirus pandemic coverage at <https://apnews.com/hub/virus-outbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

HERE'S WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING:

BEIJING — China has temporarily banned the entry of foreigners from at least eight countries as COVID-19 cases rise in Europe and elsewhere.

Non-Chinese can no longer enter from Russia, France, Italy, the United Kingdom, Belgium, the Philippines, India and Bangladesh, even if they hold a valid visa or residence permit for China.

Embassies in those countries have posted online notices in recent days announcing the temporary suspension of entry.

China has enacted strict measures to guard against new infections from abroad.

Health authorities on Friday reported 30 imported cases in the most recent 24-hour period, including 15 in Shanghai. That brought the total number of imported cases during the pandemic to 3,510.

NEW DELHI — India has recorded 47,638 new cases of the coronavirus, taking its total to 8.4 million.

Deaths rose by 670 in the last 24 hours, driving total fatalities to 124,985 on Friday, the health ministry data showed.

India has the world's second-highest caseload behind the United States. Even though the country has

seen a steady dip in cases since mid-September, its capital is witnessing a surge in infections.

New Delhi recorded nearly 6,700 new COVID-19 cases in the last 24 hours, the second-highest single-day spike since the pandemic began.

CANBERRA, Australia — Australia's highest court has upheld a state's border closure and dismissed a case arguing the pandemic measure was unconstitutional.

All Australian states and territories have used border restrictions to curb infections, and a ruling against Western Australia's closure could have impacted the others.

The High Court judges ruled the state's border closure to non-essential travel during "a hazard in the nature of a plague or epidemic" complied with the constitution.

The state shut its border to the rest of Australia on April 5 and hasn't recorded any COVID-19 community transmission since April 11. It will ease the restriction next week for people from states and territories deemed low risk..

Separately, an inquiry into quarantine troubles in Melbourne has recommended that police guard hotels where returning overseas travelers stay. The Victoria state government's decision to use private security firms instead of police and the military to enforce the quarantines has been widely blamed for lax controls that led to a virus surge in Australia's second-largest city.

2020 Latest: Biden overtakes Trump in Georgia vote count

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Latest on the presidential campaign (all times local):
4:40 a.m.

Democrat Joe Biden is now leading President Donald Trump in the battleground state of Georgia.

By Friday morning, Biden overtook Trump in the number of ballots counted in the battleground, a must-win state for Trump that has long been a Republican stronghold. Biden now has a 917-vote advantage.

The contest is still too early for The Associated Press to call. Thousands of ballots are still left to be counted — many in counties where the former vice president was in the lead.

An AP analysis showed that Biden's vote margins grew as counties processed mail ballots cast in his favor.

There is a potential that the race could go to a recount. Under Georgia law, if the margin between Biden and Trump is under half a percentage point of difference, a recount can be requested.

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

Democrat Joe Biden is pushing closer to the 270 Electoral College votes needed to carry the White House, securing victories in the battlegrounds of Wisconsin and Michigan and narrowing President Donald Trump's path.

Read more:

- Trump predicts a 'lot of litigation' to decide the White House race
- ANALYSIS: Trump delivers a diatribe that's both shocking and unsurprising
- EXPLAINER: States still in play and what makes them that way
- Trump and his Republican allies made significant inroads with Latino voters

EXPLAINER: States still in play and what makes them that way

By BRIAN SLODYSKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A handful of states remained in play Friday in the tightly contested U.S. presidential race. The outcome of contests in Georgia, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Nevada will determine whether Democrat Joe Biden or President Donald Trump wins.

The solidly Republican state of Alaska has also not been called because it is only 50% counted and will not release absentee numbers until Nov. 10. It is not expected to impact the outcome.

The Associated Press reviews the states that will determine the presidency:

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GEORGIA: Outstanding ballots left to be counted in counties where Biden has performed well.

THE BACKGROUND: Early Wednesday, Trump prematurely claimed he carried Georgia.

"It's ... clear that we have won Georgia. We're up by 2.5%, or 117,000 (votes) with only 7% (of the vote) left" to count, Trump said during an early morning appearance at the White House. He also said he planned to contest the U.S. presidential election before the Supreme Court. It was unclear exactly what legal action he might pursue.

The race is too early to call. With an estimated 99% of the vote counted there, Biden had overtaken Trump by more than 900 votes Friday morning, with thousands more ballots left to be counted.

That includes mailed ballots from population-dense counties in the Atlanta metro region that lean Democratic. Biden is overperforming Hillary Clinton's 2016 showing in those counties, including in their more upscale suburban reaches.

NEVADA: Race too early to call; vote count will continue for several more days.

THE BACKGROUND: Democrat Joe Biden leads by less than 1 percentage point in Nevada over President Donald Trump, with more than 1.2 million ballots counted.

That's after election officials in Nevada released updated returns on Thursday, including a batch of 14,285 and 12,189 ballots, respectively, in the state's two largest counties, Clark and Washoe.

Overall, officials have tallied a little more than three-quarters of the state's expected vote. Under state law, ballots postmarked by Election Day will still be counted if they arrive by Tuesday, Nov. 10. Clark County said Thursday it did not expect to complete counting the bulk of its mail votes until this weekend.

Among the ballots still left to be processed in Nevada this year are provisional ballots, including 60,000 in Clark County, where most of the state's voters live. Those ballots were mostly cast by voters who registered on Election Day and will be counted after officials verify their eligibility to be included.

In a tight race, that could delay the AP declaring a winner. For example, in the 2004 race between George W. Bush and John Kerry, the AP did not call the winner of the election in Ohio until it was able to confirm that Bush's lead exceeded the number of provisional ballots left to be counted.

Nevada, once a swing state, has trended toward Democrats in the past decade. Trump narrowly lost Nevada in 2016. Bush was the last Republican to win there, in 2004.

Biden's lead in Nevada stands at 11,438 votes.

NORTH CAROLINA: Race too early to call. Ballots left to count.

THE BACKGROUND: Trump prematurely claimed early Wednesday that he won the state.

"We've clearly won North Carolina, where we're up 1.7%, 77,000 votes with only approximately 5% left. They can't catch us," he said during an appearance at the White House. Trump also said he planned to contest the U.S. presidential election before the Supreme Court. It was unclear, exactly, what legal action he might pursue.

Though Trump is correct that he held a nearly 77,000-vote lead, which he maintained Thursday morning, the race is too early to call with up to 116,000 mail ballots left to count, as well as about 41,000 provisional ballots statewide.

As long as those ballots are postmarked by Nov. 3, state election officials have until Nov. 12 to count them. And when it comes to mail ballots, Biden was outperforming Trump. That means the ballots yet to be counted could give Biden a lead.

PENNSYLVANIA: Hundreds of thousands of votes left to be counted.

THE BACKGROUND: Pennsylvania is among a handful of battleground states Trump and Biden are narrowly contesting, and there were hundreds of thousands of votes left to be counted Thursday morning.

Trump, who held a 675,000-vote lead early Wednesday, prematurely declared victory in the state.

"We're winning Pennsylvania by a tremendous amount. We're up 690,000 votes in Pennsylvania. These aren't even close. It's not like, 'Oh, it's close,'" Trump said during an appearance at the White House.

By early Friday his lead had slipped to about 18,000 votes — and the race is expected to get tighter. One reason is because elections officials are not allowed to process mail-in ballots until Election Day under state law. It's a form of voting that has skewed heavily in Biden's favor after Trump spent months claiming without proof that voting by mail would lead to widespread voter fraud.

Mail ballots from across the state overwhelmingly broke in Biden's direction.

There's also a possibility the race won't be decided for days. If there is less than a half percentage point difference between Biden and Trump's vote total, state law dictates that a recount must be held.

Democrats had long considered Pennsylvania a part of their "blue wall" — a trifecta that also includes Wisconsin and Michigan — that for years had served as a bulwark in presidential elections. In 2016, Trump won each by less than a percentage point.

Biden, who was born in Scranton, claims favorite-son status in the state and has long played up the idea that he was Pennsylvania's "third senator" during his decades representing neighboring Delaware. He's also campaigned extensively in the state from his home in Delaware.

US hiring likely slowed for a 4th month as virus resurges

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. employers may have slowed their hiring in October for a fourth straight month with confirmed viral cases reaching record levels and the loss of government aid deepening the hardships for many.

Economists have forecast that employers added 580,000 jobs last month, down from 661,000 in September and 1.5 million in August. If that estimate proves accurate, last month's gain will have been the weakest since employers began calling some employees back to work in May. And it would mean that the economy has regained only about 12 million of the 22 million jobs that vanished when the pandemic paralyzed the economy in early spring.

The unemployment rate is expected to have declined from 7.9% to a still-high 7.7%, according to data provider FactSet. That would mark further progress but also a smaller decline in joblessness than in any previous month since the pandemic erupted in the United States.

A hiring slowdown has raised the prospect of a prolonged slump that extends unemployment for the jobless. Many temporary layoffs are becoming permanent as hotels, restaurants, airlines, retailers, entertainment venues and other employers anticipate a longer downturn than they initially expected. The resurgence of the virus would compound that threat, especially as colder weather sets in and keeps more people indoors.

A rising proportion of jobless Americans now describe their unemployment as permanent. Conversely, the proportion who say they are only temporarily laid off has tumbled from 80% in April to 40%. Millions of people have stopped looking for work, artificially lowering the unemployment rate. (People who are no longer actively seeking a job aren't counted as unemployed.)

Economists say they fear that many who have dropped out of the workforce or who face permanent job losses will suffer an erosion of professional skills and personal networks. That will make it harder for them to find work again.

Research by Stephanie Aaronson and Wendy Edelberg, fellows at the Brookings Institution, found that 65% of Americans who were temporarily laid off in the spring were back at work by September. But just 40% of workers whose jobs had been eliminated were able to find other jobs.

Many people who have dropped out of the workforce would be willing to work if a job were offered or if more were available. But only 9% of them had found jobs four months later.

Back in the July-September quarter, when companies reopened from virus-related shutdowns, the economy rebounded sharply. It is now growing more slowly. Many businesses, particularly restaurants that have depended in part on outdoor seating, face a more perilous future as winter grows closer. Consumers may also pull back again on shopping, traveling and other activities to avoid contracting the virus.

Jerome Powell, chair of the Federal Reserve, warned Thursday that the pandemic poses a worsening

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threat to the economy.

"People who have maybe begun to engage in activities that they haven't — flying, staying in a hotel, going to restaurants, going to bars ... they may pull back in a situation where suddenly the cases are everywhere in your city, your state, your community," the chairman said at a news conference after the Fed's latest policy meeting.

Powell acknowledged that the pandemic didn't harm the economy in the summer as much as many had feared it might, in large part because the multi-trillion aid package that Congress enacted provided "essential" support. But he made clear his concern about the expiration of federal aid, and he reiterated his belief that Congress should approve more stimulus.

Consumer spending on services like restaurants, health care and haircuts has slowed after having rebounded in May and June. It remains 7% below the pre-pandemic level — a decline that threatens many labor-intensive parts of the economy. The restaurant reservations website OpenTable shows, for example, that just three-quarters of restaurants are now taking reservations, a decline from three weeks ago.

The slowdown has coincided with the waning of \$1,200 checks that were sent to most adults in the spring and a \$600-a-week federal jobless benefit that expired in July. That was followed by an additional \$300 that lasted through mid-September. A study by JPMorgan Chase found that Americans spent roughly two-thirds of such money by the end of August.

"The economy is on its own against the virus," said AnnElizabeth Konkel, an economist at the job-posting website Indeed. "Accelerating cases are an ever-present threat during winter, and a virus surge means economic uncertainty for businesses. Until that uncertainty is eliminated, the labor market will struggle to return to what it used to be."

Gregory Daco, chief U.S. economist at Oxford Economics, said the elevated savings rate doesn't necessarily mean that consumers will be able keep spending at current levels. About 14% of income was saved in September, roughly double pre-pandemic levels. That rate had briefly hit 34% in April as the stimulus checks were distributed.

"I don't buy that argument that the savings buffer will offset the absence of fiscal stimulus," Daco said. "The people who need the savings are less likely to have it."

Much of the savings now likely reflect the reluctance of higher-income earners to go out and visit gyms and movie theaters as often as in the past.

At the same time, some large companies are still shedding workers. ExxonMobil said late last month that it would cut 1,900 jobs, mostly at corporate headquarters. Chevron has said it will cut about quarter of the employees from its newly acquired unit Noble Energy. Boeing said it expects to cut its workforce by 30,000 to 130,000.

Still, some parts of the economy are recovering steadily. Manufacturing output is still rebounding, with Americans stepping up their purchases of cars, homes and housing-related goods like appliances and furniture. Home sales have also jumped.

Twin Senate runoffs in Georgia could shape Biden presidency

By BILL BARROW Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — The outcome in several contested states will determine whether Joe Biden defeats President Donald Trump. But if the Democratic challenger wins, the ambitions of a Biden presidency could well come down to Georgia.

Georgia, long a Republican stronghold — but one with rapidly changing demographics — could be the site of two runoffs on Jan. 5 to settle which party would control the Senate.

Should Democrats win them, Biden would be dealing with a majority in the Senate, increasing his chances for passing legislation and securing major appointment confirmations. Otherwise, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, a Kentucky Republican, could wield the power to block Biden.

Other races in North Carolina and Alaska also hold the potential to reshape the balance of power, but Georgia offers the more likely prospect.

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In Georgia, two runoff elections would mean a campaign on an almost national scale, with tens of millions of dollars spent by both sides.

Biden has been mum on the Senate balance as he awaits the results in his own election, but he offered a preview days before Tuesday's election.

"I can't tell you how important it is that we flip the United States Senate. There's no state more consequential than Georgia in that fight," Biden declared at an Atlanta rally on Oct. 27, when he campaigned alongside Democratic Senate hopefuls Jon Ossoff and Raphael Warnock.

Votes were still being counted to determine whether Ossoff will meet Georgia Sen. David Perdue in a second round. Georgia law requires an outright majority to win a statewide office.

Separately, a Georgia special election to fill the unexpired term of former Sen. Johnny Isakson will require a runoff between Warnock and Sen. Kelly Loeffler, the Republican appointed to the post last year after Isakson retired.

Nationally, the Senate stands at 48-48. But Republicans lead uncalled races in Alaska and North Carolina. By Thursday, the focus turned to Georgia.

Both sides promised unlimited funds would flow to the campaigns and onto the airwaves, and they predicted an all-star cast of campaigners for a state that in recent weeks drew visits from Biden, Trump, Vice President Mike Pence, Democratic vice presidential nominee Kamala Harris and former President Barack Obama.

Sen. Chris Van Hollen, a Maryland Democrat who led Senate Democrats' campaign efforts in the 2018 cycle, warned that McConnell, who has gleefully dubbed himself the "grim reaper" of the Democratic agenda, would threaten a Biden presidency if he returns as majority leader.

"His DNA has been all about obstruction and very little about constructive progress together," Van Hollen said.

McConnell almost certainly wouldn't grant a floor vote to Biden's proposal for a public option expansion of the 2010 Affordable Care Act or the Democrat's proposed repeal of some of Trump's top-end tax cuts. McConnell refused to grant Obama's Supreme Court nominee, Merrick Garland, hearings or a vote.

Progressives, meanwhile, lament losses in Senate races that could have given Democrats a majority with a cushion. Adam Green, co-founder of the Progressive Change Campaign Committee, tried Thursday to downplay the pitfalls of GOP control, arguing that "bold executive branch actions that impact people's lives" still could "define Biden's legacy."

Republicans countered with warnings of an "extremist" government if Democrats, who appear positioned to keep the House majority despite losing seats, control both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue.

"David Perdue won this race in regular time and will do the same in overtime," said Kevin McLaughlin, executive director of the Senate Republicans' campaign arm, blasting Ossoff as a front man for "national Democrats and their shared dream of a socialist America."

Missouri Sen. Josh Hawley, a potential 2024 presidential candidate, was harsher. "We are in danger of losing the Senate to extremist liberals who want to raise your taxes, defund the police and pass legislation for a sweeping government takeover," Hawley wrote in a fundraising pitch for Loeffler.

Biden's tax plan proposes increases only on corporations and the wealthiest Americans. Neither Ossoff nor Warnock proposes "defunding the police." And Hawley's fundraising email didn't explain what Democrats' "takeover" would be. But his assertions track the fault lines that will define the runoff campaigns.

In Georgia, Republicans and Democrats embraced the national frame, even as they talked up their candidates' individual attributes. Loeffler is Georgia's first female senator in the modern era. Warnock, pastor of the church where civil rights icon Martin Luther King Jr. preached, would be Georgia's first elected Black senator.

"These are compelling candidates ... but I think they have to accept it for what it is: a Democrats-versus-Republican race that's all about the setup and authority in the Senate," said Jack Kingston, a former congressman who narrowly lost a GOP Senate runoff to Perdue in 2014.

State Democratic Chair Nikema Williams, just elected to succeed the late Rep. John Lewis in Congress,

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said it's impossible to separate Senate control from issues that matter to voters on the ground. "That national conversation has implications for every Georgian," she said, noting that McConnell has blocked Democratic bills to expand the Voting Rights Act and send aid to state and local governments hammered by the pandemic and would do the same on health care and other Biden initiatives.

"I can't wait to have that discussion," Williams said.

Williams further celebrated the attention as confirmation of Georgia's battleground status. Trump won the state by 5 percentage points in 2016, and Democrats have lost nearly every statewide contest for two decades.

For Ossoff, it's a bookend to the start of Trump's tenure, when he ran for a suburban Atlanta House seat that became the most expensive congressional race in U.S. history to that point. He lost. Warnock, meanwhile, is making his first bid for public office.

"Get ready, Georgia — the negative ads are coming," Warnock says in his first runoff ad released Thursday, with a voiceover introducing mocking attacks: "Raphael Warnock eats pizza with a fork and knife. ... Raphael Warnock even hates puppies."

