

# Groton Daily Independent

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## Upcoming Schedule

### Thursday, Jan. 7

6 p.m.: Wrestling Triangular with Redfield and Webster at Webster

5 p.m.: Boys Basketball hosts Sisseton with C game at 5 p.m. followed by JV and then varsity.

### Friday, Jan. 8

5 p.m.: Girls Basketball at Sisseton with C game at 5 p.m. followed by JV and then varsity.

### Saturday, Jan. 9

10 a.m.: Wrestling Quad at Wolsey-Wessington

### Monday, Jan. 11

4 p.m.: Basketball Doubleheader at Webster with Girls JV at 4 p.m. followed by Boys JV, Girls Varsity and Boys Varsity

7 p.m.: School Board Meeting

### Tuesday, Jan. 12

6 p.m.: Girls Basketball vs. Aberdeen Christian at Aberdeen Civic Arena with JV followed by varsity.



## **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 service of  
*Gary Heitmann*  
Thursday, Jan. 7th, 10:30 a.m.  
Groton United  
Methodist Church



**GDILIVE.COM**  
**GDIRADIO Locally 89.3FM**



**Boys**



**Sisseton at Groton Area**  
**Thursday, Jan. 7, 2021**  
**Boys Varsity at 7:45 p.m.**

## Spotlight on Groton Area Staff



**BJ Clocksene**

Photo by  
Benjamin Higgins

**Name:** Brandon "BJ" Clocksene

**Occupation:** Food Service Director

**Length of Employment:** 2016-Present

Brandon "BJ" Clocksene has been in charge of the food service sector of Groton Area High School for a total of four years, but his work in the culinary sector has humble beginnings. When BJ was a child, his grandmother would often prepare copious amounts of food for his family's Christmas celebration: Turkey, ham, chicken, stuffing, and casseroles abound! He cites his Grandmother as the source of his love for cooking. After graduating from Groton Area High School in the Class of 1998, he soon pursued training at Mitchell Technical Institute. He graduated with his major in Culinary Arts. Afterwards, he returned to Groton, where he has happily resided for the majority of his life.

Mr. Clocksene's duties as Food Service Director involve ordering ingredients, planning the menu, and ensuring the preparation of the student's meals is done on time. The food service staff of Groton Area pride themselves on the effort they put into preparing meals for students, making both breakfast and lunch for both high school and elementary school students every day. As for Brandon himself, he often advises students to "Try something new whenever you can."

**Editor's Note: This is a continuing series compiled by Benjamin Higgins. Higgins who is working for the Groton Independent through the Project Skills program.**

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## #318 in a series

### Covid-19 Updates: by Marie Miller

I began this day watching the consequential events scheduled in our nation's Congress right up until the world fell apart. Since then, I've been watching the shocking tragedy unfolding in our nation's Capitol. I'm still watching Congress and will stay in there until this is over.

As a result, I'm sorry, but I have nothing for you tonight besides the numbers. I do not have a feel-good story for you because, frankly, I do not feel good.

I'll get back into the saddle tomorrow. I just need a moment.

This was our fourth-worst day ever for new cases: 248,500. We're now at 21,334,400, a 1.2% increase over yesterday's total. Hospitalizations are at record levels for the third consecutive day with 131,215, some 3000 more than yesterday. And we've had our third-worst day for deaths with 3801. We've now lost 360,946 Americans to this virus, 1.1% more than we'd lost yesterday.

That's all I have for you today.

I wish you all good health. Please care for one another in this terrible time. I'll be back.

| Groton Area School District      |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |       |       |  |
|----------------------------------|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|-------|-------|--|
| Active COVID-19 Cases            |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |       |       |  |
| Updated January 4, 2021; 4:10 PM |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |       |       |  |
| JK                               | KG | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | Staff | Total |  |
| 0                                | 0  | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0     | 2     |  |

| Updated January 5, 2021; 3:07 PM |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |       |       |  |
|----------------------------------|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|-------|-------|--|
| JK                               | KG | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | Staff | Total |  |
| 0                                | 0  | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2  | 0  | 0  | 0     | 4     |  |

| Updated January 6, 2021; 4:45 PM |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |       |       |  |
|----------------------------------|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|-------|-------|--|
| JK                               | KG | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | Staff | Total |  |
| 0                                | 0  | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2  | 0  | 0  | 0     | 4     |  |

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## Jan. 6 COVID-19 UPDATE

### Groton Daily Independent from State Health Lab Reports

South Dakota: Community Spread for week of Jan. 4:

**Moderate:** Aurora, Gregory, Haakon, Marshall downgraded from Substantial to Moderate; Sully upgraded from Minimal to Moderate.

**Minimal:** Faulk, Hand, Jackson downgraded from Moderate to Minimal.

Positive: +607 (101,684 total) Positivity Rate: 13.1%

Total Tests: 4602 (783,608 total)

Total Persons Tested: 1679 (379,041 total)

Hospitalized: +41 (5805 total) 264 currently hospitalized (-6)

Avera St. Luke's: 13 (+1) COVID-19 Occupied beds, 2 (-0) COVID-19 ICU Beds, 1 (-0) COVID-19 ventilators.

Sanford Aberdeen: 6 (-3) COVID-19 Occupied beds, 0 (-0) COVID-19 ICU Beds, 0 (-0) COVID-19 ventilators.

Deaths: +6 (1519 total)

Females: 2, Males: 4

Age Group: 60s=1, 70s=3, 80+=2

Counties: Codington-1, Corson-1, McPherson-1, Minnehaha-1, Pennington-2

Recovered: +249 (93,778 total)

Active Cases: +353 (6387)

Percent Recovered: 92.2%

Vaccinations: +2619 (29879)

Vaccinations Completed: 101

Brown County Vaccinations: +56 (1391)

Beadle (37) +7 positive, +2 recovered (80 active cases)

Brookings (30) +24 positive, +21 recovered (258 active cases)

Brown (63): +29 positive, +10 recovered (303 active cases)

Clark (2): +3 positive, +0 recovered (16 active cases)

Clay (12): +8 positive, +3 recovered (95 active cases)

Codington (71): +35 positive, +6 recovered (272 active cases)

Davison (53): +8 positive, +3 recovered (106 active cases)

Day (20): +4 positive, +1 recovered (35 active cases)

Edmunds (4): +6 positive, +2 recovered (66 active cases)

Faulk (12): +0 positive, +0 recovered (4 active cases)

Grant (35): +6 positive, +0 recovered (36 active cases)

Hanson (3): +2 positive, +1 recovered (20 active cases)

Hughes (27): +14 positive, +2 recovered (116 active cases)

Lawrence (28): +11 positive, +4 recovered (131 active cases)

Lincoln (66): +31 positive, +17 recovered (471 active cases)

Marshall (4): +1 positive, +0 recovered (18 active cases)

McCook (22): +6 positive, +4 recovered (36 active cases)

McPherson (2): +3 positive, +1 recovery (11 active case)

Minnehaha (272): +144 positive, +65 recovered (1570 active cases)

Pennington (136): +94 positive, +38 recovered (892 active cases)

Potter (3): +6 positive, +0 recovered (21 active cases)

Roberts (32): +14 positive, +5 recovered (116 active cases)

Spink (24): +1 positive, +1 recovered (43 active cases)

Walworth (14): +7 positive, +3 recovered (47 active cases)

### NORTH DAKOTA

COVID-19 Daily Report, Jan. 6:

- 4.6% rolling 14-day positivity
- 341 new positives
- 6,321 susceptible test encounters
- 85 currently hospitalized (-8)
- 1,987 active cases (+103)
- 1,334 total deaths (+5)

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| County      | Positive Cases | Recovered Cases | Negative Persons | Deceased Among Cases | Community Spread | % RT-PCR Test Positivity Rate (Weekly) |
|-------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------|----------------------|------------------|--|
| Aurora      | 415            | 387             | 787              | 8                    | Moderate         | 17.24%                                 |
| Beadle      | 2533           | 2416            | 5281             | 37                   | Substantial      | 10.66%                                 |
| Bennett     | 360            | 345             | 1091             | 8                    | Moderate         | 5.49%                                  |
| Bon Homme   | 1485           | 1426            | 1889             | 23                   | Substantial      | 14.04%                                 |
| Brookings   | 3092           | 2790            | 10174            | 30                   | Substantial      | 13.28%                                 |
| Brown       | 4570           | 4201            | 11214            | 63                   | Substantial      | 22.44%                                 |
| Brule       | 643            | 612             | 1702             | 7                    | Moderate         | 26.09%                                 |
| Buffalo     | 413            | 400             | 854              | 10                   | Minimal          | 19.05%                                 |
| Butte       | 911            | 844             | 2859             | 18                   | Substantial      | 15.96%                                 |
| Campbell    | 115            | 107             | 210              | 4                    | Minimal          | 25.00%                                 |
| Charles Mix | 1144           | 1067            | 3562             | 12                   | Substantial      | 10.84%                                 |
| Clark       | 320            | 302             | 864              | 2                    | Moderate         | 2.22%                                  |
| Clay        | 1660           | 1553            | 4561             | 12                   | Substantial      | 17.89%                                 |
| Codington   | 3543           | 3200            | 8583             | 71                   | Substantial      | 19.61%                                 |
| Corson      | 454            | 429             | 900              | 12                   | Moderate         | 24.24%                                 |
| Custer      | 690            | 653             | 2438             | 9                    | Substantial      | 12.79%                                 |
| Davison     | 2753           | 2594            | 5777             | 53                   | Substantial      | 16.12%                                 |
| Day         | 550            | 495             | 1570             | 20                   | Substantial      | 19.12%                                 |
| Deuel       | 425            | 386             | 1014             | 7                    | Substantial      | 11.76%                                 |
| Dewey       | 1309           | 1192            | 3503             | 12                   | Substantial      | 19.23%                                 |
| Douglas     | 388            | 354             | 830              | 8                    | Substantial      | 27.78%                                 |
| Edmunds     | 399            | 329             | 896              | 4                    | Substantial      | 9.09%                                  |
| Fall River  | 462            | 431             | 2308             | 12                   | Substantial      | 10.59%                                 |
| Faulk       | 314            | 298             | 608              | 12                   | Minimal          | 14.29%                                 |
| Grant       | 841            | 770             | 1957             | 35                   | Substantial      | 22.08%                                 |
| Gregory     | 489            | 451             | 1096             | 26                   | Moderate         | 0.00%                                  |
| Haakon      | 234            | 203             | 475              | 8                    | Moderate         | 10.00%                                 |
| Hamlin      | 619            | 547             | 1540             | 36                   | Substantial      | 9.78%                                  |
| Hand        | 313            | 298             | 708              | 2                    | Minimal          | 0.00%                                  |
| Hanson      | 319            | 296             | 616              | 3                    | Moderate         | 23.81%                                 |
| Harding     | 89             | 85              | 156              | 1                    | Minimal          | 0.00%                                  |
| Hughes      | 2054           | 1911            | 5728             | 27                   | Substantial      | 4.76%                                  |
| Hutchinson  | 707            | 658             | 2070             | 17                   | Substantial      | 13.21%                                 |

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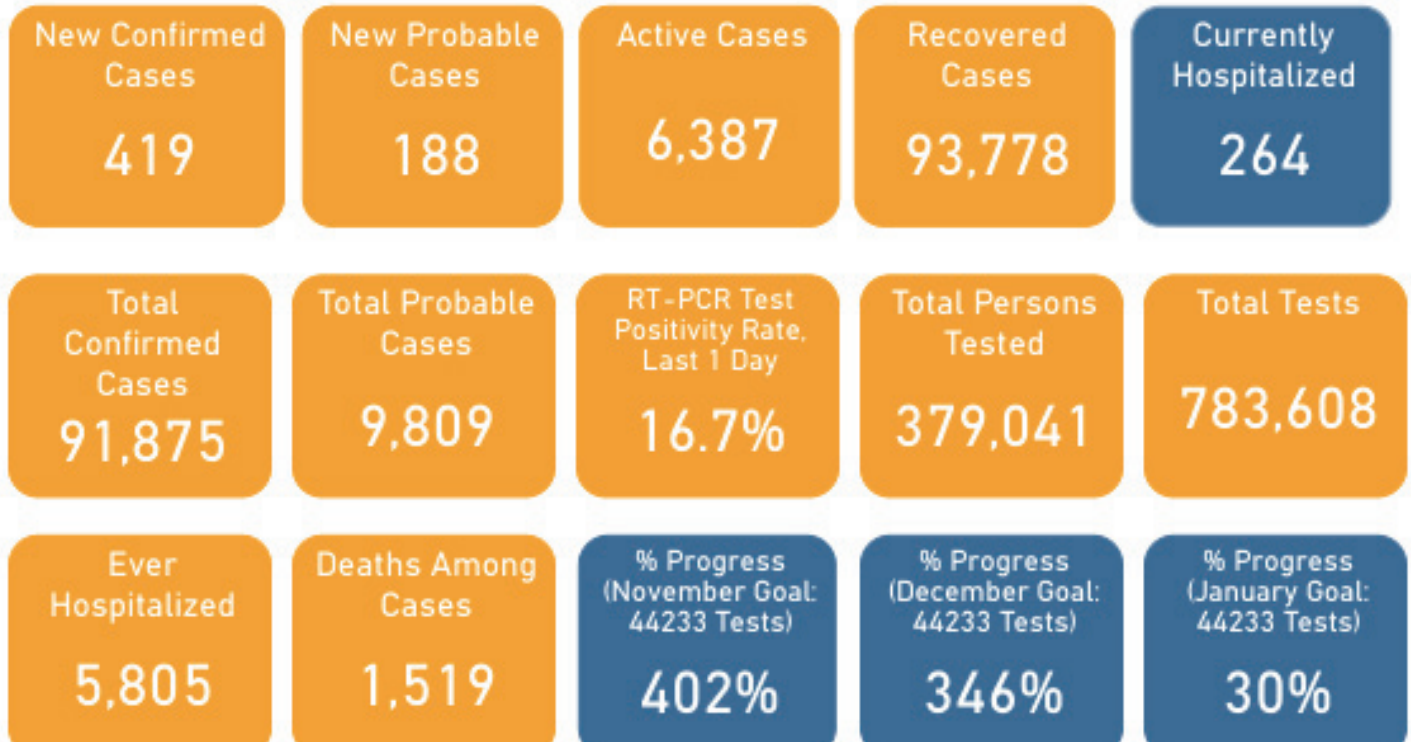
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|               |       |       |       |     |             |        |
|---------------|-------|-------|-------|-----|-------------|--------|
| Hyde          | 132   | 130   | 369   | 1   | Minimal     | 0.00%  |
| Jackson       | 265   | 246   | 855   | 8   | Minimal     | 27.27% |
| Jerauld       | 264   | 235   | 502   | 15  | Minimal     | 15.79% |
| Jones         | 69    | 65    | 187   | 0   | Minimal     | 11.11% |
| Kingsbury     | 549   | 500   | 1442  | 13  | Substantial | 8.11%  |
| Lake          | 1052  | 965   | 2811  | 16  | Substantial | 30.19% |
| Lawrence      | 2619  | 2460  | 7622  | 28  | Substantial | 11.54% |
| Lincoln       | 6968  | 6431  | 17725 | 66  | Substantial | 19.26% |
| Lyman         | 533   | 497   | 1718  | 9   | Moderate    | 16.67% |
| Marshall      | 263   | 241   | 1023  | 4   | Moderate    | 4.00%  |
| McCook        | 695   | 637   | 1424  | 22  | Substantial | 29.31% |
| McPherson     | 189   | 176   | 506   | 2   | Moderate    | 2.94%  |
| Meade         | 2309  | 2136  | 6780  | 24  | Substantial | 20.97% |
| Mellette      | 224   | 212   | 661   | 2   | Minimal     | 10.34% |
| Miner         | 231   | 203   | 505   | 7   | Moderate    | 9.52%  |
| Minnehaha     | 25579 | 23737 | 68806 | 272 | Substantial | 16.11% |
| Moody         | 546   | 496   | 1600  | 14  | Substantial | 24.44% |
| Oglala Lakota | 1952  | 1801  | 6231  | 35  | Substantial | 16.17% |
| Pennington    | 11614 | 10586 | 34376 | 136 | Substantial | 20.97% |
| Perkins       | 294   | 248   | 684   | 11  | Substantial | 18.92% |
| Potter        | 318   | 294   | 728   | 3   | Moderate    | 8.57%  |
| Roberts       | 1035  | 887   | 3768  | 32  | Substantial | 19.55% |
| Sanborn       | 309   | 296   | 620   | 3   | Minimal     | 40.00% |
| Spink         | 714   | 647   | 1884  | 24  | Substantial | 10.20% |
| Stanley       | 282   | 264   | 795   | 2   | Substantial | 6.52%  |
| Sully         | 118   | 103   | 251   | 3   | Moderate    | 10.00% |
| Todd          | 1175  | 1118  | 3862  | 19  | Substantial | 8.37%  |
| Tripp         | 633   | 601   | 1341  | 12  | Substantial | 12.12% |
| Turner        | 982   | 885   | 2405  | 49  | Substantial | 22.00% |
| Union         | 1655  | 1490  | 5462  | 30  | Substantial | 14.33% |
| Walworth      | 646   | 585   | 1640  | 14  | Substantial | 23.76% |
| Yankton       | 2555  | 2318  | 8314  | 26  | Substantial | 12.66% |
| Ziebach       | 302   | 258   | 704   | 8   | Moderate    | 14.29% |
| Unassigned    | 0     | 0     | 1935  | 0   |             |        |

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## South Dakota



### AGE GROUP OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

| Age Range with Years | # of Cases | # of Deaths Among Cases |
|----------------------|------------|-------------------------|
| 0-9 years            | 3825       | 0                       |
| 10-19 years          | 11215      | 0                       |
| 20-29 years          | 18464      | 4                       |
| 30-39 years          | 16817      | 13                      |
| 40-49 years          | 14586      | 27                      |
| 50-59 years          | 14439      | 78                      |
| 60-69 years          | 11557      | 189                     |
| 70-79 years          | 6113       | 330                     |
| 80+ years            | 4668       | 878                     |

### SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

| Sex    | # of Cases | # of Deaths Among Cases |
|--------|------------|-------------------------|
| Female | 53159      | 734                     |
| Male   | 48525      | 785                     |



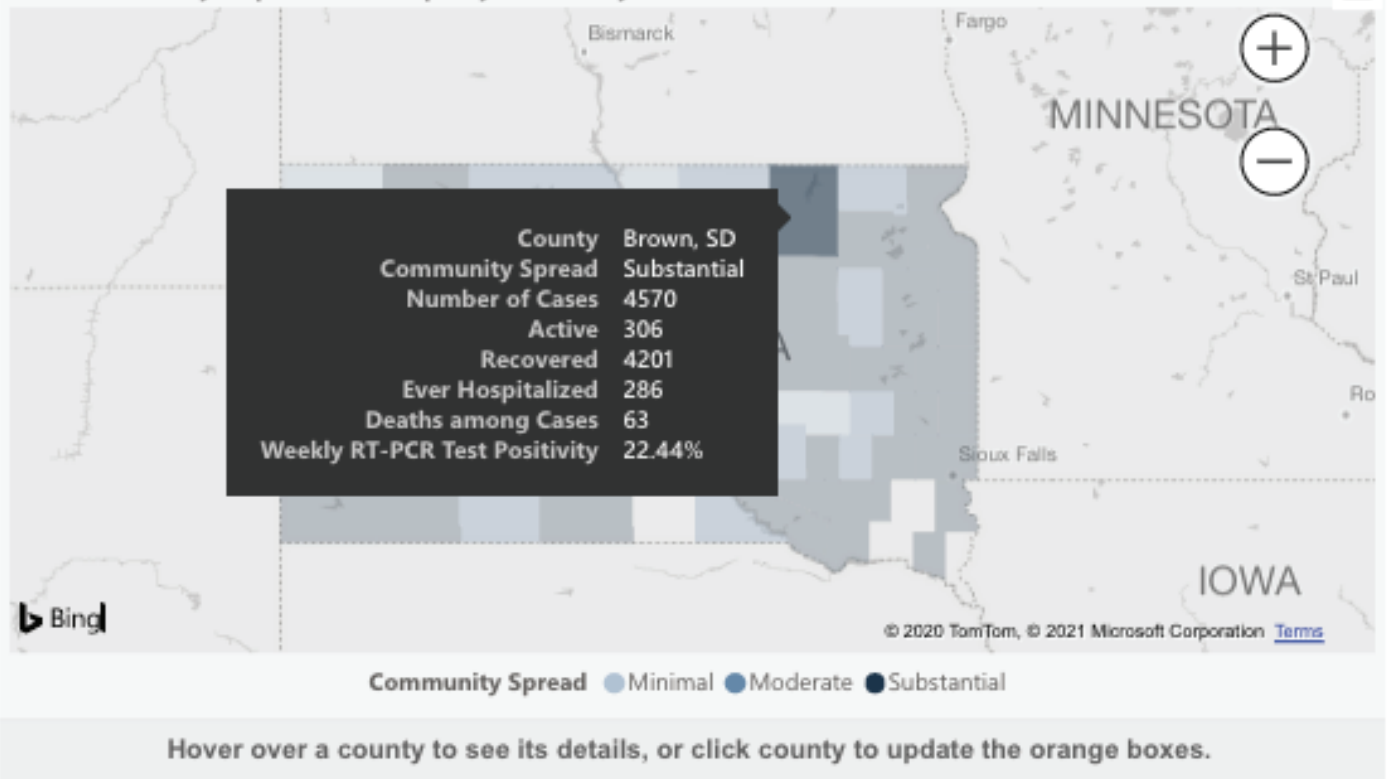
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## Brown County



### Community Spread Map by County of Residence



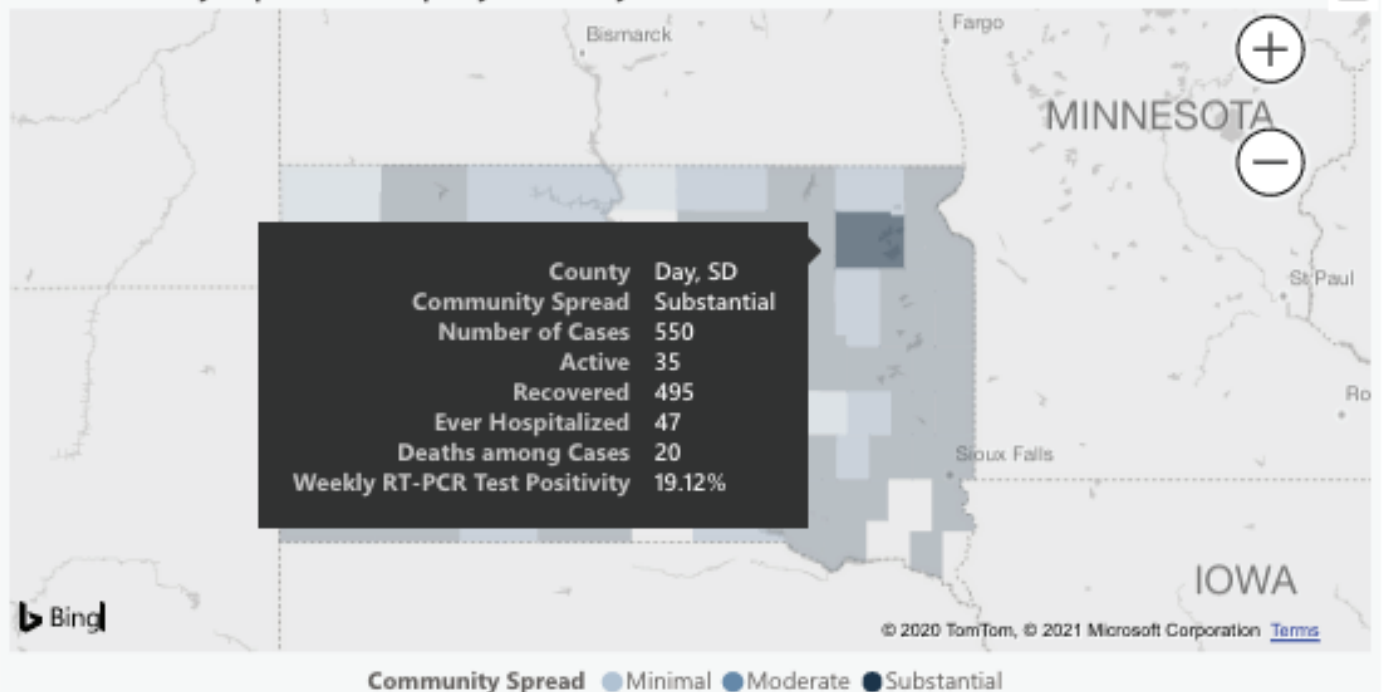
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## Day County



### 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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## Vaccinations

Total Doses Administered

29,879

Total Persons Administered a Vaccine

29,778

| Manufacturer | Number of Doses |
|--------------|-----------------|
| Moderna      | 15,888          |
| Pfizer       | 13,991          |

| Doses                    | Number of Recipients |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Moderna - 1 dose         | 15,888               |
| Pfizer - 1 dose          | 13,789               |
| Pfizer - Series Complete | 101                  |

| County       | # Doses | # Persons (1 dose) | # Persons (2 doses) | Total # Persons |
|--------------|---------|--------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| Aurora       | 46      | 46                 | 0                   | 46              |
| Beadle       | 614     | 614                | 0                   | 614             |
| Bennett*     | 40      | 40                 | 0                   | 40              |
| Bon Homme*   | 234     | 234                | 0                   | 234             |
| Brookings    | 911     | 907                | 2                   | 909             |
| Brown        | 1391    | 1,391              | 0                   | 1,391           |
| Brule*       | 107     | 103                | 2                   | 105             |
| Buffalo*     | 3       | 3                  | 0                   | 3               |
| Butte        | 37      | 37                 | 0                   | 37              |
| Campbell     | 126     | 126                | 0                   | 126             |
| Charles Mix* | 242     | 242                | 0                   | 242             |
| Clark        | 74      | 74                 | 0                   | 74              |
| Clay         | 441     | 441                | 0                   | 441             |
| Codington*   | 1132    | 1,132              | 0                   | 1,132           |
| Corson*      | 8       | 8                  | 0                   | 8               |
| Custer*      | 122     | 122                | 0                   | 122             |
| Davison      | 832     | 832                | 0                   | 832             |
| Day*         | 172     | 172                | 0                   | 172             |
| Deuel        | 94      | 94                 | 0                   | 94              |
| Dewey*       | 51      | 51                 | 0                   | 51              |
| Douglas*     | 113     | 113                | 0                   | 113             |
| Edmunds      | 101     | 101                | 0                   | 101             |
| Fall River*  | 86      | 86                 | 0                   | 86              |
| Faulk        | 22      | 22                 | 0                   | 22              |
| Grant*       | 213     | 213                | 0                   | 213             |
| Gregory*     | 175     | 175                | 0                   | 175             |
| Haakon*      | 57      | 57                 | 0                   | 57              |

