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Gov. Noem interviewed on ABC's "This Week"

Sunday morning, Governor Kristi Noem joined George Stephanopoulos on ABC's "This Week" to discuss COVID-19 in South Dakota, as well as her concerns regarding the integrity of the 2020 presidential election. We must ensure that our elections are fair, honest, and transparent.

The Governor outlined many serious legal concerns and explained why President Trump should get his day in court. More importantly, she put these concerns in context. I'll let Governor Noem's words speak for themselves:

"All I'm asking for, George, is that we don't break this country. When you break the process on which we elect our leaders, you will break America forever. This isn't just about this election; this is about every election in the future, and the fact that the American people – the everyday people who get up and work hard, that are suffering through this pandemic, that have tragically lost family members – they need to know that, at least, America still functions, and we care about doing things right."



OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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The Minnesota Vikings are starting to find their groove. After starting the season 1-5, the Vikings (3-5) have now won two straight after taming the Detroit Lions (3-5) on Sunday 34-20. The offense is the reason for the win, but the defense deserves some credit for holding Matthew Stafford and the Lions to only 20 points – seven of which were gift-wrapped after a blocked punt gave the Lions the ball at the two-yard-line.



By Jordan Wright

The Vikings' offense was on fire this week, scoring a touchdown on three of their four drives in the first half and adding two more in the second half. The team put up 487 total yards on offense and averaged 8.9 yards per play. Quarterback Kirk Cousins played efficiently, completing 13 of 20 passes for 220 yards, three touchdowns, and zero interceptions. Justin Jefferson led the team in receiving yards (three catches, 64 yards), while Irv Smith Jr. led the team in receiving touchdowns (two catches, 10 yards, 2 touchdowns).

Dalvin Cook was once again the focal point of the offense, and for the second straight week, he had a fantastic day. Cook touched the ball 24 times for 252 total yards and two touchdowns on Sunday, highlighted by a 70-yard touchdown run that put the Vikings up 21 points and essentially put the game out of reach for Detroit. If you're keeping track at home, over the past two games Cook has run the ball 52 times for 369 yards (7.1 yards per carry) and caught four passes for 109 yards, totaling 478 yards and six touchdowns. Cook is only the third player in NFL history with at least 225 scrimmage yards and two touchdowns in consecutive games, joining Jim Brown and Deuce McAllister. At the mid-point of the season, Cook has carried the ball 144 times for 858 yards (6 yards per carry) and 12 touchdowns. He has also caught 16 passes for 173 yards and another TD.

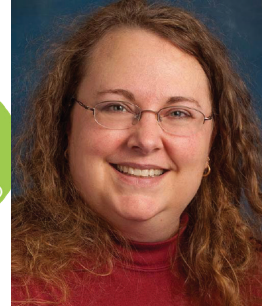
The Vikings' defense has also been playing well. Against the Lions, the defense had three interceptions and two sacks. Eric Wilson was the player of the game on defense after leading the team with 13 tackles and adding an interception and half a sack. Harrison Smith and Eric Kendricks also had an interception, while Armon Watts, Shemar Stephen, and Hercules Mata'afa all had half sacks.

Looking ahead, the Vikings travel to Chicago to battle the Bears on Monday Night Football. The Bears were one of the hottest teams in the league after starting the season with a 5-1 record. Since then, however, the Bears have lost three straight games. They are still second in the NFC North but are free-falling and are in danger of letting the season slip away from them. The biggest reason the Bears have lost three in a row is the offense. Their offensive line is in shambles, the running game is stagnant, and starting quarterback Mitch Trubisky has been sidelined with an injury. The Bears' defense is still strong though, so they can't ever be counted out. These two teams are heading in opposite directions right now, it will be up to the Vikings' offense to ensure that trend continues. Skol!

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Let's Put Ourselves in Their Shoes

When I met her, she was younger than I am now. I was responsible for admissions to our hospital that day, and the ER doctor called me about a woman with intractable bleeding. It had been going on for several months, but she was embarrassed and unsure. She hid the severity of her bleeding from her husband, until the day she passed out in the kitchen.



By Debra Johnston, M.D ~ Prairie Doc® Perspectives

Ultimately, we diagnosed her with cancer, and she started down a difficult road of surgery, chemo, radiation, and more surgery. But they faced many hurdles beyond her disease.

She and her husband each had finished high school with the help of special education classes. They struggled to understand the complicated reality of her cancer, and the choices they had to make. He was on disability, but she had never worked, and she certainly was not able to now. They got by on his social security check, which was not enough to cover her medications.

Her family lived several hours away, and their relationship with his family was often combative. The steps into their home were rickety, and she couldn't navigate them with her walker. They couldn't rely on their old car to get them to medical appointments, or even to the grocery store.

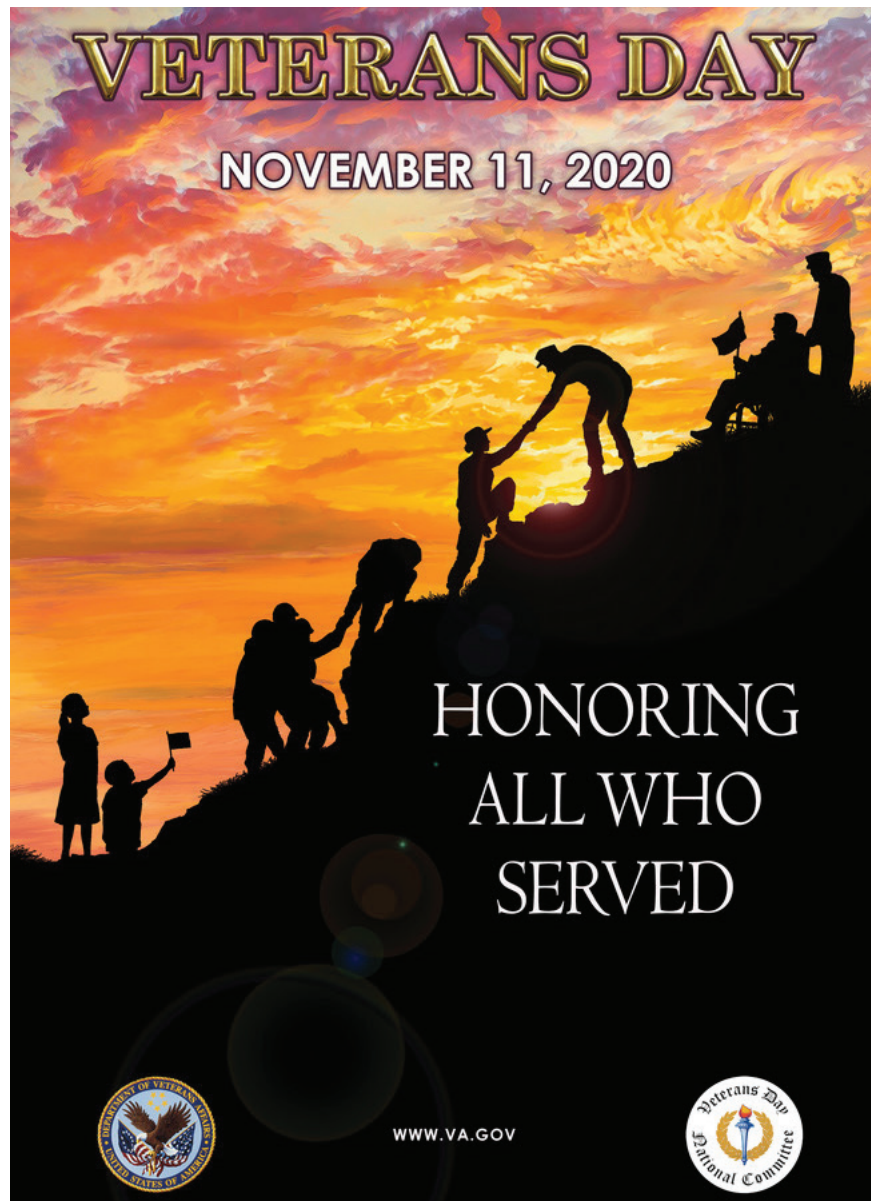
Fighting cancer or any life altering illness or injury is hard even for those who are financially secure and have the support of extended family. For a moment, let's put ourselves in the shoes of those who face an uphill battle just to get to neutral.

Perhaps we grew up with a parent who had an untreated mental illness or addiction, or who was abusive. Perhaps we face discrimination because of our race or religion or gender or sexuality or some other fundamental characteristic. Perhaps we struggle with poverty, and the attendant evils of housing and food insecurity. Perhaps we live in an unsafe neighborhood, or we cannot easily get to a grocery store.

How, then, do we eat right and exercise safely? How do we find and keep a good job if we have limited education or we don't have reliable transportation? How do we communicate with a doctor if we don't have a phone and can't read very well?

All these things are part of the social determinants of health. Our health and wellbeing depend on so much more than the factors we can control. Living with chronic stress, particularly chronic stress we experience as a child, impacts our physical health throughout our lives and that stress can continue down through generations. If we genuinely want to promote wellness, for ourselves and for our society, we must put ourselves in other people's shoes and pay close attention to these underlying issues.

Debra Johnston, MD is part of The Prairie Doc® team of physicians and currently practices family medicine in Brookings, South Dakota. For free and easy access to the entire Prairie Doc® library, visit www.prairiedoc.org and follow Prairie Doc® on Facebook, featuring On Call with the Prairie Doc® a medical Q&A show streamed most Thursdays at 7 p.m. central.



VETERANS DAY 2020 GROTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2020

The 2020 Veterans Day program will be much different in 2020 than it has been in recent history. Out of concern for students and members of the community amidst the spread of COVID-19 in our area, the program will be held virtually. Development is underway of a video with some typical parts of the program to be viewed on November 11, 2020 in place of our typical Veterans Day activities. When complete, the video will be publicly available for a short-time in accordance with copyright regulations. There will be no community breakfast event on November 11th and school will dismiss at the normal time.

Students and staff have been working on projects, music, and curriculum that recognizes the important contributions of our military heroes and aims to instill a strong sense of patriotism in our young people, and we hope to pick up on the traditional Veterans Day program and breakfast.

Thank you to all of our Veterans and active duty military for your sacrifice on behalf of our nation.

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#259 in a series

Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

This was a more typical Sunday than last week. It's still really bad, but it's down from Friday and yesterday. The big news is that we broke 10 million cases in record time, as predicted. Here's the run-up to today:

April 28 – 1 million – 98 days
June 11 – 2 million – 44 days
July 8 – 3 million – 27 days
July 23 – 4 million – 15 days
August 9 – 5 million – 17 days
August 31 – 6 million – 22 days
September 24 – 7 million – 24 days
October 15 – 8 million – 21 days
October 29 – 9 million – 14 days
November 8 – 10 million – 10 days

I have an unsettling feeling we're going to find out how much faster we can go. For today, we're at 10,051,300 cases reported in the US so far in the pandemic. There were 102,900 new case reports today, a 1.0% increase from yesterday. We've been over 100,000 daily new cases for five days running. We've been over 90,000 cases for a week and over 70,000 for two solid weeks. This summer, 70,000 was a crisis; now it's an aspirational, i.e., unrealistic, goal. We had 29 states setting weekly record numbers for new cases.

There's growth pretty much everywhere, and growth rates are increasing faster this week. We are seeing increasing rates of growth in many more states than last week. One-week increase in total cases was 578,300 (6.6%) last week and is 772,900 (8.3%) this week. Two-week increase was 1,089,700 (13.3%) last week and is 1,351,200 (15.5%) this week—which makes two consecutive weeks over a million. I have us at a one-week average new-case number of 110,414, which is miles above last week's 82,614. We knew the situation was getting worse; what we have to accept is that it is getting worse very, very fast.

I track 54 states and US territories, including the District of Columbia; and the number of these showing two-week rates of increase greater than 25% has nearly doubled from 10 last week to 19 this week. Here are the states and territories with the greatest rate of growth in cases over 14 days with their percentage increase in that time: Wyoming (56.78% - increased), North Dakota (43.97% - increased), Montana (42.32% - increased), South Dakota (41.33%), Alaska (41.12%), Connecticut (38.00%), Colorado (37.45% - big increase), Minnesota 35.16% - big increase), Wisconsin (34.94% - decreased), Iowa (31.91% - big increase), Ohio (31.37% - big increase), New Mexico (31.10% - increased), Michigan (30.52% - big increase), Nebraska (30.28 – big increase), West Virginia (29.66% - big increase), Indiana (29.00% - big increase), Illinois (28.66% - big increase), Kansas (27.51% - big increase), and Utah (26.24% - increased). Guam slipped off this list this week, but we've added many: Utah, Nebraska, Kansas, Minnesota, Iowa, Minnesota, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and West Virginia. We have 29 states and territories with growth rates above the US growth rate, which gives us an indication how widespread this virus is in the US today.

Fastest spread is, as it has been for some time, in the Great Lakes, Great Plains, and Mountain West. Highest per capita new-case numbers have for weeks been in North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin; but in the past week Iowa has slipped in ahead of Wisconsin. Nebraska comes in at 5th place. The lowest of these has over 85 daily new cases per 100,000 residents; the #6 state is well under 30. There's something seriously wrong in these states, and because spread begets more spread, it's likely to get worse fast. Minnesota has doubled its new case reports since Halloween, so they're in trouble too.

There were 482 deaths reported today, a 0.2% increase to 238,023. Average daily deaths is back up over 1000 for the first time since spring. This trend of increase is set to continue as new cases soar, and the CDC projects we'll reach 256,000 deaths by Thanksgiving.

We have some not-so-great news on the therapeutic front. The short version is that an interleukin (IL-6) inhibitor thought to be effective in treating the cytokine storms we've been talking about from very early

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on is not working. The full story, as with so much in biological systems, is considerably more complicated. Let's take a stab at sorting this out.

First, the cytokine storm: You may recall this is a hyper-reactive response by the immune system which leads to a great deal of inflammatory damage to tissues. If you're interested in more details, I introduced this concept in my Update #25 posted March 20 at <https://www.facebook.com/marie.schwabmiller/posts/3443290772353971> and fleshed that out in my Update #39 posted April 3 at <https://www.facebook.com/marie.schwabmiller/posts/3479312205418494>.

Chemicals called cytokines coordinate immune responses among the myriad cells that get into the act, serving as messengers among them, attracting and activating some of them, inhibiting and standing others down. There are a lot of different cytokines, but one which has received special attention in this current situation is IL-6 because it was thought to be present at elevated levels in patients experiencing the acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS) characteristic of severe Covid-19. The thinking was that IL-6 was mediating this overreaction which causes the tissue damage in the lungs leading to ARDS. Because we have some experience with this cytokine phenomenon from people with certain cancers and sepsis (a reaction to an overwhelming infection), as well as some more rare disorders, scientists believed administering an IL-6 inhibitor might be a good way to address the issue and have been trying this, primarily with a drug called tocilizumab. Turns out we may have gotten some of this wrong, and three papers published recently point out that there is no evidence at all tocilizumab reduces death rates in severely ill patients. The drug's maker has done its own tests and also reported it is not helpful. So another promising therapeutic avenue may have closed.

There are two things going on here. The first is that storms might not be the driver of the problems in these patients, after all, or if they are, we are not fully understanding how they occur. If cytokine storms do turn out to be an important factor in severe disease, they are clearly not identical to those seen in these other disorders, so we still have more to learn before we're going to get good at dealing with them. Some studies are finding that IL-6 levels are not elevated in all or even most severely-ill Covid-19 patients. And if this is not something we're seeing in patients as a matter of course, it's likely IL-6 is not what's causing the problem; these elevated levels might be incidental to whatever is going on. That would mean, of course, that an IL-6 inhibitor is not likely to be very helpful. Further evidence IL-6 inhibitors might not be the thing is provided from studies in sepsis patients in whom IL-6 levels are 27 times higher than they are in Covid-19 patients and in whom IL-6 inhibitors or, for that matter, other drugs that suppress cytokines, don't do much good.

This work, according to Dr. William Fischer, a pulmonary and critical care physician at the University of North Carolina, "suggests the next step should be a randomized clinical trial." And we've had this talk before: The only way to prove any therapeutic is, you know, therapeutic is this gold-standard sort of trial.

Meanwhile, there is still some evidence inflammation from a variety of immune system overreactions may be playing in the symptoms and damage we're seeing in severely-ill patients, primary in that is the fact that the steroid dexamethasone, which broadly suppresses the immune system, does reduce the death rate. There is also the possibility that some other cytokine or other inflammatory chemical plays a role. Could even be those blood clots we know are forming are sufficient to cause the damage we see. And there's another possibility laid out in a study by researchers from Massachusetts General Hospital, Harvard University, and Massachusetts Institute of Technology: There is evidence the virus can destroy germinal centers, the place in each lymph node where antibodies are produced, which could result in fewer and less effective antibodies. It is also possible that IL-6 inhibitors will work if administered earlier or later in the disease, thus the calls for randomized clinical trials. That's how we learn things in science.

Folks are getting very serious about the reports of SARS-CoV-2 in those farmed mink in Denmark. The concern is that the virus could spread to other animals, wild and domestic. The possibility that it could mutate in animals into a form more dangerous to humans is the big worry. So far, the only animal which have been infected by humans and passed it back to us is the mink; but scientists are investigating the potential for establishment of the virus in a wild species. This would be a significant development because

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it could mean there is a reservoir in animals from which it could re-emerge in humans after we've managed to eliminate it from our population. The species most susceptible to coronaviruses are chimpanzees, other apes, and old world monkeys. Reserves and sanctuaries for these animals are taking particular precautions to avoid humans infecting the animals. We know dogs and cats can become infected, but they don't seem to get sick and there are no known cases of transmission from them to humans. There is also a surveillance project underway in bats; so far, we're not seeing any transmissions, a small piece of good news.

In Norfolk, Virginia, there is a fairy village where you can leave mail for the fairies; and they'll write back. It's on the edge of a lawn where you'll find a small wooden door into a tree where the fairies sleep. There are little buildings with mushroom spires below that tree. And there is a table with chairs, paper, and pens where you can sit to write your letter and a mailbox where you can drop it. There is also another mailbox where you can pick up your reply. It has become a favorite place for many of the local children; they can come here to hang out where the fairies live and also communicate with them at a time when there are fewer avenues for socializing than there used to be.

The letters they leave in this pandemic express sadness, isolation, worry about the adults in their lives and about themselves, but not all of them are just about the pandemic. And there have been more than 700 of them on all subjects. The fairies respond with empathy, encouragement, and tips for hanging in there during difficult times.

While the fairies help the children, they also help someone else, the woman whose yard houses their village, Lisa Suhay. She says, "I find myself feeling weighed down by all the negativity, and all it takes is looking out my window and hearing a little girl singing a song from 'Frozen' at one of the doors to the tree. There are no bad days when this is in front of your house." Looks like everyone wins, even those busy little fairies.

So many ways to help others. If we each identified one and implemented it, the world would move closer to the sort of place we all prefer to live.

Stay healthy. I'll see you later.

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Area COVID-19 Cases

	Nov. 4	Nov. 5	Nov. 6	Nov. 7	Nov. 8	Nov. 9
Minnesota	156,313	160,070	164,865	170,307	174,954	180,862
Nebraska	74,060	75,888	78,012	80,693	82,395	83,969
Montana	35,159	35,955	36,968	37,947	38,948	39,679
Colorado	114,709	117,637	121,006	124,469	127,967	130,984
Wyoming	12,399	12,675	12,954	13,871	14,045	14,691
North Dakota	47,187	48,301	49,837	51,602	53,204	54,305
South Dakota	48,854	49,791	51,151	52,639	53,978	55,404
United States	9,385,324	9,488,591	9,610,965	9,744,491	9,861,898	9,972,333
US Deaths	232,635	233,734	234,944	236,155	237,123	237,584

Minnesota	3,379	3,757	+4,795	+5,442	+4,647	+5,908
Nebraska	1,440	1,828	+2,124	+2,681	+1,702	+1,574
Montana	+907	+796	+1,013	+979	+1,001	+731
Colorado	+2,562	+2,928	+3,369	+3,463	+3,498	+3,017
Wyoming	+340	+276	+279	+917	+174	+646
North Dakota	+1,172	1,114	+1,536	+1,765	+1,602	+1,101
South Dakota	+1,004	+937	+1,360	+1,488	+1,339	+1,426
United States	+92,043	+103,267	+122,374	+133,526	+117,407	+110,435
US Deaths	+1,069	+1,099	+1,210	+1,211	+968	+461

	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 8th COVID-19 UPDATE

Groton Daily Independent from State Health Lab Reports

North Dakota recorded 11 deaths while South Dakota recorded 13. Breakdown of death numbers: Female=8, Male=5. 80+=7, 60s=5, 50s=1. Bon Homme-1, Brown-1, Butte-1, Codington-1, Deuel-1, Lincoln-2, Minnehaha-2, Roberts-1, Spink-1, Turner-1, Yankton-1.

The one number that popped out at me today was the number of COVID-19 cases admitted to the hospital in Brown County. Avera St. Luke's had an increase of 3 while Sanford of Aberdeen had an increase of 8.

According to the SD Dept. of Health site, the positivity rate for the past 14 days in South Dakota remains just under 20 percent (19.9%). For the past 7 days, it's 19.2%. Hopefully, that trend will stabilize.

Glacial Lakes hospital beds being occupied by COVID-19 patients as well as Minnehaha and Pennington counties: Walworth: 3 (-0) Occupied Beds.; Potter: 2 (0) Occupied Beds; Hughes: 12 (0) Occupied Beds, 5 (-1) ICU Beds, 2 (-0) Ventilation; Hand: 3 Occupied Beds (+3); Faulk: 2 (0) Occupied Beds; Edmunds: 6 (+1) Occupied Bed; Brown: 30 (+11) Occupied Beds, 2 (-1) ICU, 0 (0) Ventilation; Spink: 3 (-2) Occupied Beds; Day: 3 Occupied Beds; Marshall: 1 (+0) Occupied Beds; Grant: 1 (0) Occupied Beds; Codington: 21 (-0) Occupied Beds, 2 (+0) ICU, 1 (+0) Ventilation; None (some counties have no hospitals): Clark, Hyde, Stanley, Sully, Campbell, McPherson, Roberts; Minnehaha: 252 (+13) Occupied Beds, 56 (-1) ICU, 57 (+4)

Ventilation; Pennington: 77 (-1) Occupied Beds, 13 (-1) ICU, 7 (-0) Ventilation

70 (+5).

ICU Units: Total 96 (-5), BH 16 (-2), GL 9 (-2), SE 58 (-1), SCP 13 (+0).

Ventilation: Total 69 (+4), BH 7 (+0), GL 3 (+0), SE 57 (+4), SCP 2 (+0).

Staffed Hospital Bed Capacity: 20% Covid, 45% Non-Covid, 36% Available

ICU Bed Capacity: 32% Covid, 34% Non-Covid, 34% Available

Ventilator Capacity: 17% Covid, 13% Non-Covid, 71% Available

Brown County:

Total Positive: +55 (2,556) Positivity Rate: 11.7%

Total Tests: +470 (20,471)

Recovered: +63 (1,977)

Active Cases: +47 (571)

Ever Hospitalized: +8 (135)

Deaths: +1 (8)

Percent Recovered: 77.3%

Hospital Reports:

Avera St. Luke's: Covid-19 Occupied 20 (+3); ICU 2 (-1), Ventilation 0 (0).

Sanford Aberdeen: Covid-19 Occupied 10 (+8).

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

Marshall County Healthcare: Covid-19 Occupied: 1 (+0).

South Dakota:

Positive: +1426 (55,404 total) Positivity Rate: 29.0%

Total Tests: 4906 (470,404 total)

Hospitalized: +76 (3,184 total). 546 currently hospitalized +31)

Deaths: +13 (536 total)

Recovered: +715 (39,118 total)

Active Cases: +700 (15,750)

Percent Recovered: 70.6%

Total COVID-19 Occupied Beds: 546 (+31), Black Hills Region 118 (+1), Glacial Lakes Region 87 (+9) Sioux Empire Region 271 (+16), South Central Plains

Beadle (19) +55 positive, +6 recovered (502 active cases)

Brown (8): +55 positive, +26 recovered (571 active cases)

Clark (1): +5 positive, +2 recovered (61 active cases)

Clay (8): +13 positive, +11 recovered (173 active cases)

Codington (17): +57 positive, +17 recovered (549 active cases)

Davison (12): +77 positive, +19 recovered (617 active cases)

Day (3): +7 positive, +0 recovered (48 active cases)

Edmunds (1): +4 positive, +1 recovered (50 active cases)

Faulk (3): +0 positive, +0 recovered (46 active cases)

Grant (4): +16 positive, +3 recovered (99 active cases)

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cases)

Hanson (1): +8 positive, +1 recovered (67 active cases)

Hughes (8): +23 positive, +3 recovered (252 active cases)

Lawrence (8): +54 positive, +32 recovered (479 active cases)

Lincoln (32): +106 positive, +50 recovered (1105 active cases)

Marshall (3): +7 positive, +0 recovered (21 active cases)

McCook (3): +18 positive, +9 recovered (144 active cases)

McPherson (1): +1 positive, +0 recovery (10 active case)

Minnehaha (125): +318 positive, +230 recovered (3920 active cases)

Potter: +5 positive, +9 recovered (65 active cases)

Roberts (9): +19 positive, +4 recovered (139 active cases)

Spink (4): +8 positive, +4 recovered (140 active cases)

Walworth (10): +7 positive, +1 recovered (70 active cases)

NORTH DAKOTA

COVID-19 Daily Report, Nov. 8:

- 14.4% rolling 14-day positivity
- 1,111 new positives
- 6,087 susceptible test encounters
- 240 currently hospitalized (+0)
- 10,563 active cases (+238)
- 639 total deaths (+11)

Yesterday

Global Cases
49,938,804
9,861,898 US
8,507,754 India
5,653,561 Brazil
1,760,420 Russia
1,709,773 France
1,328,832 Spain
1,236,851 Argentina
1,174,778 United Kingdom
1,136,447 Colombia
961,938 Mexico
920,010 Peru
902,490 Italy

Today

Global Cases
50,493,472
9,972,333 US
8,553,657 India
5,664,115 Brazil
1,835,187 France
1,781,997 Russia
1,328,832 Spain
1,242,182 Argentina
1,195,350 United Kingdom
1,143,887 Colombia
967,825 Mexico
935,104 Italy
922,333 Peru

Global Deaths

1,252,079

237,123 deaths
US

162,269 deaths
Brazil

126,121 deaths
India

94,808 deaths
Mexico

48,978 deaths
United Kingdom

41,063 deaths
Italy

40,220 deaths
France

Global Deaths

1,257,747

237,584 deaths
US

162,397 deaths
Brazil

126,611 deaths
India

95,027 deaths
Mexico

49,134 deaths
United Kingdom

41,394 deaths
Italy

40,490 deaths
France

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County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Persons	Deceased	Community Spread	% RT-PCR Test Positivity
Aurora	245	168	736	2	Substantial	32.35%
Beadle	1667	1146	4180	19	Substantial	29.07%
Bennett	256	154	981	5	Substantial	30.38%
Bon Homme	1155	858	1661	4	Substantial	55.73%
Brookings	1784	1322	6959	9	Substantial	19.72%
Brown	2556	1977	9007	8	Substantial	27.09%
Brule	387	267	1455	3	Substantial	36.05%
Buffalo	311	266	804	5	Substantial	46.99%
Butte	498	291	2223	5	Substantial	27.13%
Campbell	86	70	170	1	Moderate	23.68%
Charles Mix	530	360	3110	1	Substantial	15.32%
Clark	163	101	715	1	Substantial	32.88%
Clay	960	779	3534	8	Substantial	23.02%
Codington	1985	1419	6724	17	Substantial	29.43%
Corson	271	193	801	2	Substantial	67.01%
Custer	388	295	1829	4	Substantial	21.48%
Davison	1467	838	4726	12	Substantial	31.08%
Day	203	152	1251	3	Substantial	26.88%
Deuel	222	173	817	2	Substantial	28.41%
Dewey	553	271	3413	2	Substantial	29.36%
Douglas	222	151	722	5	Substantial	16.28%
Edmunds	181	130	764	1	Substantial	8.12%
Fall River	259	194	1891	6	Substantial	18.89%
Faulk	242	193	526	3	Substantial	11.76%
Grant	391	288	1558	4	Substantial	15.04%
Gregory	309	202	889	10	Substantial	33.10%
Haakon	108	80	428	2	Substantial	5.22%
Hamlin	272	188	1281	0	Substantial	15.77%
Hand	200	107	603	1	Substantial	44.78%
Hanson	149	81	483	1	Substantial	35.94%
Harding	62	40	113	0	Substantial	59.09%
Hughes	1070	810	3974	8	Substantial	16.97%
Hutchinson	322	199	1674	2	Substantial	12.09%