"I'm staying focused," Warnock then says into the camera. "And by the way, I love puppies."

Associated Press writer Alexandra Jaffe contributed to this report from Washington.

Confounding Democrats, Trump makes inroads with Latinos

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI and ADRIANA GOMEZ LICON Associated Press

President Donald Trump and his Republican allies made significant inroads with Latino voters in Tuesday's election, alarming some Democrats who warned that immigration politics alone was not enough to hold their edge with the nation's largest minority group.

Trump's strong performance with Cuban Americans in South Florida narrowed the traditional Democratic edge in Miami-Dade County and helped put Florida in Trump's column early Tuesday. In Texas, Trump won tens of thousands of new supporters in predominantly Mexican American communities along the border.

A GOP win in a heavily Latino New Mexico congressional district suggested a surge of Republican-leaning support there. And even in Nevada, where Democrats' strength among Latinos had powered the party to dominance, there were some signs of new Trump support among Latinos frustrated at the economic toll of coronavirus-related shutdowns. Democrat Joe Biden and Trump were still locked in a tight race there as officials counted the vote.

Democrats had hoped this would be the year when their strength among Latino voters would translate into victories in Florida and Texas, a game-changer that would reshape presidential politics. But Trump's margins dashed those hopes and prompted debate on whether the party was taking Latino voters' support for granted.

"It was tighter than all of us wanted," said Chuck Rocha, a former strategist for Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, whose presidential campaign dominated with Latino voters during the Democratic primary. "Until we start treating Latinos as a diverse and not monolithic group, Democrats are going to lose more and more of them."

The overwhelming majority of Trump's support comes from white voters, not Latinos, who remained heavily Democratic. But even small shifts in a population can have huge repercussions in an almost evenly divided country.

Biden still won a sizable majority of Latino voters — 63% nationwide, compared to Trump's 35%, according to AP VoteCast, a massive survey of the electorate. But Trump was able to shave that margin somewhat in some competitive states, like Florida and Nevada.

Trump's appeal to Latino voters is no surprise to veteran political observers in those states. Trump's emphasis on jobs and economic growth got the attention of at least some in a group of voters that has been disproportionately hit by the pandemic and ensuing plunge in business.

In Nevada, where tourism is the economic engine, about half of all Latino voters said they thought ca-

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sinos should be open as usual or with just minor restrictions during the pandemic, AP VoteCast found. Forty-one percent said they approved of the way Trump has handled the public health crisis, compared with 34% of Latinos nationally.

"The emerging Latino vote is going to have some deeply populist economic tendencies," said Mike Madrid, a California-based strategist and former Republican who is part of the anti-Trump Lincoln Project. "They're not listening to the vulgarity; they're not on Twitter. They just want to go and do their jobs."

VoteCast data shows the wide range of views among Latinos. About a quarter identify as conservative ideologically, roughly 4 in 10 favor building a wall at the U.S.-Mexico border and roughly that many say they want abortion illegal in all or most circumstances. About half of self-identified Protestants and Christians backed Trump, while roughly one-third of Roman Catholics did.

The most dramatic shift in Latino voters came in Florida. Biden won Miami-Dade, home to a large Cuban American community, by 7 percentage points compared with Hillary Clinton's 30-point victory margin four years ago. Republicans defeated two Miami-area congressional incumbents – Reps. Donna Shalala and Debbie Mucarsel-Powell.

Maria Peiro, 47, a third grade teacher who lives in Miami's Little Havana and volunteered with the Trump campaign, said she saw the Republican Party attract more Cuban American voters who have arrived in the U.S. since the late 1990s and were previously not interested in politics.

"We have seen a huge change. It's no longer just the Cubans who arrived after the 1959 revolution," Peiro said, adding that the shift was dramatic over the summer after racial justice protests erupted around the country. Peiro said she believes Democrats "were not supporting the police" and was troubled by acts of vandalism and violence.

"We didn't come to this country for this. We came here to live in peace," she said.

Geraldo Cadava, a Northwestern University Latino studies professor and author of "The Hispanic Republican," said Democrats need to pay attention to voters like Peiro. "It's not just about Biden needing to do more and earlier," Cadava said. "The argument just underestimates the political agency of Latinos. People need to start listening to Republican Latinos instead of just calling them traitors."

Trump also made huge gains in heavily Latino areas along the South Texas border. He won sparsely populated Zapata County, south of Laredo, after losing it by a 2-to-1 margin to Hillary Clinton four years ago. And he closed the gap in larger counties that cover the border cities of Laredo, McAllen and Brownsville, adding tens of thousands of votes in parts of the state that have long been considered a Democratic stronghold.

McAllen and Brownsville are part of the Rio Grande Valley, a region that was ravaged this summer by COVID-19 with hospitals surging past capacity and requiring the airlifting of some patients to other parts of the state. The Rio Grande Valley was also directly affected by Trump administration policies on immigration, including the construction of a border wall and a policy that separated migrant children from their parents in 2017 and 2018.

With the wall and bolstered Border Patrol staffing, Trump has helped expand employment in the area.

Rocha noted that campaigns spent relatively little money trying to reach voters in the remote region. He said his analysis found that Latino support for Biden held firm in the state's more populous areas, where they were exposed to Democratic messaging trying to sway big cities, but not in the Valley.

"There was nobody talking to them in the election," Rocha said. "Until we change those mathematics, Texas isn't going to turn blue."

Even in places like Nevada, where a growing Latino population helped transform the state into a Democratic-leaning battleground, there was anxiety among Democrats that they were losing ground.

The state has been heavily hit by the pandemic. The main Democratic turnout machine, a casino workers union that represented 60,000 Las Vegas casino workers, was decimated when the tourism industry shuttered in the spring and struggled to return to full business.

In a state where Democrats need to spend time having face-to-face conversations with new voters to boost turnout, the party's shutdown of in-person canvassing because of the pandemic was crippling.

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"If you want to be effective in the Latino community, you have to be going to the places they're gathering," said Nevada state Rep. Edgar Flores, a Democrat. "Early on the energy and the strategy may not have been hitting their mark."

Still, Flores was confident that, as the state slowly counts its mail ballots, Latino support will eventually put it in Biden's column. "At the end of the day, the divisive politics, the overwhelming attacks on immigrants" will make the difference, he predicted.

Associated Press writers Hannah Fingerhut in Washington, Astrid Galvan in Phoenix and Paul Weber in Austin, Texas, contributed to this report.

Analysis: Trump's vote diatribe both shocking, unsurprising

By NANCY BENAC Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — It was at the same time shocking and utterly to be expected.

As the nation held its collective breath and awaited the result of the 2020 presidential election, President Donald Trump stepped to the podium in the White House on Thursday and made a full-frontal attempt to undermine the integrity of the vote, which was leaning in the direction of Democrat Joe Biden.

The president had spent months laying the groundwork for such a moment. He had repeatedly questioned the validity of mail-in ballots. He had dismissed election officials from Democratic states and cities as political hacks. And he had demanded in advance that the results be known on Election Day, which is never a given.

All of this has circulated through the conservative echo chamber for months. And it belies the truth about how elections are conducted in America, where voter fraud is extremely rare.

But while Trump's diatribe was in line with his past misstatements about U.S. elections, it was still a watershed event to hear the president of the United States so thoroughly run down the conduct of an American election in real time, triggering fresh anxiety about prospects for a peaceful transition of power.

"On his darkest day, Richard Nixon would never have attacked democracy the way Donald Trump has now done," John Dean, who served as White House counsel for Nixon, told the AP. "At the potential of losing, Trump has shamed himself and soiled the American presidency. God save us when he actually loses."

And that was the real question going forward: How far will Trump take things if the election does end in his defeat?

And how many of the millions of Americans who voted for him will buy into his false narrative of a stolen election?

The president warned the nation in advance that it might not end well, telling reporters at midday on Election Day that "Losing is never easy, not for me it's not."

Historian Michael Beschloss framed this as a moment of truth not just for Trump but for other prominent officials, suggesting history would not look kindly on those who look the other way.

"One of the worst things any President could do is to lie and exacerbate deep national differences to advance his own selfish interest," Beschloss tweeted just after Trump completed his statement.

"Always remember who aided and abetted this abuse of Presidential power — and those who tried to stop it," he continued, highlighting Vice President Mike Pence's claim that he stands with the president and wants "every LEGAL vote" counted.

Democrats spoke out against Trump in full chorus, led by Biden, who tweeted flatly after the president's performance: "No one is going to take our democracy away from us. Not now, not ever."

A few of the usual suspects spoke out from the Republican side.

"There is no defense for the president's comments tonight undermining our Democratic process," said Maryland GOP Gov. Larry Hogan, a frequent Trump critic. "America is counting the votes, and we must respect the results as we always have before."

Former GOP Sen. Jeff Flake of Arizona, another Trump detractor, put the onus on his fellow Republicans to follow suit.

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"No Republican should be okay with the President's statements just now. Unacceptable. Period," he tweeted.

But there was notable silence from many in the president's party after his latest address, including from Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell.

Whether that dynamic will continue if fuller election results deliver the presidency to Biden is another key unanswered question.

If Trump loses his grip on power, that could diminish the incentive for Republicans to continue their sometimes awkward embrace of a president whose provocative pronouncements have so often left them squirming.

Allan Lichtman, a history professor at American University, said previous presidential candidates who have lost elections have accepted their fate with dignity and a respect for American democracy.

He pointed to Nixon's resignation after Republican colleagues told him that he would be impeached and convicted. He said that Democrat Al Gore gave a courageous speech after the Supreme Court decided his long-in-limbo race would go to George W. Bush.

He called Nixon a "pragmatist" and Trump an "egotist."

There's always the possibility that Trump will pull up short at some point and consider the weight of his words -- and the impact on his legacy.

If the vote count goes against him, does he really want to be remembered as the president who burned down the building on his way out the door?

EDITOR'S NOTE -- Nancy Benac is White House news editor and has covered government and politics for The Associated Press for four decades.

Trump predicts 'lot of litigation' in fight to keep his job

By MARK SHERMAN and JESSICA GRESKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump is looking at a political map in which he might have to persuade the Supreme Court to set aside votes in two or more states to prevent Joe Biden from becoming president.

That's a substantially different scenario than in the contested presidential election of 2000, which was effectively settled by the Supreme Court. Then, the entire fight was over Florida's electoral votes and involved a recount as opposed to trying to halt the initial counting of ballots.

Trump's campaign and Republicans already are mounting legal challenges in several states, although most are small-scale lawsuits that do not appear to affect many votes.

Judges in Georgia and Michigan quickly dismissed campaign lawsuits Thursday, undercutting a campaign legal strategy to attack the integrity of the voting process in states where the result could mean Trump's defeat.

The rulings came as Biden inched closer to the 270 Electoral College votes needed to win the White House.

Trump and his campaign promised even more legal action, making unsubstantiated allegations of election fraud.

Speaking in the White House briefing room Thursday, the president launched into a litany of claims, without proof, about how Democrats were trying to unfairly deprive him of a second term. "But we think there'll be a lot of litigation because we can't have an election stolen like this," Trump said, suggesting that the Supreme Court might eventually decide the election.

Biden, for his part, has said he expects to win the election, but he counseled patience Thursday, saying: "Each ballot must be counted."

Earlier Thursday, a Biden campaign lawyer called the lawsuits meritless, more political strategy than legal. "I want to emphasize that for their purposes these lawsuits don't have to have merit. That's not the purpose. ... It is to create an opportunity for them to message falsely about what's taking place in the electoral process," lawyer Bob Bauer said, accusing the Trump campaign of "continually alleging irregulari-

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ties, failures of the system and fraud without any basis.”

Trump is used to suing and being sued. A USA Today analysis found that he and his businesses were involved in at least 3,500 state and federal court actions in the three decades before he became president.

In one case dismissed Thursday, a Michigan judge noted that the state’s ballot count is over as she tossed the campaign’s lawsuit to get a closer look at local elections officials as they process absentee ballots.

In Georgia, a state judge dismissed a case over concerns about 53 absentee ballots in Chatham County after elections officials in the Savannah-area county testified that all of those ballots had been received on time. Campaign officials said earlier they were considering similar challenges in a dozen other counties around the state.

In Pennsylvania, meanwhile, the Trump campaign won an appellate ruling to get party and campaign observers closer to election workers who are processing mail-in ballots in Philadelphia.

But the order did not affect the counting of ballots that is proceeding in Pennsylvania and elsewhere, as elections officials are dealing with an avalanche of mail ballots driven by fears of voting in person during a pandemic.

Trump campaign officials, meanwhile, accused Democrats of trying to steal the election, despite no evidence anything of the sort was taking place.

Trump campaign manager Bill Stepien, in a call with reporters Thursday morning, said that “every night the president goes to bed with a lead” and every night new votes “are mysteriously found in a sack.” It is quite common in presidential elections to have vote counting continue after election day.

Trump’s campaign has also announced that it will ask for a recount in Wisconsin. Stepien previously cited “irregularities in several Wisconsin counties,” without providing specifics.

The Trump campaign filed a new federal lawsuit after hours Thursday in Nevada, alleging that ineligible votes were cast in the Las Vegas area, the biggest Democratic stronghold in an otherwise predominantly GOP state.

The Associated Press called Wisconsin and Michigan for Biden on Wednesday. The AP has not called Georgia, Nevada or Pennsylvania.

The president’s lawyers have asked to intervene in a pending Republican appeal to the Supreme Court over the three-day extension for the receipt and counting of mailed ballots ordered by Pennsylvania’s top court. Democrats in the state told the justices Thursday that they should put off granting the request because they “may well not need to hear and decide” the matter if Pennsylvania is not critical to the outcome or the late-arriving ballots wouldn’t make a difference.

Associated Press writers Jill Colvin in Washington, Ed White in Detroit, Marc Levy in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, Maryclaire Dale in Philadelphia, and Sudhin Thanawala in Atlanta contributed to this report.

Election officials worried by threats and protesters

By NOMAAN MERCHANT and TIM SULLIVAN Associated Press

Election officials in several states said Thursday they are worried about the safety of their staffs amid a stream of threats and gatherings of angry protesters outside their doors, drawn by President Donald Trump’s baseless claims of widespread fraud in the race for the White House.

“I can tell you that my wife and my mother are very concerned for me,” said Joe Gloria, the registrar in Clark County, Nevada, which includes Las Vegas. He said his staff was bolstering security and tracking vehicles coming and going from the election offices.

But he added that he and others would not be stopped from “doing what our duty is and counting ballots.”

Groups of Trump supporters have gathered at vote tabulation sites in Phoenix, Detroit and Philadelphia, decrying counts that showed Democrat Joe Biden leading or gaining ground.

While the protests have not been violent or very large, local officials were distressed by the crowds and concerned about the relentless accusations.

Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel tweeted a plea to “stop making harassing & threatening calls”

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to her staff.

"Asking them to shove sharpies in uncomfortable places is never appropriate & is a sad commentary on the state of our nation," wrote Nessel, a Democrat, referring to a false conspiracy theory that Trump supporters were told to fill out ballots with Sharpie markers instead of regular pens so that their votes wouldn't be counted by the machines.

Arizona Secretary of State Katie Hobbs, speaking on CNN, said her main concern was staff safety but that sheriff's deputies were providing protection. She said the protesters were "causing delay and disruption and preventing those employees from doing their job"

On Thursday, about 100 Trump supporters gathered again in front of the Maricopa County election center in Phoenix, some carrying military-style rifles and handguns. Arizona law allows people to openly carry guns.

Authorities at the center used fences to create a "freedom of speech zone" and keep the entrance to the building open. The crowd took turns chanting — "Count the votes!" and "Four more years!" — and complaining through a megaphone about the voting process.

They paused to listen as Trump spoke from the White House, where he repeated many of his groundless assertions of a rigged vote.

They whooped and clapped when the president said, "We're on track to win Arizona." The Associated Press has called Arizona for Biden.

In Atlanta, roughly 100 chanting Trump supporters gathered outside State Farm Arena as votes were being counted. Several Atlanta police officers monitored the scene.

Tom Haas, 50, who said he was visiting Atlanta from Chicago on business, said he was convinced Trump had won the election. "There's obvious voter fraud, and it's coming out of the larger Democratic-run cities," he said. "Atlanta is one of them."

"Our democracy is under attack," he said, echoing Trump's language. "We're losing America because we're losing a fair election for the nation."

A few dozen Trump supporters gathered outside Detroit's convention center Thursday morning as election workers counted absentee ballots inside. The protesters held signs that read, "Stop the steal" and "Stop the cheat." In Las Vegas, about 100 backers of the president chanted as they stood along the road in front of the election offices.

Meanwhile, Facebook banned a large group called "Stop the Steal" that Trump supporters were using to organize protests against the vote count. Some members had called for violence, while many falsely claimed Democrats are stealing the election. The group had amassed more than 350,000 members before Facebook took it down.

AP reporters Gillian Flaccus in Portland, Terry Tang in Phoenix, Claire Galofaro in Detroit, Sudhin Thanawala in Atlanta and Amy Forliti in Minneapolis contributed to this report.

EXPLAINER: States still in play and what makes them that way

By BRIAN SLODYSKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A handful of states remained in play Thursday in the tightly contested U.S. presidential race. The outcome of contests in Georgia, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Nevada will determine whether Democrat Joe Biden, or President Donald Trump wins.

The solidly Republican state of Alaska has also not been called because it is only 50% counted and will not release absentee numbers until Nov. 10. It is not expected to impact the outcome.

The Associated Press reviews the states that will determine the presidency:

GEORGIA: Outstanding ballots left to be counted in counties where Biden has performed well.

THE BACKGROUND: Early Wednesday, Trump prematurely claimed he carried Georgia.

"It's ... clear that we have won Georgia. We're up by 2.5%, or 117,000 (votes) with only 7% (of the vote) left" to count, Trump said during an early morning appearance at the White House. He also said he

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planned to contest the U.S. presidential election before the Supreme Court. It was unclear exactly what legal action he might pursue.