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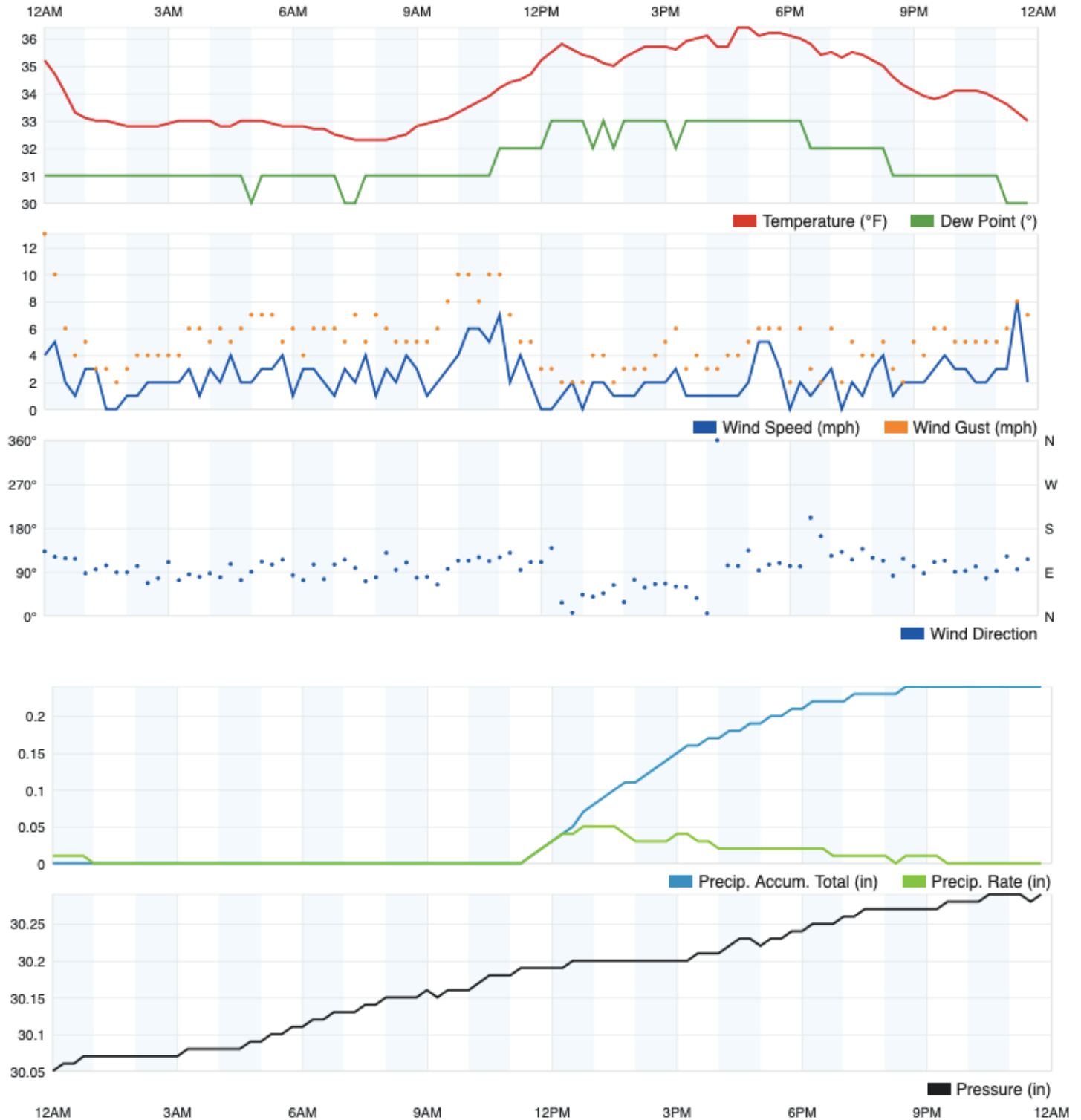
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|                |      |       |    |       |
|----------------|------|-------|----|-------|
| Hamlin         | 157  | 157   | 0  | 157   |
| Hand           | 114  | 114   | 0  | 114   |
| Hanson         | 52   | 52    | 0  | 52    |
| Harding        | 0    | 0     | 0  | 0     |
| Hughes*        | 618  | 616   | 1  | 617   |
| Hutchinson*    | 465  | 465   | 0  | 465   |
| Hyde*          | 91   | 91    | 0  | 91    |
| Jackson*       | 34   | 34    | 0  | 34    |
| Jerauld        | 66   | 66    | 0  | 66    |
| Jones*         | 28   | 28    | 0  | 28    |
| Kingsbury      | 187  | 187   | 0  | 187   |
| Lake           | 323  | 323   | 0  | 323   |
| Lawrence       | 192  | 192   | 0  | 192   |
| Lincoln        | 3717 | 3,683 | 17 | 3,700 |
| Lyman*         | 43   | 43    | 0  | 43    |
| Marshall*      | 116  | 116   | 0  | 116   |
| McCook         | 206  | 204   | 1  | 205   |
| McPherson      | 19   | 19    | 0  | 19    |
| Meade*         | 268  | 260   | 4  | 264   |
| Mellette*      | 3    | 3     | 0  | 3     |
| Miner          | 72   | 70    | 1  | 71    |
| Minnehaha      | 9702 | 9,640 | 31 | 9,671 |
| Moody*         | 146  | 146   | 0  | 146   |
| Oglala Lakota* | 8    | 8     | 0  | 8     |
| Pennington*    | 2271 | 2,199 | 36 | 2,235 |
| Perkins*       | 20   | 20    | 0  | 20    |
| Potter         | 72   | 72    | 0  | 72    |
| Roberts*       | 134  | 134   | 0  | 134   |
| Sanborn        | 79   | 79    | 0  | 79    |
| Spink          | 248  | 248   | 0  | 248   |
| Stanley*       | 86   | 86    | 0  | 86    |
| Sully          | 23   | 19    | 2  | 21    |
| Todd*          | 8    | 8     | 0  | 8     |
| Tripp*         | 168  | 168   | 0  | 168   |
| Turner         | 410  | 410   | 0  | 410   |
| Union          | 151  | 151   | 0  | 151   |
| Walworth*      | 195  | 195   | 0  | 195   |
| Yankton        | 1038 | 1,036 | 1  | 1,037 |
| Ziebach*       | 7    | 7     | 0  | 7     |
| Other          | 898  | 892   | 3  | 895   |

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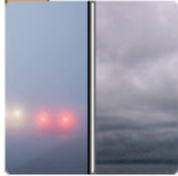

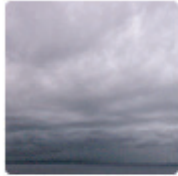


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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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| Today   | Tonight   | Friday  | Friday Night   | Saturday  |
|---|---|---|--|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Areas Dense Freezing Fog and Areas Dense Fog then Cloudy                          | Cloudy then Patchy Fog  | Cloudy  | Cloudy   | Mostly Cloudy   |
| <b>High: 35 °F</b>  | <b>Low: 24 °F</b>   | <b>High: 32 °F</b>  | <b>Low: 20 °F</b>  | <b>High: 29 °F</b>  |



**Foggy and/or Cloudy Today**

**Thursday, Jan 7<sup>th</sup>**  
 HI: 30 to 38°  
 LO: 18 to 26°

**Friday**  
 HI: 26 to 36°  
 LO: 16 to 24°

**Saturday**  
 HI: 26 to 36°  
 LO: 14 to 22°

**Sunday**  
 HI: 26 to 36°  
 LO: 10 to 18°

[www.weather.gov/abr](http://www.weather.gov/abr)  
 Updated: 1/7/2021 5:16 AM Central

Cloudy conditions with potential for fog at times continues through Saturday, before a clearing takes place with some sunshine Sunday/Monday. Temperatures stay above average meanwhile, with mostly dry conditions extending into the new work-week.

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## Today in Weather History

January 7, 1873: A blizzard raged across the Great Plains. Many pioneers, unprepared for the cold and snow, perished in the tristate region of southwest Minnesota, northwestern Iowa, and southeastern South Dakota. Visibility was down to three feet. Cows suffocated in the deep drifts, and trains were stuck for days. More than 70 people died; some bodies were not found until spring.

The following appears on pages 260-261 in the "History of Dakota Territory" by George Kingsbury. "On the 7th of January, 1873, a brother and sister of "John Foster," aged respectively fourteen and twelve years, went a short distance from home and soon afterward a blizzard came up suddenly. The children wandered in the storm to an old sod house which stood out on the prairie and there sought shelter from the driving snow. However, as the house was roofless it afforded but poor protection against the blizzard and the children perished, their bodies being buried in the snow. Our subject and the father were absent from home at the time. Weeks passed and in spite of continued searching the bodies of the children were not found, but in March a neighbor dreamed that the children were in the old house and on the 16th of that month their bodies were found there."

January 7, 1980: A strong area of low pressure moved out of the northern Rockies across South Dakota and central Minnesota on January 6th and 7th. Heavy snow, along with very high winds caused widespread blowing and drifting snow with low visibilities. Many roads were closed, and many motorists were stranded. Snowfall amounts across western and northern Minnesota were from 7 to 12 inches.

January 7, 1989: Heavy snowfall of 5 to 19 inches fell in the north and east-central South Dakota on the 6th and 7th. Snow and blowing snow reduced visibilities to near zero in many locations as winds gusted to near 50 mph. Part of Interstate 29 north of Sisseton closed the night of the 7th. Icy roads contributed to a school bus accident that injured eight boys. Extreme wind chills of 30 to 60 below also occurred. Snowfall amounts included 8 inches in Sisseton, with 12 to 19 inches across Marshall and Roberts counties.

This storm also affected northern Minnesota from the 6th through the 8th with heavy snowfall of 8 to 12 inches with local amounts of 24 to 26 inches. The heavy snow was followed by an Arctic intrusion, which brought in 35 to 50 mph winds. Snowdrifts were from 5 to 10 feet in some areas. The strong winds caused near-blizzard conditions along with extremely low wind chills.

1966: Tropical Cyclone Denise dropped 45 inches of rain on La Reunion Island in the Indian Ocean in 12 hours, and 71.80 inches of rain in 48 hours through the 8th.

1989: Empty foundations are all that remain of four homes on the southwest end of Allendale, Illinois, after an F4 tornado ripped through. The tornado was extremely rare due to its strength and the fact that it occurred so far north during the middle of meteorological winter.

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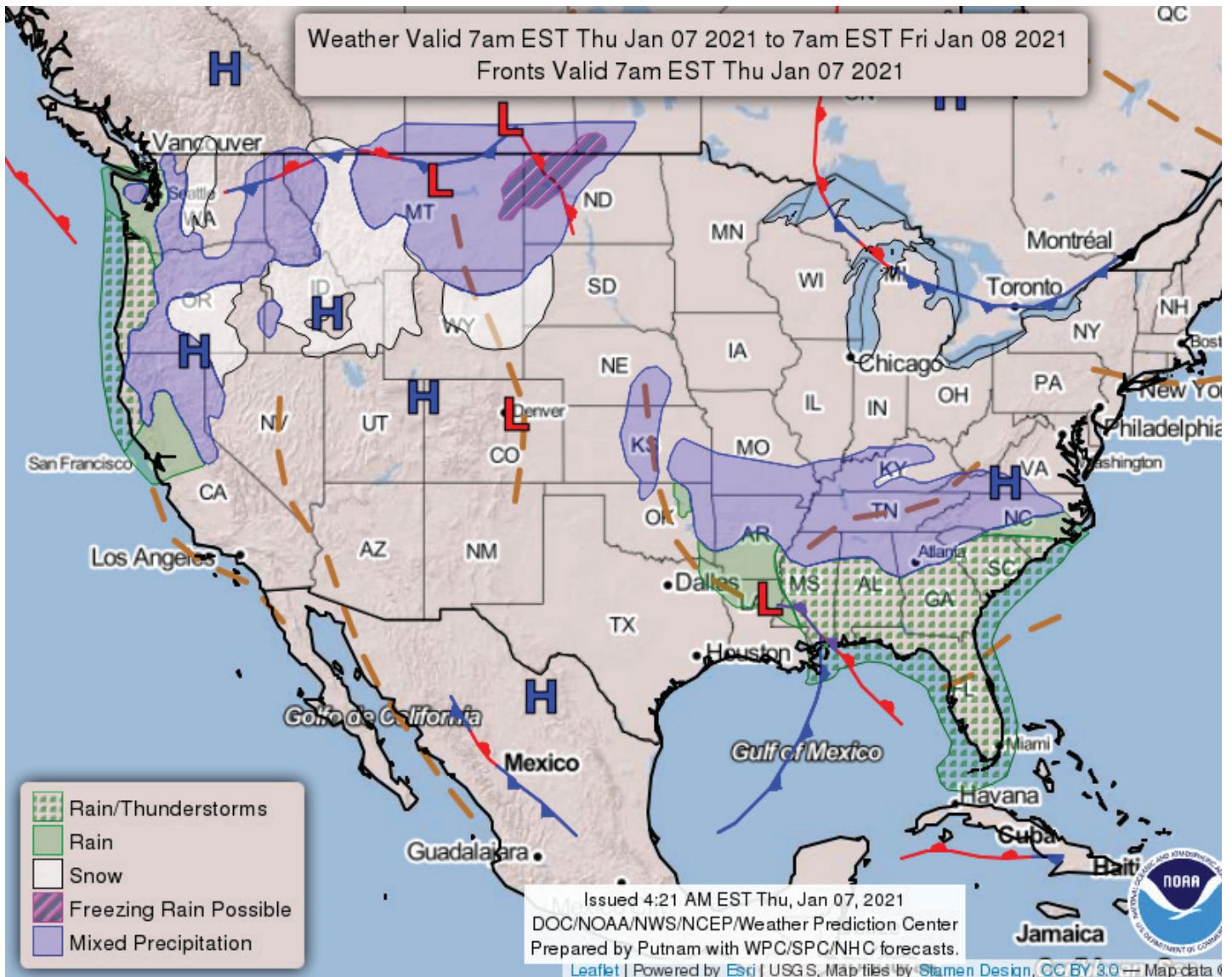
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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 36 °F at 4:44 PM**  
**Low Temp: 32 °F at 7:31 AM**  
**Wind: 10 mph at 12:09 AM**  
**Precip:**

## Today's Info

**Record High: 54° in 1963**  
**Record Low: -39 in 1912**  
**Average High: 22°F**  
**Average Low: 2°F**  
**Average Precip in Jan.: 0.11**  
**Precip to date in Jan.: 0.00**  
**Average Precip to date: 0.11**  
**Precip Year to Date: 0.00**  
**Sunset Tonight: 5:08 p.m.**  
**Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:13 a.m.**





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## IN FEAR AND TREMBLING

George Fox is recognized as the founder of the religious movement known as "the Quakers." They were given this name because they would "quake" if they sinned, had a sinful thought, or saw someone who they thought was a sinner. Their reputation for holy living was well known. Once, while appearing before a judge for his beliefs, Fox admonished the judge: "Tremble before the Word of the Lord." The judge mocked him and called him a "Quaker."

In Psalm 4:4 David said, "Stand in awe, and sin not." Another way to translate this phrase is simply, "Tremble, and sin not."

Today, however, many do not understand what sin is or its very real consequences. We live in a culture that does not recognize nor respect the value of life. We live in a world that focuses on pleasure and entertainment, wealth and the abundance of things. The moral compass of many individuals is spinning out of control and has no reference point to direct people to what is right or wrong, good or bad, decent or destructive, helpful or harmful.

In this psalm David uses the word "meditate" – which means "to consider, to reflect." Too often the only time we spend with God is to tell Him what we want. We demand things from Him as though He is our slave. Perhaps if we were willing to "consider" or "reflect" on His Word, we would realize that the sin in our lives separates us from Him, and we need His forgiveness.

Prayer: Help us, Father, to be sensitive to the sin in our lives and our need for forgiveness. May we wait before You patiently as we seek Your blessing. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Be angry, and do not sin. Meditate within your heart on your bed, and be still.  
Psalm 4:4

## News from the Associated Press

### SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — These South Dakota lotteries were drawn Wednesday:

Dakota Cash

01-17-21-30-31

(one, seventeen, twenty-one, thirty, thirty-one)

Estimated jackpot: \$68,000

Lotto America

04-08-17-25-44, Star Ball: 6, ASB: 2

(four, eight, seventeen, twenty-five, forty-four; Star Ball: six; ASB: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$2.4 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$490 million

Powerball

01-20-22-60-66, Powerball: 3, Power Play: 3

(one, twenty, twenty-two, sixty, sixty-six; Powerball: three; Power Play: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$410 million

### Tribal nations oppose drilling of 5,000 wells in Wyoming

CASPER, Wyo. (AP) — Leaders of several tribal nations said a Trump administration decision to permit five oil companies drilling rights in Wyoming will destroy cultural resources, compromise air and water quality and violate existing treaty rights, Native American tribal leaders say.

The Oglala Sioux Tribe said U.S. regulators failed to uphold federal law and fairly consult local tribes when they made their decision, the Casper Star-Tribune reported Tuesday.

The tribe also said the environmental reviews that occurred in conjunction with the project were “deficient,” according to their recent protests.

The U.S. Bureau of Land Management issued an order Dec. 23 that will allow for year-round drilling on federal leases in Converse County. The order followed completion of a roughly seven-year environmental analysis.

The area carries significant meaning for over a dozen tribes with history in the southern Powder River Basin, the newspaper reported.

Cultural resources, sacred sites and rivers within the area are important for many local tribes. The rivers within the approved project area serve as an important water source for the Oglala Sioux Tribe and other tribes in the Sioux Nation. Multiple treaties grant the tribes rights to the land.

The project would involve construction of up to 5,000 oil and natural gas wells, 1,500 multi-well pads and hundreds of miles of gas and water pipelines in the Powder River Basin. The approval also allows for the construction of roads, electrical lines and other infrastructure on federal leases in the region.

Wyoming lawmakers have expressed substantial support for the Converse County oil and gas project, the newspaper reported. The project expects to bring up to 8,000 jobs and between \$18 billion and \$28 billion in state and federal revenue.

### South Dakota shows 6 deaths after 2 days with no fatalities

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota health officials on Wednesday confirmed six new deaths due to complications from the coronavirus, after two straight days with no fatalities.

The deaths lifted the total to 1,519 since the start of the pandemic. That death count is the seventh

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highest per capita in the country at about 171 deaths per 100,000 people, according to The COVID Tracking Project.

The update showed 608 new positive tests, including 144 in Minnehaha County, 31 in Lincoln County, 36 in Brown County and 35 in Codington County. The state has confirmed 91,875 cases overall.

South Dakota ranks 34th in the country for new cases per capita in the last two weeks, Johns Hopkins University researchers said. One in every 302 people in South Dakota tested positive in the past week.

Hospitalizations in the state fell by six, to 264.

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.

## Pennsylvania lawmaker joins familiar incumbent — her son

By MARK SCOLFARO Associated Press

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) — An incumbent Pennsylvania state representative was joined by a familiar face when lawmakers took the oath of office Tuesday — his own mother.

Six-term Republican Rep. Ryan Mackenzie's district borders, for a couple miles, the one that his mother was elected to in November.

Freshman state Rep. Milou Mackenzie, 70, an interior designer and former schoolteacher, is also a Republican. They'll sit next to each other on the House floor during voting sessions and plan to carpool from their Lehigh County districts.

They lay claim to being the first mother-son pair elected to serve together in the chamber.

"It was really awe-inspiring" to be sworn in together, Milou Mackenzie said. "We didn't set out to make history or anything, but the fact that it was a historical moment is not lost on us."

They both laughed when asked what will happen if they end up voting against each other.

"We're independent thinkers, so I don't think it'll cause any problems at all," she said. "We may disagree at times as family members sometimes do. But it won't affect our relationship."

Milou Mackenzie has long been politically active, and when the Republican who last held the seat where she lives announced he would not seek reelection, Ryan Mackenzie, 38, asked his mother if she had any candidates to suggest.

She said she knocked on doors and tried to find someone, to no avail. She prayed about it. Then it struck her.

"All of a sudden, I said to Ryan, 'I think I'm going to do it,'" she recalled.

They both won contested races in November and joined the Republican majority for the 2021-22 session that got underway this week.

Similar things have happened elsewhere.

South Dakota has a Republican mother-son duo of state lawmakers as well, though they work in different chambers. Rep. Lana Greenfield took over the House seat of her son, Sen. Brock Greenfield, in 2015 when he switched chambers.

In Ohio, state Rep. Gayle Manning holds office across the legislative hall from her son, state Sen. Nathan Manning, a fellow Republican.

In the Montana Legislature, state Sen. Keith Regier has two children serving in House of Representatives. All three are Republicans. His son, Matt Regier, holds his father's former House seat. Matt Regier's sister, Amy Regier, joined the House for the 2021 session.

AP reporters Andrew Welsh-Huggins in Columbus, Ohio; Stephen Groves in Sioux Falls, South Dakota; and Amy Beth Hanson in Helena, Montana, contributed.

## Bar association warns attorneys about counseling pot sellers

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota State Bar Association is advising attorneys against providing

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legal services to businesses seeking to produce or sell marijuana in the state.

South Dakota voters approved legalizing both recreational and medical pot on the same ballot in November.

In the State Bar's January newsletter, the group says there's no doubt that manufacturing, distributing or dispensing or possessing marijuana remains illegal under federal law.

It notes that the Rules of Professional Conduct for attorneys in South Dakota states "a lawyer shall not counsel a client to engage or assist a client in conduct the lawyer knows is criminal or fraudulent, but may discuss the legal consequences of that conduct."

The association says a lawyer may not ethically provide legal services to assist a client in establishing licensing or otherwise operating a marijuana business, KOTA-TV reported.

The state bar's website states lawyers who fail to abide by the Rules of Professional Conduct "may be disciplined and given penalties ranging from a private reprimand to permanent loss of the privilege to practice law."

The legalization of marijuana in South Dakota is facing several challenges since voters approved Amendment A, which legalized recreational marijuana, and Initiated Measure 26, which legalized medical marijuana. Two state law enforcement officials have filed a lawsuit claiming Amendment A is unconstitutional.

Gov. Kristi Noem has spoken out against both measures, saying they're "the wrong choice" for South Dakota.

## Bigger lotto jackpots increasing ticket sales in SD

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Retailers that sell lottery tickets in South Dakota are reporting brisk business with larger-than-usual jackpots in the Powerball and Mega Millions games.

Tammy Gred works in customer service at Sunshine Foods in Sioux Falls. She says some of her regular lotto players are buying more tickets and those who rarely buy a ticket are getting into the game.

Others are purchasing tickets for a group.

"A handful are work groups," Gred tells KELO-TV.

The Powerball jackpot for Wednesday night's drawing is \$410 million. The Mega Millions jackpot is currently \$490 million with the next drawing on Friday.

"Large lotto jackpots tend to generate increased sales and more excitement among our players and retail partners," said Wade Laroche, South Dakota Lottery spokesman "While these jackpots lead to increased attention, we always remind our players to play responsibly and that it only takes one ticket to win."

Sunshine is one of 609 licensed lotto ticket sellers in the state, according to the South Dakota Lottery. Those licensed sellers receive a 5% commission plus bonuses for selling larger winning tickets.

The state's general fund receives 25% in net revenue from lotto tickets and the capital construction fund receives the other 75%.

The lottery generated about \$128 million for the state in fiscal year 2020.

## Biden to introduce Judge Merrick Garland as attorney general

By ERIC TUCKER and MICHAEL BALSAMO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President-elect Joe Biden will introduce Merrick Garland as his pick for attorney general on Thursday along with three others he has selected for senior Justice Department positions to "restore the independence" of the agency and faith in the rule of law.

In picking Garland, a federal appeal judge, is turning to an experienced judge who held senior positions at the Justice Department decades ago, including as a supervisor of the prosecution of the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing.

Garland's nomination will force Senate Republicans to contend with someone they spurned four years ago — refusing even to hold hearings when President Barack Obama nominated Garland for the Supreme Court. Biden is banking on Garland's credentials and reputation for moderation to ensure his confirmation.

Garland and three others Biden has picked for Justice Department leadership posts are being introduced at an event Thursday afternoon in Wilmington, Delaware. They include Obama administration homeland

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security adviser Lisa Monaco as deputy attorney general and former Justice Department civil rights chief Vanita Gupta as associate attorney general, the No. 3 official. He will also name an assistant attorney general for civil rights, Kristen Clarke, now the president of Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, an advocacy group.

"Our first-rate nominees to lead the Justice Department are eminently qualified, embody character and judgment that is beyond reproach, and have devoted their careers to serving the American people with honor and integrity," Biden said in a statement. "They will restore the independence of the department so it serves the interests of the people not a presidency, rebuild public trust in the rule of law, and work tirelessly to ensure a more fair and equitable justice system."

Garland was selected over other finalists including former Sen. Doug Jones, D-Ala., and former Deputy Attorney General Sally Yates. His confirmation prospects were solidified as Democrats on Wednesday scored control of the Senate majority by winning both Georgia Senate seats.

Garland would confront immediate challenges on the job, including an ongoing criminal tax investigation into Biden's son Hunter as well as calls from many Democrats to pursue inquiries into President Donald Trump after he leaves office. A special counsel investigation into the origins of the Russia probe also remains open, forcing a new attorney general to decide how to handle it and what to make public.

Garland would also inherit a Justice Department that has endured a tumultuous four years and abundant criticism from Democrats over what they see as the overpoliticization of law enforcement. The department is expected to dramatically change course under new leadership, including through a different approach to civil rights issues and national policing policies, especially after months of mass protests over the deaths of Black Americans at the hand of law enforcement.

Black and Latino advocates had wanted a Black attorney general or someone with a background in civil rights causes and criminal justice reform. Groups including the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund had championed Garland's Supreme Court nomination, but the extent of support from minority groups for the attorney general job was not immediately clear.

Though Garland is a white man, the selection of Gupta and Clarke, two women with significant experience in civil rights, appeared designed to blunt any concerns about his selection and served as a signal that progressive causes would be prioritized in the new administration.

Garland would return to a Justice Department radically different than the one he left. The Sept. 11 attacks were years in the future and the department's national security division had not yet been created. A proliferation of aggressive cyber and counterintelligence threats from foreign adversaries have made countries like China, Russia and North Korea top priorities for federal law enforcement.

Monaco in particular brings to the department significant national security experience, including in cybersecurity — an especially urgent issue as the U.S. government confronts a devastating hack of federal agencies that officials have linked to Russia.

Some of the issues from Garland's first stint at the department persist. Tensions between police and minorities, an issue that flared following the 1992 beating of Rodney King in Los Angeles, remain a major concern, particularly following a summer of racial unrest that roiled American cities after the May killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis.

And the FBI has confronted a surge in violence from antigovernment and racially motivated extremists. That is a familiar threat to Garland, who as a senior Justice Department official helped manage the federal government's response to the 1995 bombing of a government building in Oklahoma City that killed 168 people. The bomber, Timothy McVeigh, was later executed.

Garland has called the work the "most important thing I have done" and was known for keeping a framed photo of Oklahoma City's Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in his courthouse office in Washington.

At the time of the bombing, Garland was 42 and principal associate deputy attorney general, a top lieutenant to Attorney General Janet Reno. He was chosen to go to Oklahoma City, the highest-ranking Justice Department official there, and led the prosecution for a month until a permanent lead prosecutor was named.

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It is rare but not unprecedented for attorneys general to have previously served as judges. It happened in 2007 when President George W. Bush picked Michael Mukasey, a former federal judge in Manhattan, for the job. President Barack Obama's first attorney general, Eric Holder, had also previously been a Superior Court judge in the District of Columbia.

Garland was put forward by Obama for a seat on the Supreme Court in 2016 following the death of Justice Antonin Scalia, but Republicans refused to hold confirmation hearings in the final year of Obama's term, arguing that the person elected president that fall should make the selection.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., drew criticism from Democrats this fall when he took the opposite approach toward confirming Trump's third and final Supreme Court pick, Amy Coney Barrett. He said the difference was that the White House and Senate were controlled by the same political parties.

After the firing of FBI Director James Comey in 2017, McConnell said he would support Garland as a replacement for that position, though Garland was said to be not interested.

Garland has been on the federal appeals court in Washington since 1997. Before that, he had worked in private practice, as well as a federal prosecutor, a senior official in the Justice Department's criminal division and as the principal associate deputy attorney general.

## **Biden win confirmed after pro-Trump mob storms US Capitol**

By LISA MASCARO, ERIC TUCKER, MARY CLARE JALONICK and ANDREW TAYLOR Associated Press  
WASHINGTON (AP) — Congress confirmed Democrat Joe Biden as the presidential election winner early Thursday after a violent mob loyal to President Donald Trump stormed the U.S. Capitol in a stunning attempt to overturn America's presidential election, undercut the nation's democracy and keep Trump in the White House.

Lawmakers were resolved to complete the Electoral College tally in a display to the country, and the world, of the nation's enduring commitment to uphold the will of the voters and the peaceful transfer of power. They pushed through the night with tensions high and the nation's capital on alert.

Before dawn Thursday, lawmakers finished their work, confirming Biden won the election.

Vice President Mike Pence, presiding over the joint session, announced the tally, 306-232.

Trump, who had repeatedly refused to concede the election, said in a statement immediately after the vote that there will be a smooth transition of power on Inauguration Day.

"Even though I totally disagree with the outcome of the election, and the facts bear me out, nevertheless there will be an orderly transition on January 20th," Trump said in a statement posted to Twitter by an aide.

The Capitol was under siege Wednesday, as the nation's elected representatives scrambled to crouch under desks and don gas masks while police futilely tried to barricade the building, one of the most jarring scenes ever to unfold in a seat of American political power. A woman was shot and killed inside the Capitol, and Washington's mayor instituted an evening curfew in an attempt to contain the violence.

The rioters were egged on by Trump, who has spent weeks falsely attacking the integrity of the election and had urged his supporters to descend on Washington to protest Congress' formal approval of Biden's victory. Some Republican lawmakers were in the midst of raising objections to the results on his behalf when the proceedings were abruptly halted by the mob.

Together, the protests and the GOP election objections amounted to an almost unthinkable challenge to American democracy and exposed the depths of the divisions that have coursed through the country during Trump's four years in office. Though the efforts to block Biden from being sworn in on Jan. 20 were sure to fail, the support Trump has received for his efforts to overturn the election results have badly strained the nation's democratic guardrails.