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Hyde	73	41	303	0	Moderate	23.68%
Jackson	159	97	777	4	Substantial	30.77%
Jerauld	190	147	401	13	Moderate	25.93%
Jones	42	32	136	0	Moderate	26.67%
Kingsbury	277	157	1116	4	Substantial	20.74%
Lake	537	368	1997	9	Substantial	36.59%
Lawrence	1349	862	5810	8	Substantial	27.21%
Lincoln	3704	2567	13930	32	Substantial	31.31%
Lyman	332	264	1448	7	Substantial	21.83%
Marshall	82	58	800	3	Moderate	9.30%
McCook	379	232	1145	3	Substantial	31.25%
McPherson	73	62	420	1	Moderate	4.46%
Meade	1212	909	5391	10	Substantial	24.64%
Mellette	108	80	575	1	Substantial	47.22%
Miner	162	109	432	2	Substantial	6.45%
Minnehaha	14434	10514	55329	125	Substantial	28.77%
Moody	302	194	1425	4	Substantial	34.21%
Oglala Lakota	1252	703	5694	11	Substantial	33.07%
Pennington	5767	4114	26769	51	Substantial	19.26%
Perkins	97	67	489	0	Moderate	17.86%
Potter	178	113	620	0	Substantial	17.89%
Roberts	472	324	3343	9	Substantial	23.31%
Sanborn	159	74	474	1	Substantial	28.57%
Spink	398	254	1678	4	Substantial	16.81%
Stanley	131	86	561	0	Substantial	20.34%
Sully	59	40	178	0	Moderate	35.29%
Todd	590	463	3492	10	Substantial	46.36%
Tripp	334	258	1171	2	Substantial	12.45%
Turner	621	402	1921	30	Substantial	38.89%
Union	902	694	4278	16	Substantial	19.68%
Walworth	319	239	1355	10	Substantial	14.05%
Yankton	1106	751	6503	8	Substantial	10.57%
Ziebach	130	80	580	2	Substantial	32.26%
Unassigned	0	0	1088	0		

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South Dakota



AGE GROUP OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Age Range	# of Cases	# of Deaths
0-9 years	1732	0
10-19 years	5800	0
20-29 years	11057	2
30-39 years	9423	8
40-49 years	7925	15
50-59 years	7862	39
60-69 years	6058	77
70-79 years	3171	103
80+ years	2376	292

SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths
Female	28650	263
Male	26754	273

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Brown County

New Confirmed Cases

48

New Probable Cases

7

Active Cases

571

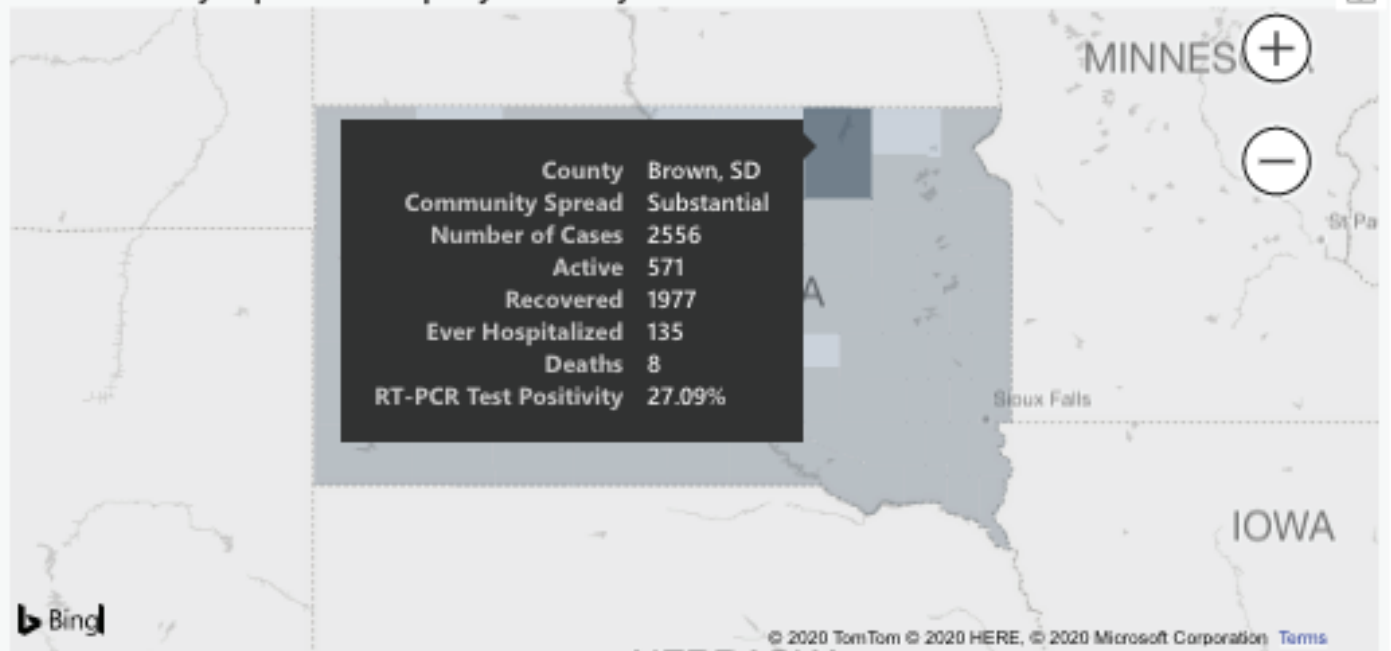
Recovered Cases

1,977

Currently Hospitalized

546

Community Spread Map by County of Residence



Community Spread ● Moderate ● Substantial

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

Total Confirmed Cases

2,509

Total Probable Cases

47

Total Persons Tested

11,563

Total Tests

20,471

Ever Hospitalized

135

Deaths

8

% Progress
(October Goal:
44,233 Tests)

327%

% Progress
(November Goal:
44,233 Tests)

81%

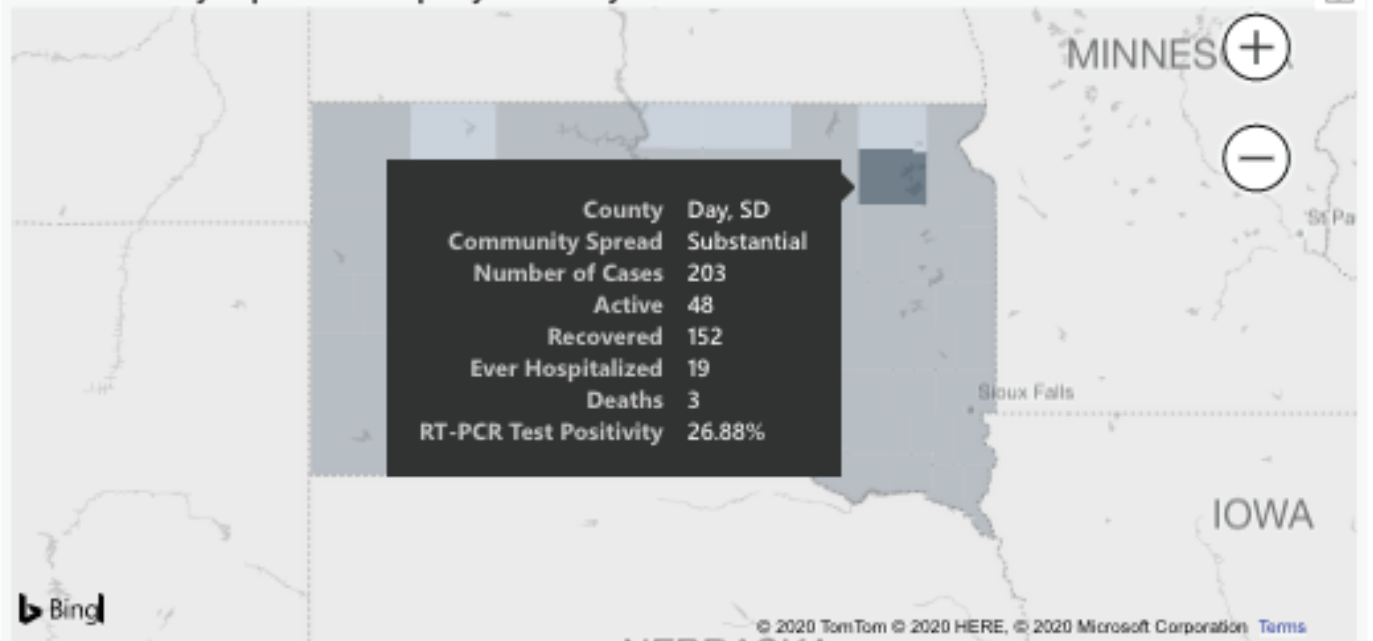
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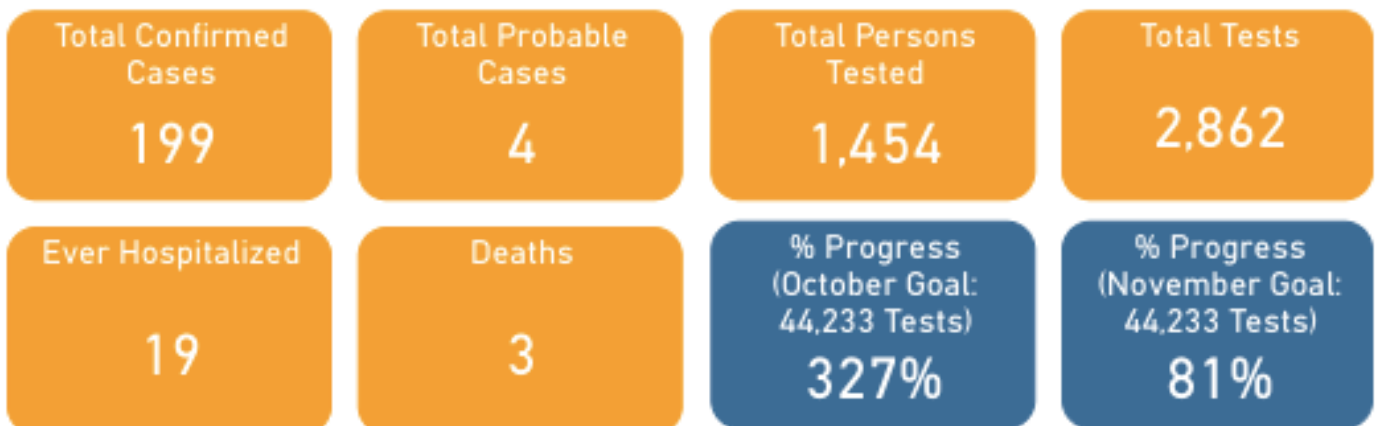
Day County



Community Spread Map by County of Residence



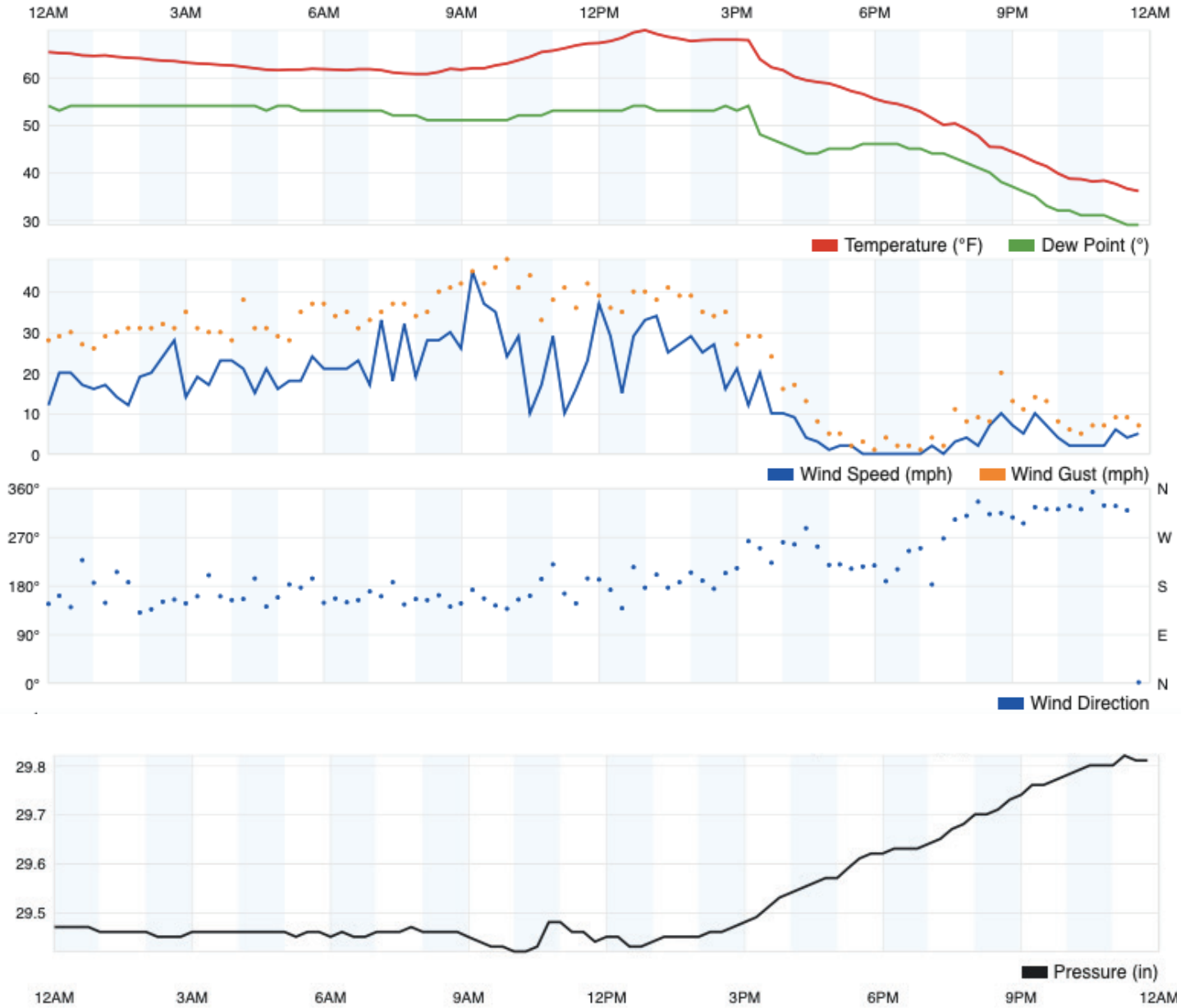
Hover over a county to see its details, or click county to update the orange boxes.



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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



Snow Likely then Chance Rain/Snow

High: 35 °F

Tonight



Mostly Clear

Low: 19 °F

Tuesday



Mostly Sunny

High: 35 °F

Tuesday Night



Mostly Clear

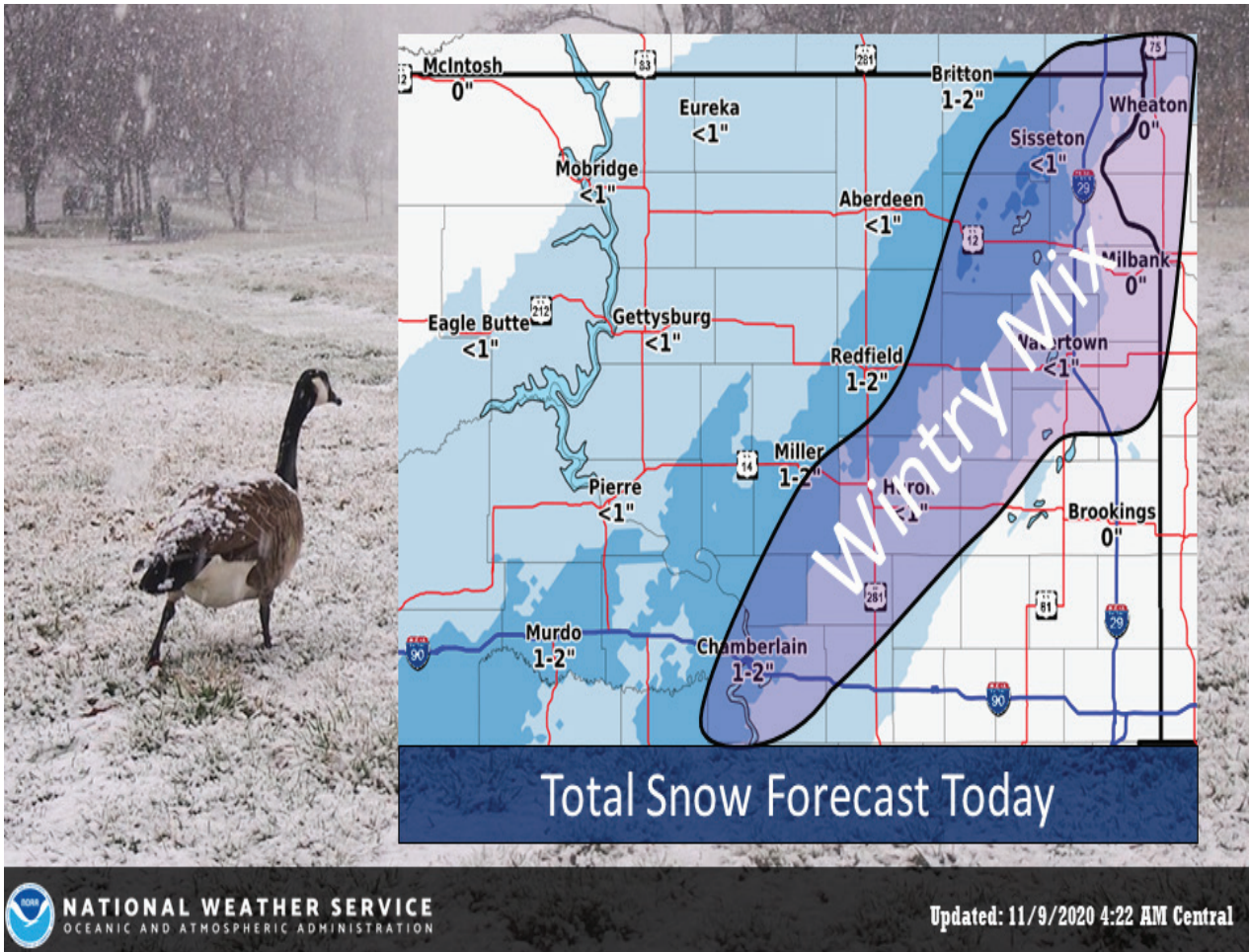
Low: 21 °F

Veterans Day



Sunny

High: 43 °F



Some areas will see 1-2" of snow this morning and into the afternoon hours. In addition, some locations will likely see a wintry mix where snow, sleet, and potentially some light freezing rain is possible. Precipitation will taper off from west to east this afternoon.

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Today in Weather History

November 9, 1977: An intense early winter storm moved northeast from Colorado to Iowa during the morning of November 9th, and then to Lake Superior by the morning of November 10th. In most areas, the precipitation began late on the 8th as rain with temperatures in the 50s, changing to snow early on Wednesday the 9th, with the storm continuing through Thursday the 10th. In west central Minnesota, some freezing rain also occurred before it changed to all snow. As the storm intensified, the winds in the eastern half of South Dakota increased with some gusts as high as 60-70 miles per hour with widespread visibilities reduced to zero in blowing snow. In west central Minnesota, north to northwest winds of 60 to 80 mph reduced visibility to zero and piled snow into eight-foot drifts. The temperature dropped rapidly into the 20s. Many roads throughout the eastern part of South Dakota and west central Minnesota were blocked, and the heavy wet snow immobilized snow plows. Many cars and trucks were snowbound on the roads and highways. Approximately 100 cars and trucks were stalled on Interstate 90, east of Murdo. Near Fergus Falls in western Minnesota, two trucks loaded with turkeys became stuck, and half the birds were frozen. Many schools were closed on the 9th and 10th. Snowfall amounts in the eastern half of the state were greater than four inches. A band of heavy snow, ten inches or more, extended from Bridgewater to Howard to Clear Lake into parts of west central Minnesota. The high winds also destroyed a 1400-foot TV tower at Garden City. There was some loss of the corn crop. Sunflowers comprised the greatest loss because they had not been completely harvested. Reports of livestock losses were minimal. Some storm total snowfall amounts include; 15 inches in Watertown; 14 inches in Sisseton; 12 inches in Clear Lake and Wheaton; 10.5 inches in Castlewood; and 9 inches near Raymond and Bryant.

1864: On Election Night, a violent tornado strikes a ferry on Mississippi River near Chester, Illinois blowing away all but the hull. The boiler and engines are found up the bluff. Half of Chester was destroyed, and twenty die during the storm.

1913: The Great Lakes Storm of 1913 was a blizzard with hurricane-force winds that devastated the Great Lakes Region, sinking as many as 19 ships and stranded 19 others. This storm would be the deadliest and most destructive natural disaster ever to hit the Great Lakes.

1926: An estimated F3 to F4 tornado tore through La Plata, Maryland, killing 14 individuals at a small school. This storm caused 17 deaths and injured 65 others.

1913 - The freshwater fury , a rapidly deepening cyclone, caused unpredicted gales on the Great Lakes. Eight large ore carriers on Lake Erie sank drowning 270 sailors. Cleveland OH reported 17.4 inches of snow in 24 hours, and a total of 22.2 inches, both all-time records for that location. During the storm, winds at Cleveland averaged 50 mph, with gusts to 79 mph. The storm produced wind gusts to 80 mph at Buffalo NY, and buried Pickens WV under three feet of snow. (9th-11th) (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1926 - A tornado in Charles County of southern Maryland killed seventeen persons. (The Weather Channel)

1982 - Seven tornadoes touched down in southern California, three of which began as waterspouts. The waterspouts moved ashore at Point Mugu, Malibu, and Long Beach. The Long Beach tornado traveled inland ten miles causing much damage. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Showers and gusty winds associated with a cold front helped extinguish forest fires in the Appalachian Region and clear out smoke in the eastern U.S. Thunderstorms produced locally heavy rains from eastern Texas to the Tennessee Valley. Longview TX received 3.12 inches of rain, including two inches in two hours, Tupelo MS was soaked with 2.80 inches of rain. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Thunderstorms developing ahead of a strong cold front produced severe weather from eastern Oklahoma to central Indiana. Hail more than two inches in diameter was reported around Tulsa OK. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - High winds prevailed along the eastern slopes of the Rockies from the afternoon of the 8th into the early morning hours of the 9th. Winds of 50 to 80 mph prevailed across the northwest chinook area of Wyoming, with gusts to 100 mph. Winds in Colorado gusted to 97 mph at Fritz Peak (located near Rollinsville) the evening of the 8th, and early in the morning on the 9th, gusted to 78 mph west of Fort Collins. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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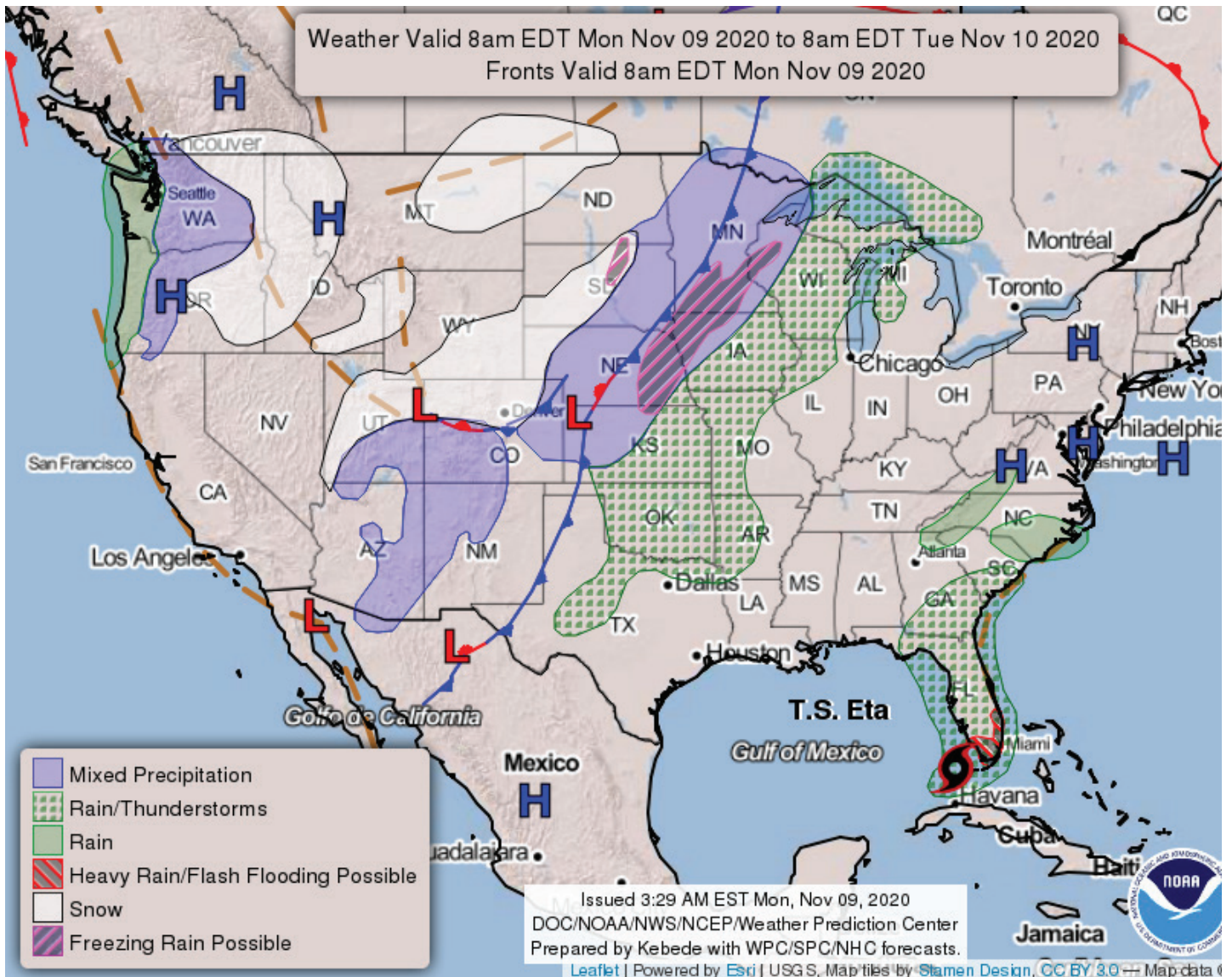
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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 70 °F at 1:00 PM
Low Temp: 36 °F at 11:55 PM
Wind: 48 mph at 9:57 AM
Precip: .00

Today's Info

Record High: 70° in 1903
Record Low: 0° in 1966, 2018
Average High: 44°F
Average Low: 22°F
Average Precip in Nov.: 0.24
Precip to date in Nov.: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 20.71
Precip Year to Date: 16.34
Sunset Tonight: 5:10 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:26 a.m.



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THE MEMORIES OF A HOLY GOD

It almost seems contradictory when we read these words of the Psalmist: "For He remembered His holy promise." It's as if God were in a grocery store and just as He began to walk through the parking lot to His car He stopped and said, "Oh my. I forgot the milk! I'm glad I thought of it." But, not so.

