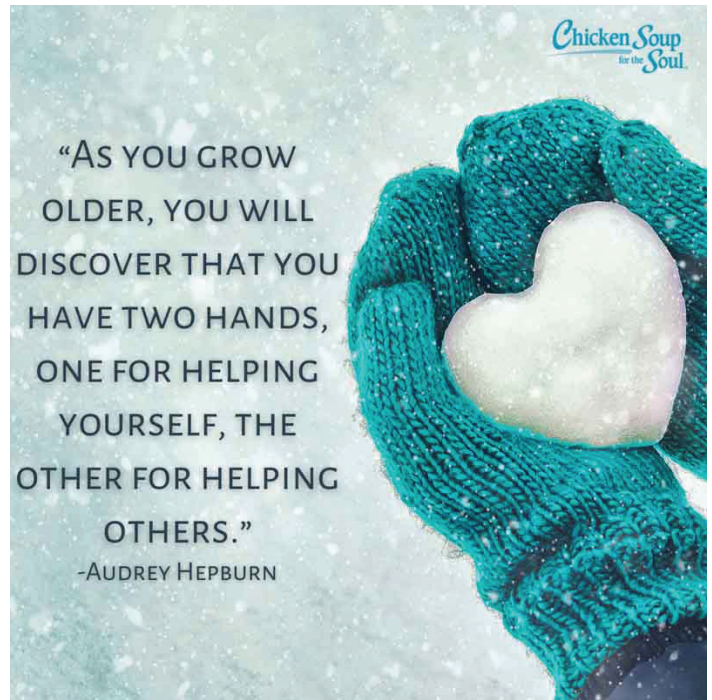


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Upcoming Schedule

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.

Thursday, Jan. 14

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

Friday, Jan. 15

6 p.m.: Girls Basketball at Roncalli with JV game followed by varsity

Saturday, Jan. 16

10 a.m.: Wrestling at Potter County Invitational (Gettysburg)



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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Doubleheader

Groton Area at Webster Area
4 p.m., Monday, Jan. 11, 2021
GJV, BJV, GV, BV

GDILIVE.COM



The service of
Sandra Mayou
Tuesday, Jan. 12th, 11 a.m.
Emmanuel Lutheran Church

GDILIVE.COM
GDIRADIO Locally 89.3FM



Girls

Groton Area vs. Aberdeen Christian at the Ab. Arena
6 p.m., Tuesday, Jan. 12, 2021
GJV, GV

GDILIVE.COM



The service of
Delores Leonhardt
Wednesday, Jan. 13, 11 a.m.
St. John's Lutheran Church

GDILIVE.COM

Service Notice: Delores Leonhardt

Services for Delores Leonhardt, 88, of Groton will be 11:00 a.m., Wednesday, January 13, 2021 at St. John's Lutheran Church, Groton. Rev. Andrew Wolfgram will officiate. Burial will follow in Scotland Cemetery under the direction of Paetznick-Garness Funeral Chapel, Groton. Services will be live streamed at GDILIVE.COM.

Visitation will be held for one hour prior to services on Wednesday.

Delores passed away January 9, 2021 at Sun Dial Manor in Bristol.

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The Life of Sandra Mayou

Private services for Sandra "Sandi" Mayou, 56, of Groton will be 11:00 a.m., Tuesday, January 12th at Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Groton. Pastor Kari Foss will officiate. Burial will follow in Pleasant Valley Lutheran Cemetery, rural Britton under the direction of Paetznick-Garness Funeral Chapel, Groton. Services will be live streamed at GDILIVE.COM to keep her co-workers and friends safe.

Visitation will be held for one hour prior to services.

Sandi passed away January 7, 2021 at Avera St. Lukes Hospital, Aberdeen following a courageous battle with pancreatic cancer.

Sandra Ann was born on January 16, 1964 in Britton to Burdean and Sharon (Person) Chapin. She attended Elementary School in Kidder and graduated from Britton High School in 1982. Sandi attended SDSU, studying Nutrition. Sandi later returned to USD and completed her degree in Nursing. She was employed at Avera St. Lukes where she worked in the Emergency Department as a Supervisor and also as a Care Flight Nurse for 10 years. She was a PICC/Procedure nurse and SANE (Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner) program nurse.. This past year, Sandi was awarded Nurse of the Year for District 4. On November 27, 2011 she joined in marriage with Stacy Mayou and together they made their home in Groton.