Congress reconvened in the evening, with lawmakers decrying the protests that defaced the Capitol and vowing to finish confirming the Electoral College vote for Biden's election, even if it took all night.

Pence reopened the Senate and directly addressed the demonstrators: "You did not win."

Republican Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said the "failed insurrection" underscored lawmakers' duty to finish the count. Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said Congress would show the world

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“what America is made of” with the outcome.

The president gave his supporters a boost into action Wednesday morning at a rally outside the White House, where he urged them to march to the Capitol. He spent much of the afternoon in his private dining room off the Oval Office watching scenes of the violence on television. At the urging of his staff, he reluctantly issued a pair of tweets and a taped video telling his supporters it was time to “go home in peace” — yet he still said he backed their cause.

Hours later, Twitter for the first time time locked Trump’s account, demanded that he remove tweets excusing violence and threatened “permanent suspension.”

A somber President-elect Biden, two weeks away from being inaugurated, said American democracy was “under unprecedented assault, “ a sentiment echoed by many in Congress, including some Republicans. Former President George W. Bush said he watched the events in “disbelief and dismay.”

The domed Capitol building has for centuries been the scene of protests and occasional violence. But Wednesday’s events were particularly astounding both because they unfolded at least initially with the implicit blessing of the president and because of the underlying goal of overturning the results of a free and fair presidential election.

Tensions were already running high when lawmakers gathered early Wednesday afternoon for the constitutionally mandated counting of the Electoral College results, in which Biden defeated Trump, 306-232. Despite pleas from McConnell, more than 150 GOP lawmakers planned to support objections to some of the results, though lacking evidence of fraud or wrongdoing in the election.

Trump spent the lead-up to the proceedings publicly hectoring Pence, who had a largely ceremonial role, to aid the effort to throw out the results. He tweeted, “Do it Mike, this is a time for extreme courage!”

But Pence, in a statement shortly before presiding, defied Trump, saying he could not claim “unilateral authority” to reject the electoral votes that make Biden president.

In the aftermath of the siege, several Republicans announced they would drop their objections to the election, including Sen. Kelly Loeffler, R-Ga., who lost her bid for reelection Tuesday.

Earlier, protesters had fought past police and breached the building, shouting and waving Trump and American flags as they marched through the halls, many without masks during the COVID-19 crisis. Lawmakers were told to duck under their seats for cover and put on gas masks after tear gas was used in the Capitol Rotunda. Some House lawmakers tweeted they were sheltering in place in their offices.

Rep. Scott Peters, D-Calif., told reporters he was in the House chamber when rioters began storming it. Security officers “made us all get down, you could see that they were fending off some sort of assault.”

He said they had a piece of furniture up against the door. “And they had guns pulled,” Peters said. Glass panes to a House door were shattered.

The woman who was killed was part of a crowd that was breaking down the doors to a barricaded room where armed officers stood on the other side, police said. She was shot in the chest by Capitol Police and taken to a hospital where she was pronounced dead. City police said three other people died from medical emergencies during the long protest on and around the Capitol grounds.

Staff members grabbed boxes of Electoral College votes as the evacuation took place. Otherwise, said Sen. Jeff Merkley, D-Ore., the ballots likely would have been destroyed by the protesters.

The mob’s storming of Congress prompted outrage, mostly from Democrats but from Republicans as well, as lawmakers accused Trump of fomenting the violence with his relentless falsehoods about election fraud.

“Count me out,” said Trump ally Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C. “Enough is enough.”

Several suggested that Trump be prosecuted for a crime or even removed under the Constitution’s 25th Amendment, which seemed unlikely two weeks from when his term expires.

“I think Donald Trump probably should be brought up on treason for something like this,” Rep. Jimmy Gomez, D-Calif., told reporters. “This is how a coup is started. And this is how democracy dies.”

Sen. Ben Sasse, R-Neb., who has at times clashed with Trump, issued a statement saying: “Lies have consequences. This violence was the inevitable and ugly outcome of the President’s addiction to constantly stoking division.”

Despite Trump’s repeated claims of voter fraud, election officials and his own former attorney general

have said there were no problems on a scale that would change the outcome. All the states have certified their results as fair and accurate, by Republican and Democratic officials alike.

Punctuating their resolve, both the House and Senate soundly rejected an objection to election results from Arizona, which had been raised by Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, and Rep. Paul Gosar, R-Ariz., and another from Pennsylvania brought by Sen. Josh Hawley, R-Mo., and Rep. Scott Perry, R-Pa. Still, most House Republicans supported the objections. Other objections to results from Georgia, Michigan, Nevada and Wisconsin fizzled.

The Pentagon said about 1,100 District of Columbia National Guard members were being mobilized to help support law enforcement at the Capitol. Dozens of people were arrested.

Associated Press writers Jill Colvin, Zeke Miller, Kevin Freking, Alan Fram, Matthew Daly, Ben Fox and Ashraf Khalil in Washington and Bill Barrow in Atlanta contributed to this report.

## **Dems' Georgia alliance is diverse and broad. Is it durable?**

By BILL BARROW, HANNAH FINGERHUT and JOSH BOAK Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — President Donald Trump came to the north Georgia mountains Monday night to gin up turnout in conservative strongholds and stave off the Democratic challengers who threatened the GOP's Senate majority in two runoff elections.

It didn't work.

The Republicans' overwhelmingly white, older and rural and exurban coalition failed the GOP Senate candidates in Tuesday's high-stakes elections, while Democrats proved their alliance that succeeded in defeating Donald Trump in the state in November was not a fluke.

Black and young voters, suburbanites and the many recent arrivals to the state showed up a second time in two months to back Democrats, handing Jon Ossoff and Raphael Warnock narrow victories over Republicans David Perdue and Sen. Kelly Loeffler.

Across Georgia, a fast-growing, diversifying Deep South state, Tuesday's election returns told the same story: Record runoff turnout -- more than 4.4 million -- didn't match the 5 million ballots cast in November, but Democrats consistently came closer than their rivals to replicating their November vote totals, even in the large towns where Trump rallied.

It was true in north Georgia's Whitfield County, Trump territory, where Perdue and Loeffler got 89% of the votes that Perdue won in the general election, when he led all Senate candidates in the first round of voting. That would be an impressive showing in most runoffs, which almost invariably see a turnout drop. But Ossoff and Warnock managed slightly more than 90% of their November totals.

And it was true across the Atlanta suburbs, both the northern, whiter enclaves that have for two decades assured statewide victories for Republicans and the southern ring of communities where Black voters tilt the ledger to Democrats. Democrats also outperformed Republicans in metro Atlanta, the center of an ever-expanding footprint that has remade the Georgia economy and, now, its politics.

Behind the Democrats' victories — two months after Biden became the first Democrat since 1992 to win the state's presidential electoral votes — are a mix of factors: The double runoffs and their national consequences brought bottomless resources to a party infrastructure that had been expanding for years.

Black voters were driven by the possibility of Warnock becoming the state's first Black senator, an achievement coveted even more coming two years after Democrat Stacey Abrams narrowly missed becoming the first Black female governor in U.S. history.

And Trump shadowed over it all as he sowed chaos within his party over his fraudulent claims of a rigged election and continued to repel college-educated suburbanites. Democrats narrowly edged out Republicans among that group, according to AP VoteCast, a survey of more than 3,700 Georgia voters.

Democrats argue their new path to power in Georgia will outlast the president.

"We've been building a multiracial, multiethnic, multigenerational statewide coalition — truly a statewide coalition for years," said Lauren Groh-Wargo, who managed Abrams' 2018 campaign and has been at the



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center of organizing work conducted by a range of groups on the left.

According to AP VoteCast, Democrats were competitive with the help of small but mighty groups in the diversifying state. Black voters — 32% of the electorate in the runoff, according to the survey — supported Ossoff and Warnock almost universally. VoteCast showed Black voters were 29% of the November electorate. That slight uptick could by itself account for tipping statewide results in a close Georgia election.

Voters in households earning under \$50,000 are roughly 40% of voters in the state, and about 6 in 10 backed Democrats. And, even as Republicans hoped Loeffler might appeal to female voters, Democrats handily won majorities of women in cities and suburbs, Black and Latino women and college-educated women.

The racial divide in the state was stark. Sixty percent of voters were white, and about three-quarters of them backed Republicans. The GOP candidates won majorities of white voters with and without a college degree, across age groups and genders. Roughly two-thirds of small town and rural voters supported Loeffler and Perdue, including comparable shares of men and women. Voters who have lived in Georgia for more than 20 years — about two-thirds of all voters — slightly favored the GOP.

But it wasn't enough in rapidly changing Georgia.

Since 2017, census figures show that roughly 280,000 people moved to the state annually. That influx has steadily tilted the state away from Republicans. About 6 in 10 of voters who moved there within the past 20 years voted for the Democrats, VoteCast found.

That growth has pushed suburbs deeper into the state. The Atlanta area has expanded an average 61 square miles each year between 1990 and 2010, almost two times more than any other city in the country, according to economist Issi Romem. The rapid expansion caused Atlanta's suburbs to become denser and more diverse, a pattern that favored improved margins for Democrats.

Roughly half of Georgia's voters in the Senate runoffs identified as suburban; Democrats won this group 54% to 46%, according to VoteCast.

Republicans bemoaned those losses in places that once solidified GOP victories statewide.

"Suburbs, my friends, the suburbs," wrote Josh Holmes, a former top aide to outgoing Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, on Twitter. "I feel like a one trick pony but here we are again. We went from talking about jobs and the economy to ... election conspiracies in 4 short years and — as it turns out — they were listening!"

By about 2 to 1, moderate voters favored Ossoff and Warnock, according to VoteCast.

Democrats have been mining Georgia's suburbs for support for years and effectively capitalized on expanded mail and early voting opportunities this election season.

About 6 in 10 Georgia voters say they were contacted on behalf of Democratic candidates, compared with about half for Republican candidates, according to VoteCast. Democratic voters were roughly twice as likely as Republican voters to say they responded to the contact by receiving help with registering, planning when to vote or voting absentee.

The evidence showed up in the results.

Cherokee County, with its fast-growing suburbs and exurbs north of Atlanta, remains a deep trove of Republican votes, even as Democrats have upped their performance in years. But Loeffler and Perdue managed just 90% of Perdue's November high mark of nearly 100,000 — a net loss of more than 9,000 votes. Ossoff managed 94% of his November total, with Warnock a percentage point higher.

South of Atlanta is Clayton County, which has the highest proportion of Democratic votes in the metro area. Democrats' raw vote totals there are often comparable to Republicans' in Cherokee. On Tuesday, Ossoff and Warnock managed 96% of Democrats' November total, losing only 3,500 votes. The Republicans matched less than 80%.

Groh-Wargo, the Democratic strategist and organizer, said the population growth and Democrats' efforts across the state will intensify, not wane, after the victories.

"The party that is reaching out and expanding across demographics, geography, figuring out how to connect with all voters," she said, "the party that's doing that is going to be the ascendant party in Georgia and any diverse state."

Fingerhut reported from Washington, Boak from Baltimore.

## **Trump says his term is ending, transition will be orderly**

By ZEKE MILLER and JILL COLVIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump for the first time acknowledged his defeat in the Nov. 3 election and announced there would be an “orderly transition on January 20th” after Congress concluded the electoral vote count early Thursday certifying President-elect Joe Biden’s victory.

Trump’s acknowledgment came after a day of chaos and destruction on Capitol Hill as a mob of his supporters stormed the Capitol building and unleashed unprecedented scenes of mayhem as it tried to halt the peaceful transition of power. Members of Congress were forced into hiding, offices were ransacked, and the formal congressional tally halted for more than six hours.

“Even though I totally disagree with the outcome of the election, and the facts bear me out, nevertheless there will be an orderly transition on January 20th,” Trump said in a statement posted to Twitter by his social media director. His own account had been locked by the company for posting messages that appeared to justify the assault on the seat of the nation’s democracy.

Trump added, “While this represents the end of the greatest first term in presidential history, it’s only the beginning of our fight to Make America Great Again!”

The statement was the first time Trump formally acknowledged his loss after spending the last two months refusing to concede and lobbing baseless allegations of widespread voter fraud, even though his own Justice Department, federal courts and state governments have said repeatedly the vote was carried out freely and fairly.

Trump’s refusal to accept reality and his incendiary rhetoric reached a breaking point Wednesday when his supporters violently occupied the Capitol in one of the most jarring scenes ever to unfold in a seat of American political power. Authorities said four people died during the violence, including one woman who was shot by an officer outside the House chamber.

Trump had encouraged his supporters to march on the Capitol to protest lawmakers’ actions, and later appeared to excuse the violent occupation by the mob, which forced its way inside and clashed with police.

“These are the things and events that happen when a sacred landslide election victory is so unceremoniously & viciously stripped away from great patriots who have been badly & unfairly treated for so long,” Trump wrote in a message that was later deleted by Twitter. He added, “Go home with love & in peace. Remember this day forever!”

Trump’s response to the violence underscored his monthslong obsession with trying to overturn the results of the election. He has spent the final days of his presidency angrily stewing and lashing out at Republicans for perceived disloyalty while refusing to acknowledge his loss or concede.

Trump’s statement could not be posted on his Twitter or Facebook feeds because both accounts had been blocked from posting.

Trump spent much of Wednesday afternoon watching the insurrection on television from his private dining room off the Oval Office. But aside from sparing appeals for calm issued at the insistence of his staff, he was largely disengaged. Instead, a White House official said, most of Trump’s attention was consumed by his ire at Vice President Mike Pence, who defied Trump’s demands by acknowledging he did not have the power to unilaterally choose the next president. The official was not authorized to discuss the matter and spoke only on the condition of anonymity.

Trump only reluctantly issued the tweets and taped a video encouraging an end to the violence. The posts came at the insistence of staff and amid mounting criticism from Republican lawmakers urging him to condemn the violence being perpetrated in his name, according to the official.

And even as authorities struggled to take control of Capitol Hill after protesters overwhelmed police, Trump continued to level baseless allegations of mass voter fraud and praised his loyalists as “very special.”

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"I know your pain. I know your hurt. But you have to go home now," he said in a video posted more than 90 minutes after lawmakers were evacuated from the House and Senate chambers. "We can't play into the hands of these people. We have to have peace. So go home. We love you. You're very special."

The violence, coupled with the president's tepid response, alarmed many in the White House and appeared to push Republicans allies to the breaking point after years of allegiance to Trump. After four years with no shortage of fraught moments, Wednesday's events quickly emerged as the nadir of morale in the Trump White House, as aides looked on in horror at the chaos at the Capitol Trump had fomented.

A number of White House aides were discussing a potential mass resignation, according to people familiar with the conversation. And others quickly departed.

Stephanie Grisham, the first lady's chief of staff and a former White House press secretary, submitted her resignation Wednesday. Deputy national security adviser Matt Pottinger, White House social secretary Rickie Niceta and deputy press secretary Sarah Matthews also resigned, according to officials. More departures were expected in the coming days, officials said.

Other aides indicated they planned to stay to help smooth the transition to the Biden administration. And some harbored concerns about what Trump might do in his final two weeks in office if they were not there to serve as guardrails when so few remain.

Trump's begrudging statement acknowledging defeat came after even longtime allies floated whether members of his Cabinet should invoke the 25th Amendment and remove him from office. Former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie told ABC late Wednesday that "responsible members of the Cabinet" should be thinking about fulfilling their oath of office, adding that Trump had "violated his oath and betrayed the American people."

Trump has been single-mindedly focused on his electoral defeat since Election Day, aides said, at the expense of the other responsibilities of his office, including the fight against the raging coronavirus. Indeed, it was Pence, not Trump, who spoke with the acting defense secretary to discuss mobilizing the D.C. National Guard on Wednesday afternoon.

Hours earlier, Trump had appeared at a massive rally near the White House, where he continued to urge supporters to fight the election results and encouraged them to march to the Capitol in remarks that were peppered with incendiary language and rife with violent undertones. At one point, he even suggested he might join them — a prospect that was discussed by the White House but eventually abandoned.

"We're going to the Capitol," he said. "We're going to try and give our Republicans ... the kind of pride and boldness that they need to take back our country."

Earlier in the rally, his lawyer, Rudy Giuliani, had advocated what he had called "trial by combat."

As the violence raged, Republican lawmakers and former administration officials had begged Trump to tell his supporters to stand down.

## Capitol violence sparks a social media reckoning with Trump

By BARBARA ORTUTAY and DAVID KLEPPER Associated Press

All it took for social-media giants Twitter and Facebook to even temporarily bar President Donald Trump from addressing their vast audiences was a violent insurrection at the U.S. Capitol, fueled by years of false statements, conspiracy theories and violent rhetoric from the president.

On Wednesday, in an unprecedented step, the two companies temporarily suspended Trump from posting to their platforms after a mob of his supporters stormed the house of Congress. It was the most aggressive action either company has yet taken against Trump, who more than a decade ago embraced the immediacy and scale of Twitter to rally loyalists, castigate enemies and spread false rumors.

Twitter locked Trump out of his account for 12 hours and said that future violations could result in a permanent suspension. The company required the removal of three of Trump's tweets, including a short video in which he urged those supporters to "go home" while also repeating falsehoods about the integrity of the presidential election. Trump's account deleted those posts, Twitter said; had they remained, Twitter had threatened to extend his suspension.

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Facebook and Instagram, which Facebook owns, followed up in the evening, announcing that Trump wouldn't be able to post for 24 hours following two violations of its policies. The White House did not immediately offer a response to the actions.

While some cheered the platforms' actions, experts noted that the companies' actions follow years of hemming and hawing on Trump and his supporters spreading dangerous misinformation and encouraging violence that have contributed to Wednesday's violence.

Jennifer Grygiel, a Syracuse University communications professor and an expert on social media, said Wednesday's events in Washington, D.C. are a direct result of Trump's use of social media to spread propaganda and disinformation, and that the platforms should bear some responsibility for their inaction.

"This is what happens," Grygiel said. "We didn't just see a breach at the Capitol. Social media platforms have been breached by the president repeatedly. This is disinformation. This was a coup attempt in the United States."

Grygiel said the platform's decision to remove the video — and Twitter's suspension — are too little, too late.

"They're creeping along towards firmer action," Grygiel said, calling Trump "Exhibit A" for the need for greater regulation of social media. "Social media is complicit in this because he has repeatedly used social media to incite violence. It's a culmination of years of propaganda and abuse of media by the president of the United States."

Trump posted the video more than two hours after protesters entered the Capitol, interrupting lawmakers meeting in an extraordinary joint session to confirm the Electoral College results and President-elect Joe Biden's victory.

So far, YouTube has not taken similar action to muzzle Trump, although it said it also removed Trump's video. But that video remained available as of Wednesday afternoon.

Guy Rosen, Facebook's vice president of integrity, said on Twitter Wednesday that the video was removed because it "contributes to rather than diminishes the risk of ongoing violence."

"This is an emergency situation and we are taking appropriate emergency measures, including removing President Trump's video," Rosen said.

Twitter initially left the video up but blocked people from being able to retweet it or comment on it. Only later in the day did the platform delete it entirely.

Trump opened his video saying, "I know your pain. I know your hurt. But you have to go home now."

After repeating false claims about voter fraud affecting the election, Trump went on to say: "We can't play into the hands of these people. We have to have peace. So go home. We love you. You're very special."

Republican lawmakers and previous administration officials had begged Trump to give a statement to his supporters to quell the violence. He posted his video as authorities struggled to take control of a chaotic situation at the Capitol that led to the evacuation of lawmakers and the death of at least one person.

Trump has harnessed social media — especially Twitter — as a potent tool for spreading misinformation about the election. Wednesday's riot only increased calls to ban Trump from the platform.

"The President has promoted sedition and incited violence," Jonathan Greenblatt, chief executive officer of the Anti-Defamation League said in a statement. "More than anything, what is happening right now at the Capitol is a direct result of the fear and disinformation that has been spewed consistently from the Oval Office."

In a statement Thursday morning, Trump said there would be an "orderly transition on January 20th" and acknowledged defeat in the election for the first time. His aides posted the statement on Twitter because his account remained suspended.

## **The Latest: Japan declares state of emergency in Tokyo area**

By The Associated Press undefined

TOKYO — Japan has declared a state of emergency for Tokyo and three nearby areas as coronavirus cases continue to surge, hitting a daily record of 2,447 in the capital.

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Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga issued the declaration at the government task force for the coronavirus. It kicks in Friday until Feb. 7, and centers around asking restaurants and bars to close at 8 p.m. and people to stay home and not mingle in crowds.

The declaration carries no penalties. But it works as a strong request while Japan juggles to keep the economy going.

Shopping malls and schools will remain open. Movie theaters, museums and other events will be asked to reduce attendance. Places that defy the request will get publicized on a list, while those that comply will be eligible for aid, according to officials.

Coronavirus cases have been surging in Japan after the year-end and New Year's holidays.

## THE VIRUS OUTBREAK:

Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar says the government will begin allowing more drugstores to start giving shots to speed coronavirus vaccinations. Some governors and other politicians are turning up the pressure after a slow rollout of the coronavirus vaccines. Dr. Anthony Fauci believes the U.S. could soon give 1 million vaccinations a day. The U.S. reports 29 severe allergic reactions to the vaccines.

The European Union has given approval to the Moderna vaccine. The decision gives the 27-nation bloc a second vaccine to use against the coronavirus. The U.K. says it has vaccinated 1.3 million people and plans to have almost 1,000 vaccination centers operating by the end of this week.

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

## HERE'S WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING:

PRAGUE — Coronavirus infections in the Czech Republic have hit a new all-time high for a second straight day, prompting the government to extend a current lockdown.

The Health Ministry reported 17,668 new cases on Wednesday, about 300 more than the previous record set a day earlier.

Infections, which have been on the rise since early December, started to surge again this week after slowing during New Year holidays.

Health Minister Jan Blatny said the government on Thursday extended the lockdown until Jan 22. The restrictions were originally scheduled to end Sunday.

The country of 10.7 million has had 794,740 confirmed cases, including 12,621 deaths.

SEOUL, South Korea — South Korea says it will extend its ban on incoming flights from Britain for two more weeks until Jan. 21.

Authorities said Thursday they've found three additional cases of the more contagious variant of the coronavirus identified in the U.K, taking the total to 14. South Korea has also found one case of a coronavirus variant detected in South Africa.

All foreigners entering South Korea will be required to submit negative COVID-19 test results starting Friday.

Officials say a recent outbreak appears to have peaked because they aren't seeing a further upsurge in infections. The country reported 870 new cases on Thursday, the third day in a row that the figure has been below 1,000. The new cases took the national caseload to 66,688 with 1,046 deaths.

South Korea on Monday extended its second-highest social distancing rules, called "Tier 2.5," in the greater Seoul area and the third-highest rules in other areas for two more weeks.

CANBERRA, Australia — Australia is advancing the start of its coronavirus vaccination program to mid-February, with plans to inoculate 15% of the population by late March.

The government had argued there was no reason for an emergency rollout that cut short usual regulatory processes as has occurred in the United States and elsewhere because local transmission rates in

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Australia are much lower. It had planned to start vaccinating in March.

But Prime Minister Scott Morrison said Thursday he expects the Pfizer vaccine will be delivered two weeks after the Australian regulator approves it in late January. He said that "it is moving considerably faster than normal."

Morrison says the goal is to give 80,000 shots a week and have 4 million of Australia's 26 million people vaccinated by the end of March.

**MEXICO CITY** — Mexico has reported a new high for a daily increase in coronavirus cases, with 13,345 newly confirmed infections reported Wednesday for the previous 24 hours. Officials also reported a near-record of 1,165 deaths related to COVID-19.

The country has now seen about 1.48 million infections and almost 130,000 deaths so far in the pandemic. A low testing rate means that is an undercount, and official estimates suggest the real death toll is over 180,000.

Mexico's vaccination effort continues at a glacial rate, with about 7,500 shots administered Wednesday, a rate similar to previous days. In Mexico City, the current center of the pandemic in the country, 88% percent of hospital beds are full.

**BEIJING** — New coronavirus cases in northern China's Hebei province have more than doubled as officials move to lock down an area that is home to about 75 million people.

Officials announced 51 new cases Thursday, bringing Hebei's total to 90 since Sunday. Most of the cases have been in Shijiazhuang, the provincial capital that is due to host some events of next year's Winter Olympics.

Rail, air and highway connections to Shijiazhuang have been suspended, control measures tightened for urban communities and villages in the region, and classes have been suspended.

Authorities have imposed similarly tight measures in the cities of Shenyang and Dalian in Liaoning province just to the north.

Wary of a new wave of infections, China is discouraging travel for next month's Lunar New Year holiday and beginning school holidays a week early.

**MONTREAL** — Quebec's premier is imposing a provincewide 8 p.m. curfew beginning Saturday as a way to curb surging coronavirus infections and hospitalizations.

The province will become the first in Canada to impose a curfew for addressing the pandemic.

Premier Francois Legault spoke of the need to take drastic action as he announced a four-week curfew prohibiting people from leaving their homes between 8 p.m. and 5 a.m. unless they are going to work.

He says officials have concluded the virus is being spread through gatherings in residences, and the curfew is meant to prevent that.

**JERUSALEM** — The Israeli Cabinet has agreed to tighten a lockdown in hopes of slowing a raging coronavirus outbreak.

Most schools and businesses will be closed, public gatherings restricted and public transportation limited for a two-week period beginning at midnight Thursday night. Thousands of police are expected to be deployed to enforce the closure.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office announced the decision late Wednesday.

Israel has jumped out to a fast start in vaccinating its population, inoculating 15% of its 9 million people in just over two weeks. But at the same time, it is facing one of the world's highest rates of coronavirus infections.

Israel's Health Ministry has reported over 462,000 cases of the coronavirus, including more than 8,000 new cases on Wednesday. It also has reported over 3,500 deaths.

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The drugstore chains CVS and Walgreens both said Wednesday that they expect to finish delivering the first round of COVID-19 vaccine doses at nursing homes on schedule by January 25.

CVS said it was roughly halfway done as of Tuesday. It is working with 7,822 nursing homes nationwide and had completed nearly 4,000 first-dose clinics.

All told, CVS said it has administered 351,231 vaccines in nursing homes as of Tuesday, including nearly 30,000 in big states like California and Florida.

There are more than 15,000 nursing homes nationally, and the drugstore chains focused first on vaccinating at those locations in part because residents there are more vulnerable and require more care than people staying at other long-term care locations.

CVS and Walgreens also are expanding their vaccine delivery into those other locations, which include assisted living facilities. CVS said it has completed nearly 700 first-dose clinics at those locations and administered more than 26,000 shots.

But the drugstore chain said it was still waiting on eight states — Arizona, Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Wisconsin — to set start dates before it can begin working in those locations.

## Japan declares emergency for Tokyo area as cases spike

By YURI KAGEYAMA Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Japan declared a state of emergency in Tokyo and three nearby areas on Thursday as coronavirus cases continue to surge, hitting a daily record of 2,447 in the capital.

Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga issued the declaration at the government task force for the coronavirus. It lasts from Friday until Feb. 7, and centers around asking restaurants and bars to close at 8 p.m. and people to stay home and not mingle in crowds.

The declaration carries no penalties. But it works as a strong request while Japan juggles to keep its economy going.

Shopping malls and schools will remain open. Movie theaters, museums and other events will be asked to reduce attendance. Places that defy the request will be publicized on a list, while those that comply will be eligible for aid, according to officials.

"I am confident we can overcome this, but I must ask all of you endure a restricted life for a while longer," Suga told reporters after the declaration.

He promised more aid for hospitals treating COVID-19 patients. The Japanese military is ready to help, and efforts are underway to get a vaccine approved and delivered, he added.

"Please take this matter seriously as your own, to protect all precious life, your parents, your grandparents, family and friends, over generations," Suga said.

Coronavirus cases have been surging in Japan following year-end and New Year's holidays.

Shigeru Omi, a doctor who heads the government panel on coronavirus measures, described the latest wave as "explosive," requiring the emergency declaration.

Tokyo has logged record numbers of daily cases for two straight days, after 1,591 on Wednesday. Nationwide, cases have been growing steadily by more than 5,000 a day.

Some experts say Japan should have acted sooner, and a government campaign to promote domestic travel through discounts was a mistake.

Opinion on having eateries close early is mixed, since places could simply get more crowded in earlier hours.

Dr. Hiroshi Nishiura, an expert on infectious diseases, said the rate of increase in number of cases will decline but infections will continue to rise. He believes more drastic action is needed.