The race is too early to call. With an estimated 99% of the vote counted there, Trump's lead over Biden had shrunk to less than 2,000 votes Thursday evening, with tens of thousands more ballots left to be counted.

That includes mailed ballots from population-dense counties in the Atlanta metro region that lean Democratic. Biden is overperforming Hillary Clinton's 2016 showing in those counties, including in their more upscale suburban reaches.

NEVADA: Race too early to call; vote count will continue for several more days.

THE BACKGROUND: Democrat Joe Biden leads by less than 1 percentage point in Nevada over President Donald Trump, with more than 1.2 million ballots counted.

That's after election officials in Nevada released updated returns on Thursday, including a batch of 14,285 and 12,189 ballots, respectively, in the state's two largest counties, Clark and Washoe.

Overall, officials have tallied a little more than three-quarters of the state's expected vote. Under state law, ballots postmarked by Election Day will still be counted if they arrive by Tuesday, Nov. 10. Clark County said Thursday it did not expect to complete counting the bulk of its mail votes until this weekend.

Among the ballots still left to be processed in Nevada this year are provisional ballots, including 60,000 in Clark County, where most of the state's voters live. Those ballots were mostly cast by voters who registered on Election Day and will be counted after officials verify their eligibility to be included.

In a tight race, that could delay the AP declaring a winner. For example, in the 2004 race between George W. Bush and John Kerry, the AP did not call the winner of the election in Ohio until it was able to confirm that Bush's lead exceeded the number of provisional ballots left to be counted.

Nevada, once a swing state, has trended toward Democrats in the past decade. Trump narrowly lost Nevada in 2016. Bush was the last Republican to win there, in 2004.

Biden's lead in Nevada stands at 11,438 votes.

NORTH CAROLINA: Race too early to call. Ballots left to count.

THE BACKGROUND: Trump prematurely claimed early Wednesday that he won the state.

"We've clearly won North Carolina, where we're up 1.7%, 77,000 votes with only approximately 5% left. They can't catch us," he said during an appearance at the White House. Trump also said he planned to contest the U.S. presidential election before the Supreme Court. It was unclear, exactly, what legal action he might pursue.

Though Trump is correct that he held a nearly 77,000-vote lead, which he maintained Thursday morning, the race is too early to call with up to 116,000 mail ballots left to count, as well as about 41,000 provisional ballots statewide.

As long as those ballots are postmarked by Nov. 3, state election officials have until Nov. 12 to count them. And when it comes to mail ballots, Biden was outperforming Trump. That means the ballots yet to be counted could give Biden a lead.

PENNSYLVANIA: Hundreds of thousands of votes left to be counted.

THE BACKGROUND: Pennsylvania is among a handful of battleground states Trump and Biden are narrowly contesting, and there were hundreds of thousands of votes left to be counted Thursday morning.

Trump, who held a 675,000-vote lead early Wednesday, prematurely declared victory in the state.

"We're winning Pennsylvania by a tremendous amount. We're up 690,000 votes in Pennsylvania. These aren't even close. It's not like, 'Oh, it's close,'" Trump said during an appearance at the White House.

By late Thursday his lead had slipped to about 24,000 votes — and the race is expected to get tighter.

One reason is because elections officials are not allowed to process mail-in ballots until Election Day under state law. It's a form of voting that has skewed heavily in Biden's favor after Trump spent months

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claiming without proof that voting by mail would lead to widespread voter fraud.

Mail ballots from across the state overwhelmingly broke in Biden's direction.

There's also a possibility the race won't be decided for days. If there is less than a half percentage point difference between Biden and Trump's vote total, state law dictates that a recount must be held.

Democrats had long considered Pennsylvania a part of their "blue wall" — a trifecta that also includes Wisconsin and Michigan — that for years had served as a bulwark in presidential elections. In 2016, Trump won each by less than a percentage point.

Biden, who was born in Scranton, claims favorite-son status in the state and has long played up the idea that he was Pennsylvania's "third senator" during his decades representing neighboring Delaware. He's also campaigned extensively in the state from his home in Delaware.

Eta back to sea as Central America tallies damages and dead

By CLAUDIO ESCALÓN and SONIA PÉREZ D. Associated Press

SAN PEDRO SULA, Honduras (AP) — As the remnants of Hurricane Eta moved back over Caribbean waters, governments in Central America worked to tally the displaced and dead, and recover bodies from landslides and flooding that claimed dozens of lives from Guatemala to Panama.

It will be days before the true toll of Eta is known. Its torrential rains battered economies already strangled by the COVID-19 pandemic, took all from those who had little and laid bare the shortcomings of governments unable to aid their citizens and pleading for international assistance.

Shortly after Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández asked neighboring Guatemala for help rescuing residents stranded near their shared border Thursday, Guatemalan President Alejandro Giammattei said at least 50 people had been killed in landslides in his own country, most of them in a remote town rescuers struggled to reach. Guatemala's national emergency agency later said only that at least 50 people were missing in San Cristobal Verapaz.

The U.S. National Hurricane Center forecast that parts of Nicaragua and Honduras could receive 15 to 25 inches (380 to 635 millimeters) of rain, with 40 inches (1,000 millimeters) possible in some isolated parts.

A week of rain spoiled crops, washed away bridges and flooded homes across Central America. Hurricane Eta's arrival Tuesday afternoon in northeast Nicaragua followed days of drenching rain as it crawled toward shore. Its slow, meandering path north through Honduras pushed rivers over their banks and pouring into neighborhoods where families were forced onto rooftops to wait for rescue.

Marta Julia Portillo, 62, fled her San Pedro Sula neighborhood before dawn Thursday with relatives. They paused at a gas station on dry ground until they were told to move on.

"We don't know where to go because we don't have any place to shelter," she said. Her son, who stayed behind at the family home, told her water was up to the third floor.

"I would say the national capacity has been overwhelmed by the size of the impact we are seeing," said Maite Matheu, Honduras director for the international humanitarian organization CARE. The group was using its network of contacts in Honduras to identify the hardest-hit areas and catalogue their most pressing needs.

Honduras Foreign Affairs minister Lisandro Rosales said via Twitter that "the destruction that Eta leaves us is enormous and public finances are at a critical moment because of COVID-19, we make a call to the international community to accelerate the process of recovery and reconstruction."

Observers are already anticipating that the havoc wrought by Eta will pressure more people to migrate from countries that are already some of the primary senders of migrants to the United States border in recent years.

"Now with this situation, this is going to be an exodus, a massive exodus of migrants toward the north," said Matheu.

Late Thursday, Tropical Depression Eta had maximum sustained winds of 35 mph (55 kph) and was moving north at 8 mph (13 kph). The forecast had it strengthening to a tropical storm before nearing the Cayman Islands Saturday and crossing Cuba Sunday. From there it could reach Florida or at least come

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close enough to assure heavy rains.

"Whatever comes out (of Central America) is going to linger awhile," said Colorado State University hurricane researcher Phil Klotzbach. "I'm not convinced we're done with Eta."

That's because what's left of Eta still has spin, which is hard to kill off, and that should help it reform, said NOAA hurricane and climate scientist Jim Kossin.

Once it reforms and heads toward Cuba, it could meander in the area for awhile.

"The winds aren't going to be the problem. The rains are going to be the problem," Klotzbach said.

Eta will be so big, wet and messy that it doesn't have to make landfall in already rain-soaked South Florida to cause a mess, Klotzbach said.

"Slow-moving sprawling ugly tropical storms can certainly pack a precipitation wallop even if it doesn't make landfall," Klotzbach said.

Pérez D. reported from Guatemala City. Associated Press writers Marlon González in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, Seth Borenstein in Kensington, Maryland and Christopher Sherman in Mexico City contributed to this report.

Trump steps to podium, baselessly attacks election

By JILL COLVIN and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — For 40 hours, President Donald Trump fumed in private and tweeted his grievances in all caps.

When he at last emerged, it was to stand behind the presidential seal in the White House and deliver a diatribe most notable for his litany of false statements about the election and his attempt to cast doubt on the integrity of the democratic process.

As votes continued to be counted and Democrat Joe Biden edged closer to victory, Trump lashed out Thursday evening in a performance that suggested he knew his prospects for a second term were slipping away.

"If you count the legal votes, I easily win. If you count the illegal votes, they can try to steal the election from us," Trump claimed. In fact, there is no evidence that any votes cast illegally are being counted or that the process is unfair and corrupt.

The ballot-counting process across the country largely has been running smoothly with no evidence of widespread fraud or problems.

Trump delivered his statement before reporters in the White House briefing room and left without taking questions. It came after Trump and his allies spent a second day watching and waiting with the rest of the nation as vote totals pushed further in Biden's direction in some key battlegrounds.

With just a handful of states yet to be decided, Biden had a clear advantage over Trump, but the president still retained a narrow path to the 270 electoral votes needed to win reelection. The Associated Press has not declared a winner, and it could take several more days for the vote count to conclude and a clear winner to emerge.

As expected, many of the votes being counted last are mail-in ballots, which take longer to process and overwhelmingly favor Democrats. Trump's voters were far more likely to vote in-person after the president spent months casting aspersions on mail-in voting.

Before Thursday evening, Trump had not been seen in public since his unfounded declaration of victory in the wee hours of Wednesday morning.

Since then, the mood in the White House has shifted dramatically. Some aides in the West Wing have wearily eyed returns, losing confidence that outstanding states would break Trump's way.

Trump spent the last two days monitoring the results and calling allies, including Texas Gov. Greg Abbott and Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey. White House spokesperson Judd Deere said the president was "working" but declined to elaborate.

Trump's preoccupation with the election results was evident from his tweets throughout the day.

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"STOP THE COUNT!" he proclaimed. But the president has no authority over vote counting, and halting the count at that moment would have resulted in a swift victory for Biden.

"ANY VOTE THAT CAME IN AFTER ELECTION DAY WILL NOT BE COUNTED!" he later wrote. That seemed to advocate tossing out untold legally cast votes, including those from service members stationed overseas. Many states accept mail-in ballots after Election Day as long as they were postmarked by Nov. 3.

Trump's all-caps declarations had the tone of a last stand from a man who abhors losing. They mirrored a last-ditch legal effort waged by his campaign in several key undecided battlegrounds that was largely dismissed by experts as superficial and unlikely to shift the outcome in any meaningful way.

Still, Trump's team outwardly expressed optimism.

"Donald Trump is alive and well," Trump campaign manager Bill Stepien said in a call with reporters Thursday morning. He predicted Trump would win Pennsylvania and other states that were too early to call.

Behind the scenes, however, the mood was more somber, with White House and campaign staff glued to television screens and watching results trickle in. Some in the West Wing were all but resigned to the idea of a Trump loss and have been discussing future employment prospects even as others continue to make unsubstantiated allegations of widespread voter fraud.

Many White House and senior Republican officials were in the dark about what Trump planned to say in his evening speech. And privately, some expressed consternation that Trump was publicly undermining faith in the democratic process.

Biden himself responded: "No one is going to take our democracy away from us. Not now, not ever."

After delivering his statement, the president stopped for a few minutes in the White House press office behind the briefing room and appeared to be watching his coverage live on television.

Trump had no other public events Thursday. And he made no reference to the surging coronavirus pandemic as confirmed new positive cases climbed to an all-time high.

Biden received a private briefing on the virus Thursday afternoon before emerging to tell the American public to be patient in awaiting the election results.

Trump's campaign was dispatching loyalists like former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani, former campaign manager Corey Lewandowski and former director of national intelligence Ric Grenell to hold press conferences in states where they are mounting legal challenges.

The campaign also bombarded supporters with fundraising messages warning of unsubstantiated Democratic efforts to "steal" the outcome. The effort had raised well over \$10 million, according to a person familiar with the matter who spoke on condition of anonymity because of not being authorized to discuss it publicly. At least some of the money was earmarked for paying down general election debt.

Allies of the president, including his eldest son, Donald Trump Jr., used Twitter to call out what the younger Trump labeled, "The total lack of action from virtually all of the '2024 GOP hopefuls.'"

"They have a perfect platform to show that they're willing & able to fight but they will cower to the media mob instead," he wrote.

Trump Jr., who has also been discussed as a potential future candidate, made clear the family has no interest in calmly waiting for votes to be counted.

"The best thing for America's future is for @realDonaldTrump to go to total war over this election to expose all of the fraud, cheating, dead/no longer in state voters, that has been going on for far too long," he wrote. "It's time to clean up this mess & stop looking like a banana republic!"

AP FACT CHECK: Trump fabricates election corruption

By CALVIN WOODWARD and MARYCLAIRE DALE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Citing "horror stories," President Donald Trump unleashed a torrent of fabricated accusations Thursday in an audacious attempt to undermine the legitimacy of the U.S. election.

Standing behind the presidential seal, Trump used a White House setting symbolizing the power of his office to assail an election he portrayed as rife with fraud and corruption. One allegation after another had no basis in fact, such as his accusation that election officials in Pennsylvania and Detroit tried to ban

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election observers from polling stations.

A look at his remarks, coming as Democrat Joe Biden made progress toward the electoral votes needed to claim the presidency.

TRUMP: "We're hearing stories that are horror stories. ... We think there is going to be a lot of litigation because we have so much evidence and so much proof."

THE FACTS: Trump has produced no evidence of systemic problems in voting or counting. In fact, the ballot-counting process across the country has been running smoothly for the most part, even with the U.S. in the throes of the coronavirus pandemic.

One of his main complaints, that counting spilled over past Election Day, is meritless. No presidential election has had all the votes counted the same day, and there is no law or even expectation that that should be the case. The surge in mailed ballots and the high turnout have made the process slower than usual in some, but not all, cases.

PENNSYLVANIA

TRUMP: "In Pennsylvania partisan Democrats have allowed ballots in the state to be received three days after the election and we think much more than that and they are counting those without any postmarks or any identification whatsoever."

THE FACTS: "Partisan Democrats" didn't ordain this. It was the state Supreme Court that ruled ballots mailed before the end of Election Day could be received up to three days later and still be counted. The U.S. Supreme Court examined the case and did not stand in the way of the three-day timeframe. It may review the matter again later.

A number of other states have also made accommodations for the crush of mailed ballots.

TRUMP: "Pennsylvania Democrats have gone to the state Supreme Court to try and ban our election observers. ... They don't want anybody in there. They don't want anybody watching them while they are counting the ballots."

THE FACTS: That's false. He is wholly misrepresenting a court case in the state. No one tried to ban poll watchers representing each side in the election. Democrats did not try to stop Republican representatives from being able to observe the process.

The main issue in the case was how close observers representing the parties could get to election workers who are processing mail-in ballots in Philadelphia. The Trump campaign sued to allow the observers to get closer than the guidelines had allowed. A court ruled in favor of that request.

MICHIGAN

TRUMP: "Our campaign has been denied access to observe any counting in Detroit."

THE FACTS: That's false.

Absentee ballots were counted at a downtown convention center, where some 134 counting boards were set up. Each party was allowed one poll watcher per board, said City Clerk Janice Winfrey.

She said she was not aware of any Republican poll watchers being removed but noted some had been "very aggressive, trying to intimidate the poll workers and processors."

Mark Brewer, former chairman of the Michigan Democratic Party, said he was inside the convention center and access was cut off to some people from both sides at one point because of capacity restrictions related to the pandemic.

GEORGIA

TRUMP: "The election apparatus in Georgia is run by Democrats."

THE FACTS: No, the state's elections are overseen by a Republican, Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger.

TRUMP: "The 11th Circuit ruled that in Georgia the votes have to be in by Election Day, that they should be in by Election Day. And they weren't. Votes are coming in after Election Day."

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THE FACTS: That's not an accurate description of the ruling in question or what happened in the election in Georgia.

Although the court ruled that votes must be in by 7 p.m. Election Day for them to count, an exception was made for ballots from the members of U.S. Military serving overseas. Those can be received until 5 p.m. Friday and still count. Election officials in Georgia are still counting votes, but they are votes that have been lawfully received.

'ILLEGAL' VOTES

TRUMP: "If you count the legal votes, I easily win. If you count the illegal votes, they can try to steal the election from us."

THE FACTS: This is baseless.

Neither Trump's campaign aides nor election officials have identified substantial numbers of "illegal" votes, much less the mammoth numbers it would take to ruin an easy win by Trump. He frequently speaks as if mail-in voting itself is illegitimate. But it unfolded in accordance with state voting rules, in some cases adapted by officials to help voters get through the pandemic safely.

TRUMP, complaining that underhanded activity sapped his leads in important races: "We were winning all the key locations, by a lot actually."

THE FACTS: The change in fortunes he speaks about is explained by the nature of vote counting in the states, not by any sudden surge of malfeasance that others have not seen.

Often, big cities are slower to report their numbers, and those votes tend skew Democratic. Likewise, many states tend to count mail-in ballots at the end of the process. That portion of the vote has tended to favor Biden, particularly because Trump urged his supporters in advance to avoid mail-in voting and to vote in person either early or on Election Day.

Trump finished election night with leads in Pennsylvania, Michigan, Wisconsin and Georgia, among the states most in play, then saw his advantage begin to fray Wednesday and past that. Biden won Wisconsin and Michigan; Georgia and Pennsylvania can't yet be called.

Dale reported from Philadelphia. Associated Press writers Amanda Seitz in Chicago, Christina A. Cassidy in Atlanta and Colleen Long and Brian Slodysko in Washington contributed to this report.

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

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EXPLAINER: A closer look at Arizona

By BRIAN SLODYSKO Associated Press

A CLOSER LOOK AT ARIZONA

State officials say there are about 250,000 votes still to be counted in Arizona, a Western presidential battleground state, where Democrat Joe Biden has a 1.6 percentage point lead over Republican Donald Trump, an advantage of about 46,250 votes.

The Associated Press has called the race in Arizona for Democrat Joe Biden. The AP said Thursday it is monitoring the vote count in the state as ballots continued to be tallied.