Sandi was involved in several organizations, including the ENA where she served as a delegate. Others included a Diversity Group, American Nurses Association, and SDNA. She also volunteered her time with Groton Fire & Rescue, SDNA First Aid Station and Safe Harbor. Sandi enjoyed golfing, refinishing furniture & woodwork, gardening and tending to her flowers. She loved time spent with her family, traveling, motor cycle trips, music concerts, dinner theaters and time spent at Four Mile Lake. Sandi was a member of Emmanuel Lutheran Church.

Celebrating her life is her husband, Stacy of Groton, her children; Amanda Kern of Minneapolis, Aaron (Melissa Sletto) Kern of Minneapolis, Emily (Nathan) Skadsen of Sioux Falls, Alexander (Rachel Krakow) Kern of Aberdeen, a baby grandchild due in April, her step-daughters, Tonya Mayou and Hayley Mayou both of Salem, her siblings; Douglas Chapin of Britton, Kent (Nancy) Chapin of Aberdeen, Marie (Jeffrey) Loutsch of Milbank and, her in-laws parents, Delbert & Sherry Mayou of Rosholt and in-laws, Scott (Lisa Doll) Mayou of Rosholt and Brenda Lohrenz of Chaska, MN.

Preceding her in death were her parents and her brother-in-law, Greg.

Honorary Casketbearers will be Sandi's many Co-Workers; her Avera St. Lukes family.

Casketbearers will be Christopher Loutsch, Aaron Kern, Nathan Loutsch, Alexander Kern, Nathaniel Steinlicht and Eric Chapin.

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Groton Area basketball teams go 3-3 with Sisseton

Groton Area's basketball teams played Sisseton last week with the boys having a three-game win at home and the girls having a three-game loss at Sisseton.

Groton Area advances to 4-1 on the season with a 51-43 win in the varsity game. Groton Area held an 8-6 lead after the first quarter. After the game was tied at 13, Sisseton scored eight straight points to take a 21-13 lead. The Tigers rallied back to within three at half time, 23-20, and then tied the game early in the third quarter at 23 and 25. Sisseton then scored nine straight points to take a 34-25 lead, then Groton Area scored nine straight points of its own to tie the game at 34. Sisseton led, 36-34, at the end of the third quarter. Jayden Zak sparked the Tigers in the fourth quarter, scoring all 10 of his points in that quarter as Groton went on to win, 51-43.

Four players hit double figures for the Tigers with Lane Tietz having 12 and Jayden Zak, Jacob Zak and Tate Larson each having 10, Wyatt Hearnen had four, Favian Sanchez three and Tristan Traphagen two. Making three-pointers were Jayden Zak and Tietz each with two and Sanchez and Larson each having one.

Xavier Donnell led Sisseton with 15 points while Anthony Tchida and Dylan Goodhart each had 13 and Levi Greseth added two.

Groton Area made 19 of 36 field goals for 52 percent and was seven of 12 from the line and had 13 turnovers. Sisseton was 19 of 49 from the field for 39 percent and was five of 11 from the line and had 12 turnovers.

Groton Area won the junior varsity game, 30-21. Sisseton held a 3-2 lead after the first quarter and Groton led at half time, 13-6. The Tigers went ahead, 25-17 at the end of the third quarter. The main highlight was at one point, Wyatt Hearnen scored three baskets in a matter of a few seconds right before half time. He led the Tigers in scoring with 18 points while Favian Sanchez had eight and Teylor Diegel and Colby Dunker each had two points. Riley Bravebull led Sisseton with nine points.

Groton Area led at the quarterbreaks in the C game, 11-7, 18-15 and 35-27 en route to a 44-31 win. Logan Ringgenberg led the Tigers with 20 points while Teylor Diegel had nine points, Holden Sippel had five, Colby Dunker four and Dillon Abeln and Cade Larson each had three points. Ethan DeSpiegler and Nate Tchida each had seven points for Sisseton.

Kenzie McInerney had her moment in the girls varsity game as she also scored three baskets in a matter of seconds in the first quarter with a three-pointer and two two-pointers. Sisseton held a 14-12 lead at the end of the first quarter. The game was tied three times and there were four lead changes early in the second quarter before Sisseton went on a 12-point run and ended up with a 29-21 lead at half time. Sisseton had 10-point run in the third quarter and led, 44-32 at the break. Sisseton went on to win, 56-45.