Vaccinations are expected to start next month in Japan, with health and essential workers first. The rollout is likely to take months.

Dr. Atsuo Hamada, an expert on infections and professor at Tokyo Medical University Hospital, said curtailing nighttime drinking and dining will help.

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"When people go out to eat at night, they tend to get drunk, talk in loud voices and sing so airborne infections spread more quickly," he said in a recent telephone interview.

Keeping COVID-19 infections under control is imperative for Japan with the Tokyo Olympics set for July. Politicians have repeatedly stressed it must go on despite an increasingly doubtful public.

A similar state of emergency was issued last April through late May, and was eventually widened to apply nationwide.

The effort was largely effective. Japanese tend to follow orders from authorities, even without the threat of penalties. Almost everyone has been wearing masks.

A legal change is needed to allow for penalties in emergency declarations, and such a move is set to be considered in parliament. A strict lockdown, like ones in Europe, is not being considered.

Yoshimasa Maruyama, chief economist at SMBC Nikko Securities, said the economic damage from the declaration will be limited, with real gross domestic product growth likely to be pushed down by 0.2 percentage points in the first quarter of 2021.

"The emergency last year affected a wider part of the economy, and it coincided with the time when the economy was already struggling amid plunging global trade," he said.

Other economists are projecting a slightly greater negative impact on GDP.

During the second quarter last year, Japan's economy shrank nearly 8%, but has gradually rebounded, growing 5% in the July-September 2020 period.

Trade has stagnated, although hopes are high for a gradual recovery. Some parts of Asia have not been as affected by the coronavirus as the U.S. and Europe.

Still, the restaurant and hotel sectors will be slammed, and government assistance is needed, Maruyama said.

Shingo Sakai, who runs La Rochelle French cuisine restaurants in Tokyo, said fine dining takes more than two hours, and his customers usually don't get out of the office until after 6 p.m.

"We have to keep our dining quality, and at the same time we need to keep our reputation by following the government order," he said.

"I have to think about cutting costs to keep the company alive. There's no place to cut costs because I did that for the last six months. There's no room for that."

Japan's unemployment rate has risen, but has not shot up, hovering at about 3%. Bankruptcies related to the coronavirus total about 800 so far, high for Japan, according to Tokyo Shoko Research.

But shopping districts have been packed, a situation that has contributed to the most recent virus wave.

Some 250,000 cases have been confirmed nationwide with more than 3,700 deaths, according to the Health Ministry. Hospitals are getting stretched thin.

Tokyo Gov. Yuriko Koike and the heads of neighboring Saitama, Chiba and Kanagawa prefectures asked the government for the emergency declaration over the weekend.

"We need to now recognize that virus infections have entered a totally new stage," she said. "Tokyo is making the protection of human life a top priority."

Yuri Kageyama is on Twitter <https://twitter.com/yurikageyama>

## From 'beautiful' to 'disgraceful': World reacts to US mob

By FOSTER KLUG Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Amid the global outrage at the storming of the U.S. Capitol building by angry supporters of President Donald Trump was a persistent strain of glee from those who have long resented the perceived American tendency to chastise other countries for less-than-perfect adherence to democratic ideals.

The teargas and bullets inside the Capitol, a globally recognized structure that stands at the center of America's idea of democracy, are more usually associated with countries where popular uprisings topple a hated dictator. The Arab Spring, for instance.

This time, however, it was an attempt by Americans to stop a peaceful transition of power to President-



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elect Joe Biden after a democratic election in a country that many around the world have looked at as a model for democratic governance.

"We must call this out for what it is: a deliberate assault on Democracy by a sitting President & his supporters, attempting to overturn a free & fair election! The world is watching!" Irish Foreign and Defense Minister Simon Coveney said on Twitter, representing a tone of outrage that many world leaders took.

Some global observers, though, seemed to be reveling in the burst of violence that marked the closing days of a presidency that has divided opinion abroad almost as strongly as it has in America.

In China, which has had constant friction with the Trump administration over trade, military and political issues, people were scathing in their criticism of Trump and his supporters, citing both his failure to control the coronavirus pandemic and the mob action in Washington.

Communist-ruled China has long accused the U.S. of hypocrisy in its efforts to promote democracy and advocate for human rights overseas.

The Communist Youth League ran a photo montage of the violence at the Capitol on its Twitter-like Weibo microblog with the caption: "On the sixth, the U.S. Congress, a most beautiful site to behold." That appeared to mock House Speaker Nancy Pelosi for her June 2019 comments in praise of sometimes violent antigovernment protests in Hong Kong.

"The U.S. is not as safe as China, right? I think Trump is a self-righteous and selfish person," said financial adviser Yang Ming.

Some watching from abroad held Trump responsible for the chaos, and there was a widespread condemnation that seemed nurtured by the U.S. president's often antagonistic relationship with countries around the world. That was especially true by those who have been at the sharp end of American military muscle and punitive sanctions.

Iran, another country that faces routine U.S. criticism over violations of human rights and democratic values, jumped on the insurrection as proof of American hypocrisy.

The semiofficial Fars news agency called the United States a "fragmented democracy," while Iran's pro-government Twitter accounts gloated, circulating photos of the mobs with hashtags that included #DownfalloftheUS.

The violence at the U.S. Capitol tarnishes the American insistence that it is a bastion of democracy for countries that have only in recent decades, in some cases, given up autocratic or military-controlled forms of government.

"The beauty of democracy?" with a shrug emoji was the reaction tweeted by Bashir Ahmad, a personal assistant to the president of Nigeria, which has seen several coups since independence — including one led decades ago by President Muhammadu Buhari, who most recently entered the office via a vote.

Some legislatures in Asia — South Korea and Taiwan, for instance — have at times been marred with brawls and screaming, but democracies throughout the region are normally staid versions of European and American lawmaking models.

"This is shocking. I hope this will serve as chance for the Americans to review their democracy," said Na HyunPil at the Korean House for International Solidarity, a Seoul-based NGO. "Trump is entirely responsible for this incident. After his four-year rule, the Americans find it difficult to tell other countries that their country is a good model for democracy."

U.S. politics have long been beset by fringe conspiracy theories and grievances, according to Wesley Widmaier, a professor of international relations at Australian National University.

"What makes the past four years different is that these views have been espoused by the president of the United States — and we can trace a direct line from Trump's incendiary rhetoric and outright lies about the 2020 election to the siege of the U.S. Capitol," he said.

Several countries, both allies and antagonists of America, issued travel warnings to their citizens.

Australians were urged to avoid U.S. protests following what Prime Minister Scott Morrison described as "rather disturbing scenes" in the United States.

Malcolm Turnbull, who was Australian prime minister when Trump came to office and was replaced by

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Morrison in 2018, was much stronger in his condemnation, describing Trump as a narcissistic bully who is only interested in his own power.

"I was appalled," Turnbull told Australian Broadcasting Corp. "Donald Trump has done more damage to America during his four years, both internally, domestically, and in terms of its international standing, than any of its adversaries could have imagined possible."

Other friendly countries were similarly shocked at what they described as an attack on American democracy, though some said they believed U.S. democratic institutions would withstand the turmoil.

"Disgraceful scenes in US Congress," tweeted Prime Minister Boris Johnson of Britain, a staunch U.S. ally for generations. "The United States stands for democracy around the world and it is now vital that there should be a peaceful and orderly transfer of power."

"What is happening is wrong," New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said in a statement. "Democracy — the right of people to exercise a vote, have their voice heard and then have that decision upheld peacefully — should never be undone by a mob."

The prime minister of the world's largest democracy, India's Narendra Modi, said on Twitter: "Distressed to see news about rioting and violence in Washington DC. Orderly and peaceful transfer of power must continue. The democratic process cannot be allowed to be subverted through unlawful protests."

Venezuela, which is under U.S. sanctions, said the events in Washington show that the U.S. "is suffering what it has generated in other countries with its politics of aggression."

Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro has survived U.S.-backed opposition efforts to oust him despite accusations of human rights abuses, civil unrest and a humanitarian crisis that has forced millions to flee the oil-rich country.

"This is insurrection. Nothing less. In Washington," tweeted Carl Bildt, a former prime minister of Sweden.

AP journalists from around the world contributed to this story.

## Pro-Trump mob storms US Capitol in bid to overturn election

By LISA MASCARO, ERIC TUCKER, MARY CLARE JALONICK and ANDREW TAYLOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A violent mob loyal to President Donald Trump stormed the U.S. Capitol on Wednesday and forced lawmakers into hiding, in a stunning attempt to overturn America's presidential election, undercut the nation's democracy and keep Democrat Joe Biden from replacing Trump in the White House.

The nation's elected representatives scrambled to crouch under desks and don gas masks, while police futilely tried to barricade the building, one of the most jarring scenes ever to unfold in a seat of American political power. A woman was shot and killed inside the Capitol, and Washington's mayor instituted an evening curfew in an attempt to contain the violence.

The rioters were egged on by Trump, who has spent weeks falsely attacking the integrity of the election and had urged his supporters to descend on Washington to protest Congress' formal approval of Biden's victory. Some Republican lawmakers were in the midst of raising objections to the results on his behalf when the proceedings were abruptly halted by the mob.

Together, the protests and the GOP election objections amounted to an almost unthinkable challenge to American democracy and exposed the depths of the divisions that have coursed through the country during Trump's four years in office. Though the efforts to block Biden from being sworn in on Jan. 20 were sure to fail, the support Trump has received for his efforts to overturn the election results have badly strained the nation's democratic guardrails.

Congress reconvened in the evening, lawmakers decrying the protests that defaced the Capitol and vowing to finish confirming the Electoral College vote for Biden's election, even if it took all night.

Before dawn Thursday, lawmakers completed their work, confirming Biden won the presidential election.

Vice President Mike Pence, presiding over the joint session, announced the tally, 306-232.

Trump, who had steadfastly refused to concede the election, said in a statement immediately after the vote there "will be an orderly transition" of power on inauguration day.

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"Even though I totally disagree with the outcome of the election, and the facts bear me out, nevertheless there will be an orderly transition on January 20th," Trump said in a statement posted to twitter by an aide.

Pence had reopened the Senate after the harrowing day and directly addressed the demonstrators: "You did not win."

Republican Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said the "failed insurrection" underscored lawmakers' duty to finish the count. Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said Congress would show the world "what America is made of" with the outcome.

The president gave his supporters a boost into action Wednesday morning at a rally outside the White House, where he urged them to march to the Capitol. He spent much of the afternoon in his private dining room off the Oval Office watching scenes of the violence on television. At the urging of his staff, he reluctantly issued a pair of tweets and a taped video telling his supporters it was time to "go home in peace" — yet he still said he backed their cause.

Hours later, Twitter for the first time time locked Trump's account, demanded that he remove tweets excusing violence and threatened "permanent suspension."

A somber President-elect Biden, two weeks away from being inaugurated, said American democracy was "under unprecedented assault," a sentiment echoed by many in Congress, including some Republicans. Former President George W. Bush said he watched the events in "disbelief and dismay."

The domed Capitol building has for centuries been the scene of protests and occasional violence. But Wednesday's events were particularly astounding both because they unfolded at least initially with the implicit blessing of the president and because of the underlying goal of overturning the results of a free and fair presidential election.

Tensions were already running high when lawmakers gathered early Wednesday afternoon for the constitutionally mandated counting of the Electoral College results, in which Biden defeated Trump, 306-232. Despite pleas from McConnell, more than 150 GOP lawmakers planned to support objections to some of the results, though lacking evidence of fraud or wrongdoing in the election.

Trump spent the lead-up to the proceedings publicly hectoring Pence, who had a largely ceremonial role, to aid the effort to throw out the results. He tweeted: "Do it Mike, this is a time for extreme courage!"

But Pence, in a statement shortly before presiding, defied Trump, saying he could not claim "unilateral authority" to reject the electoral votes that make Biden president.

In the aftermath, several Republicans announced they would drop their objections to the election, including Sen. Kelly Loeffler, R-Ga., who lost her bid for reelection Tuesday.

Earlier, protesters had fought past police and breached the building, shouting and waving Trump and American flags as they marched through the halls, many without masks during the COVID-19 crisis. Lawmakers were told to duck under their seats for cover and put on gas masks after tear gas was used in the Capitol Rotunda. Some House lawmakers tweeted they were sheltering in place in their offices.

Rep. Scott Peters, D-Calif., told reporters he was in the House chamber when rioters began storming it. Security officers "made us all get down, you could see that they were fending off some sort of assault."

He said they had a piece of furniture up against the door. "And they had guns pulled," Peters said. Glass panes to a House door were shattered.

The woman who was killed was part of a crowd that was breaking down the doors to a barricaded room where armed officers stood on the other side, police said. She was shot in the chest by Capitol Police and taken to a hospital where she was pronounced dead. City police said three other people died from medical emergencies during the long protest on and around the Capitol grounds.

Staff members grabbed boxes of Electoral College votes as the evacuation took place. Otherwise, said Sen. Jeff Merkley, D-Ore., the ballots likely would have been destroyed by the protesters.

The mob's storming of Congress prompted outrage, mostly from Democrats but from Republicans as well, as lawmakers accused Trump of fomenting the violence with his relentless falsehoods about election fraud.

"Count me out," said Trump ally Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C. "Enough is enough."

Several suggested that Trump be prosecuted for a crime or even removed under the Constitution's 25th Amendment, which seemed unlikely two weeks from when his term expires.

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"I think Donald Trump probably should be brought up on treason for something like this," Rep. Jimmy Gomez, D-Calif., told reporters. "This is how a coup is started. And this is how democracy dies."

Sen. Ben Sasse, R-Neb., who's at times clashed with Trump, issued a statement saying, "Lies have consequences. This violence was the inevitable and ugly outcome of the President's addiction to constantly stoking division."

Despite Trump's repeated claims of voter fraud, election officials and his own former attorney general have said there were no problems on a scale that would change the outcome. All the states have certified their results as fair and accurate, by Republican and Democratic officials alike.

Punctuating their resolve, both the House and Senate soundly rejected an objection to election results from Arizona, which had been raised by Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, and Rep. Paul Gosar, R-Ariz., and another from Pennsylvania brought by Sen. Josh Hawley, R-Mo., and Rep. Scott Perry, R-Pa. Still, most House Republicans supported the objections. Other objections to results from Georgia, Michigan, Nevada and Wisconsin fizzled.

The Pentagon said about 1,100 District of Columbia National Guard members were being mobilized to help support law enforcement at the Capitol. More than a dozen people were arrested.

As darkness fell, law enforcement officers worked their way toward the protesters, using percussion grenades to clear the area around the Capitol. Big clouds of tear gas were visible. Police in full riot gear moved down the steps, clashing with demonstrators.

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Associated Press writers Jill Colvin, Kevin Freking, Alan Fram, Matthew Daly, Ben Fox and Ashraf Khalil in Washington and Bill Barrow in Atlanta contributed to this report.

## **The Latest: Trump promises 'orderly transition' on Jan. 20**

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Latest on Congress' tally of the Electoral College vote won by Joe Biden (all times local):

3:55 a.m.

President Donald Trump now says there "will be an orderly transition on January 20th" after Congress concluded the electoral vote count certifying President-elect Joe Biden's victory and after a day of violence when his supporters stormed the U.S. Capitol.

Trump says in a statement tweeted by his social media director Dan Scavino, "Even though I totally disagree with the outcome of the election, and the facts bear me out, nevertheless there will be an orderly transition on January 20th."

He adds: "I have always said we would continue our fight to ensure that only legal votes were counted. While this represents the end of the greatest first term in presidential history, it's only the beginning of our fight to Make America Great Again."

Trump's account is currently locked by Twitter.

Trump has spent the last two months refusing to concede the election and making baseless allegations of mass voter fraud that have been rejected by dozens of courts and Republican officials, including his former attorney general.

Vice President Mike Pence presided over the formal session that ended early Thursday morning tallying the electoral college vote.

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### HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT CONGRESS' TALLY OF THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE VOTE

Angry supporters of President Donald Trump stormed the U.S. Capitol on Wednesday in a chaotic protest aimed at thwarting a peaceful transfer of power, forcing lawmakers to be rushed from the building and interrupting challenges to Joe Biden's Electoral College victory. Congress returned later Wednesday to resume their proceedings after the Capitol was cleared by law enforcement.

Read more:

— Pro-Trump mob storms US Capitol in bid to overturn election

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- A moment in America, unimaginable but perhaps inevitable
- AP PHOTOS: Scenes of violence at U.S. Capitol shock world
- Capitol has seen violence over 220 years, but not like this
- Pence defies Trump, says he can't reject electoral votes

HERE'S WHAT ELSE IS GOING ON:

3:41 a.m.

Congress has formally validated Joe Biden's presidential election victory on a day that saw a time-honored ceremony become a nightmare of unprecedented political terror.

The House and Senate certified the Democrat's electoral college win early Thursday after a violent throng of pro-Trump rioters spent hours Wednesday running rampant through the Capitol. A woman was fatally shot, windows were bashed and the mob forced shaken lawmakers and aides to flee the building, shielded by Capitol Police.

The rampage began shortly after President Donald Trump repeated his unfounded claims of election fraud to thousands of rallying demonstrators he'd invited to Washington. Many then surged to the Capitol after he incited them to go there as lawmakers debated the electoral votes.

More than six hours after the violence erupted, lawmakers resumed their session.

Thirteen Republican senators and dozens of GOP representatives had planned to force debate and votes on perhaps six different states' votes.

The assault on the Capitol made some Republicans squeamish about trying to overturn Biden's win, and challenges were lodged only against Arizona and Pennsylvania. Both efforts lost overwhelmingly.

Biden defeated Trump by 306-232 electoral votes and will be inaugurated Jan. 20.

3:25 a.m.

Republican Sen. Ted Cruz is defending his objection to the Electoral College results as "the right thing to do."

The Texas senator condemned the violence that erupted as supporters of President Donald Trump stormed the Capitol in an extraordinary attack over the election outcome.

Cruz led the first challenge to Joe Biden's defeat of President Donald Trump by objecting to Arizona's results. He sought to have Congress launch a commission to investigate the election. His effort was roundly defeated in the House and Senate.

Cruz said he was confident the country will have a "peaceful and orderly transition of power." Biden is set to be inaugurated Jan. 20.

3:10 a.m.

The House has joined the Senate in turning aside Republican objections to Pennsylvania's electoral vote for President-elect Joe Biden.

Lawmakers in the House voted 282-138 against the objection as the counting of Electoral College votes continued into the early hours of Thursday morning. The Senate shut down the same objection 92-7 just after midnight, and unlike the House, declined to debate before voting.

After a long day dominated by pro-Trump rioters' deadly storming of the Capitol, it was the second state for which a group of Republicans tried and failed to reverse the will of voters. Some GOP lawmakers have backed President Donald Trump's bogus claims that the election was fraudulent.

Those objecting to Pennsylvania's votes included 80 House Republicans and Missouri GOP Sen. Josh Hawley, who is considered a potential 2024 presidential contender.

2:20 a.m.

A small group of House lawmakers came close to physically fighting early Thursday morning as the congressional count of electoral votes stretched into the wee hours and a Pennsylvania Democrat charged

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that Republicans had been telling "lies" about his state's votes.

Rep. Morgan Griffiths, R-Va., objected after Rep. Conor Lamb, D-Pa., said a breach of the Capitol by an angry mob earlier in the day was "inspired by lies, the same lies you are hearing in this room tonight."

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi shot down the objection, but a few minutes later Republicans and Democrats streamed to the middle aisle, with around a dozen lawmakers getting close to each other and arguing. But the group quickly broke up when Pelosi called for order on the floor.

President Donald Trump has falsely claimed there was widespread fraud in Pennsylvania and other states and Republicans have echoed those claims as they have challenged electoral votes.

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12:55 a.m.

The Senate has quickly killed Republican objections to Pennsylvania's electoral vote for President-elect Joe Biden.

Senators voted 92-7 after midnight to derail the GOP attempt to overturn Pennsylvania's support for the Democrat.

In a long day dominated by pro-Trump rioters' deadly storming of the Capitol, it's the second state for which a group of Republicans tried and failed to reverse the will of voters. Some GOP lawmakers have backed President Donald Trump's bogus claims that the election was fraudulent.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell says he believes no other states' votes will be challenged. That means Congress' formal certification of Biden's victory could finish quickly once the House votes on the Pennsylvania challenge.

The Senate rejected the effort to cancel Pennsylvania's votes without any debate.

Those objecting to Pennsylvania's votes included 80 House Republicans and Missouri GOP Sen. Josh Hawley, who is considered a potential 2024 presidential contender.

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12:15 a.m. Thursday

Republican Rep. Scott Perry of Pennsylvania and Republican Sen. Josh Hawley of Missouri have objected to the counting of Pennsylvania's electoral votes, triggering up to two hours of debate in the House and Senate.

The objections come 11 hours after the congressional count to confirm Democrat Joe Biden's presidential victory began, and after lawmakers had to evacuate both chambers for several hours to escape a mob that had violently breached the Capitol.

Hawley said last week that he would object to Pennsylvania's electoral votes, saying Congress should investigate voter fraud. President Donald Trump has falsely said since his defeat that there was widespread fraud in the election.

Biden won Pennsylvania by just over 80,000 votes. Since the Nov. 3 election, Trump and his allies filed at least a half-dozen lawsuits challenging Biden's win on various grounds, including that many or all of the state's mail-in ballots were illegal.

The lawsuits failed as judge after judge found no violation of state law or constitutional rights, or no grounds to grant an immediate halt to certifying the election.

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11:20 p.m.

The House has voted overwhelmingly to reject an objection to President-elect Joe Biden's win in Arizona, joining the Senate in upholding the results of the election there.

The objection failed 303-121 on Wednesday night, with only Republicans voting in support.

Earlier Wednesday, supporters of President Donald Trump breached the U.S. Capitol, forcing a lockdown of the lawmakers and staff inside. Trump has claimed widespread voter fraud to explain away his defeat to Biden, though election officials have said there wasn't any.

Now that Arizona is out of the way, Congress will reconvene as the joint session and make its way through the rest of the states that have objections.

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11:10 p.m.

Four people died as supporters of President Donald Trump violently occupied the U.S. Capitol. Washington, D.C., Police Chief Robert Contee said the dead on Wednesday included a woman who was shot by the U.S. Capitol Police, as well as three others who died in "medical emergencies."

Police said both law enforcement and Trump supporters deployed chemical irritants during the hourslong occupation of the Capitol building before it was cleared Wednesday evening by law enforcement.

The woman was shot earlier Wednesday as the mob tried to break through a barricaded door in the Capitol where police were armed on the other side. She was hospitalized with a gunshot wound and later died.

D.C. police officials also say two pipe bombs were recovered, one outside the Democratic National Committee and one outside the Republican National Committee. Police found a cooler from a vehicle that had a long gun and Molotov cocktail on Capitol grounds.

10:15 p.m.

The Senate has overwhelmingly turned aside a challenge to President-elect Joe Biden's victory in Arizona, guaranteeing the result will stand.

The objection to the results in Arizona -- spearheaded by Rep. Paul Gosar and Sen. Ted Cruz -- was rejected 93-6 on Wednesday night. All votes in favor came from Republicans, but after violent protesters mobbed the Capitol earlier Wednesday a number of GOP senators who had planned to support the objection reversed course.

The Republicans raised the objection based on false claims pushed by President Donald Trump and others of issues with the vote in Arizona, which were repeatedly dismissed in Arizona's courts and by the state's election officials.

10:10 p.m.

Sen. Lindsey Graham says a commission to examine the 2020 election is not a proper next step and affirmed that Joe Biden is the "legitimate president of the United States."

Graham, a South Carolina Republican and longtime ally of President Donald Trump, called it a "uniquely bad idea to delay this election," referencing the commission idea proposed by his fellow South Carolina Republican, U.S. Sen. Tim Scott.

Graham says, "Count me out. Enough is enough."

Earlier Wednesday, supporters of Trump breached the U.S. Capitol, forcing a lockdown of the lawmakers and staff inside. Trump has claimed widespread voter fraud to explain away his defeat to President-elect Joe Biden, though election officials have said there wasn't any.

Graham said that "if you're a conservative," the idea that Vice President Mike Pence could reverse the results of the election, as President Donald Trump had urged him to do, was "the most offensive concept in the world."

10 p.m.

Police have arrested 30 people for violating a curfew imposed in Washington, D.C., after rioters stormed the U.S. Capitol.

Officials say the 30 people were arrested Wednesday evening after being found on the streets after the 6 p.m.

The curfew had been imposed after scores of supporters of President Donald Trump broke into the Capitol, halting the constitutional process of voting to certify President-elect Joe Biden's win. They were later forcibly removed from the Capitol.

The Metropolitan Police Department said 15 other people had been arrested on Tuesday and Wednesday in various protest-related arrests on an array of charges, including weapons possession and assault.

Fire officials also took 13 people to area hospitals on Wednesday from protest-related injuries.

9:55 p.m.

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Republican Sen. Josh Hawley says he is going forward with his objection to the Electoral College results in Pennsylvania despite the violent breach at the Capitol by supporters of President Donald Trump.

The Missouri senator said he did not support violence but said the Senate should go forward with a legal process that includes his objections.

Hawley says his objections should be debated "peacefully, without violence, without attacks, without bullets." He says he hoped lawmakers would not brush his concerns aside because of the violence earlier Wednesday, including the death of a protester inside the Capitol.

Trump has claimed widespread voter fraud to explain away his defeat to President-elect Joe Biden, though election officials have said there wasn't any.

9:45 p.m.

House Republican leader Kevin McCarthy is comparing violence at the U.S. Capitol to protests against racial injustice over the summer after the killing of George Floyd by police.

The U.S. Capitol was overrun by a mob supportive of President Donald Trump on Wednesday as Congress counted electoral votes to confirm President-elect Joe Biden's win. Trump has falsely said there was widespread fraud in the election to explain his defeat and encouraged his supporters to come to Washington.

McCarthy said, "Mobs don't rule America. Laws rule America. It was true when our cities were burning this summer and it is true now."

The comment got loud applause from Republicans. Democrats in the chamber sat silently.

Floyd, a Black man who was handcuffed, was killed in May after a white police officer pressed his knee against Floyd's neck for several minutes even after he said he couldn't breathe.

McCarthy, an ally of Trump's, said Wednesday was the "saddest day" he's ever had in Congress.

He said: "It is clear this Congress will not be the same after today."

9:15 p.m.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi says Congress' certification of President-elect Joe Biden's election win will show the world it won't back down.

Pelosi made her comments as the House reconvened after being shut down for hours Wednesday by unruly pro-Trump protesters. She said that every four years the ritual provides an example to the world of American democracy.

Pelosi says, "Despite the shameful actions of today, we will still do so, we will be part of a history that shows the world what America is made of."

Pelosi, a Roman Catholic, noted that Wednesday is the feast of the Epiphany and prayed that the violence would be "an epiphany to heal" for the country.

9:10 pm.

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo is sending 1,000 members of the state's National Guard to Washington, D.C., to help "the peaceful transition of presidential power."

Cuomo, a Democrat, said 1,000 troops would be sent for up to two weeks at the request of U.S. National Guard officials. It comes after a mob of President Donald Trump's supporters rampaged through the U.S. Capitol.

Cuomo said in a statement Wednesday: "For 244 years, the cornerstone of our democracy has been the peaceful transfer of power, and New York stands ready to help ensure the will of the American people is carried out, safely and decisively."

They will join law enforcement from Virginia, Maryland and New Jersey who are also coming to D.C.'s aid.

The president's supporters incited chaos in a protest over a transfer of power to President-elect Joe Biden. Trump convinced them that he was cheated out of a victory by rampant, widespread voter fraud, a false claim.



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8:55 p.m.

Multiple Republican senators have reversed course and now say they won't object to congressional certification of President-elect Joe Biden's victory.

Their change of heart came after a violent mob stormed the U.S. Capitol earlier Wednesday and interrupted their proceedings. One person was fatally shot.

Sens. Steve Daines of Montana, Mike Braun of Indiana and Kelly Loeffler of Georgia all said in light of the violence they would stand down from planned objections to Biden's win.

Lawmakers gathered to certify the Electoral College votes from each state were forced to evacuate after an angry mob of Trump supporters descended on the Capitol. Loeffler said that the "violence, the lawlessness, and siege of the halls of Congress" were a "direct attack" on the "sanctity of the American democratic process."

All three had previously signed on to Trump's false claims of widespread voter fraud to explain his defeat. Loeffler has just days left in her term. She lost her Senate race to Democrat Raphael Warnock earlier Wednesday.

8:45 p.m.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell says Congress "will not be deterred" in confirming the results of the presidential election hours after supporters of President Donald Trump stormed the U.S. Capitol.