"The Associated Press continues to watch and analyze vote count results from Arizona as they come in," said Sally Buzbee, AP's executive editor. "We will follow the facts in all cases."

The vast majority of the ballots still being counted are from Maricopa County, the most populous area of the state. The next update from elections officials there is expected around 11 a.m. EST on Friday.

The Trump campaign says it is confident the president will overtake Biden when all votes in the state are tallied.

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The AP called the race in Arizona for Biden at 2:50 a.m. EST Wednesday after an analysis of ballots cast statewide concluded Trump could not catch up in the ballots left to be counted.

Arizona has a long political history of voting Republican. It's the home state of Barry Goldwater, a five-term, conservative senator who was the Republican nominee for president in 1964. John McCain, the party's 2008 presidential nominee, represented the state in Congress from 1983 until his 2018 death.

But changing demographics, including a fast-growing Latino population and a boom of new residents — some fleeing the skyrocketing cost of living in neighboring California — have made the state friendlier to Democrats.

Many of the gains have been driven by the shifting politics of Maricopa County, which is home to Phoenix and its suburbs. Maricopa County accounts for 60% of the state's vote, and Biden leads there by 3.4 percentage points in votes that have already been tabulated.

Weakened Eta drenches Central America; at least 57 dead

By CLAUDIO ESCALÓN and SONIA PÉREZ D. Associated Press

SAN PEDRO SULA, Honduras (AP) — The rain-heavy remnants of Hurricane Eta flooded homes from Panama to Guatemala Thursday as the death toll across Central America rose to at least 57, and aid organizations warned the flooding and mudslides were creating a slow-moving humanitarian disaster across the region.

The storm that hit Nicaragua as a mighty Category 4 hurricane on Tuesday had become more of a vast tropical rainstorm, but it was advancing so slowly and dumping so much rain that much of Central America remained on high alert. Forecasters said the now-tropical depression was expected to regather and head toward Cuba and possibly the Gulf of Mexico by early next week.

On Thursday afternoon, Guatemalan President Alejandro Giammattei said a water-soaked mountainside in the central part of the country had slid down onto the town of San Cristobal Verapaz, burying homes and leaving at least 25 dead.

Two other slides in Huehuetenango had killed at least 12 more, he said. The president initially said more than 50 people had died in slides, but the individual incidents he cited did not reach that total. Later, David de León, spokesman for the national disaster agency, said there were reports of 50 people missing in the Verapaz slide, but government rescue teams had not reached the site.

Earlier Thursday, five others had been killed in smaller slides in Guatemala.

Giammattei said on that 60% of the eastern city of Puerto Barrios was flooded and 48 more hours of rain was expected.

Guatemala's toll was on top of 13 victims in Honduras and two in Nicaragua. Panamanian authorities reported eight missing.

Eta had sustained winds of 35 mph (55 kph) and was moving north at 8 mph (13 kph) Thursday. It was centered 85 miles (140 kilometers) northwest of La Ceiba, Honduras.

In Honduras, National Police said Thursday that six more bodies had been found, bringing that country's toll to 13. The bodies of two adults and two children were found after excavations in a mudslide that occurred Wednesday in the township of Gualala, and two boys aged 8 and 11 died in another mudslide in El Nispero.

Earlier, residents found the body of a girl buried in a landslide Wednesday in mountains outside the north coast city of Tela. In the same area, a landslide buried a home with a mother and two children inside it, according to Honduras Fire Department spokesman Oscar Triminio. He said there was also a 2-year-old girl killed in Santa Barbara department when she was swept away by floodwaters.

Hundreds of residents of San Pedro Sula neighborhoods had to abandon their homes before dawn Thursday when water from the Chamelecon river arrived at their doorsteps.

Miguel Angel Beltran, a security guard from the city's Planeta neighborhood, said his district was lost and many people were missing or drowned.

"We rescued my brothers, all the family from a balcony, a three-story building," he said. "How is it pos-

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sible that a government has done nothing to warn people.”

His family lost everything and had nowhere to go, he said. The few boats rescuing people had no motors and struggled against the current, he said.

Marvin Aparicio of Honduras’ emergency management agency said 41 communities have been cut off by washed out roads.

Luis Alonso Salas, a 45-year-old construction worker, stood on high ground at a gas station where people who fled their homes picked over a pile of donated clothing.

“It was terrible, I lost my whole house, I couldn’t take anything,” he said. At 1 a.m. water was up to his neck. He said others in his neighborhood were still waiting for rescuers in boats from atop their roofs.

Maite Matheu, country director for the international humanitarian organization CARE, said Thursday that some 2 million Hondurans could be directly impacted by the storm.

“The situation that we are seeing today is very, very alarming,” she said. “Mainly the people and families that need to be evacuated right now. There are dozens of families in some towns in the Sula valley who are on their roofs and are asking to be evacuated.”

She said Honduras’ government did not have the capacity to rescue people.

Giammattei, Guatemala’s president, said his Honduran counterpart Juan Orlando Hernández requested help, but that blocked roads made it impossible to do so.

Matheu said her organization was helping gather information about the most pressing needs across Honduras. The food supply was a real concern, she said. The country’s road network is badly damaged, airports were closed and much of the Sula valley, the country’s most agriculturally productive, was flooded.

“The impact on crops is going to be enormous,” Matheu said. The storm’s impact would only increase the pressure on a desperate population to migrate, she added.

In Panama, at least eight people were reported missing after flooding and landslides in the province of Chiriqui, which borders Costa Rica.

The U.S. National Hurricane Center forecast that parts of Nicaragua and Honduras could receive 15 to 25 inches (380 to 635 millimeters) of rain, with 40 inches (1,000 millimeters) possible in some isolated parts.

When what’s left of the storm wobbles back into the Caribbean it will regain some strength and become a tropical storm again, forecasts show.

And then Eta is predicted to slowly move toward Cuba and Florida, or at least close enough to Florida for forecasters to warn of 7 inches of rain for South Florida in the next five to seven days. And next week, Eta could even move into the Gulf of Mexico.

“Whatever comes out (of Central America) is going to linger awhile,” said Colorado State University hurricane researcher Phil Klotzbach. “I’m not convinced we’re done with Eta.”

That’s because what’s left of Eta still has spin, which is hard to kill off, and that should help it reform, said NOAA hurricane and climate scientist Jim Kossin.

Once it reforms and heads toward Cuba, it could meander in the area for awhile.

“The winds aren’t going to be the problem. The rains are going to be the problem,” Klotzbach said.

Eta will be so big, wet and messy that it doesn’t have to make landfall in already rain-soaked South Florida to cause a mess, Klotzbach said.

“Slow-moving sprawling ugly tropical storms can certainly pack a precipitation wallop even if it doesn’t make landfall,” Klotzbach said.

Pérez D. reported from Guatemala City. Associated Press writers Marlon González in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, Juan Zamorano in Panama City, Seth Borenstein in Kensington, Maryland and Christopher Sherman in Mexico City contributed to this report.

EXPLAINER: What’s happening with poll watchers?

By The Associated Press undefined

WHAT’S HAPPENING WITH POLL WATCHERS?

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The campaign of President Donald Trump says Republican poll watchers are being improperly denied access to observe the counting of ballots. Not so, say election officials in key battleground states, who said rules are being followed and they are committed to transparency.

WHAT IS A POLL WATCHER, ANYWAY?

Someone who monitors voting or ballot counting.

Tasked this year with monitoring a record number of mail ballots, partisan poll watchers are designated by a political party or campaign to report any concerns they may have. With a few reports of overly aggressive poll watchers, election officials said they were carefully balancing access with the need to minimize disruptions.

Poll watchers have been a central element of legal battles that have erupted in Pennsylvania, Michigan and Nevada. While counting was largely finished in Michigan, the work continued Thursday in Pennsylvania and Nevada, where a narrow margin separated Trump and his Democratic challenger, Joe Biden.

Monitoring polling places and election offices is allowed in most states, but rules vary and there are certain limits to avoid any harassment or intimidation. Monitors are not allowed to interfere with the conduct of the election and are typically required to register in advance with the local election office.

QUOTABLE:

"I'm proud of how transparent and secure our process has been. I know that the truth is on our side here." — Jocelyn Benson, Michigan's top election official and a Democrat.

Counties with worst virus surges overwhelmingly voted Trump

By CARLA K. JOHNSON, HANNAH FINGERHUT and PIA DESHPANDE Associated Press

U.S. voters went to the polls starkly divided on how they see President Donald Trump's response to the coronavirus pandemic. But in places where the virus is most rampant now, Trump enjoyed enormous support.

An Associated Press analysis reveals that in 376 counties with the highest number of new cases per capita, the overwhelming majority — 93% of those counties — went for Trump, a rate above other less severely hit areas.

Most were rural counties in Montana, the Dakotas, Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa and Wisconsin — the kinds of areas that often have lower rates of adherence to social distancing, mask-wearing and other public health measures, and have been a focal point for much of the latest surge in cases.

Taking note of the contrast, state health officials are pausing for a moment of introspection. Even as they worry about rising numbers of hospitalizations and deaths, they hope to reframe their messages and aim for a reset on public sentiment now that the election is over.

"Public health officials need to step back, listen to and understand the people who aren't taking the same stance" on mask-wearing and other control measures, said Dr. Marcus Plescia of the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials.

"I think there's the potential for things to get less charged and divisive," he said, adding that there's a chance a retooled public health message might unify Americans around lowering case counts so hospitals won't get swamped during the winter months.

The electoral divide comes amid an explosion in cases and hospitalizations in the U.S. and globally.

The U.S. broke another record in the 7-day rolling average for daily new cases, hitting nearly 90,000. The tally for new cases Thursday was on track for another day above 100,000, with massive numbers reported all around the country, including a combined nearly 25,000 in Texas, Illinois and Florida. Iowa and Indiana each reported more than 4,000 cases as well.

The AP's analysis was limited to counties in which at least 95% of precincts had reported results, and grouped counties into six categories based on the rates of COVID-19 cases they'd experienced per 100,000 residents.

Polling, too, shows voters who split on Republican Trump vs. Democrat Joe Biden differed on whether the pandemic is under control.

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Thirty-six percent of Trump voters described the pandemic as completely or mostly under control, and another 47% said it was somewhat under control, according to AP VoteCast, a nationwide survey of more than 110,000 voters conducted for the AP by NORC at the University of Chicago. Meanwhile, 82% of Biden voters said the pandemic is not at all under control.

The pandemic was considered at least somewhat under control by slim majorities of voters in many red states, including Alabama (60%), Missouri (54%), Mississippi (58%), Kentucky (55%), Texas (55%), Tennessee (56%) and South Carolina (56%).

In Wisconsin, where the virus surged just before the election, 57% said the pandemic was not under control. In Washington state, where the virus is more in control now compared to earlier in the year, 55% said the same. Voters in New York and New Hampshire, where the virus is more controlled now after early surges, were roughly divided in their assessments, similar to voters nationwide.

Trump voters interviewed by AP reporters said they value individual freedom and believed the president was doing as well as anyone could in response to the coronavirus.

Michaela Lane, a 25-year-old Republican, dropped her ballot off last week at a polling site at an outdoor mall in Phoenix. She cast her vote for Trump.

"I feel like the most important issue facing the country as a whole is liberty at large," Lane said. "Infringing on people's freedom, government overrule, government overreach, chaos in a lot of issues currently going on and just giving people back their rights."

About half of Trump voters called the economy and jobs the top issue facing the nation, roughly twice the percentage who named the pandemic, according to VoteCast. By contrast, a majority of Biden voters — about 6 in 10 — said the pandemic was the most important issue.

In Madison, Wisconsin, Eric Engstrom, a 31-year-old investment analyst and his wife, Gwen, voted absentee by mail in early October.

Trump's failure to control the pandemic sealed his vote for Biden, Engstrom said, calling the coronavirus the most immediate threat the nation faces. He and his wife are expecting their first child, a girl, in January and fear "the potential of one of us or both of us being sick when the baby is born," he said.

Engstrom called Trump's response to the virus abysmal. "If there was any chance that I was going to vote for Trump, it was eliminated because of the pandemic," he said.

The political temperature has added to the stress of public health officials, Plescia said. "Our biggest concern is how long can they sustain this pace?" he said.

Since the start of the pandemic, 74 state and local public health officials in 31 states have resigned, retired or been fired, according to an ongoing analysis by AP and Kaiser Health News.

As the election mood dissipates, rising hospitalizations amid colder weather create "a really pivotal moment" in the pandemic, said Sema Sgaier, executive director of the Surgo Foundation, a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit that worked with Harvard University-affiliated Ariadne Labs to develop a tool for estimating vaccine needs in states.

"We really need to get our act together. When I say 'we' I mean collectively," Sgaier said. Finding common ground may become easier if one of more of the vaccine candidates proves safe and effective and gains government approval, she said.

"The vaccine provides the reset button," Sgaier said.

Dr. Anthony Fauci may be another unifying force. According to VoteCast, 73% of voters nationwide approve of the way Fauci, the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, has been handling the pandemic.

Even among Trump voters, 53% approve of Fauci's performance. About 9 in 10 Biden voters approve.

Johnson reported from Washington state. Deshpande reported from Chicago and Fingerhut reported from Washington, D.C. AP reporters Todd Richmond in Madison, Wisconsin, and Terry Tang in Phoenix contributed.

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Trump hits election integrity with unsupported complaints

By JONATHAN LEMIRE, ZEKE MILLER and WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — With votes still being counted across the nation, President Donald Trump on Thursday sought to undermine confidence in the nation's election, making unsupported accusations from the White House about the integrity of the results in his race against Democrat Joe Biden.

Hours earlier, Biden offered reassurances that the counting could be trusted, projecting a more presidential appearance while urging patience from Americans.

The candidates' sharply contrasting postures intensified a national moment of uncertainty as the nation and the world waited to learn which man would collect the 270 electoral votes needed to capture the presidency. Trump pursued legal options with little success, working the phones and escalating efforts to sow doubt about the outcome of the race.

His path to victory narrow, Trump pushed unsupported allegations of electoral misconduct in a series of tweets and insisted the ongoing vote count of ballots submitted before and on Election Day must cease. And in his first public appearance since late on Election Night, he amplified the conspiracy theories amid the trappings of presidential power.

"This is a case when they are trying to steal an election, they are trying to rig an election," said Trump of Democrats, whom he accused of corruption while providing no evidence.

He made similar claims about election integrity during the 2016 campaign, which he went on to win. This time, he was speaking not as a candidate, but as the sitting president of the United States.

Biden took a different tack, speaking briefly to reporters after attending a COVID-19 briefing to declare that "each ballot must be counted."

"I ask everyone to stay calm. The process is working," said Biden. "It is the will of the voters. No one, not anyone else who chooses the president of the United States of America."

Biden's victories in Michigan and Wisconsin put him in a commanding position, but Trump showed no sign of giving up. It could take several more days for the vote count to conclude and a clear winner emerge.

With millions of ballots yet to be tabulated, Biden already had received more than 72 million votes, the most in history.

Trump's campaign engaged in a flurry of legal activity to try to improve the Republican president's chances, requesting a recount in Wisconsin and filing lawsuits in Pennsylvania, Michigan and Georgia. Statewide recounts in Wisconsin have historically changed the vote tally by only a few hundred votes; Biden led by more than 20,000 ballots out of nearly 3.3 million counted.

Judges in Georgia and Michigan quickly dismissed Trump campaign lawsuits there on Thursday.

Biden has already won Michigan and Wisconsin. The contests in Georgia and Pennsylvania, along with Nevada and North Carolina, were tight with votes still being tabulated.

The Trump campaign said it was confident the president would ultimately pull out a victory in Arizona, where votes were also still being counted, including in Maricopa County, the state's most populous area. The AP has declared Biden the winner in Arizona and said Thursday that it was monitoring the vote count as it proceeded.

"The Associated Press continues to watch and analyze vote count results from Arizona as they come in," said Sally Buzbee, AP's executive editor. "We will follow the facts in all cases."

Trump's legal challenges faced long odds. He would have to win multiple suits in multiple states in order to stop vote counts, since more than one state was undeclared.

There were no obvious grounds for the Justice Department to attempt to intervene to stop a vote count at the state level, unless the federal government could somehow assert a violation of federal voting laws or the Constitution. The department could theoretically file a brief in support of a Trump campaign lawsuit if it believed there were federal concerns at stake, but that intervention would be extraordinary.

While Trump has insisted that ballot counting stop, it was unclear exactly what that would include. Counting for votes received by Nov. 3 was continuing, but roughly 20 states allow ballots to be counted if postmarked by Nov. 3 but received in the days after. In some states that is as long as nine days, or even

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longer. Some of the deadline changes were made as a result of the pandemic, but others are just routine parts of state election laws. Trump has fixated on Pennsylvania, where the Supreme Court refused to stop a court's ruling that allowed for a three-day extension.

He also said he was taking fraud claims to court – but most of the lawsuits only demand better access for campaign observers to locations where ballots are being processed and counted. A judge in Georgia dismissed the campaign's suit there less than 12 hours after it was filed. And a Michigan judge dismissed a Trump lawsuit over whether enough GOP challengers had access to handling of absentee ballots.

Biden attorney Bob Bauer said the suits were legally "meritless." Their only purpose, he said "is to create an opportunity for them to message falsely about what's taking place in the electoral process."

It was unclear when a national winner would be determined after a long, bitter campaign dominated by the coronavirus and its effects on Americans and the national economy. The U.S. on Wednesday set another record for daily confirmed cases as several states posted all-time highs. The pandemic has killed more than 233,000 people in the United States.

Beyond the presidency, Democrats had hoped the election would allow the party to reclaim the Senate and pad its majority in the House. But while the voting scrambled seats in the House and Senate, it ultimately left Congress much like it began — deeply divided.

Weissert reported from Wilmington, Delaware. Associated Press writers Jill Colvin and Alexandra Jaffe in Washington contributed to this report.