As Psalm 105 ends, the author reminds us of the faithfulness of our God. So, he wanted to remind the readers, once again, that whether or not they were faithful to Him, He would be faithful to them. He made a covenant with Abraham and through the many generations from the day that covenant was made until that very moment, He was always with them. When they felt alone, He made His presence known. When they needed protection, He was there to guard them. When they were hungry, He provided food to nourish them. When they were weak and weary, they could rely on His power.

God has been, is, and will be true to what He says. And, He is faithful to keep His word to whomever He gives it. Wherever we look in history - in times of defeat and delay - it does not mean that God has forgotten what He has promised. God is always faithful to His holy promises. His promises are holy and sacred because they come from a God who is holy and sacred. Through days that seemed unbearable and nights that had no stars, God was always with them - working out His will in His way according to His plan.

God calls us to Himself to make us like Himself. He will do whatever it takes to restore His image in us. Remember: God is a "working in us God" and is always faithful.

Prayer: Thank you Lord for being faithful to us! Give us patience and perseverance, faith and fortitude, courage and conviction, heart and hope to do what You call us to do. Always! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: For He remembered His holy promise to his servant Abraham. Psalm 105:42

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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

News from the Associated Press

South Dakota mother pleas for clues in killing of daughter

By ARIELLE ZIONTS Rapid City Journal

BOX ELDER, S.D. (AP) — Sharon Brings Plenty has a message to whoever killed her daughter.

"You can't hide, you're going to be found ... Turn yourself in. How long do you think you can go run? Guilt is going to overcome you, eat at you."

Brings Plenty discovered her daughter Tessa Curley inside the bathroom of her Box Elder apartment on Oct. 11.

The 39-year-old died of multiple stab wounds, law enforcement said. The stab wounds were to the front of her neck and she also had a cut on her leg and bruises on her hands, Brings Plenty told the Rapid City Journal.

"We have identified several people who were around when she was last alive to include one person of more interest," said Helene Duhamel, spokeswoman for the Pennington County Sheriff's Office. She said deputies have spoken with all of those people and she expects the office will be able to release the name of a suspect it's looking at "in the near future."

The sheriff's office believes Curley was killed sometime after 1 p.m. on Oct. 6, Duhamel said. She said Curley did not call 911 that day or any recent time.

"I just want to find out who did this to her and why did you do this to her because she didn't deserve to die that way," Brings Plenty said. "This shouldn't have happened to her. She had her life, she was young, she had a whole lot to live for."

Brings Plenty says she strongly believes Curley was killed by someone she knew. She said law enforcement told her that Curley was stabbed with a kitchen knife that has a colorful rubber handle. Curley owns those kind of knives but keeps them hidden throughout her drawers, Brings Plenty said.

"Somebody must have known where her kitchen knives were," she said.

Brings Plenty and her relative Rebecca Kidder think there may have been more than one attacker since the assault was so brutal. They believe the hand bruises are signs that she fought back.

Brings Plenty gave law enforcement the names of Curley's friends and past dating partners so they could interview them. She and some of her daughter's friends think the suspect might be a dating partner who twice stole Curley's car.

Brings Plenty is afraid that whoever killed her daughter has fled South Dakota. She said she hopes speaking up will encourage anyone who knows information about the killing to share it with law enforcement or convince the suspect or suspects to turn themselves in.

Brings Plenty and Curley texted, called or saw each other nearly every day.

Brings Plenty last spoke with her daughter on Oct. 4, a week before she found her in the bathroom. Curley came over to visit relatives that afternoon but left without eating the Chinese food ordered for her.

Curley texted to say she would come pick up her food another night, Brings Plenty said.

"There was nothing in the sound of her voice like she was being threatened, it was peaceful, calm," she said.

Brings Plenty saw but did not speak with her daughter around noon on Tuesday, Oct. 6 when she saw Curley chatting with a relative outside her house before driving away. She said her daughter was gesturing a lot with her hands — something she does when she drinks — so she thought Curley may have relapsed.

"I should have got up and went out the door" to say hello, Brings Plenty said. "I didn't know" it would be the last time I saw her.

Brings Plenty said she wanted to give Curley time to recover if she had been drinking but she got worried after not hearing from her for several days.

"On Friday I kind of had that gut feeling, something's going on," Brings Plenty said. "That feeling got stronger Saturday and then Sunday I knew something wasn't right because this wasn't like her. Call it

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intuition.”

Brings Plenty decided she needed to go check on her daughter and anxiously waited for her 10 p.m. work shift to end. She then drove home to grab her pit bull in case she needed to defend herself and drove to the Northern Lights apartment building with her brother.

“I’m usually slow walking up the steps. I ran all the way up the steps and she lives on the third floor and as I got closer I just had that not-so-good feeling,” Brings Plenty said.

Curley’s door was unlocked and her lights were off. Brings Plenty couldn’t find her daughter anywhere and she wasn’t answering her calls.

Brings Plenty eventually went to look in the bathroom where she found her daughter sitting propped up against a wall with blood on her face and a pool of blood on the floor.

“I went over and I touched her and that’s when her body was all cold,” Brings Plenty said. She said her brother’s “face got white” when he saw the scene.

Brings Plenty called 911 and police officers made her leave in order to preserve the crime scene.

Brings Plenty said she doesn’t think anyone else has a key to Curley’s apartment, there was no sign of forced entry to the apartment and nothing was out of place in the bathroom. But she noticed a sage bundle that’s usually on the kitchen counter was on the floor.

“That’s disrespectful for that bundle of sage to be lying on the floor like that so I don’t know maybe there was a scuffle and it got knocked off. I don’t know. But I find that very odd that it was lying on the floor,” Brings Plenty said.

She also said that a dresser that’s usually against the wall was moved closer to the door. After the car theft incident, Brings Plenty said, her daughter told her that she would block the door with the dresser if anyone ever tried to break into her apartment.

Brings Plenty said her daughter’s car was in the parking lot but her glasses and phone were missing. She said law enforcement is still waiting on autopsy results and haven’t told her about any formal suspect or motive. Brings Plenty said she’s getting by through prayer and knowing that others are praying for her family.

“She has a very nice, outgoing personality,” Brings Plenty said of her daughter. “She’s always smiling and she’s happy to see friends or relatives or if she just met you she’ll give you a hug or shake your hand.”

Curley was a “powerful force for good and she matters” and “the first one to step up when family needs her,” even if she is going through her own struggles, Kidder added.

For example, Curley attended and supported her uncle at a sun dance ceremony even though she was grieving the recent death of her sister.

Curley, a member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, was born in Eagle Butte and grew up between there, Pierre, San Jose, California, and Rapid City.

She spent nine years in San Jose where she participated in the Girl Scouts, fancy dancing at powwows and an Azteca dance group.

Living in such a multicultural community made Curley proud of her Lakota culture, Brings Plenty said.

Curley received her GED and took some college classes once the family moved to Rapid City. She worked various jobs there and in Box Elder.

Brings Plenty said she is proud of her daughter for graduating from DUI court in 2017 and then advising other participants.

“She turned her life around,” Brings Plenty said.

Curley became religious at that time and began attending a church that combines Christianity with Lakota traditions, Brings Plenty said. Curley attended church every Sunday as well as bible study, a support group and volunteer events.

Curley enjoyed attending powwows with her family, making doodles of comics and animals, and listening to oldies music. She planned on returning to college to become a preschool or elementary teacher and reuniting with her 22-year-old son, who lives out-of-state with his father.

South Dakota tops 100 deaths due to COVID-19 in November

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — More than 100 South Dakota residents have died of complications due to the coronavirus in the first eight days of November, state health officials said Sunday.

The Department of Health confirmed 13 deaths in the last day, for a total of 111 this month and 536 since the start of the pandemic. The overall death count is the 24th highest per capita in the country in the last two weeks, Johns Hopkins University researchers said.

The state reported 1,426 positive tests for COVID-19 since Saturday. South Dakota ranks second in the country behind North Dakota in the number of new cases per capita in the last two weeks. The top five counties with the most cases per capita in that time are Bon Homme, Dewey, Buffalo, Potter and Sanborn, according to The COVID Tracking Project.

There are 546 people being treated in hospitals in the state, up 31 in the past day. Of those, 96 are in intensive care units and 69 are using ventilators.

For most people, the new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough that clear up in two to three weeks. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia and death.

2nd inmate on loose from Rapid City minimum-security prison

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Authorities say a second inmate has walked away from a minimum-security prison in Rapid City in the last two days.

Officials at the Rapid City Community Work Center said 28-year-old Keith Apple left the facility without authorization on Saturday night. Apple is serving three years for unauthorized ingestion of a controlled substance from Pennington County.

Officials said 38-year-old Ivan Good Plume left the work center Friday night. Good Plume is serving an 18-year sentence from Pennington County for aggravated assault.

The two men could face charges of second-degree escape, punishable by up to five years in prison, authorities said.

Global markets rocket higher on vaccine news, US election

By YURI KAGEYAMA AP Business Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Stock markets rocketed higher Monday after Pfizer said early data show its coronavirus vaccine is effective and investors breathed a sigh of relief after days of U.S. presidential limbo ended with Democrat Joe Biden declared the president-elect.

Markets were already sharply higher on the U.S. election result when Pfizer said that data shows vaccine shots may be 90% effective at preventing COVID-19, indicating the company is on track this month to file an emergency use application with U.S. regulators.

Any economic recovery depends on checking the pandemic, and investors pounced upon the news. Pfizer's data is only preliminary and does not mean a vaccine is imminent. Getting the vaccine to billions of people will be a massive undertaking, even if it is approved.

Dow futures jumped 4.2% higher while those for the S&P 500 rose 3.1%.

In Europe, France's CAC 40 jumped 5.6% to 5,239, while Germany's DAX surged 5.1% to 13,112. Britain's FTSE 100 gained 4% to 6,145.

Markets were already buoyant about the result of the U.S. elections, which saw Biden win the presidency.

"This means less uncertainty, less turmoil in terms of foreign relations, and reversal of some futile policies which were put by the Trump administration," Naeem Aslam, chief market analyst at Ava Trade, said in a commentary.

Many analysts expect trade tensions to de-escalate under a Biden presidency. Still, not all trade tensions are expected to vanish even if Biden rolls back some of the tariffs imposed by President Donald Trump on U.S. trading partners, especially China, in the past several years.

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The European Union pressed ahead Monday with plans to impose tariffs and other penalties on up to \$4 billion worth of U.S. goods and services over illegal American support for plane maker Boeing. That followed a World Trade Organization ruling in the U.S.'s favor over EU support for Airbus.

In Asian trading, Japan's Nikkei 225 surged 2.1% to finish at 24,839.84. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 added 1.8% to 6,298.80. South Korea's Kospi advanced 1.3% to 2,447.20. Hong Kong's Hang Seng rose 1.2% to 26,016.17, while the Shanghai Composite gained 1.9% to 3,373.73.

For now, investors seem inclined to shrug off Trump's refusal to concede and threats of legal action. With Republicans expected to retain their grip on a majority in the Senate, they are betting on continuity in tax, regulatory and other policies, analysts said.

"Trump not conceding a loss is near-term noise looking to wrong-foot Biden at the start of his presidency while Republicans in a position to not concede ground on legislation may continue to frustrate Biden's agenda," Mizuho Bank said in a commentary.

If Republicans remain in charge of the Senate, chances for a big package of economic aid are weaker, and the Federal Reserve will likely need to step up with more support, said Jeffrey Halley of Oanda.

"More easing is almost certainly on the way at December's FOMC meeting," Halley said, referring to the Fed's policy making committee. "Looser monetary policy equals higher asset prices in a zero percent interest rate world."

Despite rising infections and deaths from the pandemic, economies have continued to recover from the shocks of earlier shutdowns to combat outbreaks.

Customs data released Saturday showed China's export growth accelerated in October, boosting the total so far this year back above pre-coronavirus levels for the first time. Exports in October rose 11.4% over a year earlier to \$237.2 billion, up from September's 9.9% gain, while imports rose 4.7% by value to \$178.7 billion, decelerating from the previous month's 13.2% surge.

Biden has vowed to move decisively to try to counter the worsening coronavirus pandemic, which has sapped economic growth, trade and travel, as the U.S. and Europe face a troubling rise in infections. Even if the strictest lockdowns don't return in the United States, the worsening pandemic may dampen consumption and erase profits.

In energy trading, U.S. benchmark crude gained \$3.16 to \$40.30 a barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. Brent crude, the international standard, rose \$3.08 to \$42.53 a barrel.

The dollar rose to 104.38 Japanese yen from 103.35 yen late Friday. The euro cost \$1.1889, up from \$1.1875.

Alice Fung in Hong Kong contributed to this report.

Election 2020 Today: Transition limbo, Biden's new fight

By The Associated Press undefined

Here's what's happening Monday in Election 2020:

TODAY'S TOP STORIES:

TRANSITION LIMBO: The team helping Joe Biden prepare for the White House and a nonpartisan institution are asking President Donald Trump to cooperate with an orderly transition of power, despite his false claims that the election was stolen. Those requests have thrust into the spotlight a little-known agency called the General Services Administration, which is tasked with formally beginning the transition from one administration to another based on all available facts.

REFERENDUM ON TRUMP: The 2020 presidential election has officially hit the highest turnout in more than 50 years. The turnout rate in last week's presidential election eclipsed the 61.6% of voting age Americans who voted in the 2008 election. It has the highest turnout rate since 1968 — 62% as of Sunday. As new votes are still slowly tallied, that rate will continue to creep higher.

BIDEN'S NEW FIGHT: As he begins his transition to the presidency, Biden is pivoting from a bitter campaign battle to a more pressing fight against the coronavirus pandemic, which has hit the world's most

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powerful nation harder than any other. The U.S. is now averaging more than 100,000 new infections a day, and the death toll is soaring. Biden on Monday announced the members of a task force of public health experts to help his administration prepare to take on the virus.

MANGLED ECONOMY: Biden will inherit a mangled U.S. economy — one that never fully healed from the coronavirus and could suffer again as new infections are climbing. It will in some ways be a reprise of when Biden became vice president at the depths of the financial crisis in 2008-09, with possibly fewer tools and less political leverage to press an agenda to corral the virus and stoke economic growth.

QUOTABLE: “We cannot and will not take plaintiff’s word for it — in an election where every vote matters, we will not disenfranchise potentially eligible voters based solely upon the allegations of a private foundation.” — Federal Judge John Jones, who has said he was doubtful of claims that there were dead people on voter rolls in Pennsylvania.

ICYMI:

Trump’s election night party adds to virus scrutiny

A worried Asia wonders: What will Joe Biden do?

Pent-up global wish list of hopes, demands awaits Biden

Pfizer says early data signals COVID-19 vaccine is effective

By LINDA A. JOHNSON and LAURAN NEERGAARD AP Medical Writers

Pfizer says an early peek at its vaccine data suggests the shots may be 90% effective at preventing COVID-19, indicating the company is on track later this month to file an emergency use application with U.S. regulators.

Monday’s announcement doesn’t mean a vaccine is imminent: This interim analysis, from an independent data monitoring board, looked at 94 infections recorded so far in a study that has enrolled nearly 44,000 people in the U.S. and five other countries.

Pfizer Inc. did not provide any more details about those cases, and cautioned the initial protection rate might change by the time the study ends. Even revealing such early data is highly unusual.

“We’re in a position potentially to be able to offer some hope,” Dr. Bill Gruber, Pfizer’s senior vice president of clinical development, told The Associated Press. “We’re very encouraged.”

Authorities have stressed it’s unlikely any vaccine will arrive much before the end of the year, and limited initial supplies will be rationed.

The shots made by Pfizer and its German partner BioNTech are among 10 possible vaccine candidates in late-stage testing around the world — four of them so far in huge studies in the U.S. Another U.S. company, Moderna Inc., also has said it hopes to be able to file an application with the Food and Drug Administration later this month.

Volunteers in the final-stage studies, and the researchers, don’t know who received the real vaccine or a dummy shot. But a week after their second required dose, Pfizer’s study began counting the number who developed COVID-19 symptoms and were confirmed to have the coronavirus.

Because the study hasn’t ended, Gruber couldn’t say how many in each group had infections. Doing the math, that would mean almost all the infections counted so far had to have occurred in people who got the dummy shots.

Pfizer doesn’t plan to stop its study until it records 164 infections among all the volunteers, a number that the FDA has agreed is enough to tell how well the vaccine is working. The agency has made clear that any vaccine must be at least 50% effective.

No participant so far has become severely ill, Gruber said. Nor could he provide a breakdown of how many of the infections had occurred in older people, who are at highest risk from COVID-19.

Participants were tested only if they developed symptoms, leaving unanswered whether vaccinated people could get infected but show no symptoms and unknowingly spread the virus.

FDA has required that U.S. vaccine candidates be studied in at least 30,000 people. In addition to adequate numbers of older adults, those studies must also include other groups at high risk, including minorities

and people with chronic health problems.

And it told companies they must track half their participants for side effects for at least two months, the time period when problems typically crop up. Pfizer expects to reach that milestone later this month, but said Monday no serious safety concerns have been reported.

Because the pandemic is still raging, manufacturers hope to seek permission from governments around the world for emergency use of their vaccines while additional testing continues — allowing them to get to market faster than normal but raising concerns about how much scientists will know about the shots.

The FDA's scientific advisers last month said they worry that allowing emergency use of a COVID-19 vaccine could damage confidence in the shots and make it harder to ever find out how well they really work. Those advisers said it's critical these massive studies are allowed to run to completion.

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.

Trump faces calls to work with Biden team on transition

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP) — President Donald Trump is facing pressure to cooperate with President-elect Joe Biden's team to ensure a smooth transfer of power when the new administration takes office in January.

The General Services Administration is tasked with formally recognizing Biden as president-elect, which begins the transition. But the agency's Trump-appointed administrator, Emily Murphy, has not started the process and has given no guidance on when she will do so.

That lack of clarity is fueling questions about whether Trump, who has not publicly recognized Biden's victory and has falsely claimed the election was stolen, will impede Democrats as they try to establish a government.

There is little precedent in the modern era of a president erecting such hurdles for his successor. The stakes are especially high this year because Biden will take office amid a raging pandemic, which will require a comprehensive government response.

"America's national security and economic interests depend on the federal government signaling clearly and swiftly that the United States government will respect the will of the American people and engage in a smooth and peaceful transfer of power," Jen Psaki, a Biden transition aide, tweeted Sunday.

The advisory board of the nonpartisan Center for Presidential Transition also urged the Trump administration to "immediately begin the post-election transition process and the Biden team to take full advantage of the resources available under the Presidential Transition Act."

Biden, who was elected the 46th president on Saturday, is taking steps to build a government despite questions about whether Trump will offer the traditional assistance.

He is focusing first on the virus, which has already killed nearly 240,000 people in the United States. Biden on Monday announced details of a task force that will create a blueprint to attempt to bring the pandemic under control that he plans to begin implementing after assuming the presidency on Jan. 20.

Former Surgeon General, Dr. Vivek Murthy, ex-Food Drug Administration Commissioner Dr. David Kessler and Dr. Marcella Nunez-Smith, a Yale University associated professor and associate dean whose research focuses on promoting health care equality for marginalized populations, are its co-chairs.

"Dealing with the coronavirus pandemic is one of the most important battles our administration will face, and I will be informed by science and by experts," Biden said in a statement. "The advisory board will help shape my approach to managing the surge in reported infections; ensuring vaccines are safe, effective, and distributed efficiently, equitably, and free; and protecting at-risk populations."

There are also 10 members, including two former Trump administration officials: Rick Bright, who said he was ousted as head of the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority after criticizing the federal government's response to the coronavirus, and Luciana Borio, who until last year was a biodefense specialist on the National Security Council.

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The remainder of the panel includes experts with expertise in a number of areas, including Eric Goosby, who was then-President Barack Obama's global AIDS coordinator.

Biden was also launching agency review teams, groups of transition staffers that have access to key agencies in the current administration. They will collect and review information such as budgetary and staffing decisions, pending regulations and other work in progress from current Trump administration staff at the departments to help Biden's team prepare to transition.

But that process can't begin in full until the GSA recognizes Biden as president-elect. The definition of what constitutes a clear election winner for the GSA is legally murky, making next steps unclear, especially in the short term.

The GSA's leadership is supposed to act independently and in a nonpartisan manner, and at least some elements of the federal government already have begun implementing transition plans. Aviation officials, for instance, have restricted the airspace over Biden's lakefront home in Wilmington, Delaware, while the Secret Service has begun using agents from its presidential protective detail for the president-elect and his family.

There were other signs that some leaders were preparing for a new administration.

Biden aides said the president-elect and transition team had been in touch with Republican lawmakers. Israel's prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, one of Trump's closest allies, opened a Cabinet meeting on Sunday by congratulating Biden, a former vice president and longtime senator.

"I have a long and warm personal connection with Joe Biden for nearly 40 years, and I know him as a great friend of the state of Israel," Netanyahu said.

George W. Bush, the only living Republican former president, called Biden "a good man, who has won his opportunity to lead and unify our country."

But other Republicans, including Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, urged Trump to continue pursuing legal challenges related to the election, making a bumpy transition more likely.

Biden started his first full day as president-elect on Sunday by attending church at St. Joseph on the Brandywine near his home in Wilmington, as he does nearly every week. After the service, he visited the church cemetery where several family members have been laid to rest, including his son Beau.

He otherwise spent most of the day inside his home while some of his staff spent hours on a conference call focused on transition planning.

Those plans also may hinge on two Senate races in Georgia that have advanced to a Jan. 5 runoff. If Republicans hold those seats, they'll likely retain the Senate majority and be in a position to slow confirmation of Biden's top Cabinet choices and complicate his legislative goals, including sweeping calls for expanding access to health care and bolstering the post-pandemic economy with green jobs and infrastructure designed to combat climate change.

That could test Biden's campaign pledge to move past the divisiveness of the Trump era and govern in a bipartisan manner.

During his victory speech on Saturday, he vowed to be a president who "seeks not to divide, but unify" and appealed to Trump supporters to "give each other a chance."

Those close to Biden say he will navigate the period ahead by harnessing his sense of empathy that became a trademark of his campaign. Biden often spoke of the pain he experienced following the death of his wife and young daughter in a 1972 car crash, and Beau's 2015 death due to brain cancer.

"My brother knows how to feel," said Valerie Biden Owens, Biden's sister and longtime top adviser. "Joe's strength has been resilience and recovery and that's what we need as a country."

Associated Press writer Zeke Miller in Washington and Aamer Madhani contributed to this report.

Biden turns to coronavirus response, names advisory board

By PHILIP MARCELO Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — As he begins his transition to the presidency, Joe Biden is pivoting from a bitter cam-

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campaign battle to another, more pressing fight: reining in the pandemic that has hit the world's most powerful nation harder than any other.

The U.S. is now averaging more than 100,000 new coronavirus infections a day, frequently breaking records for daily cases. Hospitals in several states are running out of space and staff, and the death toll is soaring.

Public health officials warn that the nation is entering the worst stretch yet for COVID-19 as winter sets in and the holiday season approaches, increasing the risk of rapid transmission as Americans travel, shop and celebrate with loved ones.

"The next two months are going to be rough, difficult ones," said Dr. Albert Ko, an infectious disease specialist and department chairman at the Yale School of Public Health. "We could see another 100,000 deaths by January."

So far, the U.S. has recorded more than 9.8 million infections and more than 237,000 deaths from COVID-19.

Biden announced Monday that former Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy, former Food and Drug Administration Commissioner Dr. David Kessler and Yale University associate professor and associate dean Dr. Marcella Nunez-Smith will serve as co-chairs of a coronavirus advisory board.

The board, including doctors and scientists who've served in previous administrations, will be tasked with taking the virus proposals that Biden released during the campaign and turning them into a blueprint the new president can enact after he is inaugurated in January.

"Dealing with the coronavirus pandemic is one of the most important battles our administration will face, and I will be informed by science and by experts," Biden said in a statement Monday.

Biden pledged during the campaign to make testing free and widely available; to hire thousands of health workers to help implement contact-tracing programs; and to instruct the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to provide clear, expert-informed guidelines, among other proposals.

As the Democratic nominee, Biden made President Donald Trump's mishandling of the pandemic a central focus of his campaign. But much of what Biden has proposed will take congressional action, and he's certain to face challenges in a closely divided House and Senate.

"I'm not running on the false promises of being able to end this pandemic by flipping a switch. But I do promise this: We will start on day one doing the right things," he said during a campaign event last month.

Dr. Phillip Coule, chief medical officer at Augusta University Medical Center in Georgia, said he hopes the nation can get past the political divisions that have complicated the response to the virus now that the election is over.

"Now that we are post election, let's just handle this based on the science and not the politics of this disease and the pandemic," he said.

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, a Democrat, said he believes even the most ardent COVID-19 deniers will strike a more conciliatory tone as Trump's election defeat sinks in.

"I think the political pressure of denying COVID is gone," he said Sunday on ABC's "This Week." "I think you'll see scientists speak with an unmuzzled voice now. And I think the numbers are going to go up, and Americans are going to get how serious this is."

The president-elect is limited in what he can legally do before he's sworn in, but he and his transition team should begin laying the groundwork immediately, said Dr. Leana Wen, a public health professor at George Washington University and former health commissioner for Baltimore.

Establishing some consensus with state leaders on a national response, including a nationwide mask mandate, should be a top priority, she said. Opposition to wearing masks remains a stubborn issue, particularly in some of the hardest-hit states.

"Each state is acting fairly autonomously on their own policies, and we've seen how that's played out," said Ko, the Yale expert. "This disease needs national and global responses."

Overcoming months of mixed messaging on the pandemic is another uphill climb that Biden must start addressing during his transition, said Angela Rasmussen, a virus researcher at Columbia University in New York.

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"The past year of misinformation, confusion and gaslighting from the White House has really left people without any trust that our government is capable of handling this," she said. "It's going to be critical to begin communicating that, yes, this administration will be led by the science."

During his first remarks as president-elect, Biden said Saturday that his COVID-19 task force will create a plan "built on bedrock science" and "constructed out of compassion, empathy and concern."

His surrogates, meanwhile, have spent the days since the election assuring the public the administration will be ready to respond to the pandemic.

"I think there's a sense of urgency throughout," Pete Buttigieg, a former Democratic presidential hopeful who is now on Biden's transition team, said on Fox News Channel's "Fox News Sunday." "We know that every day is bringing more loss, more pain and more danger to the American people, and it's why he's not waiting until he's taking office to begin immediately assembling people who have the right kind of expertise and planning to actually listen to them."

There's also hope in the wider medical community that a Biden presidency will help restore U.S. leadership on global public health challenges, including the development and distribution of a vaccine when it becomes available.

Dr. Soumya Swaminathan, the chief scientist of the World Health Organization, said she was more optimistic that a Biden administration would join Covax, a WHO-led project aimed to help deploy vaccines to the neediest people worldwide, whether they live in rich or poor countries.

"Everyone recognizes that for a pandemic, you cannot have a country-by-country approach. You need a global approach," Swaminathan said.

But in Kansas, one of the states seeing a significant surge in virus cases in recent weeks, at least one hospital official remains skeptical about what a new president can do to turn the tide of the pandemic in the U.S.

"I think the damage is done," said Kris Mathews, the administrator of Decatur Health, a small hospital in the rural northwest part of the state. "People have made up their minds about how they react to it."

Associated Press writers Heather Hollingsworth in Kansas, Alexandra Jaffe and Thomas Strong in Washington and Jamey Keaten in Geneva contributed to this story.

Referendum on Trump shatters turnout records

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

With votes still being counted, turnout in the 2020 presidential election has hit a 50-year high, exceeding the record set by the 2008 presidential election of Barack Obama — an extraordinary engagement in what amounted to a referendum on President Donald Trump's leadership.

As of Sunday, the tallied votes accounted for 62% of the eligible voting-age population in the U.S. That's a 0.4 percentage point increase so far over the rate hit in 2008, when the nation elected its first Black president.

The sheer number of votes also set records, although that's a less remarkable milestone given the country's growing population. So far 148 million votes have been tallied, with Democrat Joe Biden winning more than 75 million — the highest number for a presidential candidate in history. Trump received more than 70 million — the highest total for a losing candidate.