The Republican leader reopened the Senate late Wednesday vowing to finish confirming the Electoral College for President-elect Joe Biden. It was interrupted earlier in the way when rioters breached the security perimeter and clashed with law enforcement before disrupting Congress' tallying of the Electoral College votes. One person was fatally shot.

McConnell says demonstrators "tried to disrupt our democracy. They failed."

McConnell plans to keep the Senate in session Wednesday to finish confirming the results.

Trump has repeatedly told his supporters that the November election was stolen from him, even though that is not true. He reiterated the claim in a video filmed as his demonstrators were storming the Capitol.

8:35 p.m.

Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer says President Donald Trump "bears a great deal of the blame" after a mob loyal to him stormed the U.S. Capitol.

As the Senate reconvened to count electoral votes that will confirm Democrat Joe Biden's win, Schumer said that Jan. 6, 2021, will "live forever in infamy" and will be a stain on the democracy.

Schumer said the events "did not happen spontaneously."

He said Wednesday: "The president, who promoted conspiracy theories that motivated these thugs, the president, who exhorted them to come to our nation's capital, egged them on."

Trump has falsely claimed that there was widespread fraud in the election to explain away his defeat.

Schumer says the protesters should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

8:20 p.m.

Former President Barack Obama says history will rightly remember the violence at the Capitol as a moment of great dishonor and shame for the nation.

Angry supporters of President Donald Trump stormed the U.S. Capitol on Wednesday in a chaotic protest aimed at thwarting a peaceful transfer of power.

Obama says the violence was "incited by a sitting president" who baselessly lied about the outcome of the presidential election. He has convinced his supporters that he lost the election to President-elect Joe Biden only because Democrats cheated, a false claim.

Obama says it should not have come as a surprise, and that for two months "a political party and its accompanying media ecosystem has too often been unwilling to tell their followers the truth."

He says "their fantasy narrative has spiraled further and further from reality, and it builds upon years of sown resentments. Now we're seeing the consequences, whipped up into a violent crescendo."

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8:10 p.m.

The Senate has resumed debating the Republican challenge against Democrat Joe Biden's presidential election victory, more than six hours after pro-Trump mobs attacked the Capitol and forced lawmakers to flee.

Scores of Republican representatives and 13 GOP senators had planned to object Wednesday to the electoral votes of perhaps six states that backed Biden. It was unclear whether those objections would continue in light of the day's violent events.

President Donald Trump has falsely insisted that the election was marred by fraud and that he actually won. He reiterated those claims in remarks to thousands of protesters outside the White House early Wednesday and goaded them to march to the Capitol, which many of them did.

The mayhem had forced the House and Senate to abruptly end the day's debates and flee to safety under the protection of police. And it prompted bipartisan outrage as many lawmakers blamed Trump for fostering the violence.

8:05 p.m.

Former Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, who resigned in protest over President Donald Trump's Syria policies, blamed the president for the violence at the U.S. Capitol.

In a sharp rebuke Wednesday, Mattis said the violence was fomented by Trump, who has used the presidency "to destroy trust in our election and to poison our respect for fellow citizens."

His written statement concluded, "Our Constitution and our Republic will overcome this stain and We the People will come together again in our never-ending effort to form a more perfect Union, while Mr. Trump will deservedly be left a man without a country."

Mattis, a retired four-star Marine general who stepped down as Pentagon chief in December 2018, had an embattled relationship with Trump, but largely remained publicly quiet and avoided direct criticism. Since he left the job, however, he has been more openly derisive of Trump, including a public condemnation of the president's heavy-handed use of military force to quell protests near the White House last June.

7:55 p.m.

Stephanie Grisham, chief of staff and press secretary for first lady Melania Trump, has resigned following violent protests at the U.S. Capitol by supporters of President Donald Trump.

Grisham says in a statement Wednesday that it was an "honor" to serve the country in the White House and be part of the first lady's "mission" to help children.

Grisham was one of Trump's longest serving aides, having joined the campaign in 2015. She served as the White House press secretary and never held a press briefing.

Wednesday's violent occupation of the U.S. Capitol by the president's supporters sparked renewed conversations inside the White House about mass resignations by mid-level aides who are responsible for operations of the office of the president.

Two people familiar with the conversations said the aides were torn between fears of what more would happen if they left and a desire to register their disgust with their boss. They spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss internal matters.

— AP writer Zeke Miller

7:45 p.m.

The Republican National Committee says it strongly condemns the violence at the Capitol, adding that the violent scenes "do not represent acts of patriotism, but an attack on our country and its founding principles."

The RNC is responsible for developing and promoting the Republican political platform. Its statement condemning the violence came hours after Republican President Donald Trump baselessly complained that the election was stripped away "from great patriots." He went on to tell them to "go home with love

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& in peace."

The group's communications director, Michael Ahrens, says, "What happened today was domestic terrorism."

He says to see the U.S. flag used "in the name of unfounded conspiracy theories is a disgrace to the nation, and every decent American should be disgusted by it."

Trump had encouraged his supporters to come to Washington to fight Congress' formal approval of President-elect Joe Biden's victory over him, citing false claims of voter fraud. He held a rally earlier Wednesday and urged his supporters to march to the Capitol, telling them to "get rid of the weak Congress people."

7:40 p.m.

Former President Bill Clinton says the attack on the U.S. Capitol was fueled over four years of "poison politics" and lit by President Donald Trump.

Clinton said in a statement Wednesday night that the riot at the Capitol resulted from a combination of deliberate disinformation that created distrust in the system and pit Americans against one another.

He wrote, "The match was lit by Donald Trump and his most ardent enablers, including many in Congress, to overturn the results of an election he lost."

His wife, Hillary Clinton, lost a bitter election to Trump in 2016 and conceded to him immediately. Trump has refused to accept his defeat by Democrat Joe Biden in November and is trying to cast him as an illegitimate president.

Trump had encouraged his supporters to come to Washington to fight Congress' formal approval of Biden's win. He held a rally earlier Wednesday and urged his supporters to march to the Capitol, telling them to "get rid of the weak Congress people" and saying, "get the weak ones get out; this is the time for strength."

7:20 p.m.

A West Virginia lawmaker took video of himself and other supporters of President Donald Trump rushing into the U.S. Capitol after they breached the security perimeter.

In the video by Republican Del. Derrick Evans, later deleted from his social media page, he is shown wearing a helmet and clamoring at the door to breach the building in Washington, D.C., on Wednesday.

"We're in! Keep it moving, baby!" he said in a packed doorway amid Trump followers holding flags and complaining of being pepper sprayed. Once inside, Evans could be seen on video milling around the Capitol Rotunda, where historical paintings depict the republic's founding, and yelled, "No vandalizing!"

State House of Delegates Speaker Roger Hanshaw said Evans will need to "answer to his constituents and colleagues regarding his involvement in what has occurred today."

He said he has not spoken to Evans yet about his involvement.

The delegate from Wayne County said in a statement later on Facebook that he was heading back to West Virginia and "was simply there as an independent member of the media to film history."

6:55 p.m.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi says Congress will resume the Electoral College proceedings once the Capitol is cleared of pro-Donald Trump protesters and safe for use.

Pelosi said she made the decision Wednesday in consultation with the Pentagon, the Justice Department and the vice president, who will preside.

She noted the day would always be "part of history," but now it would be "as such a shameful picture of our country was put out into the world."

Trump had encouraged his supporters to come to Washington to fight Congress' formal approval of President-elect Joe Biden's win. He held a rally earlier Wednesday and urged his supporters to march to the Capitol, telling them to "get rid of the weak Congress people" and saying, "get the weak ones get out; this is the time for strength."

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Trump supporters breached the Capitol building and clashed with law enforcement before disrupting Congress' tallying of the Electoral College votes. Trump has repeatedly told his supporters that the November election was stolen from him, even though that is not true.

6:45 p.m.

Dozens of pro-Trump protesters remain on the streets of the nation's capital in defiance of the curfew imposed after rioters stormed the Capitol.

The mostly maskless crowd was forcibly removed from the Capitol on Wednesday after breaking into the building and halting the constitutional process of voting to certify President-elect Joe Biden's win. They were pushed out of the immediate area and moved down the hill, where they taunted law enforcement and moved barricades.

Police said anyone found on the streets after the 6 p.m. curfew would be arrested. Officers in full riot gear with shields lined the streets near the U.S. Capitol.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said their debate on affirming Biden's victory would continue after the Capitol was secured.

6:40 p.m.

The head of the nation's largest union of flight attendants says people who took part in the violent protest at the Capitol must be banned from flying.

Sara Nelson, president of the Association of Flight Attendants, said in a statement Wednesday that "some of the people who traveled in our planes (Tuesday) participated in the insurrection at the Capitol today."

She says, "Their violent and seditious actions at the Capitol today create further concern about their departure from the DC area. Acts against our democracy, our government and the freedom we claim as Americans must disqualify these individuals from the freedom of flight."

Nelson and the union endorsed President-elect Joe Biden over President Donald Trump before the November election.

Trump supporters on a Delta Air Lines flight from Salt Lake City to Washington heckled Utah Sen. Mitt Romney, the lone Republican senator to vote to oust Trump after he was impeached. On an American Airlines flight from Dallas, a large contingent of Trump supporters got in an angry yelling match with other passengers after one of the president's supporters projected "Trump 2020" on the cabin ceiling and walls.

6:30 p.m.

Republican Sen. Mitt Romney is blaming President Donald Trump for inciting a violent "insurrection" at the Capitol.

Romney, the GOP's 2012 presidential nominee and a frequent critic of Trump's, said the violent breach of the Capitol on Wednesday was "due to a selfish man's injured pride and the outrage of his supporters whom he has deliberately misinformed for the past two months."

The Utah senator said those who continue to support Trump's "dangerous gambit" by objecting to the results of a legitimate, democratic election "will forever be seen as complicit in an unprecedented attack against our democracy."

Romney ridiculed Texas Sen. Ted Cruz and other Republicans who want an "audit" of the election results: "Please! No Congressional led audit will ever convince those voters, particularly when the president will continue to claim the election was stolen."

The simple truth, Romney said, "is that President-elect (Joe) Biden won this election. President Trump lost."

6:25 p.m.

President Donald Trump has appeared to justify the violent occupation of the U.S. Capitol by his supporters.

In a tweet Wednesday night, Trump said, "These are the things and events that happen when a sacred landslide election victory is so unceremoniously & viciously stripped away from great patriots who have

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been badly & unfairly treated for so long.”

He added, “Go home with love & in peace. Remember this day forever!”

Trump supporters breached the Capitol building and clashed with law enforcement before disrupting Congress’ tallying of the Electoral College votes. Trump has repeatedly told his supporters that the November election was stolen from him, even though that is not true.

Trump has faced mounting criticism from Republican lawmakers to do more to condemn the violence being perpetrated in his name.

## **Chaos, violence, mockery as pro-Trump mob occupies Congress**

By MARY CLARE JALONICK, ANDREW TAYLOR, LISA MASCARO and CALVIN WOODWARD Associated Press WASHINGTON (AP) — “Where are they?” a Trump supporter demanded in a crowd of dozens roaming the halls of the Capitol, bearing Trump flags and pounding on doors.

They — lawmakers, staff members and more — were hiding under tables, hunkered in lockdowns, saying prayers and seeing the fruits of the country’s divisions up close and violent.

Guns were drawn. A woman was shot and killed by police, and three others died in apparent medical emergencies. A Trump flag hung on the Capitol. The graceful Rotunda reeked of tear gas. Glass shattered.

On Wednesday, hallowed spaces of American democracy, one after another, yielded to the occupation of Congress.

The pro-Trump mob took over the presiding officer’s chair in the Senate, the offices of the House speaker and the Senate dais, where one yelled, “Trump won that election.”

They mocked its leaders, posing for photos in the office of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, one with his feet propped on a desk in her office, another sitting in the same seat Vice President Mike Pence had occupied only moments before during the proceedings to certify the Electoral College vote. That certification would eventually take place, but not until well after midnight.

This began as a day of reckoning for President Donald Trump’s futile attempt to cling to power as Congress took up the certification of President-elect Joe Biden’s victory. It devolved into scenes of fear and agony that left a prime ritual of American democracy in tatters.

Trump told his morning crowd at the Ellipse that he would go with them to the Capitol, but he didn’t. Instead he sent them off with incendiary rhetoric.

“If you don’t fight like hell, you’re not going to have a country anymore,” he said. “Let the weak ones get out,” he went on. “This is a time for strength.”

His lawyer, Rudy Giuliani, told the crowd, “Let’s have trial by combat.”

What happened Wednesday was nothing less than an attempted coup, said Rep. Diana DeGette, D-Colo. Sen. Ben Sasse, R-Neb., a frequent Trump critic, said, “Today, the United States Capitol — the world’s greatest symbol of self-government — was ransacked while the leader of the free world cowered behind his keyboard.”

Sasse went on: “Lies have consequences. This violence was the inevitable and ugly outcome of the president’s addiction to constantly stoking division.”

Police said they recovered two pipe bombs, one outside the Democratic National Committee and one outside the Republican National Committee and a cooler from a vehicle that had a long gun and Molotov cocktail on Capitol grounds.

Yet Trump, in a video posted 90 minutes after lawmakers were evacuated, told the insurrectionists “We love you. You’re very special,” while asking them to go home.

Authorities eventually regained control as night fell.

Heavily armed officers brought in as reinforcements started using tear gas in a coordinated effort to get people moving toward the door, then combed the halls for stragglers, pushing the mob farther out onto the plaza and lawn, in clouds of tear gas, flash-bangs and percussion grenades.

Video footage also showed officers letting people calmly walk out the doors of the Capitol despite the rioting and vandalism. Only about a dozen arrests were made in the hours after authorities regained

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control. They said a woman was shot earlier as the mob tried to break through a barricaded door in the Capitol where police were armed on the other side.

She was hospitalized with a gunshot wound and later died.

Early on, some inside the Capitol saw the trouble coming outside the windows. Democratic Rep. Dean Phillips of Minnesota surveyed the growing crowd on the grounds not long after Trump had addressed his supporters by the Ellipse, fueling their grievances over an election that he and they say he won, against all evidence.

"I looked out the windows and could see how outmanned the Capitol Police were," Phillips said. Under the very risers set up for Biden's inauguration, Trump supporters clashed with police who blasted pepper spray in an attempt to hold them back.

It didn't work. Throngs of maskless MAGA-hatted demonstrators tore down metal barricades at the bottom of the Capitol's steps. Some in the crowd were shouting "traitors" as officers tried to keep them back. They broke into the building.

Announcements blared: Due to an "external security threat," no one could enter or exit the Capitol complex, the recording said. A loud bang sounded as officials detonated a suspicious package to make sure it was not dangerous.

It was about 1:15 p.m. when New Hampshire Rep. Chris Pappas, a Democrat, said Capitol Police banged on his door and "told us to drop everything, get out as quickly as we could."

"It was breathtaking how quickly law enforcement got overwhelmed by these protesters," he told The Associated Press.

Shortly after 2 p.m., Republican Sen. Chuck Grassley of Iowa and Vice President Mike Pence were evacuated from the Senate as protesters and police shouted outside the doors.

"Protesters are in the building," were the last words picked up by a microphone carrying a live feed of the Senate before it shut off.

Police evacuated the chamber at 2:30 p.m., grabbing boxes of Electoral College certificates as they left.

Phillips yelled at Republicans, "This is because of you!"

Rep. Scott Peters, D-Calif., told reporters he was in the House chamber when protesters began storming it. He said security officers urged lawmakers to put gas masks on and herded them into a corner of the massive room.

"When we got over to other side of the gallery, the Republican side, they made us all get down, you could see that they were fending off some sort of assault, it looked like," he said. "They had a piece of furniture up against the door, the door, the entry to the floor from the Rotunda, and they had guns pulled." The officers eventually escorted the lawmakers out of the chamber.

Shortly after being told to put on gas masks, most members were quickly escorted out of the chamber. But some members remained in the upper gallery seats, where they had been seated due to distancing requirements.

Along with a group of reporters who had been escorted from the press area and Capitol workers who act as ushers, the members ducked on the floor as police secured a door to the chamber down below with guns pointed. After making sure the hallways were clear, police swiftly escorted the members and others down a series of hallways and tunnels to a cafeteria in one of the House office buildings.

Describing the scene, Democratic Rep. Jim Himes of Connecticut said "there was a point there where officers had their guns and weapons pointed at the door, they were obviously expecting a breach through the door. It was clear that there were pretty close to pulling the trigger so they asked us all to get down in the chamber."

As he walked out of the Capitol, Himes said he had lived in Latin America and "always assumed it could never happen here.

"We've known for years that our democracy was in peril and this is hopefully the worst and final moment of it," Himes said. "But with a president egging these people on, with the Republicans doing all they can to try to make people feel like their democracy has been taken away from them even though they're

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the ones doing the taking, it's really hard, really sad. I spent my entire political career reaching out to the other side. And it's really hard to see this."

Democratic Illinois Rep. Mike Quigley was also in the balcony. "It's not good to be around terrified colleagues, with guns drawn toward people who have a barricade ... people crying. Not what you want to see," he said.

"This is how a coup is started," said Rep. Jimmy Gomez, D-Calif. "This is how democracy dies."

Associated Press writers Ben Fox, Ashraf Khalil, Alan Fram and Michael Balsamo in Washington and Michael Casey in Concord, New Hampshire, contributed to this report.

## Analysis: Trump's rage ignites mob assault on democracy

By JONATHAN LEMIRE Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The riotous mob that laid siege to the U.S. Capitol on Wednesday was the product of the destructive forces that President Donald Trump has been stirring for years, culminating in the disruption of a democratic ritual that would formally end his unconstitutional bid to stay in power.

The scene that unfolded — pushing through police barricades, breaking windows, then occupying seats of power — was one that Americans are accustomed to watching in distant lands with authoritarian regimes.

But the violence, which included gunshots fired in the Capitol, one death, and an armed occupation of the Senate floor, was born from the man who swore an oath to protect the very democratic traditions that rioters tried to undo in his name.

The rioters chose to storm the Capitol, a building symbolic as a citadel of democracy, and stirred echoes of the the angst and blood of the Civil War era. Only this time it was instigated by a duly elected president unwilling to honor the foundational creed of a peaceful transfer of power.

"This is an attempted coup d'état incited by the President of the United States," said presidential historian Michael Beschloss. "We are in an unprecedented moment when a president who is willing to conspire with mobs to bring down his own government. This is totally against the idea of democracy for which the nation has stood for over two centuries."

The certification of the Electoral College votes that formalizes President-elect Joe Biden's victory, a Constitutionally-enshrined ceremony typically designed to show American democracy's strength, was disrupted within hours of Trump's incendiary demand for action in a speech to his supporters, as he implored them to "fight" to stop the "steal" of the election and march on the Capitol.

"After this, we're going to walk down — and I'll be there with you — we're going to walk down, we're going to walk down to the Capitol," Trump said, "and we're going to cheer on our brave senators and congressmen and women, and we're probably not going to be cheering so much for some of them."

As his presidency enters its final days, Trump's speech was a valedictory that seethed with anger, and roused those who took it as a call to insurrection. Rioters overran and overmatched Capitol security forces, breaking windows, stealing mementos and mocking the institution with photos showing them in seats of power.

One in the mob seized House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's dais, another her office. A sea of red "Make America Great Again" hats stormed through Statuary Hall, a part of the Capitol familiar to tourists. One man carried a Confederate flag under the same rotunda where Abraham Lincoln — and, just last year, the congressman and civil rights hero John Lewis — had lain in state. A noose was photographed not far from the Capitol's west front.

And the inauguration stand where Biden will put his hand on a Bible in two weeks was used by U.S. Capitol Police to fire pepper spray into the violent crowd.

Few escaped Trump's rage — not even his most loyal lieutenant, Vice President Mike Pence, who had, for once, said he could not honor the president's wishes that he overturn the electoral vote count because there was no legal authority for him to do so.

At his rally on the Ellipse, Trump said he would be "very disappointed" in his vice president, who a short

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time later had to be whisked to safety by the Secret Service when the Capitol's barriers were breached.

But the groundwork for the violence was laid far before the rally, which also included a call from the president's personal attorney, Rudy Giuliani, for a "trial by combat" to settle accusations of election fraud.

Trump, who has long shied away from committing to a peaceful transfer of power, spent the better part of 2020 declaring that the election was "rigged" while making baseless accusations of widespread voter fraud that numerous federal courts and his former attorney general said did not exist.

The president was enabled by dozens of his fellow Republicans, who said they were willing to object to the count, a maneuver they knew would delay but not change the outcome.

Even when it became clear he had lost the election, Trump refused to acknowledge reality, insisting repeatedly that he had won in a landslide. He lost to Biden by 7 million votes.

But his supporters were more than willing to accept his effort to subvert the verdict of voters.

Just weeks ago, he tweeted: "Big protest in D.C. on January 6th. Be there, will be wild!" And even after the siege began, and members of his own party — including some trapped in the Capitol and hiding for their lives — begged him to forcibly condemn the act of domestic terrorism, Trump refused.

He spent most of the afternoon in his private dining room off the Oval Office, watching the violence in Washington on a large mounted television, though most of his attention was fixated on Pence's disloyalty.

He reluctantly taped a video in which he called for "peace" and told the rioters to "go home," but he bracketed his request with further false claims of election fraud and told the insurrectionists: "We love you. You're very special."

In a tweet, rather than directly criticizing the mob, he offered an apology for them. "These are the things and events that happen when a sacred landslide election victory is so unceremoniously & viciously stripped away from great patriots who have been badly & unfairly treated for so long." And he encouraged them to "remember" the day as though it would someday be seen as a celebration rather than a riot.

The post was later removed by Twitter.

His words were a remarkable contrast to the man who defeated him and one who came before him.

"At their best, the words of a president can inspire. At their worst, they can incite," said Biden in an address to the nation from Delaware. "The work of the moment and the work of the next four years must be the restoration of democracy and the recovery of respect for the rule of law, and the renewal of a politics that's about solving problems — not stoking the flames of hate and chaos." He implored Trump to "step up." Trump did not.

George W. Bush, the most recent Republican president, declared that the "Insurrection could do grave damage to our nation and reputation."

"The violent assault on the Capitol — and disruption of a Constitutionally-mandated meeting of Congress — was undertaken by people whose passions have been inflamed by falsehoods and false hopes," Bush said.

Trump has long been slow to condemn violent extremism, refusing to denounce white supremacists, cheering armed protesters at the Michigan state capitol last spring and telling the far right Proud Boys to "Stand back and stand by."

The U.S. Capitol was breached in 1814, when the British attacked it and set it on fire during the War of 1812, according to the U.S. Capitol Historical Society. And the moment of internal strife, one fueled by the president, "can only be reminiscent of the Civil War," according to presidential historian Julian Zelizer.

"This is an attack on the government," said Zelizer, who teaches at Princeton University "The president has been stoking divisions and he called for this protest, he called for this chaos. We have never been here before."

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Lemire has covered the White House and politics for The Associated Press since 2013.

## Lawmakers vow to investigate police after Capitol breach

By MATTHEW DALY Associated Press



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WASHINGTON (AP) — Lawmakers are vowing an investigation into how law enforcement handled Wednesday's violent breach at the Capitol, questioning whether a lack of preparedness allowed a mob to occupy and vandalize the building.

U.S. Capitol Police, who are charged with protecting Congress, turned to other law enforcement for help with the mob that overwhelmed the complex and sent lawmakers into hiding. Both law enforcement and Trump supporters deployed chemical irritants during the hourslong occupation of the complex before it was cleared Wednesday evening.

Four people died, one of them a woman who was shot and killed by police inside the Capitol. Three other people died after suffering "medical emergencies" related to the breach, said Robert Contee, chief of the city's Metropolitan Police Department.

Police said 52 people were arrested as of Wednesday night, including 26 on the Capitol grounds. Fourteen police officers were injured, Contee said.

Rep. Zoe Lofgren, D-Calif., chairwoman of the House Administration Committee, said the breach "raises grave security concerns," adding that her committee will work with House and Senate leaders to review the police response — and its preparedness.

Lawmakers crouched under desks and donned gas masks while police futilely tried to barricade the building when people marched to the Capitol from a rally near the White House in support of President Donald Trump. Washington's mayor instituted an evening curfew in an attempt to contain the violence.

Rep. Val Demings, D-Fla., a former police chief, said it was "painfully obvious" that Capitol police "were not prepared for today. I certainly thought that we would have had a stronger show of force, that there would have been steps taken in the very beginning to make sure that there was a designated area for the protesters in a safe distance from the Capitol."

In an interview with MSNBC Wednesday night, Demings said it appeared police were woefully understaffed, adding that "it did not seem that they had a clear operational plan to really deal with" thousands of protesters who descended on the Capitol following Trump's complaints of a "rigged election."

The rioters were egged on by Trump, who has spent weeks falsely attacking the integrity of the election and had urged his supporters to come to Washington to protest Congress' formal approval of President-elect Joe Biden's victory. The protests interrupted those proceedings for nearly seven hours.

The mob broke windows, entered both the Senate and House chambers and went into the offices of lawmakers, including House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif.

Demings said there were "a lot of unanswered questions and I'm damn determined to get answers to those questions about what went wrong today."

A police spokeswoman could not immediately be reached for comment late Wednesday.

Rep. Karen Bass, D-Calif., said she was outraged to see accounts on social media of a Capitol Police officer posing for a photo with a protester. "Would you take a selfie with someone who was robbing a bank?" she asked. "I can't imagine if a couple of thousand of (Black Lives Matters) protesters had descended on the Capitol ... that there would be 13 people arrested."

Rep. Tim Ryan, D-Ohio, suggested there could be leadership changes at the Capitol police.

"I think it's pretty clear that there's going to be a number of people who are going to be without employment very, very soon because this is an embarrassment both on behalf of the mob, and the president, and the insurrection, and the attempted coup, but also the lack of professional planning and dealing with what we knew was going to occur," Ryan said.

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Associated Press writer Michael Balsamo contributed to this report.

## A year on, questions haunt Iran's downing of Ukrainian plane

By ISABEL DEBRE Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — When Navaz Ebrahim learned that a Ukrainian plane had fallen from the sky near Iran's capital, she didn't realize her older sister was on the flight. They had just spoken

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on the phone. Niloufar had promised her, like she always does, that everything was going to be alright. As news spread of the jetliner that burst into flames and plunged to the ground, killing all 176 on board, Ebrahim called her mother in Tehran, desperate to hear that her 34-year-old sister and brother-in-law, newly married in the northern mountains of Iran, had taken any other plane home to London. Then her mother checked the flight number.

A year after Iran's military mistakenly downed Ukraine International Airlines Flight PS752 with two surface-to-air missiles, the answers that have emerged from the disaster only seem to lead to more questions.

Officials in Canada, which was home to many of the passengers on board, and other affected countries have raised concerns about the lack of transparency and accountability in Iran's investigation of its own military, while grieving families allege harassment by Iranian authorities.

"Without knowing what really happened to them, we're stuck in that same horrible night," said Ebrahim, who lives in Dallas, Texas. "We haven't received anything close to the truth."

The shutdown ignited an outburst of unrest across Iran, deepened public mistrust in the government and further damaged Iran's relations with the West.

After three days of denial in the face of mounting evidence, Iran admitted its own aerial defense forces downed the plane by mistake. Just hours before the crash, Iran had fired ballistic missiles at American bases in Iraq in retaliation for the U.S. drone strike that killed Iranian general Qassem Soleimani in Baghdad. The strike pushed Washington and Tehran to the precipice of war.

On alert and fearful of American reprisals even as commercial air traffic was allowed to continue, lower-level officers mistook the Boeing 737-800 for a U.S. cruise missile, authorities later reported. After receiving no response from higher command, a missile operator opened fire in violation of protocol.

The civilian airliner, bound for the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv, exploded. The bodies of the passengers — including 82 Iranians, 57 Canadians and 11 Ukrainians — were burned beyond recognition and strewn across a field near the village of Shahedshahr just outside of Tehran. They were students, recent graduates, newlyweds, doctors, parents and children. The youngest was a 1 year-old girl.

In the immediate aftermath, Iran denied international accusations of the shutdown and tried to clear the crash site. Bulldozers rolled into the farmland, sweeping up the plane's debris, according to accounts in a Canadian government report released last month. Local villagers picked over the wreckage, pocketing valuables. Ebrahim saw nothing of Niloufar's wedding gifts, gold coins and jewels, but received her brother-in-law's wallet, intact and empty.

"Clearing the site is very unusual, and absolutely against ICAO procedure of cataloguing every piece of evidence," said Jeffrey Price, a professor of aviation at the Metropolitan State University of Denver, referring to the U.N.'s civilian aviation arm.