Sisseton had 28 team fouls which put the Tigers at the line 39 times and made 11 free throws. Groton Area had 18 team fouls as Sisseton was 11 of 20 from the line. In field goals, Groton Area was 15 of 59 for 25 percent and Sisseton was 20 of 51 for 39 percent.

McInerney led the Tigers with 16 points followed by Brooke Gengerke with seven, Allyssa Locke had five, Kennedy Hanson four, Aspen Johnson three and Sydney Leicht and Jaedyn Penning each had two points. Sisseton was led by Chloe Langager with 21 points.

Groton Area took a 14-6 lead after the first quarter in the junior varsity game and Sisseton led at half time, 18-16. The Redmen held on to a 26-23 lead at the end of the third quarter and went on to win, 36-28. Groton Area was one of seven from the line in the fourth quarter while Sisseton was three of four.

Sydney Leicht led the Tigers with 11 points followed by Jerica Locke with five, Anna Fjeldheim and Elizabeth Flihs each had three, Brooklyn Hanson, Kennedy Hanson and Jaedyn Penning each had two points and Emma Schinkel had a free throw. Rylie Huff led Sisseton with 11 points and Krista Langager added 10.

Sisseton led at the quarter stops at 13-3, 15-7 and 20-15 en route to a 33-20 C game win. Brooklyn Hansen led the Tigers with nine points while Jerica Locke and Mia Crank each had four, Elizabeth Flihs had two and Laila Roberts added one.

All four games were broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM. The varsity sponsors were Bierman Farm Service, Jark Real Estate, Harr Motors - Bary Keith, Bahr Spray Foam, Allied Climate Professionals- Kevin Nehls, S.D. Army National Guard, John Sieh Agency, Groton Vet Clinic, Blocker Construction, Locke Electric, Thunder Seed with John Wheeting and Milbrandt Enterprises, Inc. The White House Inn sponsored the girls C game, Ed and Connie Stauch sponsored the girls junior varsity game, Bob and Vicki Walter sponsored the boys C game and Wyatt Hearnen's grandparents from Arizona, Marilyn and Jerry Hearnen, sponsored the boys junior varsity game.

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For the first time in NFL history, there were six playoff games on wildcard weekend. Thanks to the league adding an extra playoff spot this season, seven teams from each conference made it to the post-season. With only the top spot securing a bye week, we were gifted to a weekend filled with football. We'll break down those games, but first...

Minnesota Vikings' news and notes

Rookie receiver Justin Jefferson had a phenomenal year, and he has been rewarded with one of the highest honors a player, regardless of years in the league, can receive. Jefferson was named to the Associated Press 2020 All-Pro Second Team, meaning he was recognized as one of the best receivers in the entire league. He is also a finalist for the Offensive Rookie of the Year Award, which will undoubtedly come down to two players, Jefferson and LA Chargers' rookie quarterback Justin Herbert.

Vikings' offensive coordinator Gary Kubiak hasn't made up his mind as to whether he'll be back next season, but two coaches who definitely won't be back are defensive assistant Dom Capers and special teams coordinator Marwan Maalouf. That should come as no surprise, however, as the Vikings' defense and special teams were horrible for large stretches of the 2020 season.

Wildcard weekend

The NFL postseason began on Saturday with the Indianapolis Colts heading to Buffalo to battle the Bills. Buffalo hadn't won a playoff game in a quarter of a century, but that drought is over thanks to a 27-24 win over the Colts. Former Vikings Stefon Diggs has been lighting it up in Buffalo, which led to him leading the league in catches and receiving yards this season, and he didn't disappoint in the postseason as he caught six passes for 128 yards and a touchdown.

The second game of the day saw the Los Angeles Rams head to Seattle and beat the Seahawks 30-20. With both of these teams being in the same division, they are well acquainted with each other by this point. The Rams weren't able to get anything going in the passing game, but leaned on a running game (43 carries, 164 yards) and their defense to shut down Russell Wilson and the Seahawks (Wilson went 11/27 for 174 yards, two touchdowns and a pick-six, and was also sacked five times).