The numbers are certain to rise as election officials continue to count more ballots. But election experts and partisans already are debating the forces behind the swell of civic participation. Some pointed to the numbers as evidence of what happens when states expand the time and the ways voters can cast ballots, as many states did this year. Other noted the extraordinary high passions Trump provoked — both for and against.

The result: the highest turnout since 1968, according to data from the Associated Press and the United States Elections Project, which tracks turnout. Experts think the 2020 rate could hit heights not seen since

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the beginning of the 20th century, before all women were allowed to vote.

"It's hard to imagine we can get higher than this," said Michael McDonald, a political scientist at the University of Florida who runs the Elections Project.

An Associated Press analysis shows that some of the biggest turnout increases to date occurred in states that liberalized their mail-voting rules. In two states where it was expanded significantly, Montana and Vermont, turnout rose by more than 10 percentage points and more than 9 percentage points, respectively, over the previous presidential election, enough to put the states into the top 10 increases. Hawaii saw the biggest turnout increase, a more than 14 percentage point jump so far.

Texas, which did not expand mail voting but gave voters extra time to cast early ballots in person, saw a whopping more than 9 percentage point increase in turnout, moving from 50% to 59% of its citizen voting-age population going to the polls.

Many of the states with the biggest turnout increases — including Arizona, Texas and Georgia — were new battlegrounds in the presidential race, places where Democrats sought to mobilize new voters and shift Republican strongholds. Some analysts noted the number proved the efficacy of voter outreach and organization efforts.

"People vote when they're asked to vote," said Seth Masket, a political scientist at Denver University.

But the record high participation, to Democrats' surprise, did not always help them. The party lost House seats and failed to win enough Senate seats outright to take control of the upper chamber — that now rests on runoffs in Georgia. They also failed to turn a single state legislature from Republican control.

Those results undermine the longtime conventional wisdom that Democrats benefit most from high turnout. It's a theory even Trump espoused this year, when he warned of "levels of voting" so high that "you'd never have a Republican elected in this country again."

Democrats were excited about massive early voting in places with normally underperforming electorates, like Texas, "Our position in Texas was always that, we're not a red state, we're a non-voting state," said Gilbert Hinojosa, chairman of the Texas Democratic Party, which had hoped to take control of the Texas House of Representatives.

Instead, Texas Democrats didn't even come close, despite the jump in voting, losing the presidential vote by 5.5 percentage points, failing to gain any congressional seats or make up ground in the state legislature.

The results had some Democrats second-guessing the party's decision to idle its door-knocking and in-person voter outreach for months, out of concern about spreading the coronavirus.

"Perhaps we were not reaching the people we needed to for persuasion," Hinojosa said. "I've got to believe that's just much more effective face-to-face."

It's still early to know exactly who turned out on Tuesday. But Tom Bonier, a Democratic data analyst, looked at information from three all-mail states — Colorado, Nevada and Oregon — and saw sizable increases in younger and non-white voters, as well as other core Democratic constituencies.

Calculating historical turnout rates is tricky because of changes in the ways voter records were kept when larger shares of the population were not allowed to vote. Predictions of a record high rate are based on records maintained by McDonald, who has calculated the number of eligible voters every election year all the way back to the founding.

The Associated Press determined the current turnout rate by comparing the number of tallied votes to the Elections Project's estimated number of current potential voters in the U.S.

Turnout was higher before 1920, when some women won the right to vote, because the pool of people who could cast a ballot was smaller. That's why McDonald and others think the 2020 election may surpass the 1908 high-water mark of 65.7%.

The highest turnout in the post-World War II era was in 1960, when 63.8% of eligible voters cast ballots, according to McDonald's records.

The 2020 turnout records come after 2018 saw the highest turnout of a midterm election since 1912. The two recent elections had one thing in common: a chance to send a message about Trump.

"He motivated Democrats who hated him and Republicans who thought he was better than most Republicans," said Brad Todd, a Republican strategist.

That raises the question of whether future elections will draw as much attention or as many votes. "With him not at the top of the ticket, what does this look like?" Masket asked.

Associated Press data editor Meghan Hoyer and Associated Press data journalist Angeliki Kastanis contributed to this report.

McCarrick: What's known about the abusive US ex-cardinal

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

ROME (AP) — The Vatican on Tuesday will release its report into the rise and fall of ex-Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, the once-influential American cardinal who was defrocked by Pope Francis in 2019 after a Vatican investigation confirmed decades of rumors that he was a sexual predator.

The McCarrick scandal is different from other cases of clergy abuse, primarily because there is evidence that Vatican and U.S. church leaders knew of his penchant for bedding seminarians but turned a blind eye as McCarrick rose to the top of the U.S. church as an adept fundraiser who advised three popes.

When McCarrick's crimes were revealed, the scandal sparked such a crisis of confidence in the church's U.S. and Vatican hierarchies that Francis approved new procedures to investigate bishops accused of abuse in a bid to end decades of impunity for Catholic leaders.

But beyond that, the McCarrick case has forced the Vatican to acknowledge that adults can be victims of sexual abuse, too. The Vatican has long tried to paint any sexual relations between priests and adult men or women as consensual, focusing its prevention policies on protecting minors.

But as a bishop, McCarrick held all the power in his relationships with his seminarians: to refuse his sexual advances or report his misconduct could have spelled an end to their priestly vocations and careers in the church. The Vatican's new policies, enacted as a response to the McCarrick scandal, spell out that adults could have been forced "to perform or submit to sexual acts" through abuses of authority by church leaders.

Here is what we know about the McCarrick case ahead of the release of the Vatican report:

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

The archdiocese of New York announced on June 20, 2018 that it had determined that an allegation that McCarrick sexually molested a minor was "credible and substantiated." The allegation was lodged by a former altar boy who said McCarrick fondled him when he was a teenager during preparations for Christmas Mass in St. Patrick's Cathedral in 1971 and 1972. The allegation was the first against McCarrick involving a minor, and as such triggered the investigation.

On the same day, McCarrick's former dioceses of Newark and Metuchen, New Jersey, revealed they had settled two of three allegations of sexual misconduct by McCarrick involving adults in 2005 and 2007. Subsequently, James Grein came forward detailing the abuse he suffered at the hands of McCarrick, a family friend, starting when he was 11. Other former seminarians have since described the harassment and abuse they endured while "Uncle Ted," as McCarrick liked to call himself, was their bishop in New Jersey, forced to sleep in his bed during weekend trips to his beach house.

McCarrick, 90, was defrocked last year after the Vatican determined he sexually abused adults and children, including during confession.

MCCARRICK'S RESPONSE

McCarrick has said he was innocent of the fondling accusation but accepted the pope's sanctions.

"While I have absolutely no recollection of this reported abuse, and believe in my innocence, I am sorry for the pain the person who brought the charges has gone through, as well as for the scandal such charges cause our people," he said in a statement June 20, 2018 after the initial fondling allegations were substantiated.

In a 2008 email McCarrick sent to the Vatican, he denied ever having sexual relations with anyone but said he had shown an "unfortunate lack of judgment" for having shared his bed with seminarians.

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VIGANO'S BOMBSHELL:

The McCarrick scandal took on greater dimensions on Aug. 26, 2018 when the former Vatican ambassador to the U.S., Archbishop Carlo Maria Vigano, published an 11-page expose accusing two dozen U.S. and Vatican churchmen by name of knowing about McCarrick's misconduct since at least 2000 and hiding it. Vigano cited the case of one former seminarian who in 1994 wrote a lengthy letter to his bishop detailing McCarrick's sexual abuse of him and others — a document that would have been turned over to the Vatican at the very least in 2004 when the man was defrocked.

Vigano demanded Francis resign, saying he had told the pope in 2013 during one of their first meetings that McCarrick has "corrupted generations of seminarians and priests, and Pope Benedict ordered him to withdraw to a life of prayer and penance." Vigano claimed that Francis rehabilitated McCarrick from Benedict's sanctions and turned him into a trusted adviser.

VATICAN'S RESPONSE

Francis initially refused to comment, but later authorized a Vatican investigation into its archives to determine who knew what and when about McCarrick, the result of which is being released Tuesday.

In 2019, Francis told Mexican broadcaster Televisa that he didn't know anything about McCarrick's past and didn't remember if Vigano had raised the issue with him when they met in 2013.

In addition, Cardinal Marc Ouellet, head of the Congregation for Bishops, confirmed McCarrick had been subject to disciplinary measures for uncorroborated "rumors" of misconduct but said the Vatican's decision for him to live a discreet life of prayer stopped short of binding canonical sanctions because the rumors lacked proof. Ouellet accused Vigano of mounting a "blasphemous" political hit job against Francis.

FURTHER REVELATIONS

A former McCarrick aide, Monsignor Anthony Figueriredo, in May 2019 released excerpts of correspondence that show McCarrick was placed under written Vatican restrictions in 2008 for sleeping with seminarians, but regularly flouted them with the apparent knowledge of Vatican officials under Benedict and Francis.

In December 2019, the Washington Post reported that McCarrick gave more than \$600,000 in donations from a personal fund he controlled to powerful clerics in the U.S. and Vatican, including those who had a say in whether to investigate him. The payments underscored the common tradition among well-funded bishops and religious superiors to curry favor in the Vatican with checks.

McCarrick also helped funnel millions of dollars to three popes via the U.S. Papal Foundation, which he helped co-found to raise money from wealthy American Catholics for specific works of papal charity.

Already flooded, South Florida feeling wrath of Eta

By KELLI KENNEDY Associated Press

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) — Beaches and coronavirus testing sites were closed, public transportation shut down and some evacuations in place early Monday after Tropical Storm Eta made landfall in the Florida Keys, bringing heavy rains to already flooded city streets after leaving scores of dead and over 100 missing in Mexico and Central America.

Eta hit land late Sunday on Lower Matecumbe Key, Florida. The system's slow speed and heavy rains posed an enormous threat to South Florida, an area already drenched from more than 14 inches (350 millimeters) of rain last month. Eta could dump an additional 6 to 12 inches (150 to 300 millimeters), forecasters said.

"In some areas, the water isn't pumping out as fast as it's coming in," warned Miami Dade Commissioner Jose "Pepe" Diaz.

Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos Gimenez said he was in frequent contact with county water officials about the struggle to drain the flooded waters, which has stalled vehicles, whitewashed some intersec-

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tions and even crept into some homes.

On Sunday night, authorities in Lauderhill, Florida, responded to a report of a car that had driven into a canal. Photos taken by fire units on the scene about 30 miles (48 kilometers) north of Miami showed rescuers searching high waters near a parking lot.

Firefighters pulled one person from a car and took the patient to a hospital in critical condition, according to a statement from Lauderhill Fire.

The U.S. National Hurricane Center in Miami said a tropical storm warning was in place for the Keys from Ocean Reef to the Dry Tortugas, including Florida Bay. Storm surge warnings were discontinued early Monday.

Eta had maximum sustained winds of 65 mph (100 kph) on Monday morning and was centered about 45 miles (70 kilometers) north-northwest of Key West, Florida, and 65 miles (100 kilometers) south of Naples. It was moving west-northwest at 13 mph (20 kph).

On the forecast track, Eta was expected to move out into the southeastern Gulf of Mexico and intensify into a hurricane late Monday or Tuesday.

In the Florida Keys, the mayor ordered mandatory evacuations for mobile home parks, campgrounds and RV parks and those in low-lying areas. Several schools districts closed, saying the roads were already too flooded and the winds could be too gusty for buses to transport students. Several shelters also opened in Miami and the Florida Keys.

"Please take this storm seriously," urged Palm Beach County Emergency Management Director Bill Johnson. "Please don't drive through flooded roadways."

The storm swelled rivers and flooded coastal zones in Cuba, where 25,000 had been evacuated. But there were no reports of deaths. Authorities in Guatemala on Sunday raised the known death toll there to 27 from 15 and said more than 100 were missing, many of them in the landslide in San Cristobal Verapaz.

Local officials in Honduras reported 21 dead, though the national disaster agency had confirmed only eight.

Eta initially hit Nicaragua as a Category 4 hurricane, and authorities from Panama to Mexico were still surveying the damages following days of torrential rains during the week.

In Guatemala, search teams first had to overcome multiple landslides and deep mud just to reach the site where officials have estimated some 150 homes were devastated.

In the worst-hit village, Quejá, at least five bodies have been pulled from the mud. The Indigenous community of about 1,200 residents consisted of simple homes of wood and tin roofs clinging to the mountainside.

Rescue workers used a helicopter to evacuate survivor Emilio Caal, who said he lost as many as 40 family members and relatives. Caal, 65, suffered a dislocated shoulder when the landslide sent rocks, trees and earth hurtling onto the home where he was about to sit down to lunch with his wife and grandchildren. Caal said he was blown several yards (meters) by the force of the slide, and that none of the others were able to get out.

"My wife is dead, my grandchildren are dead," said Caal from a nearby hospital.

Firefighters' spokesman Ruben Tellez said at least one additional person died in Guatemala on Sunday when a small plane went down while carrying emergency supplies to the stricken area.

In neighboring Honduras, 68-year-old María Elena Mejía Guadron died when the brown waters of the Chamelecon river poured into San Pedro Sula's Planeta neighborhood before dawn Thursday.

In southern Mexico, across the border from Guatemala, 20 people died as heavy rains attributed to Eta caused mudslides and swelled streams and rivers, according to Chiapas state civil defense official Elías Morales Rodríguez.

The worst incident in Mexico occurred in the mountain township of Chenalho, where 10 people were swept away by a rain-swollen stream; their bodies were later found downstream.

Flooding in the neighboring state of Tabasco was so bad that President Andrés Manuel López Obrador cut short a trip to western Mexico and was flying to Tabasco, his home state, to oversee relief efforts.

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Hurricane Eta's arrival in northeast Nicaragua Tuesday followed days of drenching rain as it crawled toward shore. Its slow, meandering path north through Honduras pushed rivers over their banks.

Associated Press writers Marlon González in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, contributed to this report.

Trebek brought consensus, class to a nation in need of both

By ANDREW DALTON AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — In a politically torn, culturally divided and socially splintered America, there was one thing nearly everyone could agree on: Alex Trebek was awesome.

For 36 years, the "Jeopardy!" host was a figure of consensus in an era that increasingly lacked it, and died at the end of an election week when those divisions were in full force.

At a time when emotions, opinions and personal details feel like they're at the center of every broadcast, post and podcast, the exceedingly Canadian Trebek held them all in check, instead valuing formality and factuality, dignity and decorum.

He was surprisingly frank with fans about his nearly two-year struggle with pancreatic cancer before his death Sunday at his home in Los Angeles at age 80. But he gave health updates in a series of polite and formal videos that were typically Trebek, speaking calmly, directly and frankly about the disease and his gratitude for the support he was getting.

Six nights a week for 36 years, after the evening news and before the firebrands of primetime cable opinion shows, Trebek brought together liberals and conservatives, city dwellers and rural folk, grandparents and grandchildren for a half-hour of brainy exercise.

His style was all facts with a touch of fun, and no politics, religion or opinion, unless they came in the form of a question in the course of the quiz show.

"I have a family with a, let's say, wildly diverse set of political beliefs," NBC News reporter Ben Collins said on Twitter after Trebek's death. "Everybody in my life loves Alex Trebek. Everybody. What a life."

With his flawless delivery of clues about Shakespeare, chemistry and world capitals, he allowed families to geek out with him, and each other.

"Growing up, he made me feel like my nerdiness was valuable and I loved learning from watching jeopardy," TV personality and author Padma Lakshmi said on Twitter, one of scores of people paying tribute to Trebek. "It was our family's nightly pleasure."

Trebek himself came in the form of a question.

He revealed next-to-nothing about his private life, emotions or opinions.

That sense of mystery surrounding him was part of his appeal. He was the composed college professor whose students endlessly speculated about what he was like when class was over.

There were beloved game show hosts before Trebek, but the job for decades had cultural connotations of a smarmy talking head or a clownish emcee.

Trebek gave the role a gravitas, and a virtuosity, that didn't seem possible before him.

"Alex was the Sinatra of our business," Wink Martindale, a longtime host of several games shows, said in a statement. "The word class defined him. In my view, there will never be another with such multiple talents."

Trebek was more a maestro than an emcee, conducting the high-tempo symphony of "Jeopardy!," elegantly squeezing a world's worth of trivia into the 13 minutes of game time in each episode.

He was a more typical figure earlier in his career, a swinging, mustachioed man's man who owned race horses rolled on TV's "Celebrity Bowling," and hosted several game shows including "High Rollers" and "Battlestars."

But when he settled into the sole role of hosting "Jeopardy!," the most serious, intellectual and highbrow of game shows, it helped forge him into the high-class figure of class he became. He would win five Emmys and a prestigious Peabody Award, a prize usually reserved for serious TV news personalities.

He shaved his signature mustache in 2001, and increasingly became a warm, grandfatherly figure for

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viewers.

He wasn't all warmth, though. Viewers loved it when he showed his sharper edges.

Some thought he showed a bit of funny condescension when he explained the correct answer to a wrong contestant — though he insisted he never knew all the answers — or when he gave a "good for you!" to contestants who shared especially banal personal stories during the mid-show chat break.

And his formality made him fodder for comedy.

Will Ferrell on "Saturday Night Live" played Trebek as a composed man who was constantly having his patience driven to the limit by impossible contestants, especially Sean Connery, on "Celebrity Jeopardy!" (The real Connery died just over a week before Trebek.)

In the social media era, Trebek became the subject of many a viral video.

One compiled his stiff attempts at showing a bit of rhythm and soul when reading the rap lyrics that came in Jeopardy clues.

Another was a supercut of him saying the word "genre," with impeccable French pronunciation. (Trebek's mother was French-Canadian.)

When the word came up in a subsequent show, Trebek added a "yes, I said it," as if to tell viewers, "I know what you're all saying about me when you think I'm not listening."

He usually was savvy enough to be in on the joke.

In a famous exchange during the original run of the show's greatest champion, Ken Jennings, Trebek delivered a clue:

"This term for a long-handled gardening tool can also mean an immoral pleasure seeker."

Jennings responded, "What is a hoe?"

As the audience began to titter, Trebek told Jennings, "Whoa. Whoa. Whoa. They teach you that in school in Utah, huh?"

Trebek immediately snapped back into the show's rhythm, as he always did, as another contestant gave the correct response, "What is a rake?"

Everyone agrees Trebek is irreplaceable. The show has given no indication of any host plans, and has not used guest hosts during Trebek's illness. Viewers will get a good bit more Trebek through episodes he has already taped, and through well over three decades of reruns.

Some have speculated that Jennings, who became a consulting producer on the show this season, would be the most suitable replacement.

But on Sunday, Jennings was just another of Trebek's countless admirers.

"Alex wasn't just the best ever at what he did," he said on Twitter. "He was also a lovely and deeply decent man, and I'm grateful for every minute I got to spend with him."

Follow AP Entertainment Writer Andrew Dalton on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/andyjamesdalton>

Two Lebanese youth offer migrant workers a way back home

By DALAL MAWAD Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — In a damp room with a few rotting pieces of furniture and old mattresses on the floor, seven migrant women sit hugging their belongings, a Kenyan flag hanging behind them on the wall.

A Lebanese woman walks into the apartment, located in a poor area east of Beirut, and the migrants rush excitedly to hug her.

"We are finally going home," says Nancy, a 25-year-old Kenyan. "Déa is a heavenly saint. We experienced a lot here, but Déa and her friend are our saviors."

Déa Hage-Chahine and Serge Majdalani are two young Lebanese who have partnered on a mission to repatriate domestic migrant workers stranded in Lebanon by the worst economic crisis in the country's modern history.

In two months, they have helped get home more than 120 women, mostly Kenyans and some Ethiopians, fundraising more than \$35,000 for flights and coronavirus tests through an online campaign and working

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tirelessly to clear bureaucratic and legal hurdles.

It's a mission both came into unexpectedly. The 33-year-old Majdalani, who works in finance in New York, was visiting his family in Beirut in the summer when he heard about the thousands of migrants lining up outside their embassies trying in vain to get help to leave.

First, he tried to use his brother's travel agency to arrange private chartered flights for them. "But that was way too costly," he said.

A friend connected him to Hage-Chahine. Separately, she too had been inspired to act.

"I was walking my dog in Beirut and saw so many women and children on the streets. No one was helping them," she said. "I could not see that and turn a blind eye."

Lebanon has some 250,000 migrant workers, most of them women working as maids.

Even before the crisis, they were subjected to abuse under a sponsorship system, known in Arabic as "kafala," which ties workers to their employers. Rights activists have described the system as a form of "neo-slavery." Thousands have escaped employers then stayed to work undocumented.

"Workers are viewed as objects here," said Majdalani. Employers use the fees they pay to brokers to justify barring maids from leaving, he said. "They confiscate their passports as if they owned them."

Then the bottom fell out of Lebanon's economy this year in a combination of financial collapse and the coronavirus pandemic. Lebanese have lost jobs and seen the value of their savings evaporate as the currency plunges in value.

Migrant workers were thrown into desperate straits. Many maids have not been paid for months. Some employers dumped them on the streets or outside their embassies.

Now many can't afford the exorbitant costs of repatriation flights.

Hage-Chahine worked in marketing but has recently been unemployed. In addition to the money from fundraising, she has used some of her savings to pay for a shelter for the women and provide food and medicine.

She spent her days with them on the streets, counseling them, shopping for them. Meanwhile, she and Majdalani worked out the nitty gritty details of arranging departures. They retrieved workers' passports and belongings from former employers, talked daily with security officials to resolve legal obstacles, and organized and paid for flights.

"We help change someone's life," Hage-Chahine said. "Unfortunately, the work we do is actually so small compared to the reality of the problem."

They played the role of embassies, which they describe as corrupt and incapable of helping the migrants.

On its website, the Kenyan Consulate in Lebanon says it is registering legal and illegal workers seeking to return home. Phone calls to the consulate, which has been embroiled in allegations of abuse and exploitation, went unanswered. The Ethiopian Embassy did not respond to an Associated Press request for a comment.

Back at the shelter, the two helped the women load their luggage into a bus.

Nancy, the Kenyan woman who gave just her first name for fear of retaliation, fled her employers years ago because, she said, the children abused her because she's Black. She has worked without papers since. With no one paying dollars anymore, she couldn't stay. What she did save is trapped in a bank account by currency controls.

She's relieved just to get out.

"I am going to see my son and start my own business," she said. "I will not come back here again."

The final goodbyes at the airport with Hage-Chahine and Majdalani were emotional for everyone.

"I don't think anyone will forget what they have done," said Ririan, 34.

"Seeing their happiness, when they are finally able to leave, is very rewarding," said Majdalani, who has since returned to New York. "Especially knowing that we are freeing them from horrible living conditions. That is a moment of pride and joy."

A worried Asia wonders: What will Joe Biden do?

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By FOSTER KLUG Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — As Asia comes to terms with the reality of a Joe Biden administration, relief and hopes of economic and environmental revival jostle with needling anxiety and fears of inattention.

From security to trade to climate change, a powerful U.S. reach extends to nearly every corner of the Asia-Pacific. In his four years in office, President Donald Trump shook the foundations of U.S. relations here as he courted traditional rivals and attacked allies with both frequency and relish.

Now, as Biden looks to settle tumultuous domestic issues, there's widespread worry that Asia will end up as an afterthought. Allies will go untended. Rivals — and especially China, that immense U.S. competitor for regional supremacy — will do as they like.

In the wake of perhaps the most contentious presidency in recent U.S. history, here's a look at how its aftermath — a Biden White House — will play out in one of the world's most important and volatile regions:

CHINA

Biden will likely look here first.

The two nations are inexorably entwined, economically and politically, even as the U.S. military presence in the Pacific chafes against China's expanded effort to have its way in what it sees as its natural sphere of influence.

Under Trump, the two rivals engaged in a trade war, and a lively exchange of verbal hostilities. A Biden administration could have a calming effect on those frayed ties, according to Alexander Huang, a strategic studies professor at Tamkang University in Taipei and a former Taiwanese national security official.

"I'd expect Biden to return to the more moderate, less confrontational approach of the Obama era toward China-U.S. relations," he said.

Greater outreach to China could prompt Washington to play down its support for Taiwan, which China claims as its own territory, without necessarily reducing U.S. commitment to ensure the island can defend itself against Chinese threats, Huang said.

Retired chemical engineer Tang Ruiguo echoed a view shared by many in China of an unstoppable U.S. decline from global superpower status. "No matter who is elected, I feel the United States may go into turmoil and unrest and its development will be affected," Tang said.

THE KOREAS

Say goodbye to the summits.

Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un went from threats of war to three unprecedented sit-downs, which, though high-profile media events, did nothing to rid the North of its banned nuclear-tipped long-range missiles.

Kim must now adjust to a man his propaganda services once condemned as a "rabid dog" that "must be beaten to death."

Biden, for his part, has called Kim a "butcher" and "thug," and said Trump had gifted a dictator with legitimacy with "three made-for-TV summits" that produced no disarmament progress.

Biden has endorsed a slower approach built from working-level meetings and said he would be willing to tighten sanctions on the North until it takes concrete denuclearization steps.

North Korea, which has yet to show any willingness to fully deal away a nuclear arsenal that Kim may see as his strongest guarantee of survival, prefers a summit-driven process that gives it a better chance of pocketing instant concessions that would otherwise be rejected by lower-level diplomats.

For South Korea, the new president will likely demonstrate more respect toward its treaty ally than Trump, who unilaterally downsized joint military training and constantly complained about the cost of the 28,500 U.S. troops stationed in the South to defend against North Korea.

JAPAN

The resignation this year of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe ended one of Trump's few close, productive relationships with a foreign leader.

There's hope in Tokyo that Biden's more progressive ecological policies will help Japanese green com-

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panies and that he will take a hard line on China, with which Japan is in constant competition.

But there's also worry.

Under Biden, "America cannot afford to take care of other countries, and it has to prioritize its own reconstruction," said Hiro Aida, Kansai University professor of modern U.S. politics and history.

As Biden is consumed with his nation's many domestic troubles, from racial unrest to worries about the economy, healthcare and the coronavirus, Japan could be left alone as China pursues its territorial ambitions and North Korea expands its nuclear efforts, according to Peter Tasker, a Tokyo-based analyst with Arcus Research.

AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

The conservative Australian prime minister who was in power when Trump was elected, Malcolm Turnbull, may have spoken for many when he tweeted congratulations to Biden: "What a relief that you won."

There's hope that Biden will do better than the Trump administration, which granted Australian manufacturers exemptions from U.S. steel and aluminum tariffs in 2018 before reportedly having a change of heart a year later.

For New Zealand, there are aspirations to sell more milk and beef under a U.S. administration that's more open to free trade.

New Zealand and other Pacific nations also hope that Biden might help ease tensions with China.

New Zealand has found itself stuck between the two superpowers, relying on China as its biggest trading partner while maintaining traditional defense and intelligence ties with the United States.

INDIA

Not much will change with the host of security and defense ties shared by India and the United States. But a Biden administration could mean a much closer look at India's spotty recent human rights and religious freedom records, both of which were largely ignored by Trump.

Biden is also expected to be more critical of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu-nationalistic policies, which critics say oppress India's minorities, according to Michael Kugelman, deputy director of the Asia Program at the Washington-based Wilson Center.

The countries will work more closely to counterbalance China, a shared rival, Kugelman said. A Biden White House won't "risk antagonizing a country that is widely viewed in Washington as America's best strategic bet in South Asia," he said.

SOUTHEAST ASIA

Some countries in the region, such as Malaysia, have pivoted toward China because of heavy investment and a focus on economic recovery, and "it will take time for the U.S. to rebuild trust," said Bridget Welsh, honorary research associate at the University of Nottingham in Malaysia. "U.S. power will never be what it was."

Biden is also likely to be more wary in his dealings with strongman leaders like the Philippines' Rodrigo Duterte, Thailand's Prayut Chan-o-cha and Cambodia's Hun Sen, said Richard Heydarian, an analyst in the Philippines.