Further undermining its credibility, Iran refused to hand over the plane's black boxes — flight data and cockpit voice recorders — for over six months. Multiple families said the cellphones of their loved ones were either withheld or returned with memory chips removed, raising questions cited in the Canadian report about whether Iran had found evidence that passengers recorded videos or tried to call those on the ground in their final moments.

When the cover-up fell apart, security forces cracked down on protesters who thronged the streets, outraged at the tragedy and their government's deception.

Families were not allowed to hold candlelit vigils and their requests for private burials were denied. Instead, authorities plastered the coffins with messages reading: "Congratulations on your martyrdom!"

Plainclothes officers were seen among mourners at funerals across Iran, and those attending the services were later summoned for interrogation at government intelligence offices.

Within weeks, families in Iran and Canada say, virulent campaigns against them began. Hamed Esmaeilion, the Toronto-based spokesman of the victims' family association, said a dozen relatives across Canada reported harassment, ranging from hateful messages and threatening phone calls to suspicious cars tailing them at vigils or parking in front of their homes at night.

Canadian police say they are investigating cases of "harassment, intimidation and foreign interference"

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in the country.

From Edmonton, Canada, Javad Soleimani, whose wife was on the plane, said Iranian authorities repeatedly threatened him, calling to demand he take down his Instagram posts that blamed the Iranian government for funeral disruptions and harassment of outspoken relatives.

When Esmailion, 43, whose wife and 9-year-old daughter perished in the tragedy, circulated a petition online saying Iranian airspace could not be considered safe, he received death threats. A number he'd never seen before called him and a man's voice said: "Let's talk about the last moments of your wife and daughter."

Iran's mission to the United Nations did not respond to a request for comment on the harassment allegations.

For the families, paralyzing grief but also rage over unanswered questions make healing unthinkable.

Iran has yet to release its final investigation report on the shutdown, which is now under review by Ukraine. So far, official explanations have left foreign authorities and aviation experts unsatisfied, with Canada's special adviser to the prime minister calling Iran's narrative "difficult to accept" and lacking in proof.

An interim report from Iran's Civil Aviation Organization, published in July, focused on a "107 degree error" in an anti-aircraft defense unit's radar system. The misalignment caused the operator to believe that the Ukrainian plane, climbing gradually to 8,000 feet (2,440 meters) as it departed from Tehran's Imam Khomeini Airport, was instead a small, low-flying cruise-missile hurtling toward the city.

"The level of incompetence required for someone to shoot down that plane is actually beyond belief," said Justin Bronk, a research fellow in air power at the Royal United Services Institute for Defense and Security Studies, noting the radar display's miscalibration does not explain other discrepancies in altitude, speed and size.

The U.N.'s aviation agency recently urged Iran to speed up its investigation. The Ukrainian deputy prosecutor has criticized Iran's lack of cooperation. Last week, Iran's foreign ministry announced those responsible for the crash would be indicted within the month and its Cabinet promised to pay \$150,000 for the families of each victim.

Most families have rejected the sum, seeing it as an attempt to close the case.

"I cannot walk away before knowing the truth and seeking some justice on her behalf," said Kourosh Doustshenas, whose 38-year-old fiancée, an immunologist living in Canada, was killed in the shutdown. His voice broke. "I cry because I still don't know why she had to die like this."

## Lawmakers vow to investigate police after Capitol breach

By MATTHEW DALY Associated Press

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Sasse went on: "Lies have consequences. This violence was the inevitable and ugly outcome of the president's addiction to constantly stoking division."

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Video footage also showed officers letting people calmly walk out the doors of the Capitol despite the rioting and vandalism. Only about a dozen arrests were made in the hours after authorities regained control. They said a woman was shot earlier as the mob tried to break through a barricaded door in the Capitol where police were armed on the other side.

She was hospitalized with a gunshot wound and later died.

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"It was breathtaking how quickly law enforcement got overwhelmed by these protesters," he told The Associated Press.

Shortly after 2 p.m., Republican Sen. Chuck Grassley of Iowa and Vice President Mike Pence were evacuated from the Senate as protesters and police shouted outside the doors.

"Protesters are in the building," were the last words picked up by a microphone carrying a live feed of the Senate before it shut off.

Police evacuated the chamber at 2:30 p.m., grabbing boxes of Electoral College certificates as they left. Phillips yelled at Republicans, "This is because of you!"

Rep. Scott Peters, D-Calif., told reporters he was in the House chamber when protesters began storming it. He said security officers urged lawmakers to put gas masks on and herded them into a corner of the massive room.

"When we got over to other side of the gallery, the Republican side, they made us all get down, you

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could see that they were fending off some sort of assault, it looked like," he said. "They had a piece of furniture up against the door, the door, the entry to the floor from the Rotunda, and they had guns pulled." The officers eventually escorted the lawmakers out of the chamber.

Shortly after being told to put on gas masks, most members were quickly escorted out of the chamber. But some members remained in the upper gallery seats, where they had been seated due to distancing requirements.

Along with a group of reporters who had been escorted from the press area and Capitol workers who act as ushers, the members ducked on the floor as police secured a door to the chamber down below with guns pointed. After making sure the hallways were clear, police swiftly escorted the members and others down a series of hallways and tunnels to a cafeteria in one of the House office buildings.

Describing the scene, Democratic Rep. Jim Himes of Connecticut said "there was a point there where officers had their guns and weapons pointed at the door, they were obviously expecting a breach through the door. It was clear that there were pretty close to pulling the trigger so they asked us all to get down in the chamber."

As he walked out of the Capitol, Himes said he had lived in Latin America and "always assumed it could never happen here.

"We've known for years that our democracy was in peril and this is hopefully the worst and final moment of it," Himes said. "But with a president egging these people on, with the Republicans doing all they can to try to make people feel like their democracy has been taken away from them even though they're the ones doing the taking, it's really hard, really sad. I spent my entire political career reaching out to the other side. And it's really hard to see this."

Democratic Illinois Rep. Mike Quigley was also in the balcony. "It's not good to be around terrified colleagues, with guns drawn toward people who have a barricade ... people crying. Not what you want to see," he said.

"This is how a coup is started," said Rep. Jimmy Gomez, D-Calif. "This is how democracy dies."

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Associated Press writers Ben Fox, Ashraf Khalil, Alan Fram and Michael Balsamo in Washington and Michael Casey in Concord, New Hampshire, contributed to this report.

## Twitter, Facebook muzzle Trump amid Capitol violence

By BARBARA ORTUTAY and DAVID KLEPPER Associated Press

In an unprecedented step, Facebook and Twitter suspended President Donald Trump from posting to their platforms Wednesday following the storming of the U.S. Capitol by his supporters.

Twitter locked Trump out of his account for 12 hours and said that future violations by Trump could result in a permanent suspension. The company required the removal of three of Trump's tweets, including a short video in which he urged those supporters to "go home" while also repeating falsehoods about the integrity of the presidential election. Trump's account deleted those posts, Twitter said; had they remained, Twitter had threatened to extend his suspension.

Facebook and Instagram, which Facebook owns, followed up in the evening, announcing that Trump wouldn't be able to post for 24 hours following two violations of its policies. The White House did not immediately offer a response to the actions.

While some cheered the platforms' actions, experts noted that the companies' actions follow years of hemming and hawing on Trump and his supporters spreading dangerous misinformation and encouraging violence that have contributed to Wednesday's violence.

Jennifer Grygiel, a Syracuse University communications professor and an expert on social media, said Wednesday's events in Washington, D.C. are a direct result of Trump's use of social media to spread propaganda and disinformation, and that the platforms should bear some responsibility for their inaction.

"This is what happens," said Grygiel. "We didn't just see a breach at the Capitol. Social media platforms have been breached by the president repeatedly. This is disinformation. This was a coup attempt in the United States."

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Grygiel said the platform's decision to remove the video — and Twitter's suspension — are too little, too late.

"They're creeping along towards firmer action," Grygiel said, calling Trump "Exhibit A" for the need for greater regulation of social media. "Social media is complicit in this because he has repeatedly used social media to incite violence. It's a culmination of years of propaganda and abuse of media by the president of the United States."

Trump posted that video more than two hours after protesters entered the Capitol, interrupting lawmakers meeting in an extraordinary joint session to confirm the Electoral College results and President-elect Joe Biden's victory.

So far, YouTube has not taken similar action to muzzle Trump, although it said it also removed Trump's video. But that video remained available as of Wednesday afternoon.

Guy Rosen, Facebook's vice president of integrity, said on Twitter Wednesday that the video was removed because it "contributes to rather than diminishes the risk of ongoing violence."

"This is an emergency situation and we are taking appropriate emergency measures, including removing President Trump's video," Rosen said on Twitter.

Twitter initially left the video up but blocked people from being able to retweet it or comment on it. Only later in the day did the platform delete it entirely.

Trump opened his video saying, "I know your pain. I know your hurt. But you have to go home now."

After repeating false claims about voter fraud affecting the election, Trump went on to say: "We can't play into the hands of these people. We have to have peace. So go home. We love you. You're very special."

Republican lawmakers and previous administration officials had begged Trump to give a statement to his supporters to quell the violence. He posted his video as authorities struggled to take control of a chaotic situation at the Capitol that led to the evacuation of lawmakers and the death of at least one person.

Trump has harnessed social media — especially Twitter — as a potent tool for spreading misinformation about the election. Wednesday's riot only increased calls to ban Trump from the platform.

"The President has promoted sedition and incited violence," Jonathan Greenblatt, chief executive officer of the Anti-Defamation League said in a statement. "More than anything, what is happening right now at the Capitol is a direct result of the fear and disinformation that has been spewed consistently from the Oval Office."

## **Biden urges restoring decency after 'assault' on democracy**

By WILL WEISSERT and DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP) — President-elect Joe Biden called Wednesday for the restoration of "simple decency" as a mob incited by his predecessor stormed the U.S. Capitol and delayed Congress from certifying the results of November's election.

Biden had planned to deliver a speech focused on how to revive the economy and provide financial relief for small-business owners reeling from the coronavirus pandemic, giving routine political remarks from a theater in his native Delaware. But shortly before he was to begin speaking, demonstrators broke into the Capitol building, reaching as far as the Senate floor.

"Our democracy is under unprecedented assault unlike anything we've seen in modern times," Biden said adding that the violent and chaotic events were "an assault on the rule of law."

The Capitol building was locked down and police moved in with guns drawn as Vice President Mike Pence and lawmakers were evacuated to secure locations. National Guard troops were deployed and a citywide curfew called for shortly after dusk, as rioters continued to occupy the seat of Congress for hours.

"I call on this mob to pull back and allow democracy to go forward," said the president-elect.

In an address that took only about 10 minutes and was televised against a split screen of the still-occupied Capitol building, Biden attempted to project calm and to say that a deeply divided country can still come together. He returned to themes that were a centerpiece of his presidential campaign, including finding common political ground, and pledged to be president for all Americans, even those who didn't vote for him.

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But Biden also expressed shock and outrage.

"This is not decent, it's chaos," he said.

The unrest erupted as a joint session of Congress had convened to certify Biden's election victory over President Donald Trump. But, in anticipation of that occurring, thousands of pro-Trump demonstrators amassed outside the Capitol. The president himself addressed the crowd, which cheered his baseless claims of voter fraud and were protesting the results of a free and fair election.

Trump's supporters then moved to besiege the Capitol — triggering unsettling scenes of disorder unlike anything Washington has seen in recent memory. The mob was eventually cleared out of the building and Congress moved to resume certification.

Biden stopped short of accusing Trump of treason but said what happened "borders on sedition."

"The words of a president matter, no matter how good or bad that president is," Biden said. "At their best, the words of a president can inspire. At their worst, they can incite."

Biden called on Trump to "go on national television now, to fulfil his oath and defend the Constitution and demand an end to this siege."

Instead, Trump released a video hours after the unrest began declaring, "I know your pain. I know your hurt. But you have to go home now." He went on to call the supporters "very special."

White House press secretary Kayleigh McEnany also joined top congressional Republicans in urging an end to the violence and for the mob to leave the Capitol.

Biden has said previously that pursuing criminal action against Trump might not be "good" for American democracy, though he wouldn't block future, independent Justice Department investigations into Trump once he leaves office.

There may be calls now for Biden to rethink that.

"The events of today really demonstrate that, for some people, rules do not matter, so you kind of have to govern that way," said Alicia Garza, head of the Black to the Future Action Fund, an advocacy group that works to empower Black Americans in politics. "I would imagine that Joe Biden now understands that his role has completely shifted. He's going to have to be — not the uniter in chief, he's going to have to be the decider in chief."

Biden's original speech was delayed by more than an hour as his aides tore up the original, scheduled remarks and worked to craft a new statement that could address what was unfolding more than 100 miles away in the nation's capital.

There didn't appear to be additional security around Biden or his motorcade. But as the president-elect huddled backstage, agents on his U.S. Secret Service detail stood in their places in front of the stage where he was set to speak, which featured four American flags, for more than hour.

Upon beginning his speech, Biden said the events at the Capitol "do not reflect a true America. Do not represent who we are."

"The work of the moment and the work of the next four years must be the restoration of democracy, of decency, of honor, of respect, the rule of law," he said. "Just plain, simple decency. The renewal of a politics that's about solving problems, looking out for one another, not stoking the flames of hate and chaos."

After concluding his remarks, the president-elect answered a journalist's question about whether he was worried about his safety on Inauguration Day in Washington on Jan. 20.

"I am not concerned about my safety, security or the inauguration," Biden said. "The American people are going to stand up, stand up now. Enough is enough."

Weissert reported from Washington.

## **A moment in America, unimaginable but perhaps inevitable**

By TED ANTHONY AP National Writer

To see it unspool — to watch the jumbled images ricochet, live, across the world's endless screens — was, as an American, a struggle to believe your eyes. But there it was, in the capital city of the United States



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in early January 2021: a real-time breaking and entering the likes of which the republic has never seen. The U.S. Capitol was overrun by violent supporters of Donald Trump, who exhorted them to march on the domed building as lawmakers inside carried out their constitutional duty by certifying his electoral defeat. The proceedings were quickly abandoned as the selfie-snapping mob smashed windows, marched through hallways and rummaged through lawmakers' desks.

Fourteen days before Joe Biden is set to be inaugurated on the very same site, elected officials sheltered in place in their own building. Agents barricaded themselves inside congressional chambers, guns drawn. The stars and stripes — soaring over public property — was lowered, then replaced as a blue Trump flag ascended.

In one of the day's most indelible images, a hoodie-clad trespasser sat in a chair overlooking the Senate floor — minutes after it had been vacated by Trump's own vice president, Mike Pence — waving his fist in front of a thick, ornate curtain designed to summon the trappings of democracy.

This was not "the peaceful transfer of power" so lionized by the American tradition. Not even remotely. "This," Republican Sen. Pat Toomey of Pennsylvania said, "is an absolute disgrace."

The United States on Wednesday seemed at risk of becoming the very kind of country it has so often insisted it was helping: a fragile democracy.

"This is not dissent," Biden said in a televised address. "It's disorder. It's chaos."

Part of the point of building magnificent structures like the Capitol in the first place was to erect actual physical representations of an abstract system of government — deliberate, solid edifices as immutable and inviolable as their people hope the democracy itself will be. "This temple to democracy" was what Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-New York, called the Capitol building after things calmed down.

So to see wooden furniture used as a barricade to keep American rioters out of an American congressional chamber, to watch Americans shattering American windows gazed through by who knows which American luminaries across the decades — that somehow spoke of something more, something deeper.

"They tried to disrupt our democracy. They failed," Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Kentucky, said when the body reconvened Wednesday night after the Capitol was cleared.

No matter what side you're on, the day's events underscored that the functioning monuments of a nation of laws — and even the very site where those laws come into being — could be upended by a group of its own people if they were angry enough and determined enough.

"I'm very disappointed, to be honest with you. What a shame," said Michael Hobson, 61, a lifelong Republican in Virginia Beach, Virginia who voted for Trump but has been discouraged by how he has behaved "like a sore loser."

"He's not acting presidential," Hobson said. "The Republican party has been tarnished. Somebody needs to step up to the plate. We need to find a good strong leader to change the vision."

Trump continued to foment divisions Wednesday, both in tweets — until his Twitter account was locked in the evening, for the first time — and in a fleeting message recorded from the White House, less than two miles from the Capitol. In the video, recorded as the chaos continued to unfold, he said a number of things, many of them inaccurate. At least one, though, was utterly true and hard to challenge: "There's never been a time like this."

But is this truly an inflection point, or simply another escalation — one in a series that has unfolded so gradually in recent years that the unimaginable of 2015 has become the merely repetitive in 2021? Is this the final gasp of something linked to the current administration, or the emergence of something that will become a dominant strand in the national DNA for decades?

"It seems like a different country, in one of those places where coups happen," said Bev Jackson, chair of the Democratic Party's Cobb County African American caucus in Georgia, where two Democrats won U.S. Senate seats in runoff elections Tuesday.

"I think people have feared a moment like this might be coming," Jackson said. "It's really sad and it's really tragic but I think people have been bracing themselves for this."

All over American television and on social networks were different permutations of the same statement: This isn't what America is. But what if it is? Indeed, many Americans who watched it all had similar how-

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could-this-happen-here reactions, echoed by newscasters and interviewees who used phrases like “banana republic” and the more unfortunate “like a third-world nation.”

It raises the question: What on Earth does this look like abroad, where the United States has long positioned itself as a fixer of such things?

“I feel like I’m watching an American film,” said Laurie Pezeron, the founder of a Black literature book club who lives in the suburbs of Paris. “I just hope it doesn’t end up with a civil war.”

Which brings us back to the Senate, shortly before it was infiltrated by intruders. Debating the objection to Arizona’s balloting, Democratic Sen. Amy Klobuchar, an early 2020 candidate for president, had cited Benjamin Franklin’s renowned (and probably actually uttered) words: “A republic, if you can keep it.”

Barely an hour later, chaos had the floor.

Associated Press journalists Claire Galofaro in Louisville, Kentucky, and John Leicester in Paris contributed to this report.

## AP FACT CHECK: Trump’s false claims, fuel on a day of chaos

By CALVIN WOODWARD Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump pressed his hopeless case for overturning the election to a crowd of supporters Wednesday, fueling the grievances of a mob that then stormed the Capitol and disrupted the confirmation of President-elect Joe Biden’s victory.

Drawing on baseless conspiracies, Trump unleashed a torrent of misinformation to supporters already convinced that his defeat was unfair, unswayed by the sweeping verdict of election officials, judges and justices and Trump’s own officials in the departments of Justice and Homeland Security that the Nov. 3 election was cleanly run and fairly counted.

Pro-Trump protesters then marched to the Capitol and some bulled their way inside, making for a scene of violent clashes with law enforcement and lawmakers huddling in lockdown.

Trump has been telling wildly false tales about the election outcome for two months in a flailing effort to upend Biden’s win. Trump didn’t pull back now, in a moment of reckoning that is sure to seal his defeat despite the chaos and moves by some of his allies in Congress to drag out the certification of the Electoral College results.

He also floated baseless theories about the two Senate elections Tuesday in Georgia, where Democrats picked up both seats and seized back control of the chamber.

A sampling of claims from Trump and the proceedings in Congress, which resumed in the evening after authorities secured the Capitol:

### LEFT-WING VIOLENCE?

REP. PAUL GOSAR OF Arizona: “I am proceeding with my objections on behalf of Arizona. ... Leftist violence — or any violence — will not deter our mission for truth and transparency.” — tweet on why he is pressing a challenge of the presidential election result in Arizona despite the attack on the Capitol.

THE FACTS: To be clear, the mob that overran Congress on Wednesday and clashed with police was made up of Trump supporters, not left-wing groups, and the conspiracy theories Trump has been promoting about the election are from far-right corners of the internet.

### TRUMP ON VICE PRESIDENT MIKE PENCE

TRUMP, on the election results: “If Mike Pence does the right thing, we win the election.” — rally.

TRUMP: Pence “has to agree to send it back.” — rally.

TRUMP: “All Mike Pence has to do is send them back to the States, AND WE WIN. Do it Mike, this is a time for extreme courage!” — tweet Wednesday.

THE FACTS: This is a fantasy. Vice President Mike Pence has no authority under the Constitution, congressional rules, the law or custom to refer the results back to the states. He has no standing to do what Trump calls “the right thing.”

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Pence is presiding over the congressional tally of Electoral College votes and will carry out his ceremonial duty to announce who has won the majority of votes for president and vice president. Whatever sympathetic words he may offer for Trump's grievances, Pence has no path for avoiding the certification of Biden as the next president and Kamala Harris as vice president.

Nor is he expected to try, despite pressure from Trump to do just that, according to people close to him. Biden won 306 electoral votes to Trump's 232. It takes 270 to win the presidency.

## A REDO?

TRUMP, on the states: "They want to recertify." — rally.

TRUMP: "The States want to redo their votes. They found out they voted on a FRAUD. Legislatures never approved. Let them do it. BE STRONG!" \_\_ tweet Wednesday.

THE FACTS: That's also false. All the states have certified their results as fair and accurate, a judgment made by Republican and Democratic officials alike. There is no prospect for a do-over. Nor has there been a sudden revelation of fraud.

State and federal election officials and Trump's own attorney general said no systematic fraud was found in the election and no errors of a scale that could possibly change the result. Judges have widely agreed, whether appointed by Republicans or Democrats. And Trump had two challenges tossed by the Supreme Court, which includes three Trump-nominated justices.

TRUMP: "We didn't lose." — rally.

THE FACTS: He lost.

Biden won by the same Electoral College margin that Trump achieved in 2016 — a result that Trump called a landslide when he won it.

Unlike Trump, Biden also won the popular vote.

## PENNSYLVANIA

TRUMP, on the results from Pennsylvania: "You had 205,000 more votes than voters."

THE FACTS: Not true. Here Trump tries to give weight to a baseless conspiracy theory from social media and untrustworthy websites.

The claim that Pennsylvania's certification of Biden's win in the state was fraudulent comes from a period when records were not consistent. The numbers certified by Pennsylvania counties showed that 6.9 million ballots were cast, while a different state data system showed 6.7 million voters turned out to the polls. There was a simple explanation: Election officials hadn't yet finished uploading their data to the latter system.

Wanda Murren, communications director for the Pennsylvania Department of State, which is responsible for elections, said people were peddling "obvious misinformation" on this matter. Trump is among them.

## MICHIGAN

TRUMP: "In Detroit, turnout was 139 percent of registered voters." — rally.

THE FACTS: No, it wasn't. The city's official election results show turnout for the Nov. 3 election was just shy of 51%, with 257,619 ballots cast by the city's 506,305 registered voters.

## GEORGIA

TRUMP, on Georgia: "Election officials pulled boxes, Democrats, and suitcases of ballots out from under a table and illegally scanned them for nearly two hours, totally unsupervised."

THE FACTS: That's wrong. Surveillance video from Atlanta's State Farm Arena shows election workers were processing ballots normally, Georgia and Fulton County election officials say.

State law does not require independent monitors to watch that process, but both an independent monitor and an investigator arrived to oversee the count.

The entire video shows poll workers had earlier opened the ballots in front of poll observers and the media. The workers then packed them back into wheeled containers because they thought they were

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done for the night. Election officials, however, asked them to keep counting, which is why they pulled the containers back out again to finish.

## GEORGIA SENATE RACES

TRUMP, referring to Georgia: "They just happened to find 50,000 ballots late last night." — tweet Wednesday.

TRUMP: "Looks like they are setting up a big 'voter dump' against the Republican candidates. Waiting to see how many votes they need?" — tweet Tuesday night.

THE FACTS: No, Georgia election officials didn't just "find" 50,000 ballots or manipulate a "voter dump" to disadvantage Republicans.

It's typical for big batches of results to be released on election night and the next morning, with leads often changing as a result.

On Tuesday, for example, Floyd County, Georgia, a Republican stronghold, released all of its results at once, giving a big early boost to the GOP candidates, Kelly Loeffler and David Perdue. Such results were countered later when population-dense counties, which often favor Democratic candidates, released their numbers.

Loeffler ultimately lost to Democrat Raphael Warnock, and Democrat Jon Ossoff ousted Republican David Perdue.

Associated Press writers Ali Swenson in Semora, North Carolina, and Amanda Seitz in Chicago contributed to this report.

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

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## Governors scramble to speed vaccine effort after slow start

By MICHELLE R. SMITH Associated Press

New York's governor threatened to fine hospitals if they don't use their allotment of COVID-19 vaccine fast enough. His South Carolina counterpart warned health care workers they have until Jan. 15 to get a shot or move to the back of the line. California's governor wants to use dentists to vaccinate people.

With frustration rising over the sluggish rollout of the vaccine, state leaders and other politicians around the U.S. are turning up the pressure, improvising and seeking to bend the rules to get shots in arms more quickly.

Meanwhile, U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar said Wednesday that the government will allow more drugstores to start giving vaccinations to speed up the process. If health workers aren't lining up fast enough, he said, it is OK to expand eligibility to lower-priority groups.

"We need to not be overly prescriptive in that, especially as we see governors who are leaving vaccines sitting in freezers rather than getting it out into people's arms," he said.

As of Wednesday, more than three weeks into the U.S. vaccination campaign, 5.3 million people had gotten their first shot out of the 17 million doses distributed so far, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. While that is believed to be an undercount because of a lag in reporting, health officials are still well behind where they wanted to be.

The slow rollout has been blamed on a multitude of problems, including a lack of funding and direction from Washington, mismatches between supply and demand, a patchwork of approaches by state and local governments, distrust of the vaccine, and disarray created by the holidays.

Across much of the nation, health care workers and nursing home residents are being given priority for the initial, limited supplies of the vaccine at this stage. But pressure is building to let other groups step

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up. Louisiana began vaccinating older people Monday, while Alaska and Mississippi have given the OK for the elderly to start receiving shots over the next few days. Michigan will begin giving vaccines to seniors and front-line workers such as teachers and police next week,

The U.S. has an estimated 21 million health care workers and 3 million residents of nursing homes and other long-term care centers. The CDC said about 512,000 people in such centers have been vaccinated through a partnership between the government and the CVS and Walgreens drugstore chains.

Government officials over the past few days reported that the number of people receiving shots has accelerated to about a half-million a day, and Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious disease expert, said the pace could soon reach 1 million or more.

Fauci estimated that between 70% and 85% of the U.S. population will ultimately need to be vaccinated to achieve "herd immunity," a goal he said could be achieved by the start of next fall. That translates to as many as 280 million people.

Azar announced that in addition to the nursing home program, pharmacies from 19 chains will be allowed to help now with dispensing shots to ease pressure on hospitals, which have been the main vaccine providers so far. More than 40,000 drugstores will eventually be involved, he said.

The pharmacies will still have to follow state guidelines for who gets in line first.

The U.S. death toll, meanwhile, climbed to around 360,000. COVID-19 deaths set another one-day record at 3,775 on Tuesday, though authorities have cautioned that the numbers around holidays can fluctuate dramatically because some health agencies fall behind in reporting cases, then catch up.

Concerns also grew about a new, more contagious variant of the virus. In Southern California, San Diego County health authorities confirmed 24 cases, the biggest known concentration so far in the United States. Cases have also been reported in Colorado, Florida, Georgia and New York.

With cases and hospitalizations also soaring, politicians are getting aggressive in trying to accelerate the vaccination drive. The governors of California, Maryland and North Carolina said they will use the National Guard.

Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan warned, too, that any facility that has not administered at least 75% of its first doses may have future allocations reduced until they can speed up vaccinations.

While about 270,000 doses have been put directly in the hands of front-line vaccinators in the state over the last three weeks, Hogan said that only about 77,000 people had been inoculated as of Tuesday, or about 1.3% of the state's population.

Gov. Henry McMaster of South Carolina warned that health care workers will lose their place in line if they don't move quickly to get their shots. As of Monday, the state had given out less than half its initial allotment of the Pfizer vaccine to about 43,000 people.

In California, where just 1% of the population was reported vaccinated, Gov. Gavin Newsom said he wants to give providers the flexibility to give shots to people not on the priority list if doses are in danger of going to waste. He also wants to expand the pool of professionals dispensing shots.

The pace had been so slow in New York that Gov. Andrew Cuomo on Monday threatened to fine hospitals up to \$100,000 if they don't finish their first round of inoculations by the end of the week. He also threatened to stop sending the vaccine to hospitals that don't use their share promptly.

"Move it quickly. We're serious," Cuomo warned. "If you don't want to be fined, just don't participate in the program. It's not a mandatory program."

The delays prompted New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio to call for eligibility to be expanded, and on Wednesday he announced a plan to provide shots to 10,000 of the city's police officers by Sunday.