The final game on Saturday was the Tampa Bay Buccaneers against the Washington Football Team. Tom Brady threw for 381 yards and two touchdowns, but it was the quarterback for Washington who stole the show. Former Viking Taylor Heinicke was thrust into the lineup because of an injury to Alex Smith, and Heinicke completed 26 of 44 passes for 306 yards, one touchdown and one interception. He also led the team in rushing yards, picking up 46 yards on the ground. While that was a great story, it wasn't enough to overcome the greatest quarterback in NFL history, as the Bucs won 31-23.

Sunday started with a familiar matchup, as the Baltimore Ravens traveled to Tennessee to take on the Titans. These two teams met last postseason, when the Titans came to Baltimore and left with a win. This year, the Ravens repaid the favor, and will be heading back home after a 20-13 road playoff win. Lamar Jackson, the 2019 NFL MVP, finally got his first playoff win – partly because of his running ability (16 carries, 136 yards, one TD), and partly because the Ravens' defense was able to shut down Derrick Henry. Henry ran for over 2,000 yards this season, but was held to only 40 yards on 18 carries Sunday.

The next game was Chicago at New Orleans, with the Saints beating the Bears 21-9. The score is misleading, as this game simply wasn't competitive. The Bears didn't even get into the endzone until the final play of the game, which was a 19-yard pass from Mitch Trubisky to Jimmy Graham. Bears' RB David Montgomery was on a hot streak coming into this game, but the Saints held him to 31 yards on 12 carries.

The Final game of the weekend featured the Cleveland Browns at the Pittsburgh Steelers. Pittsburgh were heavy favorites, but Baker Mayfield put the Browns on his back, completing 21 of 34 passes for 263 yards and three touchdowns in a 48-37 win. Steelers' QB Ben Roethlisberger threw for over 500 yards and had four touchdowns, but also threw four interceptions in a disappointing loss for a team that was undefeated through their first 11 games of the season.

Divisional round schedule

Saturday: LA Rams @ GB Packers, followed by BAL Ravens @ BUF Bills

Sunday: CLE Browns @ KC Chiefs, followed by TB Buccaneers @ NO Saints

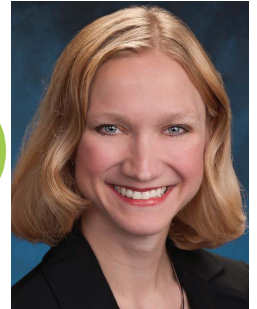
Check back next week, as we break down the divisional round of the playoffs, along with any Vikings news and notes. Skol!



By Jordan Wright

When the Heart Whispers

One definition of the word murmur is "to express one's discontent in a subdued manner." So, it makes sense that a heart murmur is often a soft-spoken signal that something may be going on in the heart. The heart does not always shout to get our attention like it does with a heart attack. Sometimes it quietly whispers to those who will listen that there might be an issue. The murmur itself is not the problem, rather, the murmur is telling us to look for one.



By Jill Kruse, DO ~ Prairie Doc® Perspectives

Some murmurs are called innocent or benign. These are murmurs when the heart is normal, but the blood is flowing over the valves rapidly which causes a sound. About forty to forty-five percent of children will have a murmur at some point in their life. No treatment is needed for these murmurs and children will often outgrow them, but up to ten percent of them do persist into adulthood.

Murmurs that indicate more serious issues are often associated with valve disorders in the heart. The valves are the areas that open when the chamber of the heart beats and close when the heart is between beats, to allow the chambers to relax and refill with blood. Sometimes a valve does not fully close, or it will balloon backwards and allow blood to backflow across the valve. This back flow causes a murmur. This is called valve prolapse that leads to blood regurgitation or "regurg" which requires medical attention.

A different type of murmur is caused by mitral or aortic valve stenosis. Stenosis is when the valve does not fully open, so the same amount of blood is forcing itself through a narrower opening in the same amount of time as it does in a normal valve. That extra pressure causes the murmur because the heart must work harder to push the blood through the valve. Over time if this is untreated it can lead to damage of the heart muscles.

The most common murmur is aortic sclerosis, which happens when the aortic valve develops scarring, stiffening, or thickening. This can occur with age or after infections such as rheumatic fever or endocarditis. This is not dangerous by itself, but if it progresses to stenosis, it can be cause for concern.

Often when a doctor hears a murmur, we may want to get a better look with a special ultrasound called an echocardiogram to see if we can find the cause of the noise. Once the cause is found, a follow up plan can be made.