"A more cautious Biden could also mean a degree of stability in relations with tricky allies and partners in Southeast Asia and the region," he said. "We are going to see American leadership, but much more in conjunction with regional players and powers, including Japan, Australia, India, European powers" and Southeast Asia.

Foster Klug, the AP's news director for the Koreas, Japan, Australia and the South Pacific, has covered Asia since 2005.

Associated Press writers Kim Tong-hyung in Seoul, South Korea, Mari Yamaguchi in Tokyo, Rod McGuirk in Canberra, Australia, Nick Perry in Wellington, New Zealand, Eileen Ng in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and

Sheikh Saaliq in New Delhi contributed to this report.

Trump's election night party adds to virus scrutiny

By JILL COLVIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — It was supposed to be a scene of celebration.

Instead, the Trump campaign's election night watch party in the White House East Room has become another symbol of President Donald Trump's cavalier attitude toward a virus that is ripping across the nation and infecting more than 100,000 people a day.

Polls suggest that attitude was a serious drag on the president's reelection bid as voters chose to deny Trump a second term in favor of his Democratic rival, now President-Elect Joe Biden. And the party — with few masks and no social distancing — is now under additional scrutiny after the president's chief of staff, Mark Meadows, became the latest top White House official to contract the virus, which has now killed more than 237,000 people in the U.S. alone.

The White House has repeatedly refused to say who else has tested positive, even as the virus continues to spread. The latest White House cluster, coming just a month after Trump's own diagnosis and hospitalization, includes a top Trump campaign official as well as a handful of undisclosed White House staff, officials said.

The White House has been increasingly secretive about outbreaks. Many White House and campaign officials, as well as those who attended the election watch party, were kept in the dark about the diagnoses, unaware until they were disclosed by the press.

That the virus would continue to spread in the White House — even though senior staff and those who come into close contact with the president and vice president are frequently tested — has come as no surprise to public health officials who have balked at the White House's lax approach.

"The administration was cavalier about the risks of the virus for themselves and for the country. And that's one reason why we have so many cases," said Dr. Joshua Sharfstein, a public health professor at Johns Hopkins University's school of public health.

Even Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has said he has been avoiding the White House since August "because my impression was their approach to how to handle this was different from mine and what I insisted that we do in the Senate, which is to wear a mask and practice social distancing,"

Meadows in particular has long tried to play down the severity of the virus. He rarely wore a mask in public, except during the period immediately following Trump's infection. At one point, he refused to speak to reporters on Capitol Hill after they requested he wear a mask.

He was again without one during Tuesday evening's East Room event, where more than 100 of Trump's most loyal supporters gathered to watch the election results come in and see him deliver what they had hoped would be a victory speech.

It was a festive atmosphere, with half-empty glasses of wine and other beverages strewn across cocktail tables in front of news cameras. Meadows, who spent time with Trump's family before-hand, was seen working the room, including giving several fist-bumps to those in attendance, before Trump took the stage early Wednesday morning.

While everyone who attended the East Room event had been tested in advance for the virus, there was no social distancing and minimal mask-wearing.

Earlier that day, Meadows had also accompanied the president to his campaign's headquarters in Virginia, where Trump received rousing cheers from several dozen staff and volunteers. Meadows did not wear a mask, nor did other White House staffers. Campaign aides largely did.

If Meadows tested positive Wednesday — as Bloomberg News reported — he would likely have been infectious during both events, said Saskia Popescu, an epidemiologist who teaches at George Mason University.

Meadows had also traveled with Trump in the run-up to Election Day, attending dozens of rallies where he was frequently seen interacting with supporters without masks.

Trump's refusal to abide by his own government's public health guidelines throughout the campaign was

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a major source of frustration for local governments as he scheduled rally after rally in defiance of local caps on crowd sizes, even in pandemic hot zones.

While Trump had hoped his efforts to downplay the virus in a bid to revive a limping economy would help him with voters, many Republicans now believe that Trump might have won reelection had he handled things differently.

Still, Trump's approach reflected the priorities of his supporters. AP VoteCast, a national survey of the electorate, found that about half of Trump voters called the economy and jobs the top issue facing the nation, versus just 1 in 10 Biden voters. A majority of Biden voters, meanwhile — about 6 in 10 — said the pandemic was the most important issue facing the country.

The White House did not respond to specific questions about the current outbreak, but said that contact tracing had been conducted by the White House Medical Unit, consistent with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines.

"Appropriate notifications and recommendations have been made," the White House said.

The CDC defines "close contact" as spending at least 15 minutes within 6 feet of an infected person beginning two days before they test positive or exhibit symptoms.

But Popescu called the party, in particular, "a ripe environment for transmission to occur," and said anyone in attendance should have been informed and asked to take precautions.

"While they might not meet CDC guidelines for exposure, I think when we're looking at an indoor event with a lot of people for a prolonged period who are unmasked, out of an abundance of caution, everyone should be notified and encouraged to stay home," she said.

"Now is not the time to be cavalier about the risks," Sharfstein said.

Ohio pastor Darrell Scott, a close ally of the president who attended the party, said he was unaware any White House officials beyond Meadows had tested positive until informed by a reporter and had not been contacted by any tracer.

While Scott, like many in Trump's orbit, continued to insist fraud was to blame for the president's loss — despite no credible evidence supporting those claims — he also blamed Trump for several "unforced errors" during the campaign, including the way he talked about the virus.

"I can't be upset if we shoot ourselves in the foot," he said.

The latest outbreak came less than two weeks after several aides to Vice President Mike Pence, including his chief of staff, tested positive for the virus. And it came a month after Trump, first lady Melania Trump and at least two dozen others tested positive after Trump held large gatherings of people not wearing facemasks, including the ceremony announcing the nomination of Judge Amy Coney Barrett to the Supreme Court.

Associated Press writers Zeke Miller and Kevin Freking contributed to this report.

Eta strikes Florida Keys; expected to become hurricane

By ANDREA RODRÍGUEZ Associated Press

HAVANA (AP) — A strengthening Tropical Storm Eta made landfall on Florida's Lower Matecumbe Key on Sunday night, days after leaving scores of dead and over 100 missing in Mexico and Central America.

The U.S. National Hurricane Center in Miami declared hurricane and storm surge warnings for the Keys from Ocean Reef to the Dry Tortugas, including Florida Bay.

Florida officials closed beaches, ports and COVID testing sites, shut down public transportation and urged residents to stay off the street. Several shelters also opened in Miami and the Florida Keys for residents in mobile homes and low lying areas. Broward County also shut down in-person schooling Monday and Miami seemed poised to do the same.

On Sunday night, authorities in Lauderhill, Florida, responded to a report of a car that had driven into a canal. Photos taken by fire units on the scene about 30 miles (48 kilometers) north of Miami showed rescuers searching what appeared to be flooded waters near a parking lot.

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Firefighters pulled one person from a car and took the patient to a hospital in critical condition, according to a statement from Lauderhill Fire's public information officer. Responders were continuing to search for others.

Eta had maximum sustained winds of 65 mph (100 kph) on Sunday night and was centered about 30 miles (45 kilometers) east-northeast of Marathon, Florida, and 70 miles (115 kilometers) east-northeast of Key West. It was moving west-northwest at 14 mph (22 kph).

The storm swelled rivers and flooded coastal zones in Cuba, where 25,000 had been evacuated. But there were no reports of deaths.

Eta earlier hit Cuba even as searchers in Guatemala were still digging for people believed buried by a massive, rain-fueled landslide. Authorities on Sunday raised the known death toll there to 27 from 15 and said more than 100 were missing in Guatemala, many of them in the landslide in San Cristobal Verapaz.

Some 60,000 people had been evacuated in Guatemala.

At least 20 people also were reported dead in southern Mexico and local officials in Honduras reported 21, though the national disaster agency had confirmed only eight.

Pope Francis on Sunday spoke about the population of Central America, hit "by a violent hurricane, which has caused many victims and huge damage, worsened as well by the already difficult situation due to the pandemic." Speaking to faithful gathered in St. Peter's Square, Francis prayed that "the Lord welcome the deceased, comfort their families and sustain all those so tried, as well as all those who are doing their best to help them."

In Florida, Gov. Ron DeSantis declared a state of emergency Saturday for eight counties at the end of the state as Eta approached, urging residents to stock up on supplies. South Florida started emptying ports and a small number of shelters opened in Miami and the Florida Keys for residents in mobile homes and low-lying areas.

Miami-Dade County declared a state of emergency Friday night and also warned a flood watch would be in effect through Tuesday night.

Further south in the Keys, officials were monitoring the storm closely, but had no plans yet to evacuate tourists or residents. They urged residents to secure their boats and encouraged visitors to consider altering plans until Eta had passed.

Eta initially hit Nicaragua as a Category 4 hurricane, and authorities from Panama to Mexico were still surveying the damages following days of torrential rains during the week.

In Guatemala, search teams first had to overcome multiple landslides and deep mud just to reach the site where officials have estimated some 150 homes were devastated.

In the worst-hit village, Quejá, at least five bodies have been pulled from the mud. The Indigenous community of about 1,200 residents consisted of simple homes of wood and tin roofs clinging to the mountainside.

Rescue workers used a helicopter to evacuate survivor Emilio Caal, who said he lost as many as 40 family members and relatives. Caal, 65, suffered a dislocated shoulder when the landslide sent rocks, trees and earth hurtling onto the home where he was about to sit down to lunch with his wife and grandchildren. Caal said he was blown several yards (meters) by the force of the slide, and that none of the others were able to get out.

"My wife is dead, my grandchildren are dead," said Caal from a nearby hospital.

Firefighters' spokesman Ruben Tellez said at least one additional person died in Guatemala on Sunday when a small plane went down while carrying emergency supplies to the stricken area.

In neighboring Honduras, 68-year-old María Elena Mejía Guadron died when the brown waters of the Chamelecon river poured into San Pedro Sula's Planeta neighborhood before dawn Thursday.

In southern Mexico, across the border from Guatemala, 20 people died as heavy rains attributed to Eta caused mudslides and swelled streams and rivers, according to Chiapas state civil defense official Elías Morales Rodríguez.

The worst incident in Mexico occurred in the mountain township of Chenalho, where 10 people were swept away by a rain-swollen stream; their bodies were later found downstream.

Flooding in the neighboring state of Tabasco was so bad that President Andrés Manuel López Obrador cut short a trip to western Mexico and was flying to Tabasco, his home state, to oversee relief efforts.

Associated Press writers Kelli Kennedy in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, Marlon González in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, and Frances D'Emilio in Rome, Italy, contributed to this report.

Fraud claims aimed in part at keeping Trump base loyal

By COLLEEN LONG and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump has promised legal action in the coming days as he refused to concede his loss to Democrat Joe Biden, making an aggressive pitch for donors to help finance any court fight.

Trump and his campaign have leveled accusations of large-scale voter fraud in Pennsylvania and other states that broke for Biden, so far without proof.

But senior officials, campaign aides and allies told The Associated Press that overwhelming evidence of fraud isn't really the point.

The strategy to wage a legal fight against the votes tallied for Biden in Pennsylvania and other places is more to provide Trump with an off-ramp for a loss he can't quite grasp and less about changing the election's outcome, the officials said. They spoke to AP on the condition of anonymity to discuss internal strategy.

Trump aides and allies also acknowledged privately the legal fights would — at best — forestall the inevitable, and some had deep reservations about the president's attempts to undermine faith in the vote. But they said Trump and a core group of loyalists were aiming to keep his base of supporters on his side even in defeat.

There has been no election in decades in which such widespread fraud was alleged. The closest was the 1960 election in which Democrat John F. Kennedy beat Republican Richard Nixon, and there were allegations that fraud helped Kennedy win.

Moments after the AP called the race for Biden, Trump attorney Rudy Giuliani stood in front of campaign banner taped over the garage door of a landscaping company in Philadelphia, wedged between a cremation center and an adult book store, with a handful of poll watchers and declared they'd been kept too far away to check for any inaccuracies.

"We have no way of knowing, because we've been deprived of the right to inspect ballots," he said.

Partisan poll watchers are designated by a political party or campaign to report any concerns they may have. They are not poll workers who actually tally ballots. 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. They are not allowed to interfere with the conduct of the election and are typically required to register in advance with the local election office.

This year, because of the coronavirus that has killed more than 230,000 people across the country, there was litigation in a few states, including Pennsylvania, over where poll watchers could stand to ensure social distancing.

Lawyers could potentially argue the vote tally should be cast aside over fraud observed by poll watchers, but in order to win that argument they'd need evidence, not just allegations the monitors weren't allowed to see clearly enough. Judges are loathe to disenfranchise any voters and there would need to be substantial proof that fraud had damaged the count so much that it must be set aside.

Democratic poll watchers, who were also given the same access, have not raised concerns. Giuliani called evidence of fraud circumstantial at the news conference. He said he'd be filing suit in federal court, but the issue has already been before judges.

A federal judge in Philadelphia Thursday night ordered the two sides to work out an agreement on the number of poll watchers and how close they could be to the counting. The judge also voiced concerns about the safety of poll workers during the pandemic if poll watchers were allowed to peer over their shoulders.

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On Fox News Channel's "Sunday Morning Futures" Sunday, Giuliani said two additional lawsuits were in the process of being drafted, in addition to existing litigation in Pennsylvania.

By the end of this week, Giuliani predicted the campaign would have filed "four or five" lawsuits, with a total of 10 possible.

Voter fraud is extremely rare, and when it does happen, people are generally caught and prosecuted and it does not change the outcome of the election. Typically, it involves someone wanting to honor the wishes of a loved one who recently died and either knowingly or not commits a crime by filling out that ballot.

Trump campaign officials have also alleged that more than 21,000 had been cast in the name of the dead in Pennsylvania. The claims stem from a conservative legal group's lawsuit against the Secretary of State, accusing her of wrongly including some 21,000 supposedly dead residents on voter rolls.

The federal judge who has the case, John Jones, has said he was doubtful of the claims. He said the Public Interest Legal Foundation that brought the claims was asking the court to accept that there were dead people on voter rolls, and he asked for proof and questioned why they had waited until the "eleventh hour" to file suit.

"We cannot and will not take plaintiff's word for it—in an election where every vote matters, we will not disenfranchise potentially eligible voters based solely upon the allegations of a private foundation," he wrote in an Oct. 20 ruling.

Even Trump's own administration has pushed back at the claims of widespread voter fraud and illegal voting though it didn't mention Trump was the one making the allegations. The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, the federal agency that oversees U.S. election security, also noted local election offices have detection measures that "make it highly difficult to commit fraud through counterfeit ballots."

Top election officials in the battleground states of Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Pennsylvania and Nevada - both Republican and Democrat - have all said they see no widespread voting irregularities, no major instances of fraud or illegal activity.

Meanwhile, on a call with supporters Saturday, Trump campaign manager Bill Stepien encouraged them to be ready to continue the fight for Trump, including standing by for rallies and demonstrations. Other aides outlined what they argued were irregularities in the count.

And Republicans were sticking to the idea that all "legal" votes must be counted—the language freighted with a clear implication that Democrats want illegal votes counted, a claim for which there is no evidence.

It's was precarious balance for Trump's allies as they try to be supportive of the president -- and avoid risking further fallout -- but face the reality of the vote count.

According to one Republican granted anonymity to discuss the private conversation, Republicans on Capitol Hill were giving Trump the space to consider all legal options, and allowing the process to play out.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has not yet made any public statements -- neither congratulating Biden nor joining Trump's complaints about the results.

"I'm not sure his position would have changed from yesterday -- count all the votes, adjudicate all the claims," said Scott Jennings, a Republican strategist in Kentucky allied with McConnell. "My sense is there's won't be any tolerance for beyond what the law allows. There will be tolerance for what the law allows."

It was a view being echoed by several other Republicans neither supporting or rejecting the outcome.

"Nothing that I've seen regarding the election raises a legal issue that could succeed. There is just is nothing there," said Barry Richard, who represented George W. Bush in the 2000 recount in Florida that ended up before the U.S. Supreme Court. "When these kind of lawsuits are filed it just breeds contempt for the whole legal system," he said.

Associated Press Writers Lisa Mascaro and Meg Kinnard in Columbia, S.C. contributed to this report.

Injured Big Ben rallies unbeaten Steelers past Cowboys 24-19

By SCHUYLER DIXON AP Pro Football Writer

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP) — Ben Roethlisberger limped around the backfield directing his receivers this

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way and that, occasionally reaching for a left knee injured during the second-quarter drive while completing every pass and leading the Steelers to their first points.

The limp was gone as the 38-year-old engineered a fourth-quarter comeback that kept Pittsburgh as the NFL's only unbeaten team.

Roethlisberger threw all three of his touchdown passes after shrugging off the injury, and the Steelers improved to 8-0 for the first time in the storied franchise's history, avoiding what might have been the biggest upset of this NFL season in a 24-19 victory over the Dallas Cowboys on Sunday.

"We're humbled and honored to be in that group," coach Mike Tomlin said. "It's not without its trials today obviously. Some of it was created by us. We can't keep having these conversations every week because one of these weeks we'll be doing it with an 'L' if we're not careful."

Garrett Gilbert was the fourth different starting quarterback in five games for the Cowboys (2-7), who were the biggest underdogs they've been at home in at least 31 years.

While throwing a touchdown in his first career start six years after he was drafted and bringing some life to an offense that hadn't reached the end zone in two games, Gilbert couldn't stop a losing streak now at four games. Those are the four games Dallas has been without star Dak Prescott, out for the season with a broken ankle.

"I don't know what I expected going into the first one," said Gilbert, a former Texas quarterback who finished his college career at nearby SMU. "It was exciting to get out there and play and get to lead those guys."

The Steelers erased a 10-point deficit in the fourth quarter with three scoring drives, the last two aided by Dallas penalties that kept drives alive. The go-ahead score with 2:14 remaining was an 8-yarder TD toss to Eric Ebron, who hurdled Saivion Smith at the goal line.

The drive to the decisive score appeared to have stalled before it started when Roethlisberger threw incomplete on third down. But linebacker Jaylon Smith was called for hitting Roethlisberger's facemask after the throw, and the 17-year veteran signaled as much to referee Tony Corrente.

"I just don't want to let my guys down," Roethlisberger said. "I think that so many times, the line and guys are looking at me on the sideline, 'Ben, we believe in you.' So I want to give everything I have."

Gilbert had a last chance in the final minute after Tomlin tried to convert a fourth-and-1 instead of kicking a short field goal for an eight-point lead. But on the final play from the Pittsburgh 23, a pass to the goal line was knocked away by Minkah Fitzpatrick.

Roethlisberger's first touchdown came after he injured his left knee after a throw on a hit from defensive tackle Neville Gallimore. Limping and grabbing at the left knee between plays, Roethlisberger still completed four straight passes, capped by a 17-yarder to James Washington for Pittsburgh's first points late in the first half.

Roethlisberger went to the locker room after the TD, and Mason Rudolph had to replace him when rookie Dallas receiver CeeDee fumbled after a catch. The Steelers settled for Chris Boswell's franchise-record 59-yard field goal for a 13-9 halftime deficit.

Roethlisberger returned in the second half and finished 29 of 42 for 306 yards as the Steelers overcame a season-low 46 yards rushing.

"Someone hit me right on the side of the knee, kind of bent my knee a little bit," Roethlisberger said. "Just had some discomfort."

Gilbert's first touchdown pass was a 20-yarder to Lamb for a 10-0 lead in the second quarter. He was the second straight Dallas quarterback to make his first career start after rookie Ben DiNucci last week and finished 21 of 38 for 243 yards.

The Cowboys led 19-15 and were driving early in the fourth quarter when Gilbert was hit as he threw by Cam Heyward, and Fitzpatrick intercepted the fluttering pass in the end zone.

Starting at the 1 and getting help from an illegal contact penalty that erased a potential turnover on a fumble by Roethlisberger, the Steelers drove and Boswell hit a 43-yard field goal to get within a point.

RECORD START TO CAREER

The victory means Tomlin will tie Marty Schottenheimer's NFL record of 14 straight seasons (1984-97)

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with at least a .500 record to start a coaching career.

UP-AND-DOWN DAY

Boswell's 59-yarder was his career long, but he missed two PATs that could have been a factor late. One was wide, the other blocked by Tyrone Crawford.

INJURIES

Cowboys: Joe Looney replaced Tyler Biadasz at center after the rookie injured his hamstring during warmups. Looney was the starter before a knee injury sidelined him for three games, opening the door for Biadasz.

UP NEXT

Steelers: Cincinnati at home next Sunday.

Cowboys: Open week, followed by visit to Minnesota on Nov. 22.

More AP NFL coverage: <https://apnews.com/NFL> and https://twitter.com/AP_NFL

Trebek remembered for grace that elevated him above TV host

By LYNN ELBER AP Television Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Alex Trebek never pretended to have all the answers, but the "Jeopardy!" host became an inspiration and solace to Americans who otherwise are at odds with each other.

He looked and sounded the part of a senior statesman, impeccably suited and groomed and with an authoritative voice any politician would covet. He commanded his turf — the quiz show's stage — but refused to overshadow its brainy contestants.

And when he faced the challenge of pancreatic cancer, which claimed his life Sunday at age 80, he was honest, optimistic and graceful. Trebek died at his Los Angeles home, surrounded by family and friends, "Jeopardy!" studio Sony said.

The Canadian-born host made a point of informing fans about his health directly, in a series of brief online videos. He faced the camera and spoke in a calm, even tone as he revealed his illness and hope for a cure in the first message, posted in March 2019.

"Now normally, the prognosis for this is not very encouraging, but I'm going to fight this and I'm going to keep working," Trebek said, even managing a wisecrack: He had to beat the disease because his "Jeopardy!" contract had three more years to run.

Trebek's death came less than four months after that of civil rights leader and U.S. Rep. John Lewis, also of advanced pancreatic cancer and at age 80. Trebek had offered him words of encouragement last January.

In a memoir published this year, "The Answer Is ... Reflections on My Life," Trebek suggested that he's known but not celebrated, and compared himself to a visiting relative who TV viewers find "comforting and reassuring as opposed to being impressed by me."

That was contradicted Sunday by the messages of grief and respect from former contestants, celebrities and the wider public that quickly followed news of his loss.

"Alex wasn't just the best ever at what he did. He was also a lovely and deeply decent man, and I'm grateful for every minute I got to spend with him," tweeted "Jeopardy!" champion Ken Jennings. "Thinking today about his family and his Jeopardy! family — which, in a way, included millions of us."

"It was one of the great privileges of my life to spend time with this courageous man while he fought the battle of his life. You will never be replaced in our hearts, Alex," James Holzhauer, another "Jeopardy!" star, posted on Twitter.

Recent winner Burt Thakur tweeted that he was "overwhelmed with emotion." When he appeared on Friday's show, Thakur recounted learning English diction as a child from watching Trebek on "Jeopardy!" with his grandfather.

The program tapes weeks of shows in advance, and the remaining episodes with Trebek will air through Dec. 25, a Sony spokeswoman said.

"Jeopardy!" bills itself as "America's favorite quiz show" and captivated the public with a unique format

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in which contestants were told the answers and had to provide the questions on a variety of subjects, including movies, politics, history and popular culture.

They would answer by saying "What is ... ?" or "Who is ?"

Trebek, who became its host in 1984, was a master of the format, engaging in friendly banter with contestants, appearing genuinely pleased when they answered correctly and, at the same time, moving the game along in a brisk no-nonsense fashion whenever people struggled for answers.

"I try not to take myself too seriously," he told an interviewer in 2004. "I don't want to come off as a pompous ass and indicate that I know everything when I don't."

The show was the brainstorm of Julann Griffin, wife of the late talk show host-entrepreneur Merv Griffin, who said she suggested to him one day that he create a game show where people were given the answers.

"Jeopardy!" debuted on NBC in 1964 with Art Fleming as emcee and was an immediate hit. It lasted until 1975, then was revived in syndication with Trebek.

Long identified by a full head of hair and trim mustache (though in 2001 he startled viewers by shaving his mustache, "completely on a whim"), Trebek was more than qualified for the job, having started his game show career on "Reach for the Top" in his native country.

Moving to the U.S. in 1973, he appeared on "The Wizard of Odds," "High Rollers," "The \$128,000 Question" and "Double Dare." Even during his run on "Jeopardy!," Trebek worked on other shows. In the early 1990s, he was the host of three — "Jeopardy!," "To Tell the Truth" and "Classic Concentration."

"Jeopardy!" made him famous. He won five Emmys as its host, including one last June, and received stars on both the Hollywood and Canadian walks of fame. In 2012, the show won a prestigious Peabody Award.

He taped his daily "Jeopardy!" shows at a frenetic pace, recording as many as 10 episodes (two weeks' worth) in just two days. After what was described as a mild heart attack in 2007, he was back at work in just a month.

He posted a video in January 2018 announcing he'd undergone surgery for blood clots on the brain that followed a fall he'd taken. The show was on hiatus during his recovery.

It had yet to bring in a substitute host for Trebek — save once, when he and "Wheel of Fortune" host Pat Sajak swapped their TV jobs as an April's Fool prank.

In 2012, Trebek acknowledged that he was considering retirement, but had been urged by friends to stay on so he could reach 30 years on the show. He still loved the job, he declared: "What's not to love? You have the security of a familiar environment, a familiar format, but you have the excitement of new clues and new contestants on every program. You can't beat that!"

Although many viewers considered him one of the key reasons for the show's success, Trebek himself insisted he was only there to keep things moving.

"My job is to provide the atmosphere and assistance to the contestants to get them to perform at their very best," he said in a 2012 interview. "And if I'm successful doing that, I will be perceived as a nice guy and the audience will think of me as being a bit of a star. But not if I try to steal the limelight!"

In a January 2019 interview with The Associated Press, Trebek discussed his decision to keep going with "Jeopardy!"

"It's not as if I'm overworked — we tape 46 days a year," he said. But he acknowledged he would retire someday, if he lost his edge or the job was no longer fun, adding: "And it's still fun."

Born July 22, 1940, in Sudbury, Ontario, Trebek was sent off to boarding school by his Ukrainian father and French-Canadian mother when he was barely in his teens.

After graduating high school, he spent a summer in Cincinnati to be close to a girlfriend, then returned to Canada to attend college. After earning a philosophy degree from the University of Ottawa, he went to work for the Canadian Broadcasting Co., starting as a staff announcer and eventually becoming a radio and TV reporter.

He became a U.S. citizen in 1997. Trebek's first marriage, to Elaine Callej, ended in divorce. In 1990, he married Jean Currivan, and they had two children, Emily and Matthew.

Trebek is survived by his wife, their two children and his stepdaughter, Nicky.

The Latest: Former WH officials urge cooperative transition

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Latest on President-elect Joe Biden (all times local):

6:40 p.m.

A bipartisan group from the last three White Houses is urging the Trump administration to move forward “to immediately begin the post-election transition process.”

The call from the Center for Presidential Transition advisory board comes as the General Services Administration has yet to formally recognize Democrat Joe Biden as the president-elect. That’s a necessary move to free up money for the transition and clear the way for Biden’s team to begin putting in place the transition process at agencies.

“This was a hard-fought campaign, but history is replete with examples of presidents who emerged from such campaigns to graciously assist their successors,” members of the advisory board said in a statement.

The statement was signed by Bush White House chief of staff Josh Bolten and Health and Human Services secretary Michael Leavitt as well as Bill Clinton-era chief of staff Thomas “Mack” McLarty and Obama Commerce Secretary Penny Pritzker.

12:30 p.m.

Former President George W. Bush says the American people “can have confidence that this election was fundamentally fair, its integrity will be upheld, and its outcome is clear.”

He says in a statement that “no matter how you voted, your vote counted.” And Bush says President Donald Trump has the right to request recounts and pursue legal challenges, with any unresolved issues to be “properly adjudicated.”

Bush says now is the time when “we must come together for the sake of our families and neighbors, and for our nation and its future.”

Bush says he’s spoken with Joe Biden and thanked the president-elect for what Bush says was “the patriotic message” in Biden’s national address on Saturday night after being declared the election winner.

Bush says in a statement that while he and Biden have political differences, the former president says he knows Biden “to be good man who has won his opportunity to lead and unify our country.”