Find AP's full election coverage at [APNews.com/Election2020](https://www.apnews.com/Election2020).

With counting winding down, Trump team pushes legal fights

By MARK SHERMAN and JESSICA GRESKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Judges in Georgia and Michigan quickly dismissed Trump campaign lawsuits Thursday, undercutting a campaign legal strategy to attack the integrity of the voting process in states where the result could mean President Donald Trump's defeat.

The rulings came as Democrat Joe Biden inched closer to the 270 Electoral College votes needed to win the White House, and Trump and his campaign promised even more legal action based on unsubstantiated allegations of voter fraud.

Speaking in the White House briefing room Thursday, the president launched into a litany of claims, without proof, about how Democrats were trying to unfairly deprive him of a second term. "But we think there'll be a lot of litigation because we can't have an election stolen like this," Trump said.

Earlier Thursday, a Biden campaign lawyer called the lawsuits meritless, more political strategy than legal. "I want to emphasize that for their purposes these lawsuits don't have to have merit. That's not the purpose. ... It is to create an opportunity for them to message falsely about what's taking place in the electoral process," lawyer Bob Bauer said, accusing the Trump campaign of "continually alleging irregularities, failures of the system and fraud without any basis."

Trump is used to suing and being sued. A USA Today analysis found that he and his businesses were involved in at least 3,500 state and federal court actions in the three decades before he became president.

In this election, the court battles so far have been small-scale efforts to get a closer look at local elections officials as they process absentee ballots. A Michigan judge noted that the state's ballot count is over as she tossed the campaign's lawsuit.

In Georgia, a state judge dismissed a case over concerns about 53 absentee ballots in Chatham County after elections officials in the Savannah-area county testified that all of those ballots had been received on time. Campaign officials said earlier they were considering similar challenges in a dozen other counties around the state.

In Pennsylvania, meanwhile, the Trump campaign won an appellate ruling to get party and campaign observers closer to election workers who are processing mail-in ballots in Philadelphia.

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But the order did not affect the counting of ballots that is proceeding in Pennsylvania and elsewhere, as elections officials are dealing with an avalanche of mail ballots driven by fears of voting in person during a pandemic.

The lawsuits in multiple states highlight that the Trump campaign could be confronting a political map in which it might have to persuade courts in two or more states to set aside enough votes to overturn the results. That's a substantially different scenario than in the contested presidential election of 2000, which eventually was effectively settled by the Supreme Court, when the entire fight was over Florida's electoral votes and involved a recount as opposed to trying to halt balloting.

Biden, for his part, has said he expects to win the election, but he counseled patience Thursday, saying: "Each ballot must be counted."

Trump campaign officials, meanwhile, accused Democrats of trying to steal the election, despite no evidence anything of the sort was taking place.

Trump campaign manager Bill Stepien, in a call with reporters Thursday morning, said that "every night the president goes to bed with a lead" and every night new votes "are mysteriously found in a sack." It is quite common in presidential elections to have vote counting continue after election day.

Trump campaign spokesman Jason Miller said additional legal action was expected and would be focused on giving campaign officials access to where ballots were being counted.

Trump's campaign has also announced that it will ask for a recount in Wisconsin. Stepien previously cited "irregularities in several Wisconsin counties," without providing specifics.

The Associated Press called Wisconsin and Michigan for Biden on Wednesday. The AP has not called Georgia, Nevada or Pennsylvania.

The president's lawyers have asked to intervene in a pending Republican appeal to the Supreme Court over the three-day extension for the receipt and counting of mailed ballots ordered by Pennsylvania's top court. Democrats in the state told the justices Thursday that they should put off granting the request because they "may well not need to hear and decide" the matter if Pennsylvania is not critical to the outcome or the late-arriving ballots wouldn't make a difference.

Associated Press writers Jill Colvin in Washington, Ed White in Detroit, Marc Levy in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, Maryclaire Dale in Philadelphia, and Sudhin Thanawala in Atlanta contributed to this report.

Poll watchers emerge as a flashpoint in battle over ballots

By CHRISTINA A. CASSIDY and ANTHONY IZAGUIRRE Associated Press

Election officials in key battleground states pushed back on claims by the Trump campaign that Republican poll watchers were being improperly denied access to observe the counting of ballots, saying Thursday that rules were being followed and they were committed to transparency.

Tasked this year with monitoring a record number of mail ballots, partisan poll watchers are designated by a political party or campaign to report any concerns they may have. With a few reports of overly aggressive poll watchers, election officials said they were carefully balancing access with the need to minimize disruptions.

"There were certainly a lot of eyes on the process in every absentee counting board all across our state," said Michigan Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson, a Democrat and the state's top election official. "I'm proud of how transparent and secure our process has been. I know that the truth is on our side here."

Poll watchers have been a central element of legal battles that have erupted in Pennsylvania, Michigan and Nevada. While counting was largely finished in Michigan, the work continued Thursday in Pennsylvania and Nevada where a narrow margin separated President Donald Trump and his Democratic challenger, Joe Biden.

Monitoring polling places and election offices is allowed in most states, but rules vary and there are certain limits to avoid any harassment or intimidation. Monitors are not allowed to interfere with the conduct of the election and are typically required to register in advance with the local election office.

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In Nevada's most populous county, officials said poll watchers were allowed in designated areas, told to comply with social distancing and mask requirements and required to be escorted by county representatives.

"When they sign in, they have to agree to follow the rules that are guided by statute. If they don't follow the rules ... they will be removed from the location," said Joe Gloria, the chief elections official in Clark County, which includes Las Vegas.

The Trump campaign had sought to halt the counting of mail ballots in the county, saying observers were being kept too far away to be able to see if signatures matched voter registration records.

"With the issues that have been reported regarding the election, we are now more than ever concerned with the lack of the transparency in observing and challenging possible invalid ballots," said Adam Laxalt, co-chair of the Trump campaign in Nevada.

That lawsuit was settled Thursday afternoon after election officials agreed to provide additional access at a ballot processing facility in Las Vegas.

In Pennsylvania, disputes over poll watchers were concentrated largely in Philadelphia, where the Trump campaign complained its observers could not get close enough to see whether mail-in ballot envelopes had signatures along with eligible voters' names and addresses.

Ballots without this information could be challenged or disqualified, but city officials said state election law allows poll watchers only to observe the work and not audit it.

Pennsylvania Secretary of State Kathy Boockvar defended the process as open.

"In Pennsylvania, every candidate and every political party is allowed to have an authorized representative in the room observing the process," Boockvar said in an interview with CNN. "Some jurisdictions including Philly are also livestreaming, so you can literally watch their counting process from anywhere in the world. It's very transparent."

On Thursday, a state judge ordered Philadelphia officials to allow party and candidate observers to move closer to election workers processing mail-in ballots. A spokesperson for the Philadelphia board of elections said barriers were shifted in response to the order while the city appealed it.

Later, a federal court in Philadelphia denied a Trump campaign bid to stop the vote count over the access issues, urging the two sides to forge an agreement. U.S. District Judge Paul S. Diamond suggested each party be allowed 60 observers inside the convention center where ballots were being tallied.

Voting advocates noted the restrictions applied to both Republican and Democratic poll watchers.

"There are specific rules in Pennsylvania about where poll watchers can stand and what they can do," said Suzanne Almeida, interim director of Common Cause Pennsylvania. "It applies to both parties equally. Everyone has the exact same access. This is not about disadvantaging one party over another."

The number of poll watchers allowed at an election office varies. Some smaller offices might allow only a few inside, while larger ones could have dozens.

Also Thursday, a Michigan judge dismissed a Trump campaign lawsuit over whether enough Republican poll watchers had access to the handling of absentee ballots.

Much of the dispute centered on Detroit, where absentee ballots were counted at a downtown convention center. Some 134 counting boards were set up, and each party was allowed one poll watcher per board, according to City Clerk Janice Winfrey.

She said she was not aware of any Republican poll watchers being removed but noted some had been "very aggressive, trying to intimidate the poll workers and processors."

Ray Wert, who volunteered as a Democratic poll watcher at the site, said he found a group of Republican supporters blocking the entrance and he observed police officers telling the crowd that no additional people were being let inside because there were equal numbers of partisan poll watchers.

"My concerns are that this is going to be used to delegitimize what is a very clear and very well-run process for counting these ballots," Wert said.

Cassidy reported from Atlanta, and Izaguirre reported from Lindenhurst, New York. AP reporters from around the country contributed.

EXPLAINER: What does a smaller majority in the House mean?

By The Associated Press undefined

The counting isn't over yet, but Democrats in Congress are already asking what went wrong. That's because it's looking like their expected gains in the House aren't happening. And while Democrats are likely to retain control for two more years, their current 232-197 majority could easily shrink.

Here, Dustin Weaver, Congress editor for The Associated Press, answers three quick questions about what this could mean.

WHAT'S THE PRACTICAL EFFECT?

Well, what it means is that Speaker Pelosi and her Democratic leadership team are going to have less of a margin of error to pass legislation. Pelosi likes to say that votes are the "currency of the realm," and when you have less of them to spend it can make passing bills harder. You're often likely to lose votes from your own side, especially on difficult issues, and Republicans often vote in lockstep against Democratic bills.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR NANCY PELOSI?

She had been widely expected to easily win another term as speaker in January, but having a smaller majority means she'll have fewer votes to spare. No challengers to her position have emerged, however, and some Democrats are saying they don't expect to see one. After all, Democrats still seem to have won the majority.

WHAT DID EVERYONE MISS?

It's probably too early to say. The Democrats have a number of theories about what went wrong. Some say they didn't fight hard enough against the Republican message that they want socialism. Others are frustrated that they were told not to knock on doors during the pandemic and instead rely on virtual events. Some say they made a mistake by not passing more virus aid before the election, and others say the party just hasn't come to terms with what makes President Donald Trump so popular among a large swath of voters. So they have to figure out where to go from here.

Presidential election exposes America's 'perilous' divides

By STEVE PEOPLES AP National Political Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Presidential elections can be revealing moments that convey the wishes of the American people to the next wave of elected officials. So far, the big reveal in the contest between President Donald Trump and former Vice President Joe Biden is the extent of the cavernous divide between Republican and Democratic America, one that defines the nation, no matter which candidate ultimately wins.

Voters from both parties turned out in droves to pick the next president, but as they did so, they found little agreement about what that president should do. Democrats and Republicans prioritized different issues, lived in different communities and even voted on different kinds of ballots.

Whoever emerges as the winner, that division ensures that the next president will face significant gridlock in Congress, skepticism about the integrity of the vote and an agitated electorate increasingly divided by race, education and geography. Even the vote count itself threatens to further split Americans.

Two days after polls closed, neither Trump nor Biden has earned the 270 electoral votes needed to win the presidency. The Republican incumbent is encouraging his supporters to protest outside counting locations still sorting through mail ballots — the method of voting preferred by many Democrats — while pursuing an aggressive legal strategy that could lead to further delays.

"Except for the Civil War, I don't think we've lived through any time as perilous as this in terms of the divisions," said historian Barbara Perry, the director of presidential studies at the University of Virginia's Miller Center.

Even after the 2000 election, when the Supreme Court ultimately intervened on Republican George W. Bush's behalf, Democrat Al Gore quickly conceded and congressional leaders found areas of agreement on Capitol Hill.

"To come out of something like this, you need to have a leader who can lead and willing followers," Perry

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said. "I just don't see willing followers on either side."

The yawning divides will threaten the next president's ability to manage multiple crises: Daily coronavirus infections set a record this week, the economy is struggling to recover from the pandemic and many Americans are pressing for a reckoning on racial injustices.

Trump and Biden voters, however, express strikingly different views on those challenges, according to AP VoteCast, a broad survey of the electorate. Biden voters overwhelmingly say they want the federal government to prioritize limiting the spread of the virus, even if that means further damage to the economy. But most Trump voters preferred an approach that focused on the economy.

About half of Trump voters also called the economy and jobs the top issue facing the nation, while only 1 in 10 Biden voters named it most important.

On race and justice issues, Biden voters almost universally said racism is a serious problem in U.S. society and in policing. But only a slim majority of Trump voters, who are overwhelming white, called racism a serious problem.

Biden has tried to bridge this gap, often appealing to a sense of national unity and the "soul" of America. Trump often casts himself as a defender of his voters. He has threatened to withhold pandemic-related aid from states run by Democratic governors and disparaged cities run by Democrats.

Many Democrats desperately hoped that Trump would suffer an embarrassing and broad defeat that would serve as a clear repudiation of Trump and his brand of politics. At the very least, they wanted an unambiguous mandate that would allow Biden to pursue ambitious policies on health care, education and the economy.

Trump may lose, but strong GOP turnout in battlegrounds and unexpectedly solid victories for Republican candidates in Senate and House races made Tuesday far from a thumping.

"There's certainly not a clarion call to go in one direction or another. There's a lot of confusion and chaos," said civil rights leader Martin Luther King III, who supported Biden.

The election solidified the parties' competing coalitions. Biden relied on urban and suburban voters, particularly women, college-educated voters and people of color. Trump exceeded his turnout numbers from 2016 by relying on thousands of new supporters from rural, GOP pockets of white voters across the country.

Results in high-turnout counties underscore that trend: Republican-leaning places became more Republican and Democratic areas more Democratic.

The Democratic margin increased in 70% of the counties that went for Hillary Clinton in 2016 and the Republican margin widened in 56% of counties that Trump won that year, according to an Associated Press analysis of all counties that by Thursday evening had tallied more votes than in the last presidential election.

That dynamic toppled some Democrats who had won seats in politically mixed areas by running as moderates. In Iowa, for example, Democrat Rep. Abby Finkenauer lost her reelection bid in the eastern part of the state as Trump bolstered his margins in rural areas such as Buchanan County just west of Dubuque. Trump won the rural county, which is 96% white, by 15 percentage points in 2016. That jumped to 21 percentage points this year.

That geographic polarization is part of what worries those who see the culture of cooperation in Washington rapidly eroding.

Former New Hampshire Sen. Judd Gregg, a leading Republican voice in the days after the Supreme Court decided the 2000 election, said it's unclear whether congressional leaders will have an incentive to work with the other party.

"There were people in the Senate like Ted Kennedy and Ted Stevens who held strong views but were there first and foremost to get things done and govern, so they did not fear their base and were willing to compromise," said Gregg, who has emerged as a Trump critic. "I am not sure that type of leadership is there today because of the strident voices that dominate both parties. But Biden, if president, has seen how it can be done, so we can hope."

Associated Press data journalist Angeliki Kastanis contributed to this report.

Fed signals readiness to do more for economy as virus rages

By MARTIN CRUTSINGER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Federal Reserve kept its benchmark interest rate at a record low near zero Thursday and signaled its readiness to do more if needed to support an economy under threat from a worsening coronavirus pandemic.

The Fed announced no new actions after its latest policy meeting but left the door open to provide further assistance in the coming months. The central bank again pledged to use its “full range of tools to support the U.S. economy in this challenging time.” The economy in recent weeks has weakened after mounting a tentative recovery from the deep pandemic recession in early spring.

“I think we have to be humble about where we are,” Chair Jerome Powell said at a news conference when asked whether the economy was at risk of enduring a severe setback with confirmed viral cases in the United States setting record highs. “We are very far from saying that we’ve got this and eliminated” the risks.

Several Fed officials have expressed concern that Congress has failed so far to provide further aid for struggling individuals and businesses. The Fed’s policy statement, issued after a two-day meeting, made no mention of lawmakers’ failure to act. But when asked about the danger to the economy without a new rescue aid package soon, the chairman was clear:

“I think we will have a stronger recovery if we can get more fiscal support” from Congress, Powell said.

A multi-trillion-dollar stimulus, enacted in the spring, had helped sustain jobless Americans and ailing businesses but has since expired. The failure of lawmakers to agree on any new aid has clouded the future for the unemployed, for small businesses and for the economy as a whole. There is some hope, though, that a logjam can be broken and more economic relief can be enacted during a post-election “lame-duck” session of Congress between now and early January.

“The outlook for the economy is extraordinarily uncertain,” Powell said at the news conference.

The chairman said the policymakers discussed this week whether and how their bond buying program might be altered to provide more economic support. The Fed is buying \$120 billion a month in bonds — \$80 billion in Treasuries and \$40 billion in mortgage bonds — to try to keep long-term borrowing costs low. Powell’s comments appeared to raise the possibility that changes could be announced as soon as the Fed’s next meeting in December.

In addition to buying bonds to keep long-term borrowing costs low, the Fed has kept its key short-term rate, which influences many corporate and individual loans, near zero.

The Fed’s latest policy meeting coincided with an anxiety-ridden election week and an escalation of the virus across the country. Most economists warn that the economy cannot make a sustained recovery until the pandemic is brought under control and most Americans are confident enough to return to their normal habits of shopping, traveling, dining and congregating in groups.

“The recent rise in COVID-19 cases both here and abroad is particularly concerning,” Powell said. “All of us have a role to play, to keep appropriate social distance and to wear masks in public.”

The central bank’s policy statement Thursday was approved on a 10-0 vote. Robert Kaplan, president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, who had dissented at the previous meeting, voted with the majority this time. Another dissenter in September, Neel Kashkari, head of the Minneapolis Fed, was absent, with his alternate, Mary Daly of the San Francisco Fed, approving the statement.

The statement was nearly identical to the one the Fed issued in September. At that meeting, it adopted a policy goal change it had made in August to keep rates low for some period of time even after inflation hits its 2% annual target. The reason was to allow the Fed to supply a longer boost to the economy and for unemployment to fall further before the policymakers begin to worry about inflation.

At his news conference, Powell was asked about a nationwide shortage of coins that has developed as a decline of shoppers at retail stores has depressed the normal circulation of change. He noted that the

circulation of coins and currency was especially important for low-income people who do not have credit cards.

The chairman said he had been told by Fed officials who are reviewing the problem that “things have gotten significantly better” and that the situation was “well on the way to normalizing.”