But Cuomo immediately shot down that idea, saying, "We need to get the health care population done first because they are the front line."

## Protesters swarm Statehouses across US; some evacuated

By MORGAN LEE AND BEN NADLER Associated Press

SANTA FE, N.M. (AP) — Protesters backing President Donald Trump massed outside statehouses from

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Georgia to New Mexico on Wednesday, leading some officials to evacuate while cheers rang out at several demonstrations as a pro-Trump mob stormed the U.S. Capitol.

Hundreds of people gathered in state capitals nationwide to oppose President-elect Joe Biden's win, waving signs saying "Stop the steal" and "Four more years." Most of them didn't wear masks amid the coronavirus pandemic, and some carried guns in places like Oklahoma, Georgia, Arizona, Nevada and Washington state.

There were some scuffles in states like Ohio and California, with some instances of journalists or counterprotesters being pepper-sprayed or punched, but most demonstrations were peaceful — some of them quite small — and only a few arrests were reported.

New Mexico police evacuated staff as a precaution from a Statehouse building that includes the governor's office and the secretary of state's office, shortly after hundreds of flag-waving supporters arrived in a vehicle caravan and on horseback.

Demonstrators sang "God Bless America," honked horns and wrongly announced on a megaphone that Trump was the rightful election winner — though Biden won the vote in New Mexico by a margin of roughly 11%.

"It's the first time in the history of the United States that the peaceful transfer of power has been slowed by an act of violence," Democratic House Speaker Brian E golf said. "It is a shameful moment, and I hope that the Congress can recover soon."

Violent protests in Washington, D.C., came as Congress tried to affirm Biden's Electoral College victory. News that protesters had breached the U.S. Capitol set off cheers at pro-Trump protests in Minnesota, Nevada and Arizona, where armed protesters marched at the Capitol in Phoenix and several men displayed a guillotine.

Georgia's secretary of state and his staff evacuated their offices at the Capitol as about 100 protesters gathered outside, some armed with long guns.

Republican Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger and his team decided to leave, according to Gabriel Sterling, a top official with Raffensperger's office.

"We saw stuff happening at the Georgia Capitol and said we should not be around here, we should not be a spark," Sterling told The Associated Press.

Trump has focused much of his ire on Raffensperger in the weeks following his loss by about 12,000 votes.

Republican Gov. Brian Kemp slammed the storming of the U.S. Capitol, calling it "a disgrace and quite honestly un-American." Kemp said he was extending an executive order from protests over the summer activating the National Guard in case they are needed to protect the state Capitol on Monday when the legislative session begins.

In Washington state, protesters broke through a gate at the governor's mansion and dozens of people gathered on the lawn for about 30 minutes before being cleared from the area. The crowd, some of whom were armed, repeated baseless allegations of election fraud. The State Patrol said that Gov. Jay Inslee "and his family are in a safe location."

Earlier, dozens of people gathered at the state Capitol, demanding a recount of the U.S. presidential election and Washington's gubernatorial election, which Inslee, a Democrat, won by more than 500,000 votes. The Statehouse has been closed to the public for nearly a year due to the pandemic.

In Utah, the staff of Gov. Spencer Cox was sent home as several hundred people gathered in Salt Lake City, Lt. Gov. Deidre Henderson tweeted. Salt Lake Tribune photographer Rick Egan said he was pepper-sprayed by a demonstrator who taunted him for wearing a mask and shoved him as he was shooting video of the protest. It wasn't immediately clear if anyone was arrested.

At least one person was arrested at the Oregon Capitol in Salem on suspicion of harassment and disorderly conduct as police in riot gear tried to get people — many of them armed — to leave.

Video showed protesters and counterprotesters clashing and riot police moving in. But by midafternoon, only a few dozen people remained, their American flags and Trump banners drooping in the rain.

In Topeka, Kansas, chants of "Stop the steal" and "No more masks" faded as a rally ended and Trump supporters filed peacefully into the Statehouse building through security checkpoints, milling around his-

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torical exhibits.

In Honolulu, about 100 protesters lined the road outside the state Capitol waving American and Trump 2020 flags at passing cars. Sheryl Bieler, a retiree in the blue state, said she came out to "support our president and support the integrity of the elections."

Trump supporters circled the state Capitol building in Madison, Wisconsin, in cars and trucks adorned with Trump and U.S. flags for several hours Wednesday, blaring their horns.

In Colorado, Denver Mayor Michael Hancock ordered city agencies to close buildings after hundreds gathered in front of the Capitol building for a protest against the election results.

In South Carolina, protesters supporting Trump came to the Statehouse but left before the U.S. Capitol was breached.

Associated Press writers John Hanna in Topeka, Kansas; Rachel La Corte in Olympia, Washington; Andrew Selsky in Salem, Oregon; Sophia Eppolito in Salt Lake City; Audrey McAvoy in Honolulu; Jonathan J. Cooper in Phoenix; Patty Nieberg in Denver; Todd Richmond in Madison, Wisconsin; and Sam Metz in Carson City, Nevada, contributed to this report.

## Capitol has seen violence over 220 years, but not like this

By JERRY SCHWARTZ Associated Press

In more than 220 years, the U.S. Capitol had seen nothing like it: a roiling mob, forcing its way past its majestic marble columns, disrupting the passage of power, desecrating the seat of the world's greatest democracy.

But this was far from the first time the Capitol has been scarred by violence.

In 1814, just 14 years after the building opened, British forces in the War of 1812 tried to burn it down. The invaders looted the building first, and then set the southern and northern wings ablaze — incinerating the Library of Congress. A sudden rainstorm prevented its total destruction, but the building was left "a most magnificent ruin," according to architect Benjamin Henry Latrobe.

Over the centuries since, events have made a mockery of the inscription on the rostrum of the House chamber — "Union, Justice, Tolerance, Liberty, Peace." The building has been bombed several times. There have been shootings. One legislator almost killed another.

The most famous episode occurred in 1954, when four Puerto Rican nationalists unfurled the island's flag and, shouting "Freedom for Puerto Rico," unleashed a barrage of about 30 shots from the visitor's gallery of the House. Five congressmen were injured, one of them seriously.

"I did not come to kill anyone, I came to die for Puerto Rico!" cried the leader, Lolita Lebron, when she and the others were arrested.

Before and since, the building has been a target. In 1915, a German man planted three sticks of dynamite in the Senate reception room; it went off shortly before midnight, when no one was around.

The bomber -- who had previously murdered his pregnant wife by poisoning, and would go on to shoot financier J.P. Morgan Jr. and bomb a steamship loaded with munitions bound for Britain -- killed himself before he could be arrested.

More recently, the Weather Underground set off an explosive in 1971 to protest the U.S. bombing of Laos, and the May 19th Communist Movement bombed the Senate in 1983 in response to the invasion of Grenada. Neither caused any deaths or injuries, but both resulted in hundreds of thousands of dollars in damage and led to tougher security measures.

The most deadly attack on the Capitol occurred in 1998, when a mentally ill man fired at a checkpoint and killed two Capitol Police officers. One of the dying officers managed to wound the gunman, who was arrested and later institutionalized. A nearby statue of Vice President John C. Calhoun still bears a bullet mark from the incident.

In 2013, a dental hygienist with her 18-month-old daughter in tow tried to drive onto the White House grounds, and was chased to the Capitol, where she was shot to death by police.

There have been other, storied attacks. In 1835, a deranged house painter tried to shoot two pistols at President Andrew Jackson outside the building; the guns misfired, and Jackson caned his assailant into submission.

And famously, in 1856, Rep. Preston Brooks attacked abolitionist Senator Charles Sumner with his cane on the floor of the Senate after the senator gave a speech criticizing slavery.

Sumner was beaten so badly that three years passed before he had sufficiently recovered to return to Congress. The House failed to expel Brooks, but he resigned -- and was immediately reelected.

## 2 detectives involved in Breonna Taylor's death are fired

By DYLAN LOVAN Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — Two more officers involved in the fatal shooting of Breonna Taylor have been fired — a detective believed to have fired the fatal shot and another who sought the search warrant that led to the deadly raid, authorities announced Wednesday.

The announcement came moments after city officials said the former Atlanta police chief would soon take over the Louisville Police Department after months of unrest over Taylor's death. Erika Shields served in Atlanta for 25 years, including more than three years as chief. Her tenure ended when she resigned in June after Atlanta officers fatally shot a Black man named Rayshard Brooks in a restaurant parking lot.

Detectives Myles Cosgrove, who shot Taylor, and Joshua Jaynes, who sought the warrant for the March 13 drug raid, were informed of their firings on Tuesday. Their dismissals follow that of officer Brett Hankison, who was fired in September after being indicted by a grand jury on charges of endangering Taylor's neighbors by firing bullets that went through her home and into an adjacent apartment.

Taylor, a 26-year-old Black emergency medical technician, was killed as officers attempted to serve a no-knock search warrant. None of the three white officers who fired into her home were charged by a grand jury in her death.

Investigators said Cosgrove fired 16 rounds into the apartment after police breached the front door and Taylor's boyfriend fired a shot at them. Federal ballistics experts said they believe the shot that killed Taylor came from Cosgrove.

In Cosgrove's dismissal letter, interim Police Chief Yvette Gentry wrote that the detective violated the department's use-of-force policies for firing 16 shots without identifying a target and for not activating his body camera. Gentry cited Cosgrove's statements to internal investigators that he began firing at a "distorted shadowy mass" after Taylor's boyfriend fired a single shot at officers.

"The shots you fired were in three different directions, indicating you did not verify a threat or have target acquisition," Gentry wrote.

Jaynes, the detective who sought the narcotics warrant that led to the raid, was "untruthful" about how he obtained some information about Taylor in the warrant, Gentry wrote. Jaynes was not at the scene the night Taylor was shot.

In a May interview with Louisville police investigators, Jaynes acknowledged that he did not personally verify that a drug-trafficking suspect was receiving mail at Taylor's apartment, even though he had said in an earlier affidavit that he had. Jaynes said he relied instead on information from a fellow officer.

"I acknowledge that you prepared the warrant in good faith," Gentry wrote in a letter to Jaynes. "However you failed to inform the judge that you had no contact with the US postal inspector."

Jaynes and Cosgrove have been on administrative reassignment, along with another officer who was at the raid, Sgt. Jonathan Mattingly.

Mattingly was shot in the leg by Taylor's boyfriend, who said he thought an intruder was breaking into the home. Mattingly said in October that he intended to retire.

In September, Kentucky Attorney General Daniel Cameron, who took on the role of special prosecutor in the case, said Cosgrove and Mattingly were not charged with Taylor's killing because they acted to protect themselves. The decision disappointed and angered protesters who have been calling for justice for Taylor for six months, and they vowed to stay in the streets until all the officers involved were fired or someone was charged with her killing.



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Three grand jurors have since come forward to say that Cameron did not allow the grand jury to consider homicide-related charges against the officers for Taylor's death. Speaking anonymously, the jurors said they believe they would have brought criminal charges against the officers if given the chance.

For months, Taylor's name has been a rallying cry for activists protesting police killings of Black men and women. Famous musicians, actors, athletes and politicians have called for the officers' arrests.

Trust between police and many in the city's Black community has frayed since Taylor's death, which sparked the firing of the city's longtime chief, Steve Conrad. Two interim chiefs, including Gentry, the first Black woman to lead the department, have served since Conrad was fired in June.

Shields will be the fourth person to lead the police force in Kentucky's largest city since Taylor was shot.

"I commit to begin my work here with a focus on rebuilding community trust, trust that I believe was already eroding prior to Breonna Taylor's killing," Shields said. She also pledged to tackle gun violence in the city, which had a record 173 homicides in 2020.

Shields said she was "sickened" by Brooks' shooting and that staying on as chief in Atlanta would have amounted to a distraction. To Louisville residents who might be upset over her hiring, Shields said she "would just ask that people step back, take the time to see what I accomplished, what I believe in and how I led the department."

Shields starts the job on Jan. 19.

A day earlier, a Wisconsin prosecutor declined to file charges against a white police officer who shot a Black man in the back in August in Kenosha. The wounding of Jacob Blake, who was left paralyzed, also sparked protests over police brutality and racism. Authorities concluded that they could not disprove the officer's contention that he acted in self-defense because he feared Blake would stab him.

## Warnock, Ossoff win in Georgia, handing Dems Senate control

By STEVE PEOPLES, BILL BARROW and RUSS BYNUM Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Democrats won both Georgia Senate seats — and with them, the U.S. Senate majority — as final votes were counted Wednesday, serving President Donald Trump a stunning defeat in his turbulent final days in office while dramatically improving the fate of President-elect Joe Biden's progressive agenda.

Jon Ossoff and Raphael Warnock, Democratic challengers who represented the diversity of their party's evolving coalition, defeated Republicans David Perdue and Kelly Loeffler two months after Biden became the first Democratic presidential candidate to carry the state since 1992.

Warnock, who served as pastor for the same Atlanta church where civil rights leader the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. preached, becomes the first African American from Georgia elected to the Senate. And Ossoff becomes the state's first Jewish senator and, at 33 years old, the Senate's youngest member.

This week's elections were expected to mark the formal finale to the tempestuous 2020 election season, although the Democrats' resounding success was overshadowed by chaos and violence in Washington, where angry Trump supporters stormed the U.S. Capitol to stop Congress from certifying Biden's victory.

Wednesday's unprecedented siege drew fierce criticism of Trump's leadership from within his own party, and combined with the bad day in Georgia, marked one of the darkest days of his divisive presidency.

Still, the Democrats' twin victories in Georgia represented a striking shift in the state's politics as the swelling number of diverse, college-educated voters flex their power in the heart of the Deep South. They also cemented the transformation of Georgia, once a solidly Republican state, into one of the nation's premier battlegrounds for the foreseeable future.

In an emotional address early Wednesday, Warnock vowed to work for all Georgians whether they voted for him or not, citing his personal experience with the American dream. His mother, he said, used to pick "somebody else's cotton" as a teenager.

"The other day, because this is America, the 82-year-old hands that used to pick somebody else's cotton picked her youngest son to be a United States senator," he said. "Tonight, we proved with hope, hard work and the people by our side, anything is possible."

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Loeffler, who remains a senator until the results of Tuesday's election are finalized, returned to Washington on Wednesday morning to join a small group of senators planning to challenge Congress' vote to certify Biden's victory. She didn't get a chance to vocalize her objection before the violent protesters stormed the Capitol.

Georgia's other runoff election pitted Perdue, a 71-year-old former business executive who held his Senate seat until his term expired Sunday, against Ossoff, a former congressional aide and journalist.

"This campaign has been about health and jobs and justice for the people of this state — for all the people of this state," Ossoff said in a speech broadcast on social media Wednesday morning. "Whether you were for me, or against me, I'll be for you in the U.S. Senate. I will serve all the people of the state."

Trump's false claims of voter fraud cast a dark shadow over the runoff elections, which were held only because no candidate hit the 50% threshold in the general election. He raised the prospect of voter fraud as votes were being cast and likened the Republicans who run Georgia's election system to "chickens with their heads cut off" during a Wednesday rally in Washington.

Gabriel Sterling, a top official with the Georgia secretary of state's office and a Republican, said there was "no evidence of any irregularities."

"The biggest thing we've seen is from the president's fertile mind of finding fraud where none exists," he said.

Both contests tested whether the political coalition that fueled Biden's November victory was an anti-Trump anomaly or part of a new electoral landscape. To win in Tuesday's elections — and in the future — Democrats needed strong African American support.

AP VoteCast, a survey of more than 3,700 voters in Tuesday's contests, found that Black voters made up roughly 30% of the electorate, and almost all of them — 94% — backed Ossoff and Warnock. The Democrats also relied on the backing of younger voters, people earning less than \$50,000 annually and newcomers to the state.

The Republican coalition backing Loeffler and Perdue was the mirror opposite: white, older, wealthier and longtime Georgia residents.

The coalition closely resembles the one that narrowly handed Georgia's Electoral College votes to Biden in November, making him the first Democratic presidential candidate to win the state in almost three decades.

Trump's claims about voter fraud in the 2020 election, while meritless, resonated with Republican voters in Georgia. About 7 in 10 agreed with his false assertion that Biden was not the legitimately elected president, AP VoteCast found.

Election officials across the country, including the Republican governors in Arizona and Georgia, as well as Trump's former attorney general, William Barr, have confirmed that there was no widespread fraud in the November election. Nearly all the legal challenges from Trump and his allies have been dismissed by judges, including two tossed by the Supreme Court, where three Trump-nominated justices preside.

Publicly and privately, some Republicans acknowledged that Trump's monthslong push to undermine the integrity of the nation's electoral system may have contributed to the GOP's losses in Georgia.

"It turns out that telling the voters that the election was rigged is not a great way to turn out your voters," said Utah Sen. Mitt Romney, a Republican and a frequent Trump critic.

Even with Trump's claims, voters in both parties were drawn to the polls because of the high stakes. AP VoteCast found that 6 in 10 Georgia voters say Senate party control was the most important factor in their vote.

Turnout exceeded both sides' expectations. Ultimately, more people cast ballots in the runoffs than voted in Georgia's 2016 presidential election.

Former President Barack Obama, the nation's first Black president, issued a statement praising the election of Georgia's first African American senator and his ability to improve divisions in Washington.

"Georgia's first Black senator will make the (Senate) chamber more reflective of our country as a whole and open the door for a Congress that can forego gridlock for gridlock's sake to focus instead on the many crises facing our nation," Obama said.

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Peoples reported from New York. Bynum reported from Savannah, Ga. Associated Press writers Halleluya Hadero, Angie Wang, Sophia Tulp, Ben Nadler and Kate Brumback in Atlanta contributed to this report.

## **EXPLAINER: How Democrats won Georgia's 2 Senate runoffs**

By BRIAN SLODYSKO Associated Press

The Associated Press on Wednesday declared Democrat Jon Ossoff the winner of his U.S. Senate runoff election, the second such seat captured by the party in twin contests that were held in Georgia on Tuesday.

Earlier in the day, the AP declared Democrat Raphael Warnock the winner of the other race.

The two victories will give Democrats control of the Senate for the next two years.

Here's a look at the contests:

### **WHY AP DECLARED OSSOFF THE WINNER**

Ossoff held a lead of about 25,000 votes, or about 0.56 percentage points, over Republican David Perdue out of about 4.4 million cast when the AP called the race at 4:20 p.m. Wednesday.

The call was made after an analysis of outstanding ballots showed there was no way for Perdue, who was seeking a second term, to overtake Ossoff's lead.

Tens of thousands of outstanding votes remain to be counted, but the vast majority were in six Democratic-leaning counties that Ossoff was winning.

Many of the ballots left to be counted were mail votes, a form of voting that overwhelmingly favored Ossoff. The remaining votes left to be counted in Republican-leaning areas that favored Perdue were not enough for him to catch up.

Georgia elections officials said there were about 14,000 outstanding overseas and military ballots that had been issued but not returned. Those must be received by Friday in order to be counted. Gabriel Sterling, a top Georgia elections official, said they expected only a fraction of those ballots would be returned in time.

### **WHAT ABOUT THE OTHER RACE?**

Warnock defeated Loeffler after an analysis of outstanding votes showed there was no way for Loeffler to catch up to him with the remaining ballots left to be counted in Republican-leaning areas.

Warnock held a lead over Loeffler of about about 1.2 percentage points, or about 62,000 votes as of 4:15 p.m. ET Wednesday, an edge that is likely to grow as more votes are tabulated.

Almost all the votes left to be counted statewide were mail ballots and early in-person votes. Of those, most are in Democratic-leaning counties.

Warnock was winning mail ballots by 68%, according to an AP analysis conducted early Wednesday morning. And most of the early in-person votes left to be counted were in DeKalb County; that method of voting in the county favored Warnock by about 70 percentage points.

### **WHAT'S AT STAKE**

The outcomes of the two races will help determine the country's political trajectory over the next two years. With Democrats winning both races, they will have a 50-50 seat split with Republicans in the Senate, with Vice President-elect Kamala Harris poised to cast tie-breaking votes.

That would enable President-elect Joe Biden to enact an agenda that includes liberal priorities like raising the minimum wage, approving additional economic stimulus to combat the effects of the pandemic and expanding health care.

But Republicans need to carry only one of the seats to hold a slim 51-49 majority that could serve as a conservative bulwark to limit Biden's ambitions.

The fact that Georgia will determine which of these two dueling visions could become reality speaks to its recent emergence as a swing state. Georgia has been a Republican stronghold for decades, like much of the rest of the South. These two elections are testing just how much the state has changed.

Georgia's government is dominated by the GOP. Until Warnock, a Democrat hadn't won a U.S. Senate contest in the state since former Georgia Gov. Zell Miller in 2000. And until Biden won it by just under 12,000 votes in November, a Democratic presidential contender hadn't carried the state since Bill Clinton in 1992.

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But it has slowly morphed into a battleground — a change driven in part by demographic shifts, particularly in the economically vibrant area of metropolitan Atlanta.

As older, white, Republican-leaning voters die, they've been replaced by a younger and more racially diverse cast of people, many of whom moved to the Atlanta area from other states — and carried their politics with them.

Overall, demographic trends show that the state's electorate is becoming younger and more diverse each year. Like other metro areas, Atlanta's suburbs have also moved away from Republicans. In 2016, Hillary Clinton flipped both Cobb and Gwinnett counties. Four years later, electoral maps showed a sea of blue in the more than half-dozen counties surrounding Atlanta.

In 2018, Democrat Stacey Abrams galvanized Black voters in her bid to become the country's first African American woman to lead a state, a campaign she narrowly lost.

## **Qatar emerges from Gulf spat resolute and largely unscathed**

By AYA BATRAWY Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Qataris awoke to a surprise blockade and boycott by Gulf Arab neighbors 3 1/2 years ago, and this week were jolted again by the sudden announcement that it was all over.

The period in between was bitter, with mud-slinging by both sides and viscous media blitzes, social media trolling, expensive lobbying efforts in Washington, and allegations of hacks and leaks. Criticism of the boycott was a criminal offense in Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt as the four sought to punish Qatar.

Qatar's resolve in the face of the assault showed how little the campaign achieved as the small, but influential U.S. ally holds firm with its ties to Turkey, Iran and Islamists.

"In terms of foreign policy, the international relations of the blockade, Qatar didn't have to change much because the blockade was on such shaky ground to start," said Jocelyn Sage Mitchell, an assistant professor in residence at Northwestern University's campus in Qatar.

She said the quartet's efforts to internationally isolate Qatar failed. This, coupled with an incoming Biden administration in Washington that is expected to take a firmer stance toward Saudi Arabia and re-engage with Iran, put Qatar in a strong negotiating position.

"I don't expect to see any concessions or changes of significance from Qatar," Mitchell said. "Doha is actually used, and recognized, and welcomed for their ability to be the ally in the middle."

On Monday night, Saudi Arabia ended its embargo, opening its airspace and, in the coming days, its land crossing to its tiny Gulf neighbor. On Tuesday, Gulf Arab leaders and a representative from Egypt gathered in Saudi Arabia and signed a declaration to start a new page in brotherly relations, effectively ending Qatar's isolation among the quartet.

So stark was the about-face that Saudi Arabia's crown prince embraced Qatar's ruling emir upon his arrival to the summit, and later drove him to see historic desert sites in the area. In a nod to their fraternal ties, Qatar's emir landed in a jet named after an ancient town located in Saudi Arabia's landlocked Najd region, the birthplace of his Bani Tamim tribe.

Qatar's emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, was 37 years old when the crisis erupted in mid-2017, marking the biggest political challenge of his rule.

In the initial days of the boycott, worried residents rushed to grocery stores in the capital, Doha, emptying shelves of milk and other imported food items. Qatar's government immediately drew from its substantial cash reserves, used alternative shipping and flight routes, flew in thousands of cattle to ensure a steady supply of fresh dairy and deepened alliances with Turkey and Iran.

Qatar also used its strategic location in the Persian Gulf as the world's largest producer of liquefied natural gas to continue shipments to major world powers. Construction supplies were rerouted, allowing Qatar to continue pace with building new roads, hotels and mega-stadiums as it prepares to host the FIFA World Cup in 2022.

Sheikh Tamim's resolve and handling of the crisis catapulted his popularity at home. His image was plas-

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tered on high-rise buildings and car windows with pledges of loyalty and slogans praising him as "glorious". Qatar's National Museum dedicated a gallery to the nation's solitary under his leadership amid the crisis.

The young ruler, now 40, was seen as a "firm, steady, wise and mature hand at the wheel," said Mitchell, who has lived in Qatar for 13 years and witnessed the country of 2.7 million people rally around their leader.

Economically, the uber-wealthy nation took a hit from the blockade. Qatar Airways says it lost billions of dollars by being blocked from the quartet's airspace and markets.

Despite the pressure, Qatar's ability to assert its sovereign independence was strengthened by the crisis.

Now that the embargo has ended, Qatar may soften some of its policies, but it's unlikely to sever ties with Turkey, said Ayham Kamel, head of Eurasia Group's Middle East and North Africa division.

"As a result, all the Gulf countries will not align their foreign policies," he said. "These issues could once again become problematic as Qatari support for Muslim Brotherhood organizations across the region could become significant."

Days after the crisis erupted, the quartet issued a list of 13 demands on Qatar, ordering it to shutter its Al Jazeera news network, expel a small contingency of Turkish troops from its territory, cut ties with the Muslim Brotherhood and hand over political dissidents living in exile there.

Qatar rejected the demands. Although it stamps out dissent domestically, Qatar framed its support of opposition Islamist groups in other Arab countries as a sign of its tolerance and pluralistic approach.

When asked about the list by CNN's Becky Anderson on Tuesday, a top Emirati diplomat downplayed its significance.

"The 13 demands at the time were what I would consider a maximalist negotiating position," Anwar Gargash said.

Pivoting to the UAE's new public stance, he said the focus now is on beginning the process of healing. Still, he said one should be realistic about the road ahead.

"The issue of rebuilding confidence is one that takes time, takes some energy and takes a lot of transparency," he said, adding: "We have to work at making this deal quite waterproof in many ways."

On Wednesday, Qatari news websites, including the Doha-based Al Jazeera English and Arabic pages, were still blocked in the UAE. There was, however, a palpable shift in tone in state-linked news outlets, signaling a new understanding. Newspapers in the UAE and Saudi Arabia led with front-page photos of Tuesday's Gulf summit and positive headlines of the rift ending.

While there is relief that tensions have eased, there is also deep skepticism among Gulf Arab citizens. Families who'd intermarried with Qataris were divided, Qataris living in the UAE and Saudi Arabia were expelled, and social ties were frayed by the crisis.

"When you're connected to these countries by ties of family and friendship, it's painful to watch it descend into what it did," said Ahmed Al-Omran, a Saudi analyst and author of the Riyadh Bureau newsletter.

"People I think will be happy to see and hear less nasty exchanges in media, and personal attacks and all of this ugliness that marked this dispute."

Follow Aya Batrawy on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/ayaelb](http://www.twitter.com/ayaelb)

## 'Only in America': Warnock's rise from poverty to US senator

By RUSS BYNUM Associated Press

SAVANNAH, Ga. (AP) — The Rev. Raphael Warnock's roots showed little promise of a future that led to the U.S. Senate.

He grew up in Savannah in the Kayton Homes public housing project, the second youngest of 12 children. His mother as a teenager had worked as a sharecropper picking cotton and tobacco. His father was a preacher who also made money hauling old cars to a local scrapyard.

"My daddy used to wake me up every morning at dawn," Warnock told a hometown crowd at a drive-in rally two days before his election Tuesday. "He said, 'Boy, you can't sleep late in my house. Get up, get

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dressed, put your shoes on. Get ready.”

Pushed by his parents to work hard, Warnock left Savannah and became the first member of his family to graduate from college, helped by Pell grants and low-interest student loans. He earned a Ph.D. in theology that led to a career in the pulpit, eventually as head pastor of the Atlanta church where the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. preached.

Now Warnock, 51, will go to Washington as the first Black senator elected from Georgia, a Southern state still grappling with its painful history of slavery, segregation and racial injustice.

“Only in America is my story even possible,” Warnock told the cheering drive-in crowd Sunday.

Warnock defeated Republican Sen. Kelly Loeffler, a wealthy businesswoman who spent more than \$20 million of her own money to try to keep the Senate seat to which Georgia’s Republican governor appointed her a year ago.

His election followed a year scarred not only by a pandemic that disproportionately killed African Americans and left many jobless and struggling to pay rent, but also marked by the volatile outcry over the killings of Black Americans, including George Floyd in Minneapolis, and Ahmaud Arbery and Rayshard Brooks in Georgia.