HERE’S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE TRANSITION

Democrat Joe Biden has defeated President Donald Trump to become the 46th president of the United States. The inauguration is in January.

Read more:

- Americans pivot from red-hot Trump to Biden’s seasoned cool
- Trump, who never admits defeat, mulls how to keep up fight
- Message of Election 2020: Trump lost, but Trumpism did not
- Fight for Senate control awaits in Georgia after Biden’s win

WHAT ELSE IS GOING ON:

11:30 a.m.

Joe Biden began his first full day as president-elect the same way he does nearly every Sunday, heading to church near his home.

Biden entered St. Joseph on the Brandywine in Wilmington, Delaware, shortly after the start of 10:30 a.m. Mass. He typically arrives a bit late and leaves a few minutes early so the presence of Secret Service agents doesn’t bother other attendees.

It felt like any other Sunday, except for a huge swarm of media camped near the church entrance — having anticipated Biden’s arrival.

Biden entered with his daughter, Ashley, and his grandson, Hunter, the son of the president-elect’s late son, Beau, a former Delaware attorney general.

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Biden has no other public events on his schedule but is expected to swiftly move to begin appointing key members of his team for the transition to the White House, including a chief of staff.

11 a.m.

Donald Trump is spending his first day as a lame duck president golfing.

Trump arrived at his Virginia golf club just before 10 a.m. on Sunday for the second day in a row. He was welcomed by several protesters, including one who held a sign that read, "Orange Crushed."

Trump was also on the golf course Saturday when The Associated Press and other news outlets called the race for his Democratic rival, Joe Biden, because he had won enough votes to deny Trump a second term.

Trump has yet to concede the race and is continuing to baselessly dispute the results even though there is no evidence of widespread fraud.

10:25 a.m.

President-elect Joe Biden is planning to name former Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy and former FDA Commissioner Dr. David Kessler as co-chairs of the coronavirus working group he's launching this week.

Biden deputy campaign manager Kate Bedingfield announced the two public health experts would lead the task force during an appearance on NBC's "Meet the Press" on Sunday. Murthy and Kessler have been part of a group of experts and doctors that have briefed Biden on the pandemic for months throughout the campaign.

Murthy served as surgeon general during President Barack Obama's second term, and Kessler was FDA commissioner in the 1990s and now serves as board chair at the Centers for Science in the Public Interest.

Biden said during his victory speech Saturday night that he'd unveil the full COVID-19 task force on Monday. They'll be tasked with taking the proposals he's released during the campaign for dealing with the pandemic — which include investments in personal protective equipment and loans for small businesses as well as plans to implement more standardized public health guidelines — and turning them into a "blueprint" that he'll enact when inaugurated president next January.

Biden made President Donald Trump's mishandling of the pandemic a central focus of his campaign against the Republican and pledged if elected to make combating the pandemic his top priority.

10:15 a.m.

Utah Sen. Mitt Romney says that President Donald Trump is within his rights to pursue recounts and legal challenges in close races that decided last week's election but urged Trump to dial back his rhetoric.

Romney told NBC's "Meet the Press" that he thought it was unlikely that a recount or legal challenges will change the outcome and suggested Trump "be careful in the choice of words."

The Republican senator, who has been a frequent critic of Trump's, says when a president says an "election was 'corrupt' or 'stolen' or 'rigged,' that that's unfortunately rhetoric that gets picked up by authoritarians around the world."

Romney, who was the GOP's 2012 presidential nominee, added that Trump's language also "discourages confidence in our democratic process here at home."

10 a.m.

The highest-ranking Black member of Congress says President Donald Trump should concede the presidency to President-elect Joe Biden, although he says it's more crucial what the rest of the Republican Party does in the wake of the 2020 election.

U.S. House Majority Whip Jim Clyburn of South Carolina told CNN on Sunday that the GOP "has a responsibility here" and that he's watching to see "whether or not the Republican Party will step up and help us preserve the integrity of this democracy."

Clyburn also said he sees the United States as "teetering" following Trump's term, advising that "we had better get a hold of ourselves and this country and stop catering to whims of one person."

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Clyburn also talked about his endorsement of Biden ahead of South Carolina's early primary, a nod that helped boost Biden to win that contest, gain momentum and ultimately clinch the nomination. Saying the field was full of good candidates, Clyburn said he "came to the conclusion that Joe Biden was our best bet."

9 a.m.

President-elect Joe Biden will launch an "agency review teams" this coming week. It's the group of transition staffers that have access to key agencies in the current administration to smooth the transfer of power.

The teams will collect and review information such as budgetary and staffing decisions, pending regulations and other work in progress from current staff at the federal departments.

The teams are meant to lay much of the groundwork so that the thousands of new staffers and appointees who will take over in January will have a road map and guidelines for how to continue the federal government's work without pause, and how to shift the departments toward Biden's priorities.

Biden's campaign launched a transition team in May, and they've been working alongside designated staffers in President Donald Trump's administration on transition planning for months. But the agency review process begins in earnest after a new president is elected. Biden has just over 10 weeks to prepare before he is inaugurated.

On Monday, he plans to announce a team of scientists and experts that will work to craft a coronavirus response plan that can be enacted when he takes office.

Biden's transition team has also come out with a transition-focused website — BuildBackBetter.com — and is launching transition-focused social media accounts under the username "Transition46."

Norm Crosby, comic mangler of language, dies at 93

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Norm Crosby, the deadpan mangler of the English language who thrived in the 1960s, '70s and '80s as a television, nightclub and casino comedian, has died. He was 93.

Crosby's daughter-in-law, Maggie Crosby, told The New York Times that the comic died Saturday of heart failure in Los Angeles.

Early in his career, Crosby had realized he needed a gimmick to differentiate himself from the burgeoning generation of comedians who were achieving fame on the many network TV variety shows.

"I was looking around for fresh ideas, and I kept hearing people misuse words," he told an interviewer in 1989. "So I started to use it in my act."

He called the famed baby doctor Benjamin Spock "Dr. Spook." With straight-faced sincerity, he said people "should have an apathy for one another; they should have rappaport for each other." Today's kids, he said, "gotta cut that umbrella cord and split."

Crosby's first steady work as a comic came at Blinstrub's in his native Boston, which led to an engagement in the early 1960s at the prestigious Latin Quarter in New York.

In his widely read newspaper column, Walter Winchell gave the comedian a rave, and offers from Johnny Carson and other TV shows and club dates poured in. Crosby became a favorite at the major Las Vegas and Atlantic City casinos and played theaters, including many times at London's Palladium, and concert halls. He also was a regular guest on Dean Martin's celebrity roasts.

Starting in 1978, he starred in a syndicated TV show, "Norm Crosby's Comedy Shop." For many years he served as co-host with Jerry Lewis on the Labor Day weekend telethon for muscular dystrophy.

As a public performer, Crosby thrived despite having poor hearing. During World War II, he served aboard a Coast Guard submarine chaser, and concussion from the depth charges damaged his ears. He wore a hearing aid onstage.

"I was never shy about my hearing loss, probably because I got it from military service," he explained in a 1993 interview. "I got thousands of letters from people who had said they would never get a hearing aid but had changed their minds after they saw me being open about it."

Crosby was a longtime spokesman for the Better Hearing Institute and hosted an annual golf benefit for the cause. In 2009, he was among those honored by the Starkey Hearing Foundation, which raised

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funds to distribute hearing aids to children in need.

Norman Lawrence Crosby was born in Boston in 1927. "Like most comedians, I was the funny kid in the family and in the neighborhood," he explained in 1993. "I was always told I should entertain."

The war intervened, but after his discharge, he saw the practical value of a steady job over show business and enrolled at the Boston School of Art. He worked as a commercial artist and for a while ran a small advertising agency. But he still devoted evenings and weekends to honing his performing skills.

In October 2001, Crosby appeared at a Friars Club benefit honoring TV producer Aaron Spelling, who had been ailing with cancer. Instead of his usual word play, the comedian performed a parody of the Gettysburg address in which he praised Spelling.

Crosby married Joan Crane Foley in 1966. They had two children.

Mexico, Brazil leaders silent as world congratulates Biden

By MARK STEVENSON and DÉBORA ÁLVARES undefined

MEXICO CITY (AP) — There were two notable holdouts among the world leaders who rushed to congratulate Joe Biden on his victory in the U.S. elections: the leaders of Latin America's two largest countries, both of whom have been seen as friendly to President Donald Trump.

President Jair Bolsonaro of Brazil, sometimes dubbed "the Trump of the Tropics" for his populist, off-the-cuff style, has kept silent on Trump's loss. And Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador refused to congratulate Biden at this point, saying he would wait until the legal challenges over the vote were resolved.

Trump and the two Latin leaders are united by some surface similarities: They dislike wearing masks during the coronavirus pandemic, and all three can loosely be described as populist and nationalist. But the motives of the two Latin leaders may differ.

Bolsonaro and his sons — who like Trump's children play a role on the political scene — seem to be actively uncomfortable with the outcome of the U.S. race. Bolsonaro, who previously expressed hope for Trump's reelection and whose son wore hats with the logo "Trump 2020," has kept largely silent this week, but his sons haven't.

Congressman Eduardo Bolsonaro posted images on social media questioning how Biden's votes were rising so quickly in later counts, while Trump's weren't. The younger Bolsonaro also questioned networks' decision to cut away from Trump's speech on Wednesday alleging vote fraud, calling it an attack on freedom of speech.

A senior official of the Brazilian Embassy in the United States, who cannot identify himself for fear of reprisals, said Brazilian officials fear that loose talk by Bolsonaro or his sons could destabilize relations between countries.

Officials in the office of the presidency, who were not authorized to speak on the record, said Bolsonaro has been adopting a more pragmatic tone, at least since Wednesday, following the guidance of his advisers.

At the beginning of the week, some of the more ideological elements in Bolsonaro's office believed in a Trump victory, but since then, the diplomatic staff has made contact with Biden's campaign.

López Obrador's cordial relationship with Trump, meanwhile, was often seen as unusual for a left-leaning politician, but it had a workmanlike basis.

In part, that is political realism: In 2019, Trump threatened to apply crippling tariffs on Mexican products unless López Obrador cracked down on Central American migrants crossing Mexico to reach the U.S. border. Mexico complied, rounding up migrants and busing them back to their home countries.

But there were also moments of seeming real friendship between the two. On Saturday, López Obrador was one of the few world leaders still willing to heap praise on Trump.

"President Trump has been very respectful of us, and we have reached very good agreements, and we thank him because he has not interfered and has respected us," López Obrador said.

And López Obrador angered many at home and in the U.S. Democratic Party when he made his first — and so far only — trip abroad as president over the summer to meet with Trump to celebrate the enactment of the new U.S.-Mexico-Canada free trade agreement, which both leaders viewed as fixing problems

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with the old North American Free Trade Agreement of the 1990s.

López Obrador didn't meet with Biden or his campaign team during that trip, and the wounds are still apparently there, even though the Mexican president said he knows Biden and had "very good relations" with him.

Rep. Joaquin Castro, the Democratic congressman for Texas' 20th District, wrote in Spanish in his Twitter account that the unwillingness to congratulate Biden "represents a true diplomatic failure on the part of Andrés Manuel López Obrador, at a moment in which the incoming Biden administration is seeking to start a new era of friendship and cooperation with Mexico."

Rep. Jesús García, a Democrat from Illinois' 4th District, wrote in a similar vein to López Obrador that "American voters have spoken and Joe Biden is our President Elect. He won fair and square. Don't miss the boat."

Democrats are unlikely to be as vindictive toward Mexico as the Trump administration once appeared to be, with its focus on building a border wall and threats of punishing tariffs. But a Biden administration that only quietly presses Mexico to limit migrant crossings could leave López Obrador in a more uncomfortable position.

Mexico was able to easily crack down on migrant caravans in 2019 and 2020 because appeasing open U.S. pressure is fairly understandable if distasteful at home; but asking Mexico to do so without open threats would be more politically costly for López Obrador.

The Mexican president might fear reprisals in the short time Trump has left in office, but his failure to patch up any hurt feelings with the Biden team is already exposing López Obrador to criticism at home.

"To quote (Mexican singer) Juan Gabriel, 'What do you gain?'" the newspaper El Universal said in an editorial Sunday. "Donald Trump will be president for two more months, but Joe Biden will be president for four more years! And we have already started off this relationship on the wrong foot."

Former U.S. Ambassador to Mexico Antonio Garza disagreed.

"It seems a bit clumsy, and perhaps an early opportunity missed. But by inauguration day (it) will hardly matter," he said.

Garza, now a counsel to the White & Case law firm in Mexico City, wrote that he is "convinced that the Biden administration will be committed to solid relationships with the U.S.'s neighbors, and that given both Canada and Mexico's importance to trade, immigration and security that the focus will be on addressing those issues cooperatively."

"Look," he added, "there are simply too many other hot spots in the world for our next president to be sweating this misstep."

Associated Press writer Mark Stevenson reported this story in Mexico City and AP writer Debora Alvares reported from Brasilia, Brazil.

Biden seeks to move quickly and build out his administration

By WILL WEISSERT, ALEXANDRA JAFFE, and AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP) — President-elect Joe Biden signaled on Sunday he plans to move quickly to build out his government, focusing first on the raging pandemic that will likely dominate the early days of his administration.

Biden named a former surgeon general, Dr. Vivek Murthy, and a former Food and Drug Administration commissioner, David Kessler, as co-chairs of a coronavirus working group set to get started, with other members expected to be announced Monday.

Transition team officials said that also this week Biden will launch his agency review teams, the group of transition staffers that have access to key agencies in the current administration to ease the transfer of power. The teams will collect and review information such as budgetary and staffing decisions, pending regulations and other work in progress from current staff at the departments to help Biden's team prepare to transition. White House officials would not comment on whether they would cooperate with

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Biden's team on the review.

"People want the country to move forward," said Kate Bedingfield, Biden deputy campaign manager, in an interview on NBC's "Meet the Press, and see Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris "have the opportunity to do the work, to get the virus under control and to get our economy back together."

It's unclear for now whether President Donald Trump and his administration will cooperate. He has yet to acknowledge Biden's victory and has pledged to mount legal challenges in several closely contested states that decided the race.

Biden adviser Jen Psaki pressed for the Trump-appointed head of the General Services Administration to quickly recognize Biden as the president-elect, which would free up money for the transition and clear the way for Biden's team to begin putting in place the transition process at agencies.

"America's national security and economic interests depend on the federal government signaling clearly and swiftly that the United States government will respect the will of the American people and engage in a smooth and peaceful transfer of power," Psaki said in a Twitter posting.

A GSA official said Sunday that step had not been taken yet.

A bipartisan group of administration officials from the Barack Obama, George W. Bush, and Bill Clinton administrations on Sunday called on the Trump administration to move forward "to immediately begin the post-election transition process."

"This was a hard-fought campaign, but history is replete with examples of presidents who emerged from such campaigns to graciously assist their successors," members of the Center for Presidential Transition advisory board said in a statement.

The statement was signed by Bush White House chief of staff Josh Bolten and Health and Human Services Secretary Michael Leavitt as well as Bill Clinton-era chief of staff Thomas "Mack" McLarty and Obama Commerce Secretary Penny Pritzker.

Biden aides said the president-elect and transition team had been in touch with Republican lawmakers. Israel's prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, one of Trump's closest allies, opened a Cabinet meeting on Sunday by congratulating Biden, a former vice president and longtime senator.

"I have a long and warm personal connection with Joe Biden for nearly 40 years, and I know him as a great friend of the state of Israel," Netanyahu said. "I am certain that we will continue to work with both of them in order to further strengthen the special alliance between Israel and the U.S."

George W. Bush, the sole living Republican former president, also wished Biden well.

"Though we have political differences, I know Joe Biden to be a good man, who has won his opportunity to lead and unify our country," Bush said.

Biden faces key staffing decisions in the days ahead. The always-frenzied 10-week transition period before Inauguration Day on Jan. 20 already has been shortened by the extra time it took to determine the winner of Tuesday's election.

The second Catholic to be elected president, Biden started his first full day as president-elect by attending church at St. Joseph on the Brandywine near his home in Wilmington, as he does nearly every week. After the service, he visited the church cemetery where several family members have been laid to rest, including his late son, Beau.

Beau Biden, a former Delaware attorney general, died in 2015 from cancer. Before his death, he had encouraged his father to make a third run for the White House.

Joe Biden said Saturday in a victory speech that he would announce a task force of scientists and experts Monday to develop a "blueprint" to begin beating back the virus by the time he assumes the presidency. He said his plan would be "built on bedrock science" and "constructed out of compassion, empathy and concern."

Murthy, who had advised Biden during the campaign, was named to a four-year term as surgeon general in 2014 by President Barack Obama. Murthy was asked to resign by Trump months into the Republican's term. Kessler was appointed as FDA commissioner by President George H.W. Bush and served in the position through President Bill Clinton's first term in the White House.

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Biden senior adviser Ted Kaufman said the transition team will focus on the “nuts and bolts” of building the new administration in coming days.

Biden may not make top Cabinet choices for weeks. But he built his presidential run around bipartisanship and he has spent the days since Tuesday’s election pledging to be a president for all Americans. That suggests he could be willing to appoint some Republicans to high-profile administration positions.

Many former Republican officeholders broke with Trump to endorse Biden’s campaign. Biden’s selection of some of them to join the new government could appease Senate Republicans, who may have to confirm many of Biden’s choices for top jobs. The GOP could retain control of the chamber after two special elections in Georgia on Jan. 5.

Still, too much across-the-aisle cooperation could draw the ire of progressives. Some already worry that uncooperative Senate Republicans could force Biden to scale back his ambitious campaign promises to expand access to health care and lead a post-pandemic economic recovery that relies on federal investment in green technology and jobs to help combat climate change.

“I think there will be a huge misuse of the word ‘unity’ to imply that we need to water down the ideas that Joe Biden just campaigned on,” said Adam Green, co-founder of the Progressive Change Campaign Committee. He said the country was more united around bold solutions to big problems than small-scale efforts.

Biden’s efforts at bipartisan reconciliation could still be derailed by Trump’s refusing to concede the race.

Symone Sanders, a Biden campaign senior adviser, said that while several Republican lawmakers have been in contact with the president-elect in recent days, the campaign has yet to hear from White House officials.

“I think the White House has made clear what their strategy is here and that they are going to continue to participate and push forward these flailing and, in many — in many respects, baseless legal strategies,” Sanders said on CNN’s “State of the Union.”

Sen. Mitt Romney, R-Utah, said Trump had a right to pursue recounts and legal challenges. But he noted that those efforts will unlikely change the outcome and he urged the president to dial back his rhetoric.

“I think one has to be careful in the choice of words. I think when you say the election was corrupt or stolen or rigged that that’s unfortunately rhetoric that gets picked up by authoritarians around the world. And I think it also discourages confidence in our democratic process here at home,” Romney said on NBC.

Madhani reported from Chicago. Associated Press writers Zeke Miller in Washington and Steve Peoples in New York contributed to this report.

Christian churches mirror country’s political division

By LUIS ANDRES HENAO and DAVID CRARY Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The messages in Christian houses of worship on the first weekend since the election were as divided as the country’s electorate, with religious leaders mostly calling for peace and unification even as some bemoaned the result and others celebrated.

Hours after the news broke Saturday of Democrat Joe Biden’s victory, St. Joseph on the Brandywine Deacon Michael Stankewicz led a prayer during afternoon Mass at the president-elect’s home church in Wilmington, Delaware, in which he asked “that our newly elected officials lead with wisdom and integrity to bring about unity, peace and reconciliation in our country and around the world.”

In Oklahoma, which voted for President Donald Trump by a 2-to-1 margin, civil rights activist and minister Warren G. Blakney Sr. started the Sunday morning service at North Peoria Church of Christ by noting the toll the virus is taking on his hometown of Tulsa and mourning the death of a church member the day before.

He offered an exultant message of political change to parishioners, saying the election provides the catalyst “to begin to celebrate a new era.”

“Aren’t you glad that 74 million hearts don’t want that stuff no more? I voted for change. I know that in January better days are coming,” Blakney said, shouting to make himself heard over the car horns being

honked in agreement by worshippers attending the parking lot service.

Other faith leaders sounded a note of concern.

Pastor Matt Hagee of Cornerstone Church in San Antonio lamented a troubled world, and said "the cure," which was the main theme for his Sunday sermon, was Jesus Christ.

Without explicitly naming the president- and vice president-elect, he criticized public officials, abortion and what he called censorship of "the word of God." Last year, Biden shifted his stance on abortion to back an end to restrictions on government funding for the procedure.

"Something's wrong when it doesn't take a lot of effort to fill the streets with protesters, but you have to beg and plead to fill a church with prayer warriors. Something's wrong when the word of God is censored as hate speech and public officials can blatantly lie and be called servants. Something's wrong when we can murder unborn children and call it health care," Hagee said in the livestreamed service.

His father, prominent megachurch pastor and conservative activist John Hagee, returned to Cornerstone on Sunday after being diagnosed with COVID-19 last month. The 80-year-old pastor has been a staunch supporter of President Donald Trump.

During a brief appearance on stage, he told worshippers to dream big and "expand the tent," and cited political reasons in extolling the church's educational work.

"We built a world-class school for our young people who are going to become the leaders of tomorrow, who are not infected with the socialist ideas that children are hearing now in public schools," he said.

The elder Hagee later lamented the "miserable year" and challenged congregants to "forget it" and move on.

"Go home today, take a shower and shake it out of your hair," he said. "Turn off the fake news, and start expecting God to do a good thing."

Henao reported from Jersey City, NJ. Global religion editor Sally Stapleton contributed from New York.

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

Astronauts arrive at launch site for 2nd SpaceX crew flight

By MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — Four astronauts arrived at Kennedy Space Center on Sunday for SpaceX's second crew launch, coming up next weekend.

For NASA, it marks the long-awaited start of regular crew rotations at the International Space Station, with private companies providing the lifts. There will be double the number of astronauts as the test flight earlier this year, and their mission will last a full six months.

"Make no mistake: Every flight is a test flight when it comes to space travel. But it's also true that we need to routinely be able to go to the International Space Station," NASA Administrator Jim Bridenstine said in welcoming the astronauts to Kennedy.

The crew of three Americans and one Japanese are scheduled to rocket away Saturday night, provided approaching Tropical Storm Eta doesn't interfere. It will be a speedy trip to the space station, a six-orbit express lasting under nine hours.

The astronauts have named their Dragon capsule Resilience given all the challenges of 2020: coronavirus and social isolation, protests against racial injustice, and a particularly difficult election and campaign season. They have been in quarantine for a week or two and taking safety precautions — masks and social distancing — long before that.

"It's been a tough year for everybody for a lot of different reasons," crew commander Mike Hopkins said after flying in from Houston. "We felt like if the name of our vehicle could give a little hope, a little inspiration, put a smile on people's face, then that is definitely what we wanted to do."

The four will remain in orbit until spring, when their replacements arrive aboard another SpaceX Dragon

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capsule. The cargo version of the capsule also will keep making regular deliveries of food and supplies. SpaceX's Benji Reed said the company expects to launch seven Dragons over the next 14 months: three for crew and four for cargo.

"Every time there's a Dragon launch, there will be two Dragons in space," said Reed, director of crew mission management.

NASA's other hired taxi service, meanwhile, Boeing, isn't expected to fly its first crew until next summer. The company plans a second uncrewed test flight in a couple months; the first one suffered so many software problems that the Starliner capsule failed to reach the space station.

NASA turned to private companies for space station deliveries — cargo, then crew — following the shuttle fleet's retirement in 2011. U.S. astronauts kept hitching rides on Russian rockets at increasingly steep prices. The last Soyuz ticket cost NASA \$90 million.

SpaceX finally ended NASA's nearly decade-long launch drought for astronauts last May, successfully delivering a pair of test pilots to the space station from Kennedy for a two-month stay. The returning capsule was scrutinized by SpaceX following its splashdown, resulting in a few changes for this second flight.

Engineers discovered excessive erosion in the heat shield from the searing reentry temperatures; the company shored up the vulnerable section for the upcoming launch, said SpaceX's Hans Koenigsmann, a vice president. Improvements also were made to the altitude-measuring system for the parachutes, after the chutes opened a little too low on the first astronaut flight. More recently, the Falcon rocket had two engines replaced because of contamination from a red lacquer used in processing. The engine swaps delayed the flight two weeks.

Perhaps the biggest surprise from the first SpaceX crew flight was all the private boats full of gawkers who surrounded the capsule in the Gulf of Mexico following splashdown in August. Koenigsmann promises a bigger keep-out zone and more patrols for future returns.

The second crew has three veteran fliers and one first-timer:

— Hopkins, 51, is an Air Force colonel and former space station resident who grew up on a hog and cattle farm in Missouri.

— Navy Cmdr. Victor Glover, 44, is the pilot and the lone space rookie; he's from the Los Angeles area and will be the first African American astronaut to move into the space station for a long stay.

— Shannon Walker, 55, a Houston-born-and-raised physicist, also has lived before on the space station; her husband, retired astronaut Andrew Thomas, helped build the outpost.

— The Japanese Space Agency's Soichi Noguchi, 55, another former station resident, will become the first person in decades to launch on three kinds of rocketships; he's already flown on a U.S. space shuttle and Russian Soyuz.

They will join two Russians and one American who arrived at the space station last month from Kazakhstan.

Hopkins and his crew will ride to the launch pad in Teslas — SpaceX founder Elon Musk's other company — in spacesuits color-coordinated with the spacecraft. But beneath all the good looks is "lots of amazing capability," according to Glover.

"It's a very sleek capsule. But it's got the advantage of having great leaps in technology since the last time we built spacecraft here in this country," Walker said in a recent interview with The Associated Press.

Noguchi, who along with Walker joined the crew just this year, is particularly excited about riding a Dragon. In Japan, the dragon is an esteemed mythical creature — "almost a ride to the heaven."

"It's quite a privilege to learn how to train the Dragon actually, how to ride a Dragon," he said. "SpaceX did pretty good job teaching from scratch to dragon rider in six months."

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.

Nursing home COVID-19 cases rise four-fold in surge states

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By RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Despite Trump administration efforts to erect a protective shield around nursing homes, coronavirus cases are surging within facilities in states hard hit by the latest onslaught of COVID-19.

An analysis of federal data from 20 states for The Associated Press finds that new weekly cases among residents rose nearly four-fold from the end of May to late October, from 1,083 to 4,274. Resident deaths more than doubled, from 318 a week to 699, according to the study by University of Chicago health researchers Rebecca Gorges and Tamara Konetzka.

Equally concerning, weekly cases among nursing home staff in surge states more than quadrupled, from 855 the week ending May 31, to 4,050 the week ending Oct. 25. That rings alarms because infected staffers not yet showing symptoms are seen as the most likely way the virus gets into facilities. When those unwitting staffers test positive, they are sidelined from caring for residents, raising pressures on remaining staff.

The administration has allocated \$5 billion to nursing homes, shipped nearly 14,000 fast-test machines with a goal of supplying every facility and tried to shore up stocks of protective equipment. But the data call into question the broader White House game plan, one that pushes states to reopen while maintaining that vulnerable people can be cocooned, even if the virus rebounds around them.

"Trying to protect nursing home residents without controlling community spread is a losing battle," said Konetzka, a nationally recognized expert on long-term care. "Someone has to care for vulnerable nursing home residents, and those caregivers move in and out of the nursing home daily, providing an easy pathway for the virus to enter."

The nation is setting records for coronavirus cases heading into cold weather season when many experts expect the virus will be harder to contain. The seven-day rolling average for daily new cases stood at nearly 104,000 on Saturday, according to data from Johns Hopkins University.

Nursing homes and other long-term care facilities account for about 1% of the U.S. population, but represent 40% of COVID-19 deaths, according to the COVID Tracking Project.

In Fort Dodge, a manufacturing and transportation center in north-central Iowa, Julie Thorson said she knew she was in for a bad week when several employees at the Friendship Haven nursing home tested positive last Monday. As president of the senior living community, Thorson contacted the county health department. "They were basically not surprised because they're seeing it all over the county," she said.