EXPLAINER: What effect could lawsuits have on the election?

By The Associated Press undefined

Two days later, an uneasy United States is still waiting to hear who will be its next president. With Democrat Joe Biden pushing closer to the 270 Electoral College votes needed to win, President Donald Trump’s campaign has attacked the integrity of the voting process with lawsuits in three key states. They are Pennsylvania, Michigan and Georgia.

Here, Colleen Long, a national reporter in the Washington bureau of The Associated Press who is leading coverage of the legal challenges, breaks down how these lawsuits could affect the presidential election.

WHAT ARE THESE LAWSUITS TRYING TO DO?

In Pennsylvania and Michigan, the campaign wanted to temporarily halt vote counting until Republicans got more oversight of the tally. The lawsuit in Georgia asked for a judge’s order to make sure the state is following the law around absentee ballots. But judges already swatted down the Michigan and Georgia ones. They could still be appealed, though.

WHAT ARE EXPERTS SAYING?

Election law experts and state election officials have overwhelmingly said there has been no sign of widespread or even sporadic voter fraud. Counting votes just takes more time than in past years because the coronavirus pandemic has changed the way people go about it. But the Trump campaign says these lawsuits are necessary anyway. Meanwhile, Biden campaign attorney Bob Bauer says the suits have no merit and are just meant to spread a false narrative about the electoral process. He said it’s more about Trump’s own effort to discredit the election.

CAN THESE LEGAL MANEUVERS HAVE CONSEQUENCES?

Sure. *Bush v. Gore* in 2000 was a good example of how litigation can affect the outcome of an election. But legal experts say today, a lawsuit with that kind of power would have to come out of a state where the result there would determine who wins the overall election. Also, the difference between the candidates’ vote totals would have to be smaller than the ballots at stake in the lawsuit. And neither condition has been met yet.

ARE THESE THE ONLY ONES?

No, there were hundreds filed before the election by both sides, and they had to do with changes to how the election was going to work because of the coronavirus pandemic. When absentee ballots could be counted until, whether you had to wear a mask, that kind of thing. Some of them were still live on Nov. 3, but most were sorted out.

PREVIOUS AP STORIES ON THE 2020 ELECTION AND LEGAL CHALLENGES:

- Taking a stand has new meaning in heavily litigated election
- Just over a week before the US election, lawsuits linger

EXPLAINER: How much misinformation is kicking around?

By The Associated Press undefined

They go together all too closely these days: momentous events — and bad information that tells an inaccurate story about how they’re happening. The two days since Election Day, predictably, demonstrate this to be true.

Karen Mahabir, fact check and misinformation editor for The Associated Press, says her team of reporters has had no shortage of work since Americans stopped voting late Tuesday. Her staff has written nearly 20 separate pieces debunking bad information in English and Spanish, and laid out the misinformation landscape in a nearly half a dozen other stories. “It’s been a really busy time for us,” Mahabir says.

Here, she answers three quick questions about the misinformation landscape at the moment.

WHAT ARE YOU SEEING SINCE THE VOTING ENDED?

We're starting to see a lot more misinformation focusing on the ballots and the voting process — ballot boxes being removed, states that changed names from one candidate or another, none of which is true. Lots from Pennsylvania and other closely contested states, a lot about ballots being quote-unquote "found."

HOW ARE THE SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS DOING WHEN IT COMES TO MISINFO?

We know they stepped up all their efforts to curb misinformation, which seems to be working for the most part. They're taking action. They're labeling posts they know to be inaccurate and what they're doing is they're pointing people to the correct sources of information. It remains to be seen how much impact that's going to have, but we're noticing it more and more. But it's good to see.

WHAT DO YOU SEE ON THE HORIZON IN COMING DAYS?

I think we're going to see a lot more claims that are focused on the states that are still counting the votes. We'll see anecdotal situations that are probably going to be blown out of proportion." All of this is kind of typical. It's taking reality and twisting it into something that it's not, creating an impression of impropriety.

SOME RECENT AP STORIES ABOUT MISINFORMATION:

- Claim that Sharpie pens ruin Arizona ballots misses the mark
- Trump and allies spread falsehoods to cast doubt on election
- Did social media actually counter election misinformation?
- Pennsylvania emerges as online misinformation hot spot

Senate control hangs in balance with a few races undecided

By LISA MASCARO and MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Control of the Senate hung in the balance Thursday, a cliffhanger after Republicans trounced Democratic challengers in crucial states but failed to lock down the seats needed to retain their tenuous majority.

One race in Georgia is headed to a January runoff. A second contest in Georgia and races in North Carolina and Alaska remain undecided, leaving the chamber now deadlocked 48-48. An outcome may not be known until the new year.

With the presidential race between President Donald Trump and Democrat Joe Biden also undecided, the Senate is in limbo because the vice president of the eventual winner's party would serve as a tie-breaker in a split chamber.

"We're waiting — whether I'm going to be the majority leader or not," Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., said Wednesday.

That was still the case Thursday.

The counting continued in Georgia, where GOP Sen. David Perdue was trying to hold off Democrat Jon Ossoff in a multi-candidate race that could also go to a runoff if neither candidate clears the 50% threshold to win.

There already is a Jan. 5 runoff in the state's other Senate race. GOP Sen. Kelly Loeffler will face Democrat Raphael Warnock, a Black pastor at the church where the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. preached, after they emerged as top vote-getters, but failed to clear the majority threshold.

In North Carolina, GOP Sen. Thom Tillis hoped to prevail over Democrat Cal Cunningham, whose sexting affair with a public relations specialist has clouded the race.

Republicans were confident they would keep Alaska, where GOP Sen. Dan Sullivan was challenged by newcomer Al Gross, a doctor and Democratic-backed independent.

Democrats faced long but not fully impossible odds to take a slim majority after a disappointing election night when Republicans defeated multiple challengers.

In Michigan, Democrats were spared a loss when Sen. Gary Peters withstood a strong challenge from

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Republican John James, a Black Republican businessman. But Republicans held on to Susan Collins in Maine and other key seats.

McConnell, who secured a seventh term for himself in a costly campaign against Democrat Amy McGrath, a former fighter pilot, has said he he felt "pretty good" about the remaining contests.

But Democrats remained hopeful. Strategist Zac Petkanas said the 2020 election "was going to be an awful, ugly, dirty slog until the bitter end."

Election night jarred Democrats and enthusiastic backers who were eager to counter Trump and his party's grip on the Senate.

While Democrats picked up must-win seats in Colorado and Arizona, they suffered a setback in Alabama, and Republicans held their own in one race after another — in South Carolina, Iowa, Texas, Kansas and Montana. That dramatically limited Democrats' hopes to make inroads.

In Maine, Sen. Susan Collins' victory over Democrat Sara Gideon was especially important for Republicans, holding a seat in a state where Trump was not expected to win. For Collins, it was the hardest-fought race of her career. Democrats had tried to tie the moderate to Trump and criticized her for her vote to confirm Justice Brett Kavanaugh in 2018.

Many races attracted an unprecedented outpouring of small-dollar donations for Democrats.

"You wasted a lot of money," said White House ally Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., after defeating Jaime Harrison, despite the Democrat's stunning \$100 million haul for his upstart campaign.

But Harrison energized voters, among several Black Democratic candidates for Senate including Warnock, drawing an outpouring of national support in a year of racial reckoning, enthusiasm that will be tested again in 2021.

"This is the most important race in the country right now," Warnock said in a fundraising appeal.

Securing the Senate majority will be vital for the winner of the presidency. Senators confirm administration nominees, including the Cabinet, and can propel or stall the White House agenda. With Republicans now controlling the chamber, 53-47, three or four seats will determine party control, depending on who wins the presidency.

The Democrats' gains were in Colorado where former Gov. John Hickenlooper defeated GOP Sen. Cory Gardner, and Arizona, where former astronaut Mark Kelly beat Republican incumbent Martha McSally.

But Democrats couldn't hold on in Alabama: Former college football coach Tommy Tuberville defeated Sen. Doug Jones.

Associated Press writers Bruce Schreiner in Louisville, Kentucky, Meg Kinnard in Columbia, South Carolina, and Padmananda Rama in Washington contributed to this report.

Find AP's full election coverage at [APNews.com/Election2020](https://www.apnews.com/Election2020).

This story has been corrected to reflect that the first name of South Carolina Democratic candidate Harrison is Jaime, not Jamie.

In South, most Black Senate candidates since Reconstruction

By MEG KINNARD Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — In the battle for control of the U.S. Senate this year, the Deep South is fielding more Black candidates than it has since Reconstruction.

In South Carolina, Jaime Harrison is raising a previously unfathomable amount of money in what has become a competitive fight to unseat one of the more powerful Republicans in the Senate. He's joined by Raphael Warnock in neighboring Georgia, the leading Democrat in a crowded field running for the seat held by an appointed Republican. Mike Espy and Adrian Perkins, meanwhile, are launching spirited bids for the Senate in Mississippi and Louisiana, respectively.

Their candidacies come during a year of deep reckoning in the U.S. over systemic racism and represent

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a more diverse type of political leader in the South, where Democrats have tended to rally behind white moderates in recent years in often ill-fated attempts to appeal to disaffected Republicans.

"It's continually a tough fight that we wage to help Democrats imagine a world where people who look like myself, are viable candidates everywhere — not just in your blue states, not just in the urban cities," said Quentin James of The Collective, a political action committee that supports Black candidates.

The Senate currently has three Black members: Republican Tim Scott of South Carolina and Democrats Cory Booker of New Jersey and Kamala Harris of California. Harris is the Democratic vice presidential nominee.

The candidates face hurdles in a region that has been a GOP stronghold for a generation. Of their four states, only one has a Democratic governor. In South Carolina, it's been nearly 15 years since a Democrat won statewide office and 44 years since a Democratic presidential candidate won.

But there are signs of possible change. In Georgia and North Carolina — states that haven't supported a Democrat for the White House since 1992 and 2008, respectively — Joe Biden is running a tight race with President Donald Trump. In Georgia, Warnock recently appeared at a rally with Harris, who has endorsed him.

The 2018 elections marked something of a turning point. While Democrat Stacey Abrams narrowly lost the Georgia governor's race, her strong performance, particularly in Atlanta's Republican-leaning suburbs, suggested there was a path for Black Democrats.

"The more competitive races are, and Black candidates win those competitive races, it diminishes this worry that Black candidates can't win," Abrams recently told The Associated Press.

Warnock is hoping to come out on top in a crowded field against Republican Sen. Kelly Loeffler, who was appointed this year by Republican Gov. Brian Kemp.

Warnock is pastor of the Atlanta church where the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. preached. He draws heavily on his experience as a Black man living in the Deep South, from his early days growing up in Georgia public housing to his current support for expanding access to health care, voting rights, criminal justice reform and the Black Lives Matter movement.

In Louisiana, Perkins, a West Point graduate and Army veteran, is seen as the lead candidate in a non-partisan, qualifying primary to take on Republican U.S. Sen. Bill Cassidy.

Perkins has been endorsed by former President Barack Obama and other high-profile Democrats, but his late entrance into the race has made fundraising difficult. Cassidy has amassed a sizable campaign account.

In Mississippi, Espy is trying for a second time to become the state's first Black senator since Reconstruction with his challenge to Republican incumbent Cindy Hyde-Smith. In 1986, Espy was elected as Mississippi's first Black congressman in modern times before heading up the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Biden has endorsed Espy.

The Republican-dominated state last had a Democrat in the Senate in 1988. To win, Espy needs a strong turnout among Democratic Black voters, along with support from white voters disenchanted with Trump.

Espy highlights his family's history in Mississippi, where his grandfather started a hospital for African Americans in 1924, and his father owned a funeral home where Emmett Till's body was taken after the Black 14-year-old from Chicago was tortured and killed in rural Mississippi. Espy and his twin sister were among the few Black students who integrated an all-white high school.

"It's about overcoming issues in the old Mississippi and fighting for progress in the future," he said.

There's also Tennessee Democrat Marquita Bradshaw, a Black environmental activist who faces an uphill battle to secure a U.S. Senate seat that opened up with Republican Lamar Alexander's retirement.

Bradshaw, the first Black woman to win a statewide nomination in Tennessee, is running against former U.S. Ambassador to Japan Bill Hagerty, who's been endorsed by Trump. Republicans have held both Tennessee seats in the Senate since 1994.

But it's Harrison who has received the most national attention — and money — this year. His more than \$100 million in fundraising has shattered records for a Senate campaign and helped turn a race that might have otherwise been an afterthought into a genuine competition.

Harrison highlights his humble upbringing and criticizes incumbent Sen. Lindsey Graham for being too

quick to do Trump's bidding. Graham, chairman of the powerful Judiciary committee, was at the helm of the process pushing Amy Coney Barrett's Supreme Court confirmation.

With the state to himself as Graham shepherded that effort, Harrison has held a series of drive-in rallies, drumming up support from constituents he says are ready for a change. His fundraising has allowed him to blanket the state with advertising, much of which includes his origin story of meager beginnings, Ivy League education and desire to give back.

"Only in America can a little round-headed boy, who grew up to a 16-year-old mama, with grandparents who had a fourth grade and eighth grade education, who lived in a mobile home, went to Yale, Georgetown, worked on Capitol Hill, today is on the verge of being the next United States senator from the great state of South Carolina," Harrison said during a recent rally.

"I know what hard times is," he added. "I have lived hard times."

Associated Press reporters Kimberlee Kruesi in Nashville, Tennessee; Emily Wagster Pettus in Jackson, Mississippi; and Ben Nadler in Atlanta contributed to this report.

Meg Kinnard can be reached at <http://twitter.com/MegKinnardAP>.

Study: Fix to food climate problem doesn't require veganism

By SETH BORENSTEIN AP Science Writer

The world likely can't keep global warming to a relatively safe minimum unless we change how we grow, eat and throw away our food, but we don't need to all go vegan, a new study says.

Researchers looked at five types of broad fixes to the food system and calculated how much they fight warming. They found that sampling a buffet of partial fixes for all five, instead of just diving into the salad bar, can get the job done, according to a study published in Thursday's journal *Science*.

If the world food system keeps on current trajectories, it will produce near 1.5 trillion tons of greenhouse gases (almost 1.4 trillion metric tons) over the next 80 years, the study found. That's coming from belching cows, fertilizer, mismanaged soil and food waste. That much emissions — even if the globe stops burning fossil fuels which produce twice as much carbon pollution as food — is enough to likely warm Earth by more than the goals set in the 2015 Paris climate accord.

"The whole world doesn't have to give up meat for us to meet our climate goals," said study co-author Jason Hill, a biosystems engineering professor at the University of Minnesota. "We can eat better, healthier foods. We can improve how we grow foods. And we can waste less food."

The researchers from the United States and the United Kingdom found:

— A nearly complete switch to a plant-rich diet around the world could slash almost 720 billion tons of greenhouse gases (650 billion metric tons).

— If almost everyone ate the right number of calories based on their age, around 2,100 calories a day for many adults, it would cut about 450 billion tons of greenhouse gases (410 billion metric tons).

— If farming got more carbon efficient — by using less fertilizer, managing soil better and doing better crop rotation — it would slice nearly 600 billion tons of greenhouse gases (540 billion metric tons).

— If farms could increase yield through genetics and other methods, it would trim almost 210 billion tons of greenhouse gases (190 billion metric tons).

— If people waste less food either on their plates, in restaurants or by getting it to people in poorer countries, that would eliminate nearly 400 billion tons of greenhouse gases (360 billion metric tons).

Or if the world does each of those five things but only half way, emissions would plummet by almost 940 billion tons (850 billion metric tons). And that, with fossil fuel emissions cuts, would give the world a fighting chance of preventing another 0.5 to 1.3 degrees (0.3 to 0.7 degrees Celsius) of warming, which the Paris accord aims to do, the study found.

Hans-Otto Poertner, who leads the United Nations science panel looking at world climate change impacts, said the study makes sense in laying out the many paths to achieving the needed emission reductions.

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"There are many innovations that are possible with stopping food waste as well as stopping unsustainable practices such as cutting tropical forests for soy production and its export as (animal) feed," said Poertner, who wasn't part of the study. "It cannot be ignored that reducing meat consumption to sustainable levels would be important."

A Mediterranean diet of less meat and animal fats, along with cutting portions, would do the trick and make people healthier, Hill said.

"Something like convincing the whole world to go vegan was always going to be an impossible large sell," said Breakthrough Institute climate director Zeke Hausfather, who wasn't part of the study. "This paper shows that a mix of different behavioral and technological solutions can make a real difference."

While most of the world's heat-trapping gases come from the burning of coal, oil and natural gas, one-quarter to one-third of the greenhouse gases come from agriculture, Hill said.

John Roy Porter, a professor of agriculture at the University of Montpellier in France, said some of the calculations from Hill's study double counted emissions, which Hill disputes, and said he worried that "the only people really to profit from such a paper will be the fossil fuel lobby who can divert attention from oil wells to farmers' fields."

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.

Review: Borat is back, and this time he fits right in

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

Since Sacha Baron Cohen first appeared as his Kazakh journalist on "Da Ali G Show," Borat Sagdiyev has been remarkably consistent. The accent is the same. The gray suit is still rumpled. "Nahce" and "Mah Wahfe" regularly exude from him with a mangled melody. Borat hasn't changed in the last 20 years. But America has.

When Baron Cohen last traipsed across the country as Borat, in 2006's "Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan," his character's unapologetic anti-Semitism, misogyny and racism teased prejudices out from all kinds of dark and not-so-dark corners. His comedy revealed a more disturbing, hidden America that was often happy to go along with Baron Cohen's gonzo act. Fourteen years later, those prejudices aren't so hard to find. Borat fits right in.

In "Borat Subsequent Moviefilm: Delivery of Prodigious Bribe to American Regime for Make Benefit Once Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan" — Baron Cohen's October surprise, shot secretly earlier this year and debuting Friday on Amazon Prime Video — Borat returns to the U.S., like a deranged Alexis de Tocqueville, for another look.