Warnock isn’t the first Black candidate to win statewide office in Georgia, where voters elected Black men to serve as attorney general, state labor commissioner and a state Supreme Court justice in the 1990s. But the Senate seat is by far the most high-profile office won by an African American from the state.

“A barrier has been broken, a wall has literally been shattered and splintered,” said Michael Thurmond, the elected CEO of DeKalb County in metro Atlanta. “Historically, it didn’t matter how qualified you were, primarily you were prohibited by color. It was an office reserved for white men.”

A Black Democrat, Thurmond previously served as Georgia’s labor commissioner and ran his own campaign for the U.S. Senate in 2010. He credited Warnock’s victory largely to Georgia voters defying stereotypes and expectations.

“African American voters did something many political pundits didn’t believe they would do, which is come back for a runoff,” said Thurmond, who also noted that many whites supported Warnock — even as Republicans spent huge sums to portray him as being too radical for the traditionally conservative state. “The fact that whites weren’t scared to vote for this Black man was quite amazing.”

Michaëlle Viosa moved to Atlanta last year from New York and said she’s been unable to find a job amid economic fallout from the pandemic. Hearing of Warnock’s win when she woke Wednesday, Viosa, a Black woman of Haitian descent, cheered his victory — but also wondered what he’ll do when he gets to Washington.

“I believe God wanted it,” Viosa said. “I’m hoping he uses his powers for good for our community. There has been so much oppression on our people.”

Warnock framed his campaign for the Senate as an extension of his years of progressive activism as the leader of Atlanta’s storied Ebenezer Baptist Church. He won election on a platform that called for bail reform and an end to mass incarceration; a living wage and job training for a green economy; expanded access to voting and health care, and student loan forgiveness.

It was an unabashedly liberal agenda that illustrates a political shift in Georgia. The state’s last Democratic senator, Zell Miller, became so conservative that he gave a rousing speech at the 2004 Republican National Convention endorsing the reelection of President George W. Bush.

It remains to be seen whether another Georgia Democrat, Jon Ossoff, will join Warnock in the Senate. Both of the state’s Senate seats were on the runoff ballot Tuesday. But it remained too early Wednesday to call the race between Ossoff and Republican David Perdue.

Warnock insists he’ll work to unite Georgia after a bitterly divisive campaign and the polarizing four years of President Donald Trump’s term. He said his first priorities will be pushing to increase coronavirus relief payments to \$2,000 and improving distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine.

“What Georgia did last night is its own message,” Warnock told CNN on Wednesday, “in the midst of a moment in which so many people are trying to divide our country at a time we can least afford to be

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divided.”

Loeffler and Republicans targeted Warnock using video snippets from some of his sermons as ammunition for a barrage of negative ads. One of them featured Warnock defending President Barack Obama’s former pastor, Jeremiah Wright, after Wright decried the country’s mistreatment of Blacks with the exclamation, “God damn America.”

Other Black ministers called Loeffler’s criticisms unfair, saying Republicans used brief sermon excerpts without context and showed no understanding of how Black preachers have often spoken out against racial injustice in terms that can be discomfiting to outsiders.

Warnock was arrested at the Georgia state Capitol in 2014 while protesting the refusal of state Republicans to expand Medicaid. In 2017, as he and other pastors demonstrated against efforts to repeal Obama’s signature health care law, he was arrested again at the U.S. Capitol in Washington.

Warnock recalled the Washington arrest during his speech Sunday in Savannah, as he looked ahead to his next trip to Capitol Hill.

“I’m going to meet those Capitol police officers again,” he said. “This time they will not be taking me to central booking. They can help me find my new office.”

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Associated Press journalists Haleluya Hadero and Sudhin Thanawala in Atlanta contributed to this report.

## WikiLeaks founder Assange denied bail in UK

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — A British judge on Wednesday denied bail to WikiLeaks’ founder Julian Assange, ordering him to remain in a high-security prison while U.K. courts decide whether he will be sent to the United States to face espionage charges.

District Judge Vanessa Baraitser said Assange must remain in prison while the courts consider an appeal by U.S. authorities against her decision not to extradite him.

The judge said Assange “has an incentive to abscond” and there is a good chance he would fail to return to court if freed.

On Monday, Baraitser rejected an American request to send Assange to the U.S. to face spying charges over WikiLeaks’ publication of secret military documents a decade ago. She denied extradition on health grounds, saying the 49-year-old Australian was likely to kill himself if held under harsh U.S. prison conditions.

Wednesday’s bail ruling means Assange must remain in London’s high-security Belmarsh Prison where he has been held since he was arrested in April 2019 for skipping bail during a separate legal battle seven years earlier.

Assange’s partner, Stella Moris, said the decision was “a huge disappointment.” WikiLeaks spokesman Kristinn Hrafnsson said “it is inhumane. It is illogical.”

Several dozen Assange supporters gathered outside London’s Westminster Magistrates’ Court, shouting “Free Assange.” Police said seven people were arrested for breaching coronavirus lockdown rules.

Lawyers for the U.S. government have appealed the decision not to extradite Assange, and the case will be heard by Britain’s High Court at an unspecified date.

Clair Dobbin, a British lawyer acting for the U.S., said Assange had shown he would go “to almost any length” to avoid extradition, and it was likely he would flee if granted bail.

She noted that Assange had spent seven years inside Ecuadorian Embassy in London after seeking refuge there from a Swedish extradition request in 2012.

Dobbin said Assange had the “resources, abilities and sheer wherewithal” to evade justice once again, and noted that Mexico has said it will offer him asylum.

But Assange’s lawyer, Edward Fitzgerald, said the judge’s decision to refuse extradition “massively reduces” any motivation to abscond.

“Mr. Assange has every reason to stay in this jurisdiction where he has the protection of the rule of law and this court’s decision,” he said.

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Fitzgerald said it's also unclear whether the incoming Joe Biden administration will pursue the prosecution, initiated under President Donald Trump.

Fitzgerald said Assange would be safer awaiting the outcome of the judicial process at home with Moris and their two young sons — fathered while he was in the embassy — than in prison, where there is “a very grave crisis of COVID.”

But the judge ruled that Assange still had a strong motive to flee.

“As far as Mr. Assange is concerned this case has not yet been won,” she said. “Mr. Assange still has an incentive to abscond from these as yet unresolved proceedings.”

U.S. prosecutors have indicted Assange on 17 espionage charges and one charge of computer misuse over WikiLeaks' publication of thousands of leaked military and diplomatic documents. The charges carry a maximum sentence of 175 years in prison.

American prosecutors say Assange unlawfully helped U.S. Army intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning steal classified diplomatic cables and military files that were later published by WikiLeaks.

Lawyers for Assange argue that he was acting as a journalist and is entitled to First Amendment protections of freedom of speech for publishing documents that exposed U.S. military wrongdoing in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The judge rejected that argument in her extradition ruling, saying Assange's actions, if proven, would amount to offenses “that would not be protected by his right to freedom of speech.” She also said the U.S. judicial system would give him a fair trial.

But the judge agreed that U.S. prison conditions would be oppressive, saying there was a “real risk” he would be sent to the Administrative Maximum Facility in Florence, Colorado. It is the highest security prison in the U.S., also holding Unabomber Theodore Kaczynski and Mexican drug lord Joaquin “El Chapo” Guzman.

“I am satisfied that, in these harsh conditions, Mr. Assange's mental health would deteriorate, causing him to commit suicide,” she said in her ruling.

Assange's legal troubles began in 2010, when he was arrested in London at the request of Sweden, which wanted to question him about allegations of rape and sexual assault made by two women. In 2012, Assange jumped bail and sought refuge inside the Ecuadorian Embassy, where he was beyond the reach of U.K. and Swedish authorities — but also effectively was a prisoner in the tiny diplomatic mission.

The relationship between Assange and his hosts eventually soured, and he was evicted from the embassy in April 2019. British police immediately arrested him for breaching bail in 2012.

Sweden dropped the sex crimes investigations in November 2019 because so much time had elapsed, but Assange has remained in prison throughout his extradition hearing.

## **Sudan says it signs pact on normalizing ties with Israel**

By SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — Sudan on Wednesday said it had signed an agreement with the United States that paves the way for the cash-strapped African nation to normalize relations with Israel and help clear some of its massive debt to the World Bank.

Justice Minister Nasredeen Abdulbari signed the deal with visiting U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, according to the prime minister's office.

“This is a very, very significant agreement. ... It would have a tremendous impact on the people of Israel and the people of Sudan as they continue to work together on cultural and economic opportunities and trade,” Mnuchin said in comments carried by the state-run SUNA news agency.

Abdulbari said Sudan welcomed “the rapprochement” with Israel and other countries as well as the beginning of diplomatic relations. He said Khartoum would work “to strengthen and expand them in the interest of Sudan and in the interest of other countries in the region.”

Also during Mnuchin's visit, the U.S. and Sudan signed a “memorandum of understanding” to facilitate the payment of the African country's debt to the World Bank, the Finance Ministry said, a move widely seen as a key step toward its economic recovery.



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The ministry said the settlement would enable Sudan to receive more than \$1 billion annually from the World Bank for the first time in nearly three decades, when the country was designated a pariah state.

Sudan has more than \$60 billion in foreign debt.

On Oct. 23, President Donald Trump announced Sudan would become the third Arab state to normalize ties with Israel as part of a U.S.-brokered deal known as the "Abraham Accords" after the biblical patriarch revered by Muslims and Jews.

That followed Sudan agreeing to put \$335 million in an escrow account to compensate U.S. victims of terrorist attacks. Those include the 1998 bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania by the al-Qaida network while its leader, Osama bin Laden, was living in Sudan. The country also was believed to have served as a pipeline for Iran to supply weapons to Palestinian militants in the Gaza Strip.

In exchange, Trump notified Congress of his intent to remove Sudan from the U.S. list of state sponsors of terrorism, a key incentive for the deal.

There was no immediate comment from Israel on Wednesday.

The Trump administration announced diplomatic pacts last year between Israel and the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain — the first since Jordan recognized Israel in the 1990s and Egypt in the 1970s. Morocco also established diplomatic ties with Israel. The agreements are all with countries that are geographically distant from Israel and have played a minor role, if any, in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The accords have contributed to the severe isolation and weakening of the Palestinians by eroding a longstanding Arab consensus that recognition of Israel should only be given in return for concessions in the peace process.

Although Sudan is not a regional powerhouse, establishing ties with Israel is deeply symbolic. Sudan hosted the 1967 Khartoum summit where Arab countries vowed never to make peace with Israel, and more recently had close ties with Israeli enemies like Hamas and Hezbollah.

Sudan is on a fragile path to democracy after a popular uprising led the military to overthrow longtime autocrat Omar al-Bashir in April 2019. The county is now ruled by a joint military and civilian government that seeks better ties with Washington and the West.

During his visit, Mnuchin met with Gen. Abdel-Fattah Burhan, head of the ruling sovereign council, and Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok.

It was the first visit by a sitting U.S. treasury chief to Sudan, the statement said. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in August became the first top U.S. diplomat to visit Sudan since 2005, when Condoleezza Rice visited.

The visit came "at a time when our bilateral relations are taking historical leaps towards a better future. We're planning to make tangible strides today as our relations enter a #NewEra," Hamdok tweeted.

The Justice Ministry said last month that under the deal, the U.S. would give a \$1 billion bridge loan to the World Bank on behalf of Sudan, in addition to \$1.1 billion in direct and indirect aid from the U.S.

Since the ouster of al-Bashir, Sudan has been seeking better ties with the West but has been struggling with a huge budget deficit and widespread shortages of essential goods, including fuel, bread and medicine.

Annual inflation soared past 200% in the past months as prices of bread and other staples surged, according to official figures.

Mnuchin's visit came amid rising tensions between military and civilian members of the transitional government. Those tensions, which resurfaced in recent weeks, have largely centered on the military's economic assets, over which the civilian-run Finance Ministry does not have control.

John Prendergast, co-founder of The Sentry watchdog group, said Mnuchin should pressure the military and security apparatus to allow "independent oversight" to businesses they control.

"As Secretary Mnuchin engages with the leadership in Khartoum, it is critical that he weighs in with strong support for international anti-money-laundering standards and fiscal transparency, which are essential for Sudan to counter the looting of its national economy," he said.

Mnuchin flew to Sudan from Cairo, where he met with Egypt's President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi, a close U.S. ally, in a flurry of activity during the final days of the Trump administration.

Mnuchin later tweeted that he was headed to Israel "for important meetings."

Associated Press writer Joe Federman in Jerusalem contributed.

## EU commission greenlights Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine

By ALEKSANDAR FURTULA and MIKE CORDER Associated Press

AMSTERDAM (AP) — The European Union's executive commission gave the green light Wednesday to Moderna Inc.'s COVID-19 vaccine, providing the 27-nation bloc with a second vaccine to use in the desperate battle to tame the virus rampaging across the continent.

The European Commission granted conditional marketing authorization for the vaccine. The decision came against a backdrop of high infection rates in many EU countries and strong criticism of the slow pace of vaccinations across the region of some 450 million people.

"We are providing more COVID-19 vaccines for Europeans. With the Moderna vaccine, the second one now authorized in the EU, we will have a further 160 million doses. And more vaccines will come," European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said in a statement.

The EMA recommended the conditional authorization following a meeting earlier Wednesday.

"This vaccine provides us with another tool to overcome the current emergency," said EMA Executive Director Emer Cooke. "It is a testament to the efforts and commitment of all involved that we have this second positive vaccine recommendation just short of a year since the pandemic was declared by WHO."

The EMA last month granted the same conditional approval to a coronavirus vaccine made by American drugmaker Pfizer and Germany's BioNTech. Both vaccines require giving people two shots.

The EU has ordered 80 million doses of the Moderna vaccine with an option for a further 80 million. The bloc also has committed to buying 300 million doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine.

Commissioner for Health and Food Safety Stella Kyriakides said that the vaccine authorization "will ensure that 460 million doses will be rolled out with increasing speed in the EU, and more will come. Member States have to ensure that the pace of vaccinations follows suit."

German Health Minister Jens Spahn — who has in the past been critical of the slow pace of the EMA — said shortly before the announcement of the EMA authorization that he expected the Moderna vaccine to begin rolling out to EU nations next week. Germany would get 2 million doses in the first quarter and 50 million in all of 2021, Spahn told reporters in Berlin.

"The problem is the shortage of production capacity with global demand," he said.

Spahn said that if further vaccines beyond the BioNTech-Pfizer and Moderna shots are approved in the EU, "we'll be able to offer everyone in Germany a vaccine by the summer."

He insisted that the strategy of bulk-buying for the entire bloc had been the right one as it had given manufacturers certainty to go ahead with production and ensured fair distribution among all the 27 EU countries.

Early results of large, still unfinished studies show both the Moderna and the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccines appear safe and strongly protective, although Moderna's is easier to handle since it doesn't need to be stored at ultra-frozen temperatures.

The EU agency gave the green light to use the Moderna vaccine on people age 18 year and above. It said side effects "were usually mild or moderate and got better within a few days after vaccination."

The most common side effects are "pain and swelling at the injection site, tiredness, chills, fever, swollen or tender lymph nodes under the arm, headache, muscle and joint pain, nausea and vomiting," the EMA said.

Cook stressed that EU authorities "will closely monitor data on the safety and effectiveness of the vaccine to ensure ongoing protection of the EU public. Our work will always be guided by the scientific evidence and our commitment to safeguard the health of EU citizens."

The United States, Canada and Israel have already authorized use of the Moderna vaccine. The U.S. gave it the green light for emergency use in people over 18 years on Dec. 18, followed by Canada five

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days later with an interim authorization also for people over 18. Israel authorized the vaccine on Monday.

Moderna said Monday that it is increasing its estimate for global vaccine production in 2021 from 500 to 600 million doses. The company said it is "continuing to invest and add staff to build up to potentially 1 billion doses for 2021."

Both Moderna's and Pfizer-BioNTech's shots are mRNA vaccines, made with a groundbreaking new technology. They don't contain any coronavirus – meaning they cannot cause infection. Instead, they use a piece of genetic code that trains the immune system to recognize the spike protein on the surface of the virus, ready to attack if the real thing comes along.

The EU officially began giving out Pfizer-BioNTech vaccination shots on Dec. 27, but the speed of each nation's inoculation program has varied widely. France vaccinated around 500 people in the first week, while Germany vaccinated 200,000. The Dutch were only beginning to give out vaccine shots Wednesday, the last EU nation to start doing so.

Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz tweeted that approval of the Moderna vaccine "is another important step in the fight against the pandemic. This means we have more vaccine available in the EU and can fight the pandemic faster."

Mike Corder reported from The Hague, Netherlands. Associated Press writer Frank Jordans in Berlin contributed to this report.

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

## Hong Kong arrests 53 activists under national security law

By ZEN SOO Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — Hong Kong police arrested 53 former lawmakers and democracy proponents Wednesday for allegedly violating the new national security law by participating in unofficial election primaries for the territory's legislature last year.

The mass arrests were the largest move against Hong Kong's democracy movement since the law was imposed by Beijing last June to quell dissent in the semi-autonomous territory.

"The operation today targets the active elements who are suspected to be involved in the crime of overthrowing, or interfering (in) ... the Hong Kong government's legal execution of duties," Hong Kong's security minister, John Lee, said at a news conference.

He said those arrested were suspected of trying to paralyze the government by attempting to gain a majority in the legislature to create a situation in which the chief executive had to resign and the government would stop functioning.

A video on former lawmaker Lam Cheuk-ting's Facebook page showed police arriving at his home and telling him he was "suspected of violating the national security law, subverting state power." Police told those recording the video to stop or risk arrest.

The legislative election that would have followed the unofficial primaries was postponed by a year by Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam, who cited the public health risks during the coronavirus pandemic. Mass resignations and disqualifications of pro-democracy lawmakers have left the legislature largely a pro-Beijing body.

Lee said the police would not target those who voted in the unofficial primaries, which were held in July and attracted more than 600,000 voters even though pro-Beijing lawmakers and politicians had warned the event could breach the security law.

All of the pro-democracy candidates in the unofficial primaries were arrested, apart from a few who had fled the territory, according to reports by the South China Morning Post, online platform Now News and political groups.

At least seven members of Hong Kong's Democratic Party — the city's largest opposition party — were

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arrested, including former party chairman Wu Chi-wai. Former lawmakers Lam, Helena Wong and James To were also arrested, according to a post on the party's Facebook page.

Benny Tai, a key figure in Hong Kong's 2014 Occupy Central protests and a former law professor, was also arrested, reports said. Tai was one of the main organizers of the primaries.

The home of Joshua Wong, a prominent pro-democracy activist who is serving a 13 1/2-month prison sentence for organizing and participating in an unauthorized protest last year, was also raided, according to a tweet posted from Wong's account.

American human rights lawyer John Clancey was also among those taken into custody. Clancey was the treasurer of political group Power for Democracy, which was involved in the unofficial primaries.

"We need to work for democracy and human rights in Hong Kong," Clancey said as he was being led away by police, in a video posted by local online news outlet Citizen News.

Police also went to the offices of Stand News and Apple Daily, two prominent pro-democracy news outlets, with a court order to hand over documents to assist in an investigation related to the national security law, according to the two media outlets. Another online news outlet, In-Media, received a similar court order. No arrests were made.

Lee pointed to a "10 steps to mutual destruction" plan that included taking control of the legislature, mobilizing protests to paralyze society and calling for international sanctions.

That plan was previously outlined by former law professor Tai. He predicted that between 2020 and 2022, there would be 10 steps to mutual destruction, including the pro-democracy bloc winning a majority in the legislature, intensifying protests, the forced resignation of Lam due to the budget bill being rejected twice, and international sanctions on the Chinese Communist Party.

"The plot is to create such mutual destruction that if successful ... will result in serious damage to society as a whole," said Lee. "That is why police action today is necessary."

Senior Supt. Steve Li of the national security unit said the operation involved 1,000 officers. The 45 men and eight women arrested are aged between 23 and 79, according to a police statement.

All were in police custody except for one man who was granted bail so he could self quarantine, according to the statement. He is expected to report to the police later this month.

Six were arrested for subverting state power by organizing the unofficial primaries, while the rest were arrested for allegedly participating in the event, Li said. He said more arrests could be made and investigations were ongoing.

Alan Leong, chairman of the pro-democracy Civic Party in Hong Kong, said at a news conference Wednesday that plans to exercise voting rights to veto the budget and eventually oblige the chief executive to step down are rights enshrined in the Basic Law, Hong Kong's mini-constitution.

The arrests were an "affront to the constitutionally protected rights to vote" in Hong Kong, Leong said.

Hua Chunying, a spokesperson for China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said Beijing supports Hong Kong police in their carrying out of "their duties in accordance with the law."

"The rights and freedom Hong Kong people enjoyed have not been affected in any way," Hua said at a daily news briefing. "What was affected was that some external forces and individual people in Hong Kong colluded with each other in an attempt to undermine the stability and security of China."

In recent months, Hong Kong has jailed several pro-democracy activists, including Wong and Agnes Chow, for their involvement in anti-government protests, and others have been charged under the national security law, including media tycoon and outspoken pro-democracy activist Jimmy Lai.

The security law criminalizes acts of subversion, secession, terrorism and collusion with foreign powers to intervene in the city's affairs. Serious offenders could face up to a maximum punishment of life imprisonment.

Lam had said at the time of the unofficial primaries last year that if their aim was resisting every policy initiative by the Hong Kong government, the election may fall under subverting state power, an offense under the national security law.

Beijing had also called the primaries illegal and a "serious provocation" of Hong Kong's electoral system.

Following the handover of Hong Kong to China by the British in 1997, the city has operated on a "one country, two systems" framework that affords it freedoms not found on the mainland. In recent years,

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Beijing has asserted more control over the city, drawing criticism that it was breaking its promise of Hong Kong maintaining separate civil rights and political systems for 50 years from the handover.

The sweeping arrests drew condemnation from Anthony Blinken, the U.S. Secretary of State nominee for the upcoming Biden administration, who said on Twitter that it was an "assault on those bravely advocating for universal rights."

"The Biden-Harris administration will stand with the people of Hong Kong and against Beijing's crackdown on democracy," Blinken wrote in his tweet.

In Germany, Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Adebahr said the arrests "confirm our fears ... that the national security law would lead to an erosion of the freedoms, rights and rule of law guaranteed to Hong Kongers in the Basic Law."

The arrests send the "signal that political pluralism is no longer tolerated in Hong Kong," EU spokesman Peter Stano told a press conference. The security law is being used "to crush dissent and stifle the exercise of human rights and political freedoms."

Human Rights Watch senior China researcher Maya Wang said the national security law is a blanket law that allows the government to arrest people for exercising their rights.

"Hong Kong is looking more like mainland China but where one ends and the other begins is hard to discern," she said.

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AP Writer Geir Moulson in Berlin contributed to this report.

## Some Orthodox Christians ignore COVID warnings on Epiphany

SOFIA, Bulgaria (AP) — Thousands of Orthodox Christian worshippers in Bulgaria on Wednesday ignored warnings issued by health authorities to abstain from mass gatherings due to the coronavirus pandemic and kept instead to their centuries-old Epiphany traditions.

Young men plunged into the icy waters of rivers and lakes across Bulgaria to retrieve crucifixes tossed by priests in ceremonies commemorating the baptism of Jesus Christ.

The legend goes that the person who retrieves the wooden cross will be freed from evil spirits and will be healthy throughout the year. After the cross is fished out, the priest sprinkles believers with water using a bunch of basil.

In the small mountain city of Kalofer in central Bulgaria, dozens of men dressed in traditional white embroidered shirts waded into the frigid Tundzha River waving national flags and singing folk songs. Inspired by bass drums and bagpipes and fortified by homemade liquor, they performed a slow "mazhko horo," or men's dance, stomping on the rocky riverbed.

The mayor of Kalofer, who usually leads the dance, this year did not enter the river to set an example that coronavirus regulations have to be followed.

A few local police officers attempted to prevent people from entering the river, threatening them with fines, but their calls were widely ignored.

Epiphany marks the end of the 12 days of Christmas, but not all Orthodox Christian churches celebrate it on the same day.

While the Orthodox Christian churches in Greece, Bulgaria and Romania celebrate the feast on Jan. 6, Orthodox Churches in Russia, Ukraine and Serbia follow the Julian calendar, according to which Epiphany is celebrated on Jan. 19, as their Christmas falls on Jan. 7.

Some Western Christian churches celebrate the religious holiday of Epiphany as the Three Kings Day, which marks the visit of the Magi, or three wise men, to the baby Jesus, and closes out the Christmas season.

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## Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Thursday, Jan. 7, the seventh day of 2021. There are 358 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Jan. 7, 1789, America held its first presidential election as voters chose electors who, a month later, selected George Washington to be the nation's first chief executive.

On this date:

In 1927, commercial transatlantic telephone service was inaugurated between New York and London.

In 1942, Japanese forces began besieging American and Filipino troops in Bataan during World War II. (The fall of Bataan three months later was followed by the notorious Death March.)

In 1953, President Truman announced in his State of the Union message to Congress that the United States had developed a hydrogen bomb.

In 1959, the United States recognized the new government of Cuba, six days after Fidel Castro led the overthrow of Fulgencio Batista.

In 1972, Lewis F. Powell, Jr. and William H. Rehnquist were sworn in as the 99th and 100th members of the U.S. Supreme Court.

In 1979, Vietnamese forces captured the Cambodian capital of Phnom Penh, overthrowing the Khmer Rouge government.

In 1989, Emperor Hirohito of Japan died in Tokyo at age 87; he was succeeded by his son, Crown Prince Akihito.

In 1999, for the second time in history, an impeached American president went on trial before the Senate. President Bill Clinton faced charges of perjury and obstruction of justice; he was acquitted.

In 2004, President George W. Bush proposed legal status, at least temporarily, for millions of immigrants improperly working in the U.S.

In 2006, U.S. Rep. Tom DeLay, R-Texas, facing corruption charges, stepped down as House majority leader. (DeLay was found guilty in Nov. 2010 of illegally funneling corporate money to Texas candidates; his conviction was eventually overturned.)

In 2015, masked gunmen stormed the Paris offices of Charlie Hebdo, a French newspaper that had caricatured the Prophet Mohammad, methodically killing 12 people, including the editor, before escaping in a car. (Two suspects were killed two days later.)

In 2019, Amazon eclipsed Microsoft as the most valuable publicly-traded company in the U.S. For the first time in more than 25 years, Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg was absent from oral arguments as she recuperated from cancer surgery.

Ten years ago: A package addressed to Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano ignited at a Washington postal facility, a day after fiery packages sent to Maryland's governor and state transportation secretary burned the fingers of workers who opened them.

Five years ago: President Barack Obama tore into the National Rifle Association during a televised town hall meeting in Fairfax, Virginia, as he dismissed what he called a "conspiracy" alleging that the federal government — and Obama in particular — wanted to seize all firearms as a precursor to imposing martial law.

One year ago: A magnitude 6.4 earthquake, the strongest to hit Puerto Rico in more than 100 years, killed one person, injured nine others and knocked out power across the U.S. territory. A stampede at the funeral of Gen. Qassem Soleimani in his Iranian hometown of Kerman killed 56 people and injured more than 200. Jury selection began in New York for the rape and sexual assault trial of Hollywood mogul Harvey Weinstein; about a third of the first 120 prospective jurors were sent home after they said they could not be impartial. Neil Peart, the drummer for the influential rock trio Rush, died at the age of 67 at his California home; the band said he had been battling brain cancer.

Today's Birthdays: Magazine publisher Jann Wenner is 75. Singer Kenny Loggins is 73. Singer-songwriter Marshall Chapman is 72. Actor Erin Gray is 71. Actor Sammo Hung is 69. Actor Jodi Long is 67. Actor David

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Caruso is 65. Talk show host Katie Couric is 64. Country singer David Lee Murphy is 62. Rock musician Kathy Valentine is 62. Actor David Marciano is 61. Sen. John Thune, R-S.D., is 60. Actor Hallie Todd is 59. Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., is 58. Actor Nicolas Cage is 57. Singer-songwriter John Ondrasik (on-DRAH'-sik) (Five for Fighting) is 56. Actor Rex Lee is 52. Actor Doug E. Doug is 51. Actor Kevin Rahm is 50. Actor Jeremy Renner is 50. Country singer-musician John Rich is 47. Actor Dustin Diamond is 44. Actor Reggie Austin is 42. Singer-rapper Aloe Blacc is 42. Actor Lauren Cohan is 39. Actor Brett Dalton is 38. Actor Robert Ri'chard is 38. Actor Lyndsy Fonseca is 34. Actor Liam Aiken is 31. Actor Camryn Grimes is 31. Actor Max Morrow is 30. Actor Marcus Scribner is 21.