Residents also started testing positive. The facility had 11 new cases among residents, as of Friday.

"I was thinking all night what's worse, to have it hit and not know what you are getting into, or to prepare, prepare, and prepare, and then have it hit," she said.

Responding to the study findings, the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services issued a statement saying that "the bottom line is that the COVID-19 pandemic's effect on nursing homes is complex and multifactorial."

The agency noted different ways the administration has worked to help nursing homes and said its focus now was on ensuring that residents and staff would "immediately" have access to a vaccine once approved. But it also added that facilities "bear the primary responsibility for keeping their residents safe."

"Many times, the likely causes of nursing home outbreaks are simply nursing homes failing to comply with basic infection control rules," the statement said.

But Konetzka said her research has shown that nursing home quality has no significant effect on cases and deaths once community spread is factored in. "It's not like the high-quality facilities have figured out how to do things better," she said. Other academic experts have reached similar conclusions.

Highly rated by Medicare, St. Paul Elder Services in Kaukauna, Wisconsin, has had 72 COVID-19 cases among residents and 74 among staff, according to its Facebook page. The first case among residents was Aug. 19, and 15 have died, said the facility's president, Sondra Norder.

"The outcomes are really not much different here than they were in New York back earlier in the pandemic," Norder said. "It's been called the perfect killing machine of the elderly, especially those who live in congregate settings." Kaukauna is a small city about 100 miles north of Milwaukee.

The study, based on data reported by nursing homes to the government, also raised other concerns:

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— For the week ending Oct. 25, about 1 in 6 nursing homes in surge states did not report having tested staff the prior week. Government requirements call for staff testing at least weekly in areas where the virus is spreading.

— During the same period, nearly 1 in 5 nursing homes reported shortages of basic protective supplies such as masks and gowns.

— Nearly 1 in 4 facilities reported a nurse staffing shortage.

Most of the states in the study are in the middle and northern tiers of the country.

The Commons, a senior living community in Enid, Oklahoma, that includes a nursing home, is in a coronavirus hotspot. The oil and gas hub has a positive rate approaching 18%. A local mask mandate has twice been shot down, said Steven Walkingstick, CEO of The Commons.

“From my standpoint, a mandate unfortunately is needed,” said Walkingstick. “I don’t want the government involved, but evidence has shown we are not going to do this voluntarily.”

Walkingstick said he believes the U.S. has gotten better at saving the lives of COVID-19 patients, but not at keeping the virus out of nursing homes.

Thorson, head of the Fort Dodge facility, said it takes a lot of effort to try to keep the virus out, and it’s demoralizing to see it break through.

“Don’t forget about us, because we are still here, doing the best we can in rural areas,” she said.

The 20 states analyzed in the study were Alaska, Arkansas, Iowa, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Utah, Wisconsin, West Virginia, and Wyoming. They were selected because they’re now seeing their highest hospitalization rates for COVID-19.

UK honors war dead in scaled-back Remembrance Sunday service

By PAN PYLAS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — In a scaled-back service, Queen Elizabeth II led tributes Sunday to those from the U.K. and the Commonwealth who perished in wartime, as most veterans paid their respects at home as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

The 94-year-old monarch looked on from a balcony at a government building above the Cenotaph on Whitehall in central London on the 100th year anniversary of the memorial’s installation following the conclusion of World War I. The Cenotaph was officially unveiled on Nov. 11, 1920, two years to the day after the armistice was signed that brought an end to hostilities.

Following a two-minute silence at 11 a.m., Prince Charles laid a wreath on the queen’s behalf during the Remembrance Sunday commemoration. Others, including Charles’ oldest son, Prince William and Prime Minister Boris Johnson, also laid wreaths in honor of those who have perished in wartime. Leaders from across the political spectrum, including former prime ministers, were also present.

The public were unable to attend this year, with the event taking place during a second national lockdown in England, and were instead encouraged to take part in the two-minute silence at home.

In other years, the commemoration is packed with thousands of veterans and military personnel. In Sunday’s service, there were less than 30 veterans in attendance and everyone present observed social distancing rules though mask wearing wasn’t mandatory in the outdoor setting.

Though the service was very different, people up and down the land took time out to honor the war dead. Small services were permitted.

World War II veteran Seymour “Bill” Taylor, who turns 96 next month, usually attends the service but paid his respects outside his home in Colchester, around 65 miles (105 kilometers) northeast of London, with the support of his neighbors.

“It’s something that’s really special and it means an awful lot,” he said. “I shall remember it as a good day.”

Charles’ other son, Prince Harry, wasn’t present but spoke about what serving for his country in Afghanistan meant to him.

“Being able to wear my uniform, being able to stand up in service of one’s country, these are amongst

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the greatest honors there are in life," Harry said in a podcast. "To me, the uniform is a symbol of something much bigger, it's symbolic of our commitment to protecting our country, as well as protecting our values."

Gen. Nick Carter, chief of the defense staff, said remembrance services still hold relevance today even though there is no one alive who served in World War I and the number of veterans from World War II are dwindling.

"We have to remember that history might not repeat itself but it has a rhythm and if you look back at the last century, before both world wars, I think it was unarguable that there was escalation which led to the miscalculation which ultimately led to war at a scale we would hopefully never see again," he said in an interview with Sky News.

"We need to be conscious of those risks and that's why remembrance matters," he added.

One week in an America riven by politics and the plague

By JERRY SCHWARTZ Associated Press

On Nov. 1, as election week dawned, Dr. Juan Fitz lay dying in the same Lubbock, Texas, hospital where he had worked in the emergency room for nearly 20 years.

Months before, he had told a professional journal of his fear that he would bring COVID-19 home to his two young children. But the Army veteran persisted: "Like I tell my students and residents, 'I am airborne, I am cavalry, I go into the thick of it and, challenged by the situation, find ways to improve and sort things out.'"

Now he was on a ventilator, and his time was ticking away.

On that same day, President Donald Trump sprinted across the country, trying to seal the deal on his reelection in the waning moments of the campaign. At his fifth rally of the day, in Opa-locka, Florida, he lamented that when "You turn on the news, it's COVID, COVID, COVID, COVID."

When the predominantly mask-less crowd of thousands responded with a chant of "Fire Fauci! Fire Fauci!" the president seemed to suggest that he might contemplate dispatching one of the world's most trusted authorities on the pandemic, Dr. Anthony Fauci.

"Don't tell anybody," he said. "But let me wait till a little bit after the election."

This was just the start of an election week like none other in American history.

"Voting is a civic sacrament," the Rev. Theodore Hesburgh, the famed president of the University of Notre Dame, once said. But in 2020, as a viral plague and corrosive politics converged, there was no time and little inclination to celebrate democracy — there was just partisan bile, and a mounting roll of the sick and the dead.

Federal authorities sent an astonishing message to the states on Aug. 27, the day Trump accepted the Republican nomination for a second term: Be ready to distribute a COVID-19 vaccine on Nov. 1.

The memo stoked suspicions that the administration was going to play politics with the pandemic, rushing a vaccine to the market to bolster its chances.

It didn't happen. Instead, the election coincided with an astounding escalation in the spread of the disease: On Friday, even as vote counting continued in Pennsylvania, Nevada and elsewhere, the number of cases reported hit a record 126,480. The death toll that day was 1,146.

Among the dead: David Andahl, 55, a candidate for the North Dakota Legislature. He was careful about the disease but fell ill, said his mother, Pat Andahl. He died Monday; the next day, he was elected.

Also, a poll worker in St. Charles County, Missouri, who tested positive for the coronavirus on Oct. 30. She worked on Election Day anyway, and died soon after.

Fear of contagion rewrote the rules of this election. There was curbside voting for the infected. Election workers spread out to limit contact. Plexiglass barriers. Tank loads of hand sanitizer — the disinfectant on voters' hands even caused a ballot scanner to jam at a polling place in Des Moines, Iowa.

There also were masks everywhere, though some resisted. "We tell them 'Sir or ma'am' — it is mostly sir — 'you are not supposed to be in here without a mask. There is a county ordinance,'" said Steve Van-

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core, elections spokesman in Broward County, Florida. "They mostly obey."

Mostly, there was an unprecedented retreat from in-person voting. For the first time, most Americans — more than 100 million — voted early, by mail or otherwise.

And it is the counting of those votes that extended the excruciating wait for an end to this election, opening the door to Trump's baseless claims that the Democrats were stealing the election from him.

Former Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge tweeted that Trump "disrespected every single American who figured out a way to safely vote amid a pandemic that has taken 235,000 lives. Not to mention those who are dutifully counting that vote. Absolutely shameful. Yet so predictable."

But others disagreed — virulently. In Detroit, Philadelphia and Phoenix, protesters demanded an end to the vote count. In a tweet, Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel pleaded for an end to "harassing & threatening calls" to her elections staff. In less than 22 hours before it was shut down, the Facebook group "Stop the Steal" attracted more than 320,000 followers.

That there are two Americas has never seemed more obvious. Each has constructed its own view of reality — of politics, of the pandemic.

Preliminary results from AP VoteCast — a survey of more than 133,000 voters and nonvoters nationwide conducted for The Associated Press by NORC at the University of Chicago — found that about 6 in 10 voters supporting former Vice President Joe Biden called the pandemic the most important issue facing the country. Only 1 in 10 Biden voters said the economy was most important. But for half of Trump voters, the top issue was the economy and jobs.

And an AP analysis found that in 376 counties with the highest number of new COVID-19 cases per capita, 93% of those counties went for Trump. Most were rural. There's little reason to believe the surge they are experiencing has changed any minds.

Was the die cast with this election — is this the way it will always be? There once was a shared assumption that Americans would come together after an election, however hard-fought.

"You call my candidate a horse thief, and I call yours a lunatic, and we both of us know it's just till election day," said the writer Stephen Vincent Benet in 1942. "It's an American custom, like eating corn on the cob. And, afterwards, we settle down quite peaceably and agree we've got a pretty good country — until next election."

But Benet also warned: "We cannot be a house divided — divided in will, divided in interest, divided in soul. We cannot be a house divided and live."

"This virus doesn't care if we voted for Donald Trump. It doesn't care if we voted for Joe Biden," Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine said Thursday. "It's coming after all of us."

DeWine had called a news conference to announce a new state health director. She replaces one who quit in June amid criticism from conservatives; another withdrew her name within hours of her appointment in September, fearing her family might be harassed.

The new health director walked into a maelstrom: COVID-19 hospitalizations reached 2,075 in Ohio on Thursday, a record and an increase of 55% over two weeks. And there were 4,961 confirmed and probable cases, another one-day record.

Nearly everywhere, the story is the same. In 43 states, the number of new infections is rising. And the tally of the dead will surely follow.

There have been more than 200 dead in Lubbock since March. The city's Covenant Medical Center has been slammed, forced to move non-COVID patients into hallways to make room for those who are infected.

This was Juan Fitz's domain. And when the 67-year-old doctor fell ill in early October, he drove himself to the medical center — he didn't want to alarm his children with an ambulance, said a friend, Christy Martinez-Garcia.

"He was a kind of a Superman," she said. "He was a superhero."

This is how she remembers him: A dandy who liked to dress well. A funny man who called himself the Hispanic Rodney Dangerfield ("I don't get no respect," he would say). Active in the Latino community.

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Honored by the American College of Emergency Physicians as a "hero of emergency medicine."

And a very proud veteran. Fittingly, his memorial service was scheduled for Nov. 11, Veterans Day. He died on Election Day. He never had an opportunity to vote.

Stacey Abrams credited for boosting Democrats in Georgia

By BILL BARROW and KAT STAFFORD Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Stacey Abrams spent years working to convince political power players that Georgia is a genuine two-party battleground, a Deep South state where the left could compete if it organized Black voters, other sporadic voters and stopped apologizing for being Democrats.

She was right.

President-elect Joe Biden is on track to become the first Democratic presidential candidate to carry the state in nearly three decades. The state's two U.S. Senate seats are heading to a runoff after Democratic candidates mounted strong challenges to Republican incumbents, and the outcome is likely to determine which party controls the chamber.

Abrams, the onetime candidate for Georgia governor who has become perhaps the nation's leading voice on voting rights, is being credited for paving those inroads. She raised millions of dollars to organize and register hundreds of thousands of voters and used her high profile to keep the party focused on the state.

"There's a lot of work that's gone into this, but Stacey really is the architect of what's been built in Georgia," said Dubose Porter, the former Georgia Democratic Party chairman and an Abrams mentor.

This week's election is the culmination of a political shift decades in the making. The GOP's advantage has slowly eroded as Atlanta and its surrounding suburbs experience explosive population growth.

Abrams said she's seen this moment coming over many election cycles.

"Georgia has had the potential for years," she said in an interview shortly before the election. "It didn't just start this cycle. This has been work that's been ongoing for nearly a decade, and I'm just proud to see it come to fruition and for it to finally receive the level of investment it deserves."

That success is fueling speculation about her future prospects. Some of her cheerleaders envision her as Democratic National Committee chairwoman or taking a prominent post in the Biden administration. Those close to Abrams suggest her likeliest next move is a rematch with Republican Gov. Brian Kemp in 2022.

She ended her 2018 campaign without explicitly conceding defeat to Kemp. She alleged systemic voter suppression by state elections officials, including Kemp, who was then Georgia's secretary of state overseeing his contest against Abrams.

Kemp steadfastly denied any wrongdoing, but the dispute resulted in a sharper focus on the state's election system and intensified Democrats' attention on voter registration, education and turnout. After her loss, Abrams formed Fair Fight to raise money to organize voters.

The 2018 campaign marked a notable shift in Georgia Democrats' overall approach.

In 2014, when Porter first insisted to the national party that his state should be financed as an emerging battleground, Democrats nominated candidates with centrist identities. Jason Carter, grandson of onetime governor and former President Jimmy Carter, challenged a Republican incumbent governor. Michelle Nunn, daughter of former Sen. Sam Nunn, was nominated for an open Senate seat.

It was a play for white voters who'd drifted to Republicans in the decades since the elder Carter and elder Nunn were Georgia's dominant political figures. It failed miserably, with Republicans winning by the same wide margins they'd secured previously to take complete control of Georgia's state and federal offices.

Amid the fallout, Abrams asserted herself. Democrats, she said, wouldn't close a gap measured in the hundreds of thousands by changing the minds of white perennial voters. They'd do it by reshaping the electorate, by exciting the expanding universe of potentially Democratic voters: the youngest native white Georgians; whites from beyond Georgia; Black voters who cast ballots sporadically; Black voters moving to Georgia from other regions; and a growing Latino and Asian-American population.

"Stacey had the vision for getting to new voters, registering them, talking to them -- and then giving them a reason to vote," Porter said.

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Glynda Carr, the president and CEO of Higher Heights, an organization focused on electing Black women, said Democratic success in Georgia is the result of work led by Black women organizers whose efforts have been impactful but largely underfunded previously.

"Change doesn't happen overnight," Carr said. "We're prepared to dig down deeper and invest further in the political possibilities of Black women's leadership."

In one sign of Abrams' growing stature, she's becoming a frequent target of Republican attacks.

As GOP Sen. Kelly Loeffler and U.S. Rep. Doug Collins battled for a Senate runoff spot, each attacked the other for previous associations with Abrams. And when Republicans gathered Friday at state GOP headquarters to falsely insist Democrats were stealing the election from President Donald Trump, Abrams' name was invoked.

"We're going to fight," roared Vernon Jones, a Black state lawmaker who backed the president's re-election. "We'll take on Antifa, Black Lives Matter, Fair Fight, Stacey Abrams and all of them."

Trump himself was an accelerating variable in Georgia's shift, pushing some white suburbanites toward Democrats.

In 2018, even as Abrams lost, Democrat Lucy McBath won an Atlanta-area congressional seat once held by Republican Newt Gingrich, the former House Speaker. McBath was re-elected Tuesday. Democrat Carolyn Bourdeaux flipped the neighboring suburban congressional district Tuesday after a narrow defeat two years ago.

Notably, whatever damage Trump did to the Republican brand in the suburbs, he maximized GOP turnout beyond urban footprints. It remains to be seen whether that non-metro spike for Republicans or the shift of suburban whites toward Democrats can last beyond Trump.

But Democrats like Atlanta resident Celeste Hackett, a Black, 44-year-old Ohio native, see the rest of their coalition as a new, hardening baseline.

"We've been coming on for 10 years now," Hackett said Saturday, as she joined hundreds of others celebrating Biden's victory in Atlanta's Freedom Park, near the Carter Presidential Library. "Stacey was the signal that it could happen. Well, it's happened. And we're going to make it happen again in January."

Stafford reported from Detroit.

Ethiopia reshuffles top officials as Tigray conflict grows

By CARA ANNA Associated Press

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — Ethiopia's prime minister announced major changes to his government's military and intelligence leadership on Sunday as he sought to defend a growing military action against the country's defiant Tigray region, and urged citizens not to target the ethnic Tigrayan people amid fears of civil war.

At least 60 people have been wounded and six killed in one location along the Tigray border alone, Doctors Without Borders said Saturday, and the United Nations warns of a major humanitarian crisis if up to 9 million people flee all-out fighting or the Tigray region remains largely cut off from the world.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's cabinet reshuffle included little explanation but appeared aimed at bringing the most outspoken supporters of the operation in Tigray to the forefront.

The former deputy of the armed forces, Gen. Birhanu Jula, becomes army chief. Foreign Minister Gedu Andargachew was reassigned as security advisor to Abiy, with Deputy Prime Minister Demeke Mekonnen replacing him. Demelash Gebremichael was removed as head of intelligence and will lead the Federal Police Commission, while former Amhara regional leader Temesgen Tiruneh steps into the role.

Birhanu told the state-owned Addis Zemen newspaper that several locations in Tigray including Dansha, Barken and areas from Shiraro to Shire are now under the federal army's control after the military operation began Wednesday. "The army has destroyed all the heavy weapons controlled by the infidel group. Now it is marching forward," he said.

The Tigray government, the Tigray People's Liberation Front, made its own claim.

A fighter jet sent to strike locations around the regional capital, Mekele, was shot down Sunday, senior

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TPLF official Getachew Reda told the region's state-affiliated Tigray Mass Media Agency.

Communications remain almost completely cut off in Tigray, with airports and roads closed, complicating efforts to verify either side's assertions. Each accuses the other of starting the fighting.

The conflict in Tigray pits two heavily armed forces against each other in the heart of the strategic but vulnerable Horn of Africa region, and experts worry that neighbors including Sudan, Eritrea and Somalia could be sucked in. The federal and Tigray governments, once allies in Ethiopia's ruling coalition, now regard each other as illegal, the result of Abiy's political reforms after taking office in 2018 that left the once-dominant TPLF feeling marginalized and targeted.

Diplomats and others assert that the conflict in Tigray could destabilize other parts of Ethiopia, Africa's second-most populous country with 110 million people, scores of ethnic groups and other regions that have sought more autonomy even as the Nobel Peace Prize-winning Abiy tries to hold the country together with exhortations of national unity.

The Tigray leader in a letter to the African Union chair, seen by The Associated Press, has warned that Ethiopian forces are preparing to launch a large-scale offensive. Debretsion Gebremichael also appeared open to talks, saying the AU was well-placed to bring parties to dialogue to "avert an all-out civil war."

Pope Francis on Sunday said he was following "with worry" the news from Ethiopia and exhorted people to "reject the temptation of armed conflict."

With international pressure on Ethiopia's prime minister growing, he has issued several statements seeking to defend what he calls a "law enforcement action" while his own military officials speak in terms of war.

Abiy's on Sunday accused the TPLF of trying to undermine his rule and "make the country ungovernable by instigating clashes along ethnic and religious lines." He accused the TPLF of a "massive military buildup" in an attempt at intimidation, and he again took aim at the local election Tigray held in September, calling it illegal.

Abiy's message, delivered in English, rejected any idea that the federal government was "equal with criminal groups," again seeming to slam the door on any dialogue with the TPLF

Tigray, for its part, has objected to the postponement of national elections until next year because of the COVID-19 pandemic, which extends Abiy's rule.

Concerns are growing that tensions over the conflict could lead to the targeting of ethnic Tigrayans. Abiy urged "all Ethiopians to take responsibility for ensuring that Tigrayans do not fall prey to any illegal activity that follows the government's actions."

On Saturday the mayor of Addis Ababa, Adanech Abebe, announced the arrests of 10 city officials in the capital, accusing them of being "keen to carry out terrorist activities."

Elias Meseret in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and Frances D'Emilio in Rome contributed.

Biden shores up fragile 'blue wall' in industrial north

By THOMAS BEAUMONT Associated Press

Joe Biden shored up the Democrats' "blue wall," — more sturdily in Michigan, more tenuously in Pennsylvania and Wisconsin — to rebuild the party's path back to the White House.

And while The Associated Press had called all three states and their combined 46 Electoral College votes for Biden, the Democrat's relatively narrow margins there reflect the nation's continuing deep divisions more than a newly strengthened Democratic bulwark in the industrial north.

Trump had stunned the country four years ago by winning the three states that had been carried for decades by Democrats by a total of 77,000 votes. He did particularly well in rural areas and among non college-educated white voters, and his victory showed a fraying of the Democratic coalition as more working-class voters viewed their former party as dominated by coastal elites who considered their homes "flyover country."

Biden, from the start, sought to reclaim at least some of those voters, making his appeal as a son of Scranton, Pennsylvania, who attended a state college, had known financial struggle, and could relate to

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their concerns.

"Joe Biden won these states because he and his campaign focused on how to win them individually," said Amy Chapman, a senior adviser to Democrat Barack Obama's campaigns in Michigan.

But to Sen. Roy Blunt, R-Mo., "the blue wall is at best a blue speed bump now," telling ABC's "This Week" on Sunday, "This is a competitive country."

Biden's slender margins underscored that the Democrats have work to do if they want to solidify this cluster of states that have been integral to them winning presidential elections.

"It's a mistake to ever have thought Wisconsin was a safely blue state," said state Democratic Chairman Ben Wikler.

Four of the past six presidential elections were decided by less than a percentage point in Wisconsin. "Wisconsin will be a pivotal battleground for the foreseeable future," Wikler said. "We're on a knife's edge."

Indeed, the Trump campaign has asked for a recount of the state's vote. The Associated Press has called the state for Biden, who has a lead about 20,000 votes, roughly the same margin Trump carried the state by four years ago.

To reverse Clinton's losses in the "blue wall" states, Biden benefited from both strong suburban turnout and in the urban centers of Philadelphia, Detroit and Milwaukee. He was also able to shave Trump's winning margins in working-class, swing-voting regions.

"Our suburbs are just becoming more and more Democratic," said former Pennsylvania Rep. Ryan Costello, a Republican and Trump critic. "Some of that is natural. But a big chunk of that is attributable to Donald Trump, who he is, and everything he does that is such a turnoff for suburban voters."

With nearly all the votes reported in Chester County, Costello's home, Biden was leading Trump by 17 percentage points, 10 better than Clinton's margin.

Biden had received roughly 150,000 more votes than Clinton did across Chester and Philadelphia's three other neighboring counties — Bucks, Delaware and Montgomery — and was winning about 60 percent of the suburban vote, better than Clinton.

Even in losing Republican-heavy Waukesha County, Wisconsin, Biden's suburban gains were part of his winning Wisconsin formula.

Biden reached nearly 39 percent in Waukesha County, the state's most populous Republican-heavy county. The last Democrat to carry it was Lyndon Johnson in the landslide of 1964.

What's more, Trump fell short of a 60 percent in the combined GOP suburban bloc of Waukesha, Ozaukee and Washington Counties, where even losing Republican Gov. Scott Walker in 2018 reached 65 percent.

"There's little overstating the significance in the swing in these suburban counties," said veteran Wisconsin Democratic campaign strategist Teresa Vilmain.

Unlike Clinton, who did not visit Wisconsin during the general election campaign in 2016, Biden visited Wisconsin three times, even as he strictly limited his in-person campaigning in many states during the coronavirus pandemic. Biden traveled to Michigan four times, but campaigned most in Pennsylvania, 14 times.

While Trump campaigned collectively to all three more often, Biden's campaign vastly outspent Trump's campaign in the three states, \$148.7 million to \$58.5 million, though other groups spent millions more on either side.

Biden also tailored his advertising and visits to state-specific dynamics, Michigan's Chapman noted. And while Democratic turnout in Detroit and Milwaukee rebounded from 2016, a boost to Biden, his messages to manufacturing-heavy regions near blue-collar Green Bay, Wisconsin, in September and Erie, Pennsylvania, in October, may have helped him trim Trump's edge in those swing-voting regions, where Clinton lost.

Trump carried Brown County, home to Green Bay, by a smaller percentage than he did in 2016, and lost Erie County in Pennsylvania, where he had won four years before but where the economy continues to struggle. Trump also lost Saginaw County, Michigan, a struggling former General Motors supply manufacturing county Obama carried before the president flipped.

"We'd heard so much about the Trump economy. But we're still a manufacturing economy and nearly

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stagnant in our growth," Erie County Democratic Party Chairman Jim Wertz said. "The Trump economy has not translated into a groundswell of work and opportunity here in Erie County. Joe Biden had the right message for this part Pennsylvania."

While aggressive Democratic organizing — the vast majority of it virtual during the pandemic — was also part of what helped push Biden just over the goal line, the win did not dramatically alter the political landscape in these states.

There were notably smaller changes.

Biden captured Sauk County, won by Obama and Trump. The rolling stretch north of Madison is reflective of the state, with Democratic-leaning suburban and exurban growth areas to the south and it's more lightly populated GOP-leaning agricultural north.

Biden also captured Door County, Wisconsin, where Trump had won after Obama.

A sign of Democratic growth appeared in Biden's carrying once GOP-heavy Kent County, Michigan, where newcomers in the medical field are diversifying its electorate. The western Michigan county is the home of the late former Republican President Gerald Ford and where Trump's Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos retains a permanent residence.

The results in Michigan were one area where Democrats could sense a reversal. Trump won the state by 10,704 votes in 2016. Biden's margin over Trump is about 150,000.

Overall, though, there were hardly the dramatic changes to the maps as in 2016, when Trump carried 21 Wisconsin counties won four years earlier by Obama and 11 in Michigan. Trump flipped only 3 Obama counties in Pennsylvania. Biden turned only four back to Democrats across the three states.

Likewise, Trump's increased turnout in rural areas, where Democrats were dubious he could recreate the 2016 turnout, caught them by surprise.

However, with Trump presumably off the ballot, former GOP Rep. Jim Greenwood of Pennsylvania sees the state sliding back to a Democratic-leaning state, as Trump supporters recede, uninspired by more conventional politicians.

"I view Trump as a sort of a one-off," said Greenwood, among the Republicans who campaigned and raised money for Biden. "Without Trump on the ballot, we're kind of back to a more stable politics."

But Republicans like Costello, though just as critical of Trump, noted GOP state legislative gains that might prompt Republicans to view Trump's style as the answer—a pitfall when so many suburban voters chose Republican statehouse candidates but Biden for president.

"I'm concerned that both parties are going to learn the wrong lesson," Costello said, "and that things will get worse before they get better."

For some who bore toll of virus, Biden offers sign of hope

By MATT SEDENSKY AP National Writer

After a brutal year of trying to save the sick and burying the dead, news of Joe Biden's ascension to president-elect came to some as a glimmer of hope that an end to the coronavirus misery might be in sight.

As much as the electoral verdict could be reduced to a simple political win or loss, for many who've borne the brunt of the pandemic, it was something more: the end of a dark chapter, a chance for a fresh start and perhaps an optimistic sign from a loved one who was lost.

Donna Taylor of Playa del Rey, California, whose 83-year-old mother died of COVID-19 in July, fell asleep with her TV tuned to CNN and felt like her mother nudged her awake to see the headline announcing Biden's victory. After suffering the worst day of 2020 in July, she pronounced Saturday the best day of the year.

"I feel that we are now going to start listening to science," said 56-year-old Taylor, who blamed President Donald Trump's handling of the virus for her mother's death. "Instead of saying, 'It's not a big deal,' Biden feels it is, and he's going to work very hard to get this horrible disease under control."