It takes a little while to get going. Borat doesn't have the free rein he once did, and not just because of the restrictions of the pandemic. He's hounded on the streets by cell phone-waving fans asking for a picture, and has to resort to a coterie of disguises. His trail of fiascos this time is a little more limited but no less damning. The "Borat" sequel will make you laugh and squirm as much as it will send shudders down your spine.

Jason Woliner, a TV veteran and frequent collaborator with Aziz Ansari taking over as director for Larry Charles, begins by catching us up on Borat. Locked away in the gulag for bringing shame on Kazakhstan with the first movie, Borat is temporarily freed for a mission to deliver a gift to Trump (Borat refers to him, admiringly, as "McDonald Trump"). Given his past encounters with the president (Baron Cohen's Ali G interviewed him; Borat previously defecated in front of a Trump building), it's judged best to instead seek out who Borat calls "America's most famous ladies man," Vice President Mike Pence.

Borat arrives via shipping container in Galveston, Texas, only to find that the monkey meant for Pence is dead and his daughter Tutar (played by Bulgarian actress Maria Bakalova), last seen chained alongside

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farm animals, has stowed away. They'll remain paired throughout the film in a journey through America and Borat's own over-the-top sexism. This "Borat" is, in its own absurd way, a #MeToo movie.

There are stopovers with an Instagram influencer for a lesson on sugar-baby submissiveness, a debutant coach, a plastic surgeon and an anti-abortion clinic where a pastor maintains his stance despite being given the impression Tutar has been impregnated by her father. "God doesn't make accidents," he says.

Borat, however, does, and in the film's second half, he launches his most audacious stunts. They include a trip, with Borat dressed as Trump, to the Conservative Political Action Conference, where he shouts at Pence from the crowd before being rapidly removed; and a "March for Our Rights Rally" in which he leads a crowd of Trump supporters in a sing-along not unlike Borat's famed "Throw the Jew Down the Well" ditty. This time, mentions of Barack Obama and Anthony Fauci are followed by choruses of "Inject him with the Wuhan flu" and "Gas him up like the Germans." The film's piece-de-resistance is an exceedingly awkward sit-down interview with Rudy Giuliani and Tutar that ends with Borat (disguised as the boom-mic holder) rushing in on the two of them in a charged moment alongside a hotel bed.

Borat's adventures are often followed by a raft of lawsuits, and that could well be the case again. Some have already been filed. But I suspect there won't be a lot of apologies or public contrition this time around. There isn't anything that Borat uncovers that can't be found on the airwaves, in social-media posts and across newspaper front pages. In the movie's most compelling section, Borat appeals to a pair of guys for a place to stay, and despite it being a pandemic, they warmly welcome him in. How long Borat stays there isn't clear but it seems like several days. They're friendly hosts who happily discuss political views they've gleaned partly from the internet, like that Hillary Clinton drinks the blood of children. When Borat shares some of his wild ideas about Jews, they correct him. That's not true, they say. "That's a conspiracy theory."

"Borat Subsequent Moviefilm: Delivery of Prodigious Bribe to American Regime for Make Benefit Once Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan," an Amazon Studios release, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association of America for pervasive strong crude and sexual content, graphic nudity, and language. Running time: 94 minutes. Three stars out of four.

Follow AP Film Writer Jake Coyle on Twitter at: <http://twitter.com/jakecoyleAP>

This review was first published on Oct. 21, 2020. It was updated on Nov. 5, 2020, to correct the name of the character of Borat's daughter. The character's name is Tutar, not Tutor.

More than a dozen arrested as protesters demand vote count

By MARTHA BELLISLE and ADAM GELLER Associated Press

Police arrested dozens of people in Seattle, Minneapolis and Portland, Oregon overnight during protests demanding a tally of all votes in the US election, and smaller groups backing President Donald Trump returned to tabulation sites in closely contested states to insist counting be halted.

In Seattle, seven people were arrested. One person arrested for allegedly damaging property was taken to a hospital after "experiencing a medical episode," police said in a statement early Thursday.

The protests came as the president insisted, without evidence, that there were major problems with voting and counting of ballots. Republicans filed suit in multiple states, preparing to contest election results.

In Minneapolis, police arrested more than 600 demonstrators who marched onto an interstate in Minneapolis Wednesday night protesting Trump's threats to challenge the election results, as well as a variety of social injustices.

No force or chemicals were used to make the arrests for walking on a freeway and being a public nuisance, the Minnesota Department of Public Safety said Thursday.

In Portland, protesters smashed windows at businesses, hurled objects including fireworks at officers. Police made at least 10 arrests, according to a statement from the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office.

Officers seized multiple firearms, ammunition, a knife, fireworks, body armor and gas masks from people who were arrested, a sheriff's office statement said.

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One of the people who was arrested had a rifle with a magazine of ammunition, fireworks, a knife and was wearing a ballistics vest, the sheriff's office said.

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown called out the National Guard to manage the unrest in Portland, which has been a scene of regular protests for months.

"It's important to trust the process, and the system that has ensured free and fair elections in this country through the decades, even in times of great crisis," Brown said in a statement.

Portland protester Richard March said he came despite a heart a heart condition that makes him vulnerable to COVID-19.

"To cast doubt on this election has terrible consequences for our democracy," he said. "I think we are a very polarized society now — and I'm worried about what's going to come in the next days and weeks and months."

In New York, hundreds of people paraded past boarded-up luxury stores on Manhattan's Fifth Avenue, and in Chicago, demonstrators marched through downtown and along a street across the river from Trump Tower. Protesters also gathered in cities including Los Angeles, Houston, Pittsburgh and San Diego.

The protests came as smaller groups of Trump supporters gathered at vote tabulation sites in Phoenix, Detroit and Philadelphia, decrying counts that showed Democrat Joe Biden leading or gaining ground.

In Phoenix, at least two dozen Trump supporters gathered outside city hall Thursday morning, chanting "Protect Our Vote." The group said they planned to return to the tabulation center, where a Wednesday night rally decried a declaration by Fox News that Biden was the winner in Arizona.

"We're not going to let this election be stolen. Period," said Rep. Paul Gosar, an Arizona Republican and staunch Trump supporter, told the crowd Wednesday.

Observers from both major political parties were inside the election center as ballots were processed and counted, and the procedure was live-streamed online at all times.

Several sheriff's deputies blocked the entrance to the building. The vote-counting went on into the night, Maricopa County Elections Department spokeswoman Megan Gilbertson said.

"Everyone should want all the votes to be counted, whether they were mailed or cast in person," said the statement issued by two top county officials — one a Democrat and the other a Republican. "An accurate vote takes time. ... This is evidence of democracy, not fraud."

In Detroit, a few dozen Trump supporters gathered outside the city's convention center Thursday morning, as election workers counted absentee ballots inside. They held signs that said "stop the steal" and "stop the cheat."

A small group of counter protesters gathered on the other side of the street, and the two sides shouted at each other. Trump's supporters occasionally mocked those on the other side over a loud speaker.

Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel, a Democrat, insisted Wednesday that both parties and the public had been given access to the tallying, "using a robust system of checks and balances to ensure that all ballots are counted fairly and accurately."

AP reporters Gillian Flaccus in Portland, Terry Tang in Phoenix and Claire Galofaro in Detroit contributed to this report.

Greece imposes lockdown to avoid worst at hospitals

By ELENA BECATOROS and MENELAOS HADJICOSTIS Associated Press

ATHENS, Greece (AP) — With a surge in coronavirus cases straining health systems in many European countries, Greece announced a nationwide lockdown Thursday in the hopes of stemming a rising tide of patients before its hospitals come under "unbearable" pressure.

Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said that he acted before infection rates reached the levels seen in many neighboring countries because, after years of financial crises that have damaged its health system, it couldn't afford to wait as long to impose restrictions as others had.

"We must stop this wave," Mitsotakis said. "I chose once again to take drastic measures sooner rather

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than later.”

Before the outbreak, Greece had one of the lowest rates of intensive-care beds per capita in Europe. It has since doubled the number to 1,013. But, of the 348 beds dedicated to coronavirus cases, only 128 remain unoccupied.

It’s unlikely that number would’ve been enough to cope with what Mitsotakis said could be 1,000 new hospital admissions over the next 10 days, of which about 150 would likely have required ICU treatment.

On Wednesday, Greece announced a record 18 daily deaths and 2,646 new cases bringing the total confirmed cases to just under 47,000 and deaths to 673 in this country of nearly 11 million. Greece’s rolling average of daily new cases is just over 17 per 100,000 people, as compared to 33 in the United Kingdom, about 47 in Italy and 68 in France. But the prime minister warned Greece also had less margin to respond.

Countries across Europe have imposed tighter restrictions in recent days, but some experts felt those measures were too slow in coming.

Britain’s own lockdown kicked in Thursday, shuttering restaurants, hairdressers and clothing stores until at least Dec. 2. The lockdown decision was an about-face for the government, which had earlier advocated a targeted regional response to the pandemic.

Italy, too, has held off on a nationwide closure, but the government announced that four regions will be put under “red-zone” lockdown for at least two weeks starting Friday, with severe limits imposed when people can leave home. Germany and France have also put some kind of shutdown into effect over the past week.

In Greece, Mitsotakis explained that he acted relatively earlier than others because he could not take the risk of waiting to see whether the effects of measures taken recently would work.

“It could be the case that the measures would have worked, but if they didn’t, then in 15 days the pressure that would have been exerted on the health system would be unbearable,” he said. “That is something that, I will say it again, I can in no way allow.”

The lockdown takes effect at daybreak on Saturday across the country and will last until the end of the month. People will only be allowed to leave their homes for work, physical exercise and medical reasons — and only after sending a text message to authorities.

Shops will shut, although supermarkets and other food stores will remain open. Restaurants will operate on a delivery-only basis.

The measures mirror Greece’s spring lockdown that was credited with keeping the number of infections, deaths and serious COVID-19-related illnesses low.

The main difference this time around is that kindergartens, primary schools and all grades in special education schools will remain open. High schools will operate by remote learning. Borders will remain open, but anyone arriving from abroad will have to have proof of a negative coronavirus test, Civil Protection Deputy Minister Nikos Hardalias said.

The lockdown comes just ahead of the crucial Christmas shopping season, and Mitsotakis announced additional measures to buoy the economy.

He said workers suspended from their jobs will receive an 800-euro (\$950) stipend — 300 euros more than what the government doled out in the spring. Mitsotakis also announced an extension of unemployment benefits.

Greek Finance Minister Christos Staikouras outlined other measures, with a total cost of 3.3 billion euros (\$3.9 billion). They include the extension of payment deadlines for taxes and loans. Staikouras said measures taken to tackle the pandemic so far in Greece amount to more than 6% of gross domestic product.

Greece’s lockdown comes as daily infection rates in other European countries kept setting new records.

Germany, which this week enacted a monthlong partial lockdown, recorded nearly 20,000 new coronavirus cases in one day Thursday, its highest level yet.

Poland, Ukraine and the Czech Republic also registered new daily coronavirus infection records on Thursday.

“The situation is quickly changing from difficult to catastrophic. The outbreak is unfolding at the speed of a hurricane,” Ukrainian Health Minister Maksym Stepanov said on Tuesday.

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Meanwhile, France is considering tightening a monthlong partial lockdown to stop fast-rising virus hospitalizations and deaths. Despite signs that the country's infection rate is starting to dip, it remains very high. More disconcertingly, COVID-19 patients now occupy more than 80% of France's ICU beds, according to the public health agency, a proportion that is still rising quickly.

Paris hospitals are at 92% capacity with 1,050 COVID patients in intensive care and another 600 patients in ICU with other ailments, Paris region health service chief Aurelien Rousseau told public broadcaster France-Info on Thursday.

"There is unprecedented pressure, on hospitals and medics," Rousseau said. "We have reached the alert level, because to manage, every day we have to cancel a bit more activity" like pre-programmed surgeries.

Hadjicostis reported from Nicosia, Cyprus.

Follow AP's coronavirus pandemic coverage at <https://apnews.com/hub/virus-outbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>.

EXPLAINER: Have election-related protests materialized?

By The Associated Press undefined

WASHINGTON (AP) — Two days after Election Day, protests across the United States are scattered, happening in places from Portland, Oregon and Seattle to Washington, D.C. There have also been some intense moments at some ballot-counting locations in Arizona and Michigan.

In New York, hundreds of people paraded past boarded-up luxury stores on Manhattan's Fifth Avenue, and in Chicago, demonstrators marched through downtown and along a street across the river from Trump Tower. Similar protests — sometimes about the election, sometimes about racial inequality — took place in at least a half-dozen cities, including Los Angeles, Houston, Pittsburgh, Minneapolis and San Diego.

In Portland, demonstrators engaged in what authorities said was widespread violence downtown. Those protesters were demonstrating about a range of issues, including police brutality and the counting of the vote.

Here, Elizabeth Kennedy, deputy Washington bureau chief for The Associated Press, who is leading coverage of election-related protests, breaks down what AP journalists across the United States have been encountering.

WHAT ARE YOU SEEING ACROSS THE COUNTRY?

There have been arrests, there have been marches, there's some relatively minor property damage. But really it's like spirits are high — and tensions are high. The country is in a very tense moment, not just because of the election but because of 2020. We have been in this place of racial tensions, the coronavirus, politics. This election is sort of pushing every American sore point.

ARE THE PROTESTS AT THE LEVEL THAT WAS EXPECTED?

It's still early days. We have no winner. There was no widespread violence at the polls or in the immediate aftermath. There were scattered flareups, but nothing that looked organized across the country at all.

WHERE DO YOU SEE THIS GOING?

As the days go by, things are getting a little more heated. We're hearing people take up (Donald) Trump's message of "stop the count" and also people echoing the other side — "count every vote." It remains to be seen if a spark ignites these tensions. So far, that has not happened in any widespread way. But it's clear that the country's extremely divided, which the election is sort of bearing out.

COVID-19: 'The Bitter End' for nation's live music venues?

By KEVIN MCGILL Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — The venerable New Orleans funk band Galactic purchased the historic music club Tipitina's in late November 2018 and, according to bassist Robert Mercurio, was making a go of it.

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"It's a tight-margin business but we were making our notes and fulfilling our bills and whatnot. So, it was moving along in a good direction," he said.

That was before the coronavirus pandemic forced shutdowns of public gatherings.

Audiences last packed into Tipitina's for a March 12 performance by the Stooges Brass Band. Now, Mercurio is worried that COVID-19 could prove fatal to Tipitina's, a New Orleans cultural touchstone founded in the 1970s as the performance home for the late Henry Roeland Byrd, better known as rhythm and blues keyboard genius Professor Longhair.

For Mercurio, the problem is twofold. Galactic is a band with nowhere to tour and a business whose operating model — packing hordes of people in front of a stage for hours — doesn't work in a pandemic.

"It's terrifying," he said. "It's extremely difficult to be a now-nonworking musician owning an unopened nightclub."

Such fears aren't limited to New Orleans. Independent music clubs all over the nation — pop culture icons like the Troubadour in West Hollywood; the Bluebird Cafe in Nashville, Tennessee; The Bitter End in New York's Greenwich Village — are shuttered. And owners fear for the future of their businesses and of a musical way of life.

"There's no amount of history or legendary status that will protect you," Audrey Fix Schaefer said. She is a spokesperson for the National Independent Venue Association, which was formed in the wake of the pandemic to raise awareness and money for the newly struggling clubs. She points to the iconic jazz club Birdland in New York City. "Can you imagine having the type of rents that you have in midtown Manhattan and no revenue?"

NIVA, which has 2,800 members representing venues, promoters and festivals, lobbied for congressional passage of what the organization calls the Save Our Stages Act. The aid package, Schaefer said, has bipartisan backing and was included in a \$2.2 trillion relief plan passed earlier this year in the Democrat-controlled House, and in a smaller relief package in the Republican-controlled Senate. But with no imminent resolution of differences on the overall package between the chambers, there is no clear end in sight to the pandemic closures.

"The rent is the rent, and that's the problem," says Chris Cobb, owner of Nashville's Exit/In. He said fixed costs haven't come down much at the nearly 50-year-old venue, while revenue is down 94%. Fundraising efforts, such as those by Nashville's Music Venue Alliance, and the possibility of more federal help are keeping him hopeful that they can buy themselves a few more months.

Some venues are turning to livestreaming to help themselves and create work for musicians left jobless by the pandemic. The Maple Leaf Bar, a fixture in New Orleans' Carrollton neighborhood since the 1970s, recently kicked off a series of streaming concerts dubbed "The Viral Sessions," with Jon Cleary and his band.

"It keeps musicians employed," owner Hank Staples said. "It keeps our brand out there and we've made some much needed income off of it as well."

But even with that income — minus the expenses of mounting the productions — Staples isn't sure how long he can keep The Maple Leaf going.

"We can certainly go for another month and a half or two months," Staples said recently as he sat on the Leaf's narrow stage, decorated with strings of tiny blue lights, vinyl records repurposed as wall hangings and a cardboard cutout of a nearly naked James Booker, the flamboyant piano prodigy who performed there regularly until his death in 1983. "But we need some way to generate income because the money I've squirreled away — it's depleted severely."

It's already too late for some clubs. U Street Music Hall in Washington closed for good on Oct. 5, Schaefer noted.

Club owners said in an online post that they'd hoped they could save the decade-old venue. "But due to the pandemic, mounting operational costs that never paused even while we were closed, and no clear timeline for when clubs like ours can safely reopen, we had no choice recently but to make this heart-breaking decision."

Cobb fears too many such closures would mean loss of something irretrievable in his beloved Nashville and elsewhere.

"This is an organic ecosystem that supports American music," he said by telephone. "Without this independent network, American music as we know it would not exist. These are the venues where the superstars got their start. It's where they honed their craft. It's where they built fan bases. It's where they get better. Nobody plays the arena that didn't spend time touring the clubs."