That will be no easy task for a pandemic again surging across the U.S., with 237,000 deaths and infections surpassing 9.8 million. In his victory address Saturday night, the former vice president promised "to marshal the forces of science and the forces of hope" and to "spare no effort — or commitment — to

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turn this pandemic around.”

Biden said his first step will be to name a group of leading scientists and other experts on Monday to create a blueprint to combat the virus as soon as he takes office.

“There is a vision for change now,” said Joelle Wright-Terry, a retired police officer from Clinton Township, Michigan, whose husband died of COVID-19 and who battled the virus herself.

Kennedy Johnson, a 19-year-old in Rancho Cucamonga, California, watched as her mother and grandmother cried with joy at the news of Biden’s win, barely able to produce words. She knows they were thinking of her 76-year-old grandfather, who died of COVID-19 in April.

“It was a feeling of release, of being free from Trump and having Biden, someone who takes the pandemic seriously, someone who cares,” said Johnson, who works at McDonald’s while pursuing a music production degree. “We can finally move forward.”

There were, of course, many struck by the tragedy of COVID-19 who nonetheless backed Trump, who contracted the virus himself and has been criticized for sparring with the nation’s top infectious disease expert, Dr. Anthony Fauci, and embracing views on the fringe of the scientific community.

Jeffrey Wnek, a 56-year-old sheet metal worker from Buffalo, New York, lost his father to the pandemic, but it did not change his mind about a president he views as the first in his lifetime to help the working man.

“I can’t blame him for that,” Wnek said. “I don’t think it would have mattered if Biden was there or Obama was there. It was going to do what it did no matter who was in office.”

Still, both nationwide and in key battleground states across the Midwest and Sun Belt, Biden dominated with voters worried about the coronavirus and hungry for the federal government to do more to contain its spread, according to AP VoteCast, an expansive survey of more than 110,000 voters nationwide.

The coming months bring fear of a tough winter of infections and hope of a vaccine for COVID-19, but for those hurt by the pandemic and seeking a change at the White House, Biden’s victory felt special.

Scott Glaessgen, a 50-year-old emergency medical technician in Norwalk, Connecticut, was emotional as he digested news of Biden’s win after a trying year of transporting those sick with COVID-19 and losing his own mother to the virus.

“I’ve seen the devastation,” Glaessgen said. “The difference in which Biden has talked about it and said he was going to handle it is stark. Hopefully that will save lives.”

Dr. Irwin Redlener, a public health expert who heads the National Center for Disaster Preparedness at Columbia University, said he knew a change at the White House was “not a magical panacea” to end the pandemic. In the past year, his work was transformed, his oldest son was hospitalized with the virus, and he’s lived in fear that another son, an emergency physician, could be infected. He saw reason to be buoyed by the news.

“We hopefully will be rejoining the world’s experts in trying to figure out what we need to do about this,” he said. “We’re not going to see this administration or anyone involved in it fabricating fairy tales about when this will be over.”

There was hope, Redlener said: “This will help put us on a course for getting control of this pandemic.”

Claire Sundbye, 23, a recent college graduate in Chicago, thought of those like her father, a doctor who’s been on the front lines of the COVID-19 response.

“I’m just so thankful to know the president that we are going to have is somebody that will stand by science and facts so that we can hopefully stand by our medical workers and get this virus under control.”

In Sioux Falls, South Dakota, 49-year-old nurse Kathy James felt an overwhelming sense of relief over Biden’s victory. Her son-in-law died of COVID-19 last month as cases have skyrocketed in her region.

“It hurts, and its never going to stop hurting to lose Doug,” James said of her son-in-law. “But there is this moment that he made a difference in this world. I have a feeling that he is up there, enjoying this moment.”

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

Associated Press writers Ken Miller in Oklahoma City and Stephen Groves in Sioux City, South Dakota, contributed to this report.

Thai protesters defy police water cannons to deliver letters

By CHALIDA EKVITTHAYAVECHNUKUL Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — Pro-democracy protesters in Thailand were confronted by riot police and sprayed by water cannons Sunday as they tried to approach Bangkok's Grand Palace to deliver letters about their political grievances addressed to the country's king.

The pro-democracy movement has been pushing a bold challenge to reform the country's monarchy with almost daily demonstrations. Sunday marked the second time water cannons were used against the protesters during several months of demonstrations.

The melee was brief, and police later allowed the protesters to place four red mock mailboxes near the palace walls into which protesters could place their letters. People then went home, ending the protest.

The police had let loose with their water cannons when protesters pushed aside one of several buses serving as a barrier to marchers trying to approach the palace, which houses the royal offices but is only used by King Maha Vajiralongkorn on infrequent ceremonial occasions. The attempt to break through came after police had declared their march illegal and asked for protesters to send representatives to talk.

The protesters had met earlier at Bangkok's Democracy Monument and marched as darkness fell, pushing past an initial thin line of police. Protesters threw objects at police during the melee, but both sides backed off after a few minutes and it appeared that no one suffered any serious injuries.

"People just wanted to submit the letters. There was no sign of violence from protesters at all," said protester Thawatchai Tongsuk, 36. "If the police gave way, I believe that the leaders would have submitted the letters and then been finished. Everyone would go home."

"The more violence they use, the more people will join the protest," Thawatchai said.

The demonstrators had solicited letters to the king from protest supporters that marchers said they intended to deliver, though the action was clearly a symbolic one, with the ultimate disposition of the missives unclear. It was the latest gimmick by the protest movement to maintain public interest in their cause.

The student-led movement, which over several months has seized the political initiative, has put enough pressure on the government of Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha to call for Parliament to deal with at least some of their demands.

They are seeking Prayuth's resignation, changes to the constitution to make it more democratic and reforms to the monarchy to make it more accountable.

The protesters believe Prayuth lacks legitimacy because he came to power after an election last year whose rules were set up under military rule. Prayuth as army chief in 2014 led a coup ousting an elected government and then headed the junta that ran the country until last year's polls.

A new constitution was put into effect by the junta that the protesters also consider illegitimate and anti-democratic.

The third demand, calling for reform of the monarchy, is the most controversial. The monarchy has traditionally been an untouchable institution, regarded by most Thais as the heart and soul of the nation. A lese majeste law mandates a prison term of up to 15 years for anyone who defames the king or his close family.

Until the protesters raised the issue, public criticism of the royal institution was virtually unknown.

While the protesters have increasingly put the monarchy issue front and center, they have received serious pushback. Even the main opposition party, otherwise sympathetic to their other points, has said it does not want to amend laws covering the monarchy, and royalists have started holding counter-demonstrations. A few dozen rallied briefly Sunday across from the main protest.

Parliament has agreed to debate amending the constitution and political leaders are discussing setting up a reconciliation committee, an effort that so far has been rejected by the protesters.

But Prayuth has insisted he won't step down, and any effort to reform the monarchy seems to be a dead

end, leaving the situation deadlocked.

Americans pivot from red-hot Trump to Biden's seasoned cool

By CALVIN WOODWARD and MICHAEL TACKETT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — In a crystallizing moment at the last presidential debate, Donald Trump and Joe Biden fielded a question about people of color who live alongside chemical plants and oil refineries that seem to be making them sick.

As is his way, Biden responded with I've-been-there empathy. He recalled growing up so close to Delaware refineries that when his mom drove him to school in a morning frost, the wipers spread an oil slick on the windshield.

Trump responded in his own way, too. "The families that we're talking about are employed heavily and they are making a lot of money," he presumed. "More money than they've ever made ... tremendous money."

These men were true to form, authentic in that exchange. On debate night and through the campaign they offered voters a distinct choice between a red-hot president who put the bottom line before all else and an unflashy Democrat who invited Americans to cool down and come together.

Biden promised straight talk and sobriety on the lethal pandemic, respect for the facts (if you don't count his flubs), aspirations for racial justice and a revival of the verities of American democracy that Democrats said Trump was tearing apart.

And the nation pivoted, embracing at least the chance of reconciliation in this deeply riven country. Will Americans accept the olive branch Biden extends? The election was far from a comprehensive repudiation of the polarizing president.

While Biden drew the most votes of any presidential candidate in history, Trump drew the second most ever — each over 70 million and some 4 million votes apart. Biden's victory Saturday, when Pennsylvania sealed his Electoral College win, had Trump crying foul, refusing to concede and feeding the false sense among his supporters that he was cheated by a corrupted vote.

After nearly five decades in public office, Biden was never going to be the most energizing candidate in the field. He had no pithy slogan like "Hope and Change" to rouse excitement. Audacity isn't his thing, man.

Rather, he tapped a majority's desire to stop the noise, to reject the bleating on Twitter, to turn the page from a period marked by confrontation, division and chaos, often driven by the White House itself. "Let this grim era of demonization in America begin to end, here and now," he told his excited crowd, and the country, in his victory speech Saturday night.

The Trump years had all been too much for lifelong Republican Edward Drnach, 61, of Ellicott City, Maryland, who voted for a Democratic president for the first time.

"I've just had it," Drnach said of Trump. "Whether he says something stupid, or whether he breaks ties with an ally, or whether he kisses up to a dictator, I've had it, and the whole boatload of things that come along with him, his whole family, etcetera."

It was all too much for Biden voter Cynthia McDonald, too, in Sandy Springs, Georgia. "I want to wake up and not have this sense of doom," said the 52-year-old consultant. "I just want to wake up and feel like there's an adult in charge."

"It's kind of like a train wreck that you can't look away from," she said. "Then you realize you're not watching the train wreck. You're on the damn train."

At least some of Biden's victory was driven by an animus toward Trump that was far greater than the rejection of Jimmy Carter or George H.W. Bush, the only two other elected incumbents to lose since Herbert Hoover in the Depression. It was great enough that the left swallowed its disappointment at their party's choice of a conventional candidate and swung behind him.

PASSION PLAYS

From the start, if anyone can remember a start, Biden and running mate Kamala Harris clutched their consistent lead in opinion polls like a precious vase, wary of moving too much lest it slip and shatter.

Campaigning in the midst of a pandemic, they stayed studiously distanced. Like a throwback to the age

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of drive-in movies, people gathered in and on their cars in fields and parking lots to hear Democrats speak, honking their horns in approval.

When Trump viewed the Democratic events, he didn't see a respect for public guidelines; he saw only sparse crowds. His own events, often in states suffering heavy virus infections in the closing days of the campaign, drew thousands, standing shoulder-to-shoulder. They came to see the leader who contracted COVID-19, seemed to shrug it off, then danced for his cheering, spottily masked throngs.

Such passions spread across the vast American landscape in an explosion of banners on small-town lawns and farmers' fields — geographically, at least, this was still Trump country.

But signs, rallies and red ballcaps are not votes. Americans ousted Trump with the quiet passion of their ballots.

For all of that, Trump country endures beyond the man himself in ways that cannot simply be snapped back, culturally, politically or between neighbors.

Biden will take over with an entrenched conservative majority on the Supreme Court and a federal judiciary reshaped with Trump's lifetime appointments. He inherits immigration barriers that were fashioned both from policy and from the steel beams that form Trump's imposing if very unfinished border wall. Biden prepares to assume office in a pandemic that won't turn on a dime simply because he takes it seriously and doesn't scorn the experts.

Trump also gave voice to a large, aggrieved minority simmering with resentments of their own, often over a government they feel has left them behind. These resentments don't vanish overnight.

They may only be exacerbated by the defeat of the leader who seemed to have the back of those who had elected him four years ago — the leader who wielded lock-'em-up aggression as a means of getting what you want.

Some dared hope otherwise.

"Joe Biden is a good man who wants the best for everyone in this country," said Gabriella Cochrane, a 54-year-old corporate recruiter in Virginia Beach, Virginia, who voted for him. "Not the richest. Not the whitest. For everyone. His soothing presence is what this country needs right now."

PIVOTS AHEAD

Whatever hurdles Biden faces with Congress, prepare yourself for a change of style that will also come with a change of substance, at least in areas where a new president can flip a switch.

The rollback of environmental regulation from the White House is over. Hello again, Paris climate accord. Mask-wearing will be encouraged from the bully pulpit, never ridiculed. Goodbye to the White House tweet tsunami — more than 22,000 of them from Trump since he took office.

Biden's ego is as substantial as any normal politician's and his way of deflecting attention to others is not a unique grace in politics. His way only stands out because the common graces vanished so thoroughly in the Trump era. In a Quinnipiac poll not long before the election, strong majorities said Biden has a sense of decency and Trump does not.

The Democrat comes to office with the support of scores of Republicans who served as national security officials, U.S. attorneys, governors and lawmakers, part of a larger pool of ordinary Americans who also traditionally vote for Republican presidents but this time didn't.

That pivot does not signal smooth sailing in Washington, however, where the toxicity writ large in the country promises epic showdowns across the range of policy — taxes, immigration, trade, foreign affairs and more.

Biden's broad coalition of college graduates, women, urban and suburban voters, young people and Black Americans prevailed over Trump's core of white voters without a college degree, rural voters and religious conservatives, according to AP VoteCast, a nationwide survey of the electorate. Both sides went into the fight entrenched — about three-quarters said they knew all along which candidate they backed.

Then there is the pandemic, which has upended so much of American life and may have ultimately cost Trump the presidency. The election exposed how close to home the crisis has come: About 1 in 5 voters said a close friend or family member died from the virus and roughly 2 in 5 said their household lost a

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job or income because of it, AP VoteCast found.

Trump tangled with scientists and did not tell the public all that he knew: that the virus was airborne, that young people could be infected, that the virus was in fact far deadlier than the seasonal flu.

He closed out the campaign exasperated by all the attention still being paid to "COVID, COVID, COVID" as the virus rages, hospitals in hotspots strain to accommodate the sick and the death toll has surpassed 236,000.

Biden brings a different approach to the crisis simply by acknowledging its severity, pledging to be guided by the public-health authorities and promising that Americans at long last will hear the truth about it from the White House.

He has not laid out a plan of federal action that is markedly different from what the country has seen. Still, more than 4 in 10 voters named the pandemic as their dominant issue, more than were motivated primarily by the economy, Trump's strong point in public opinion.

The man dubbed Sleepy Joe by Trump may represent a cure for another kind of condition — Trump fatigue.

So hopes Carla Dundes, a retired professional oboist who got so tired of Trump tooting his own horn.

So tired of obsessively following the political news, the virus infection numbers, the polls, the latest count of received mail-in ballots on her county's website from her home in the Pittsburgh suburb of Mount Lebanon. She's sick of only feeling centered when she's behind her Steinway piano, her instrument of choice these days.

"I want my life back," she said.

Starring at an Orlando, Florida, drive-in rally late in the campaign, Barack Obama paid an odd compliment to his former vice president and Harris. He said they are people you can ignore for days at a time.

"You're not going to have to think about them every single day," he said. "You're not going to have to worry about what crazy things they're going to say, what they're going to tweet. They're just going to be too busy doing the work. It just won't be so exhausting. You'll be able to go about your lives."

Folks honked.

Associated Press writers Jeff Martin in Marietta, Georgia; Brian Witte in Ellicott City, Maryland; Ben Finley in Norfolk, Virginia; and Matt Sedensky in Philadelphia contributed to this report.

Convention centers, museums become classrooms amid pandemic

By HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH Associated Press

MISSION, Kan. (AP) — In ordinary times, the airy convention center on a 61-acre site in Hesston, Kansas, hosts weddings, corporate retreats and church events. During the pandemic, it has become a schoolhouse for the district's seventh- and eighth-graders.

Megan Kohlman teaches literature and writing inside one of the rooms, separated from a math teacher's space by only a plastic sheet. It's hardly ideal, but for her it's an upgrade from distance learning in the spring, when she juggled instruction with care of her own young children.

"Everyone just really believes in the power of having kids with us as much as we can," Kohlman said.

Some schools are getting creative about finding extra square footage to facilitate social distancing and reduce the health risks associated with in-person learning. Districts are setting up makeshift outdoor shelters, bringing in trailers to house classrooms and making use of otherwise empty spaces like museums. As infection rates rise across the county with the arrival of colder weather, some education leaders say they wish such approaches were taken more widely.

School systems could take cues from the health care system, which has found ways to increase capacity when coronavirus cases surge, said Joseph Allen, a Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health associate professor of exposure science who runs the school's Healthy Buildings Program. He said the costs of keeping kids out of school are "devastating."

"With schools, we seem to be stuck in this closed mindset where it is only in schools or in the existing

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setup or it is not going to happen," Allen said.

Kansas Education Commissioner Randy Watson is holding up the Hesston district's plan as a model to be replicated. He said his visits to dozens of school districts revealed many were struggling regardless of whether they were offering in-person, virtual or hybrid instruction. In nearly every district, officials told him the models they were using were unsustainable because of the stress on everyone involved.

"We've got to change it. But we've got to change it in a way that we aren't trading out safety for bringing kids back," he said.

He also is promoting the efforts in Topeka schools, where office space and music rooms have been transformed into classrooms and some central office staff turned into teachers to keep classes small.

"It really is all hands on deck," said Topeka school district Superintendent Tiffany Anderson.

In Hesston, seventh- and eighth-graders started the fall semester at the Cross Wind Conference Center, which had been sitting unused amid the pandemic. That created room for the fifth- and sixth-graders to spread out in the middle school, including in the gymnasium and choir room. The two grades returned to the middle school for two weeks when coronavirus numbers temporarily improved, but then returned to the conference center as the numbers worsened. The number of cases has risen 77% over the past two weeks in the surrounding county.

If the coronavirus numbers continue to rise in the community, second- and fourth-graders will be moved from their normal classrooms into churches.

In a district with only 820 students, Hesston Superintendent Ben Proctor acknowledges logistical challenges are not what they could be for a larger school system.

In New York City, Council Member Ben Kallos pushed for unused commercial space to be repurposed as classrooms, along with libraries and senior centers. But the idea faltered amid concerns about codes, costs and logistics.

"New York City had a blight of empty storefronts before the pandemic, which has only gotten worse, and it seems only natural that the city could have activated each and every one of these spaces to serve our children in this time of need. It is disappointing and frankly irresponsible that the city didn't do it," Kallos said.

However, some 1,100 New York City schools have been approved to spend part of their day outdoors. The city's schools have sufficient indoor space for social distancing but are also using "alternative space" like holding classes in parks or closed streets, said NYC Department of Education spokesperson Katie O'Hanlon.

Nationwide, dozens of school systems have shifted instruction outdoors or are making plans to do so, said Sharon Danks, CEO of Green Schoolyards America, a Berkeley, California, nonprofit that advocates for outdoor education.

In New Orleans, the Louisiana Children's Museum has been repurposed as a classroom for about 60 charter school students since it was forced to close earlier this year because of the coronavirus. Preschoolers and kindergartners from Langston Hughes Academy can spread out among the indoor exhibits, including a nearly \$1 million water table that allows them to get their hands wet as they explore replicas of the locks and dams in the Mississippi River. Outside there are gardens to wander through and trees to climb.

"If this building were empty day in and day out, it would just be depressing," museum CEO Julia Bland said. "The teachers have been totally engaged by this. They say they have never been so excited about going to work."

Samantha Keppler, assistant professor at the University of Michigan's business school, wrote in the spring that schools could harness the power of relationships with churches and other community organizations to add space to make school reopening safer. She said it hasn't happened as frequently as she had hoped.

"I think it is surprising where in big cities where the YMCA is literally across the street and they have a relationship and are running their afterschool program that they haven't used this," she said.

5 states OK measures eradicating racist language, symbols

By JAY REEVES Associated Press

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BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (AP) — Alabama voters reversed themselves from a few years ago and removed racist vestiges of segregation from the state constitution that courts long ago ruled unconstitutional. Rhode Island did a similar a U-turn to eradicate the word “plantations” from the state’s official name.

In a year when discussions of racial justice have dominated U.S. society like few others, five states voted to cleanse the public sphere of words, phrases and symbols that to many were painful reminders of the nation’s history of slavery and the systematic oppression of Black people.

Brendan Skip Mark, who teaches political science at the University of Rhode Island, believes the decisions were linked to the revulsion and widespread protests that followed the police killing of George Floyd in Minnesota in May.

“In many ways this has sparked a national conversation on race, and I think we’ve seen a lot of people who are more willing to take concrete steps to address racism than they were in the past,” Mark said.

In addition to the votes in Alabama and Rhode Island, residents of Utah and Nebraska decided to strip their constitutions of unenforceable provisions that allowed slavery as a punishment for criminal convictions. And Mississippi voters approved a state flag without the familiar X-shaped design of the Confederate battle flag.

The votes are a positive sign in a nation where racial tension always has existed, said Stacy Moak, who teaches in the social work department at the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

“Affirmative votes for these changes shows a willingness on the part of Americans to provide for a more inclusive community. These changes, by themselves, are not enough — but they are encouraging signs of progress in the right direction,” she said in an interview conducted by email.

The Alabama measure begins the process of removing Jim Crow language from the 1901 Constitution that was intended to entrench white supremacy. Voters in the mostly white, conservative state had rejected similar proposals twice since 2000.

Courts had previously struck down the legality of the segregationist provisions that were enshrined in the document long ago, but the language banning mixed-race marriage, allowing poll taxes and mandating school segregation remained.

Glenn Crowell, a Black Republican from Montgomery, was among the roughly 67% of voters who supported scrapping those sections.

“It just doesn’t make any sense nowadays,” said Crowell, 63. Yet another statewide vote will be required to approve the revisions after legislators consider a draft in 2022.

In neighboring Mississippi, about 71% of voters approved a new state flag featuring a magnolia and the words “In God We Trust” to replace the Confederate-themed flag that state legislators voted to retire in June after the nation erupted in demonstrations following Floyd’s killing.

Mississippi voters also eliminated an 1890s provision that aimed to ensure white control of the state by requiring majorities of both the popular vote and the 122 state House districts to win statewide office. Now, only a popular vote majority is required.

To the west, Utah and Nebraska approved provisions similar to Alabama’s to delete constitutional language allowing slavery as a possible punishment in criminal cases.

The measures, which passed by 81% in Utah and 68% in Nebraska, got relatively little attention before the vote.

But the fact that states even placed the measures on ballots shows that protests and the national discussion on racism are having an impact, said Deirdre Cooper Owens, director of the humanities in medicine program at the University of Nebraska.

“Symbolism matters, and so does language,” she said by email.

The vote was closest in Rhode Island, once a hub of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, where about 53% of voters supported the proposal to strip the words “and Providence Plantations” from the state’s formal name, first adopted in 1790. A similar measure failed in 2010.

Like elsewhere in the country, Rhode Island has seen protests over Floyd’s death, and in racially diverse Providence, a truth commission was established to consider the state’s historic ties to slavery, land seizures,

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systemic racism and possible reparations.

"This ballot initiative is part of a broader shift in Rhode Island to reconcile with the past," said Mark, the political scientist. "I think this is a unique moment in history."

All those ballot measures involved changing symbols or wiping away reminders of injustices of long ago. In California, where voters were asked to reconsider a more contemporary race-related issue, they balked.

The liberal-minded state rejected a proposition that would have repealed a 1996 initiative prohibiting affirmative action programs in public employment, education or contracting. Supporters said the measure lost for several reasons, including a lack of time to persuade voters during a busy election year.

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Monday, Nov. 9, the 314th day of 2020. There are 52 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Nov. 9, 1989, communist East Germany threw open its borders, allowing citizens to travel freely to the West; joyous Germans danced atop the Berlin Wall.

On this date:

In 1620, the passengers and crew of the Mayflower sighted Cape Cod.

In 1938, Nazis looted and burned synagogues as well as Jewish-owned stores and houses in Germany and Austria in a pogrom or deliberate persecution that became known as "Kristallnacht."

In 1961, U.S. Air Force Maj. Robert M. White became the first pilot to fly an X-15 rocket plane at six times the speed of sound. The Beatles' future manager, Brian Epstein, first saw the group perform at The Cavern Club in Liverpool, England.

In 1965, the great Northeast blackout began as a series of power failures lasting up to 13 1/2 hours, leaving 30 million people in seven states and part of Canada without electricity.

In 1967, a Saturn V rocket carrying an unmanned Apollo spacecraft blasted off from Cape Kennedy on a successful test flight.

In 1976, the U.N. General Assembly approved resolutions condemning apartheid in South Africa, including one characterizing the white-ruled government as "illegitimate."

In 2000, George W. Bush's lead over Al Gore in all-or-nothing Florida slipped beneath 300 votes in a suspense-filled recount, as Democrats threw the presidential election to the courts, claiming "an injustice unparalleled in our history."

In 2005, three suicide bombers carried out nearly simultaneous attacks on three U.S.-based hotels in Amman, Jordan, killing 60 victims and wounding hundreds.

In 2007, President Gen. Pervez Musharraf (pur-VEHZ' moo-SHAH'-ruhv) of Pakistan placed opposition leader Benazir Bhutto (BEN'-uh-zeer BOO'-toh) under house arrest for a day, and rounded up thousands of her supporters to block a mass rally against his emergency rule.

In 2011, after 46 seasons as Penn State's head football coach and a record 409 victories, Joe Paterno was fired along with the university president, Graham Spanier, over their handling of child sex abuse allegations against former assistant coach Jerry Sandusky.

In 2012, retired four-star Army Gen. David Petraeus abruptly resigned as CIA director after an affair with his biographer, Paula Broadwell, was revealed by an FBI investigation.

In 2018, President Donald Trump issued an order to deny asylum to migrants who enter the country illegally; the measure would be blocked by court challenges.

Ten years ago: Continuing his Asia tour, President Barack Obama flew from India to Indonesia, his home for four years of his youth. Former President George W. Bush officially kicked off the release of his memoir, "Decision Points," with a book-signing in Dallas. A special prosecutor cleared the CIA's former top clandestine officer and others of any charges for destroying agency videotapes showing waterboarding of terror suspects, but continued an investigation into whether the harsh questioning went beyond legal

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boundaries. Seattle's Ichiro Suzuki won his 10th straight Gold Glove, tying the AL record for Gold Gloves by an outfielder shared by Ken Griffey Jr. and Al Kaline.

Five years ago: Minimizing sharp differences, President Barack Obama and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu reaffirmed their commitment to seeking elusive Middle East peace during a White House meeting. The president of the University of Missouri system and the head of its flagship campus resigned with the football team and others on campus in open revolt over what they saw as indifference to racial tensions at the school. President Obama launched his own personal Facebook page. Andy White, 85, a top session drummer in England during the 1960s who stepped in for newcomer Ringo Starr as the Beatles recorded their debut single "Love Me Do," died in Caldwell, New Jersey.

One year ago: Germany marked the 30th anniversary of the opening of the Berlin Wall, at a ceremony attended by leaders from Germany, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic. Police in Hong Kong announced the arrests of six pro-democracy lawmakers. Australian officials said wildfires razing the country's drought-stricken east coast had left at least three people dead, with more than 150 homes destroyed. (At least 34 people and more than a billion animals would die in Australia's wildfire season, with thousands of people displaced and 47 million acres burned.)

Today's Birthdays: Baseball Hall of Famer Whitey Herzog is 89. Actor Charlie Robinson is 75. Movie director Bille August is 72. Actor Robert David Hall is 72. Actor Lou Ferrigno is 69. Sen. Sherrod Brown, D-Ohio, is 68. Gospel singer Donnie McClurkin is 61. Rock musician Dee Plakas (L7) is 60. Actor Ion Overman is 51. Rapper Pepa (Salt-N-Pepa) is 56. Rapper Scarface (Geto Boys) is 50. Blues singer Susan Tedeschi (teh-DEHS'-kee) is 50. Actor Jason Antoon is 49. Actor Eric Dane is 48. Singer Nick Lachey (98 Degrees) is 47. Country musician Barry Knox (Parmalee) is 43. Rhythm-and-blues singer Sisqo (Dru Hill) is 42. Country singer Corey Smith is 41. Country singer Chris Lane is 36. Actor Emily Tyra is 33. Actor Nikki Blonsky is 32. Actor-model Analeigh (AH'-nuh-lee) Tipton is 32.