In New York, The Bitter End owner Paul Rizzo agrees. "Stephanie Germanotta, when she played at The Bitter End, wasn't Lady Gaga yet," says Rizzo. "She had to play for a while. You have to get experiences to become something that you are able to become."

How two blind brothers became Two Blind Brothers for a cause

By LEANNE ITALIE Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Would you buy something you can't see?

That's the question posed by two New York brothers who've lost much of their vision to a rare degenerative eye disorder and have dedicated their lives — and livelihoods — to raising money for a cure.

Bradford Manning, 35, and his 30-year-old brother, Bryan, are the founders of the clothing brand Two Blind Brothers. They've hit on a strategy that's helped raise more than \$700,000 for the cause: selling mystery boxes full of an assortment of their ultra-soft shirts, cozy socks, knit beanies and sunglasses.

The two turn over all profits from the boxes and their other sales to groups like the Foundation Fighting Blindness, funding research on retinal eye ailments like the one they've suffered from since they were 5, Stargardt disease. It's an inherited form of macular degeneration that causes central vision loss over time.

"We just wanted to try and help and raise awareness, and just do something good," said Bryan.

Since 2016, when they left their previous careers -- Brad worked for an investment firm and Bryan sold software -- they've picked up celebrity supporters like Ice-T and entrepreneur Richard Branson. Ellen DeGeneres helped with one of her famous Shutterfly checks for \$30,000.

And the sale of their mystery boxes, costing from \$30 to \$200, is now a social media phenomenon.

Customers have included relatives of the blind, among them parents with vision impaired children; some have posted unboxing videos on TikTok, Facebook and Instagram, with a few opening boxes blindfolded.

The brothers hit on the idea in 2015, when a gene therapy discovered by an underfunded researcher for an unrelated juvenile eye disease was about to hit the market.

"It was mind boggling to us," Bryan said. "Our whole lives they were like, 'Oh, a cure is down the line, a cure is down the line.' This one isn't for us, but it is happening, and the Foundation Fighting Blindness kicked this off with just a tiny charitable gift to this brilliant researcher."

Soon after, they were separated while shopping at Bloomingdale's. When they reconnected, they found that they had purchased the same soft shirt.

"It was the feel of it. It felt so soft and comfortable that we both keyed upon it, and then we had this idea, well what if we could take this sense of touch to a different place, make super comfortable clothing" and turn over the profits to researchers at work on eye diseases, Bryan said.

With advice from friends in the fashion industry, two blind brothers became Two Blind Brothers.

The casual line of super soft Henleys, hoodies, polos and T-shirts for men and women, along with offerings for kids, are made of sustainable bamboo mixed with cotton and spandex. They've incorporated Braille indicating the color of each garment into some of the designs they sell online at Twoblindbrothers.com.

The goods were originally manufactured in Texas, mostly by visually impaired people. But as they've grown, most of the operation moved to Los Angeles.

Brad was diagnosed at 7 after their mother, a nurse, found a doctor who determined that Stargardt disease was the cause of his declining vision.

The doctor told her to "take him home, get him a magnifier and maybe teach him Braille, and good luck," Bryan recalled. But they would not give up on their sons. Today, their condition has slowed, leaving both with peripheral vision.

The brothers include their story in every mystery box, with some special thanks.

"When someone shops blind, they prove something remarkable," they write. "They prove that genuine

trust is real.”

Associated Press writer Jessie Wardarski in New York contributed to this story.

“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.

Pioneering Black doll Baby Nancy enters Toy Hall of Fame

ROCHESTER, N.Y. (AP) — Baby Nancy, the first Black baby doll to have an Afro and other authentic features, was inducted into the National Toy Hall of Fame on Thursday, along with sidewalk chalk and the wooden block game Jenga.

The 2020 honorees were recognized for their creativity and popularity over time.

They were chosen by a panel of experts from among 12 finalists that also included bingo, Breyer Horses, Lite-Brite, Masters of the Universe, My Little Pony, Risk, Sorry!, Tamagotchi, and Yahtzee.

Baby Nancy was the inaugural doll for Shindana Toys, a California company launched in 1968 by Operation Bootstrap Inc., the not-for-profit Black community self-help organization that emerged in the aftermath of the Watts riots in Los Angeles.

By Thanksgiving, Baby Nancy was the bestselling Black doll in Los Angeles, and before Christmas, she was selling nationwide. The toy exposed a long-standing demand for ethnically correct Black dolls, according to the National Toy Hall of Fame, located in The Strong museum in Rochester, New York.

Shindana Toys folded amid financial problems in 1983, but Baby Nancy “still stands as a landmark doll that made commercial and cultural breakthroughs,” curator Michelle Parnett-Dwyer said in a news release.

Another inductee, sidewalk chalk, traces its roots all the way back to Paleolithic cave art found throughout the world, hall officials said.

“There are few limits to what kids can do with chalk. Every sidewalk square, patio, and driveway holds the potential for a work of art, a winning game of strategy and cleverness, or a demonstration of physical agility, poise, and balance,” chief curator Christopher Bensch said.

Jenga, the creation of Englishwoman Leslie Scott, was honored for its simplicity and ability to be played by almost anyone. Players take turns removing wooden blocks from a rectangular tower until it collapses. Its name comes from the Swahili verb, kujenga, which means to build.

“It is one of the rare games that’s equally fun for two people or a bigger crowd. It’s perfect for a game party with a group or something more intimate, but either way, it’s always sure to make instant memories,” curator Nicolas Ricketts said.

The three new inductees will be on permanent display at the National Toy Hall of Fame, alongside previous winners that include Barbie and the Hula Hoop. The hall takes nominations from anyone year-round and has inducted a new class each year since 1998.

France reinforcing its border controls following attacks

By SYLVIE CORBET Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — French President Emmanuel Macron said on Thursday that France is reinforcing its border controls after a series of attacks that hit the country in recent weeks.

Macron said the number of police and troops in charge of border controls will double from 2,400 now to 4,800. They will focus on fighting illegal immigration and smuggling activities, he said, during a visit to a frontier post in Le Perthus, at the border with Spain.

“We see very clearly that terrorist actions can actually be led by some people who use migratory flows

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to threaten our territory. So we must reinforce our controls for reasons of national security," Macron said.

Macron notably referred to the Islamic extremist attack at Notre Dame Basilica in the city of Nice that killed three people last week. The chief suspect, Ibrahim Issaoui, is a 21-year-old Tunisian who transited through Italy in September en route to France. Issaoui is now in a French hospital after being wounded by police as they arrested him.

In addition, Macron said he will push for changes to make controls at the European Union's external borders more efficient.

"Attacks in France, in Austria a few days ago in Vienna, show us that the terrorist risk is everywhere, that (terrorist) networks are global ... which forces Europe to intensify its response," he said. France will present its proposals at a European summit in December.

The country raised its security alert to the maximum level after Nice attack on Oct. 29.

It was the third attack since Charlie Hebdo republished the caricatures of the prophet of Islam in September as the trial opened for the 2015 attacks at the paper's offices and a kosher supermarket. The gunmen in that attack claimed allegiance to the Islamic State group and al-Qaida, which both recently called anew for strikes against France.

Herve Cazaux, border police director in Le Perthus region, said police have arrested 11,200 people seeking to cross the French-Spanish border illegally so far this year, compared with 5,500 last year.

This is in part explained by France's spring pandemic lockdown, under which the borders were closed until June 20, and by an increase in numbers of migrants this summer, many travelling via Spain from Algeria and Morocco, Cazaux said.

751,000 seek US jobless benefits as virus hobbles economy

By PAUL WISEMAN AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The number of Americans seeking unemployment benefits fell slightly last week to 751,000, a still-historically high level that shows that many employers keep cutting jobs in the face of the accelerating pandemic.

A surge in viral cases and Congress' failure so far to provide more aid for struggling individuals and businesses are threatening to deepen Americans' economic pain. Eight months after the pandemic flattened the economy, weekly jobless claims still point to a stream of layoffs. Before the virus struck in March, the weekly figure had remained below 300,000 for more than five straight years.

Thursday's report from the Labor Department said the number of people who are continuing to receive traditional unemployment benefits declined to 7.3 million. That figure shows that some of the unemployed are being recalled to their old jobs or are finding new ones. But it also indicates that many jobless Americans have used up their state unemployment aid — which typically expires after six months — and have transitioned to a federal extended benefits program that lasts an additional 13 weeks.

The job market has been under pressure since the virus paralyzed the economy and has regained barely half the 22 million jobs that were lost to the pandemic in early spring. The pace of rehiring has steadily weakened — from 4.8 million added jobs in June to 661,000 in September. On Friday, when the government issues the October jobs report, economists foresee a further slowdown — to 580,000 added jobs — according to a survey by the data firm FactSet.

Last week, nearly 363,000 people applied for jobless aid under a new program that extended eligibility for the first time to self-employed and gig workers, up slightly from 359,000 the previous week. That figure isn't adjusted for seasonal trends, so it's reported separately.

All told, the Labor Department said 21.5 million people are receiving some form of unemployment benefits, though the figure may be inflated by double-counting by states.

The financial aid package that Congress enacted in the spring included a \$600-a-week federal jobless benefit and \$1,200 checks that went to most adults, in addition to assistance for small businesses. All that money has run out. Without additional federal aid, millions of unemployed Americans likely will lose all their jobless benefits in coming weeks and months, probably forcing them to scale back their spending.

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And many small companies could go out of business.

In the meantime, new confirmed viral cases in the United States reached an all-time high of more than 86,000 a day, on average, in a sign of the worsening crisis that lies ahead for the winner of this week's presidential election. By contrast, just two months ago, according to Johns Hopkins University, the seven-day rolling average for confirmed daily new cases was 34,000.

As temperatures fall, restaurants and bars will serve fewer customers outdoors. And many consumers may stay home to avoid infection. Dwindling business could force employers to slash more jobs during the winter.

The data firm Womply found that more businesses are shuttering in the face of a COVID resurgence and a potentially deteriorating economy: 21% of small businesses were closed as November began, it says, up from 20% in October, 19% in September and 17% in August. And sales growth is slowing at the companies that are open.

"The economy is on its own against the virus," said AnnElizabeth Konkel, an economist at Indeed. "Accelerating cases are an ever-present threat during winter, and a virus surge means economic uncertainty for businesses. Until that uncertainty is eliminated, the labor market will struggle to return to what it used to be."

A series of major corporations have announced layoffs recently. Last week, Exxon Mobil said it was slashing 1,900 jobs from its U.S. workforce. Chevron said it planned to cut a quarter of the employees at its recently acquired Noble Energy, with the pandemic sapping demand for fuel. Charles Schwab announced after completing its purchase of TD Ameritrade that it would cut 1,000 jobs from the combined company.

Swedish PM self-isolates as nation passes grim threshold

By JAN M. OLSEN Associated Press

COPENHAGEN, Denmark (AP) — Sweden's prime minister has gone into protective self-isolation after a person close to him came into contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19, as Sweden experiences a fall surge of coronavirus infections.

Stefan Lofven broke the news on Facebook on Thursday, when the Scandinavian country passed the threshold of 6,000 overall coronavirus deaths.

"The developments are going in the wrong direction fast. More are infected. More die. This is a serious situation," he wrote.

"On the doctor's advice, my wife Ulla and I will stay isolated for the time being," Lofven wrote. "We are fine and have no symptoms. In accordance with recommendations from health officials, we will take a coronavirus test as soon as possible."

"This is the only responsible thing to do in this situation," he added, saying the person close to him had been in contact with another person who had tested positive.

Earlier this year, when European nations locked down to fight the virus, Sweden drew worldwide attention by keeping schools, gyms and restaurants open and not requiring people to wear masks. But now that daily new infections are on the rise again, Swedes may not have had much practice in making sacrifices for the national good.

In recent weeks, the government has ruled that a maximum of eight people can be seated at a restaurant together. It has also rolled out local restrictions — urging people to avoid crowded places, avoid public transportation and work from home if possible — that now affect seven in 10 Swedes.

"The Swedish population must understand that what happens in Europe, can, of course, also happen here. We see an increase (in new cases) that we must deal with," Health Minister Lena Hallgren said. "Now what is important is to understand what the purpose is ... which is to stop a pandemic."

At first, the Nordic country of 10 million people had some of the lowest numbers of new coronavirus cases. However, the latest figures tell a different story.

For the week beginning Oct. 19, Sweden reported 9,165 new infections, an increase of 63% compared to the previous week and the highest number of cases seen so far in one week, according to Sweden's Public Health Agency.

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Overall, Sweden reported another 4,034 infections Thursday, and 141,764 in total, and five more deaths that brought the overall toll to 6,002.

In comparison, neighboring Denmark has had 50,530 cases and 729 deaths and Norway, which shares a more than 1,600-kilometer (994-mile) border with Sweden, has recorded 21,954 cases and only 282 deaths.

As to the two-week cumulative number of COVID-19 cases per 100,000, Sweden has 293, Denmark 233 and Norway 97.3. The corresponding number of deaths is 0.7 in Sweden and Denmark, and 0.1 in Norway.

Experts say all reported numbers understate the true toll of the pandemic, due to missed cases, limited testing and other factors.

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

And Boeing said it would make deeper cuts to its workforce than originally planned. It has been losing money because the viral outbreak has depressed demand for new planes. Boeing expects to end the year with about 130,000 employees, down 30,000 from the start of this year — far more than the 19,000 reduction it had announced three months ago.

A pandemic-caused jobs crisis is inflicting damage elsewhere in the world, too. When the viral outbreak struck, halting most global travel, 1 million people lost jobs in Spain, for example, and the unemployment rate hit 16.3% in September. The government has supported the wages of roughly 3.4 million workers and still keeps 600,000 under its national furlough system. But experts warn that Spain needs to fix its job market, which is plagued with temporary and part-time contracts.

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Friday, Nov. 6, the 311th day of 2020. There are 55 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Nov. 6, 1860, former Illinois congressman Abraham Lincoln of the Republican Party was elected President of the United States as he defeated John Breckinridge, John Bell and Stephen Douglas.

On this date:

In 1854, America's "March King," John Philip Sousa, was born in Washington, D.C.

In 1861, James Naismith, the inventor of the sport of basketball, was born in Almonte, Ontario, Canada.

In 1893, composer Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky died in St. Petersburg, Russia, at age 53.

In 1956, President Dwight D. Eisenhower won re-election, defeating Democrat Adlai E. Stevenson.

In 1977, 39 people were killed when the Kelly Barnes Dam in Georgia burst, sending a wall of water through Toccoa Falls College.

In 1984, President Ronald Reagan won re-election by a landslide over former Vice President Walter Mondale, the Democratic challenger.

In 1986, former Navy radioman John A. Walker Jr., the admitted head of a family spy ring, was sentenced in Baltimore to life imprisonment. (Walker died in prison in 2014 at age 77.)

In 1990, about one-fifth of the Universal Studios backlot in southern California was destroyed in an arson fire.

In 1997, former President George H.W. Bush opened his presidential library at Texas A&M University; among the guests of honor was President Clinton, the man who'd sent him into retirement.

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In 2012, President Barack Obama was elected to a second term of office, defeating Republican challenger Mitt Romney.

In 2014, the march toward same-sex marriage across the U.S. hit a roadblock when a federal appeals court upheld laws against the practice in four states: Ohio, Michigan, Kentucky and Tennessee. (A divided U.S. Supreme Court overturned the laws in June 2015.)

In 2016, FBI Director James Comey abruptly announced that Democrat Hillary Clinton should not face criminal charges related to newly discovered emails from her tenure at the State Department.

Ten years ago: President Barack Obama opened his 10-day Asia trip on a somber note in Mumbai, India, where he memorialized victims of devastating terror attacks two years earlier, declaring, "We'll never forget." A Yemeni judge ordered police to find Anwar al-Awlaki, a radical U.S.-born cleric, "dead or alive" after the al-Qaida-linked preacher failed to appear at his trial for his role in the killing of foreigners. (Al-Awlaki was killed in a U.S. drone strike in the mountains of Yemen on Sept. 30, 2011.)

Five years ago: President Barack Obama rejected the proposed Keystone XL pipeline, declaring it would undercut U.S. efforts to clinch a global climate change deal at the center of his environmental legacy. (President Donald Trump would reverse the Obama decision.)

One year ago: Democrats announced that they would launch public impeachment hearings the following week; first to testify would be William Taylor, the top U.S. diplomat in Ukraine. In its latest step away from a nuclear accord with world powers, Iran said it would start injecting uranium gas at midnight into 1,044 centrifuges at the underground Fordo facility. The Senate gave final congressional approval to a bill making some types of animal cruelty a federal felony.

Today's Birthdays: Actor June Squibb is 91. Country singer Stonewall Jackson is 88. Singer P.J. Proby is 82. Actor Sally Field is 74. Singer Rory Block is 71. Jazz musician Arturo Sandoval is 71. TV host Catherine Crier is 66. News correspondent and former California first lady Maria Shriver is 65. Actor Lori Singer is 63. Actor Lance Kerwin is 60. Rock musician Paul Brindley (The Sundays) is 57. Former Education Secretary Arne Duncan is 56. Rock singer Corey Glover is 56. Actor Brad Grunberg is 56. Actor Peter DeLuise is 54. Actor Kelly Rutherford is 52. Actor Ethan Hawke is 50. Chef/TV judge Marcus Samuelsson is 50. Actor Thandie Newton is 48. Model-actor Rebecca Romijn (roh-MAYN') is 48. Actor Zoe McLellan is 46. Actor Nicole Dubuc is 42. Actor Taryn Manning is 42. Retired NBA star Lamar Odom is 41. Actor Patina Miller is 36. Actor Katie Leclerc (LEH'-klehr) is 34. Singer-songwriter Ben Rector is 34. Singer-songwriter Robert Ellis is 32. Actor Emma Stone is 32. Actor Mercedes Kastner is 31.