When the heart whispers, we must always listen. By doing so, we may avoid further discontent, forcing the heart to raise its voice over a larger problem.

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

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#322 in a series

Covid-29 Update: by Marie Miller

Tonight's numbers are down: typical Sunday. I'll add that what we call "down" would have been horrifying during the spring peak or during the summer peak; hell, it would have been bad a couple of months ago. These things are relative, and so we're in the position of being grateful for "only" close to a quarter-million new cases today.

Longer view: We're up over the last week and over two weeks. This is your Christmas surge, aided and abetted by a New Year's surge; we'll be seeing these effects for some time to come, certainly through the end of the month and into February. I like holidays, but I find myself deeply grateful we don't have another one scheduled for quite some time. We are at 22,448,300 cases reported in the US so far in the pandemic. There were 226,800 new cases reported today for a 1.0% increase in total cases. We've been over 90,000 cases for a solid ten weeks and over 70,000 for eleven weeks. California, while it remains in deep trouble, has been overtaken by Arizona and Rhode Island; and the South is knocking at the door with West Virginia and Tennessee moving up. Hospitalizations are not at record levels, but just a couple of thousand off the record at 130,781, well above last week.

We're up to 50 states and territories in the red zone, three in orange, and one in yellow. One-week increase in total cases was 1,500,600 (7.8%) last week and is up to 1,786,600 (8.6%) this week. Two-week increase was 2,785,400 (15.6) last week and is, shockingly, up a half-million to 3,287,200 (17.2%) this week. The Christmas travel period is showing us who's boss with New Year's yet to come. Combine our current situation with a new highly-transmissible variant making its way across the country, and we're in for hard times. Those vaccines cannot come fast enough to help us through what's coming. We added almost 6.4 million cases in December; we're on track to add 7.5 million in January. I have us at a one-week daily average new-case number of 255,288.6, almost 41,000 more than last week, a 25% increase in growth rate in a week. I don't know how to explain how terrible this is.

I track 54 states and US territories, including the District of Columbia; and the number of these showing two-week rates of increase greater than 25% is up to eight. Here are the states and territories with the greatest rate of growth in cases over 14 days with their percentage increase in that time: Connecticut (38.00%), Maine (32.90%), Vermont (27.57% - increase), California (26.68%), New Hampshire (26.44%), New Jersey (26.27 - huge increase), West Virginia (25.40%), and Arizona (25.09%). Three of these, Vermont, New Jersey, and Arizona, are new to the list this week. We still have 19 states and territories with growth rates above the US growth rate. I had thought the South was going to be more prominent by this week, but it looks as though that prediction was premature. I do still see it coming, but I am open to being disappointed in this expectation.

There were 1991 deaths reported today, a 0.5% increase to 374,389. Average daily deaths have increased to the highest number of the pandemic, almost one-third greater than last week's record-setting average of 2201.3 at 3244.1 this week. This is the eighth consecutive week since spring we've reported over 10,000 deaths, and we've now broken the 20,000 mark. These are human lives snuffed out; each of them mattered to someone, and we can't get them back. States with the most per capita deaths over the past week are Arizona, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Tennessee. None of these states were on this list last week.

We've talked from time to time about long-haulers, those folks who, having survived infection with SARS-CoV-2, experience lingering symptoms, sometimes for months. There's a new study published in The Lancet on Friday of patients in Wuhan, China. The study was an ambidirectional (meaning both retrospective and prospective) cohort study of those who had spent a median of 14 days hospitalized and were discharged between January 7, 2020, and May 29, 2020, which is a fair swath of time, especially in the context of a pandemic that is just a year old. Researchers looked at 1733 patients with a median age of 57 and about equal numbers of men and women. Patients were given physicals, lab tests, and a six-minute walk test (a standardized measure of endurance and aerobic capacity) and interviewed about their health. Some also had lung function tests, chest CT scans, and ultrasounds. Findings were that more than three-quarters

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had at least one symptom six months after discharge.

Most common symptoms were exhaustion, muscle weakness, sleep difficulties, and anxiety or depression. These are things that are going to affect these folks' lives going forward. The plan is to continue to follow these people for up to two years, so we should develop a fuller picture as time goes on. Most physicians are well aware that a great many patients are experiencing ongoing issues; but this study documents in detail just what those issues have been and how many people are reporting them.

I received a question this morning, and I suspect the answer will be of interest to more than just my questioner, so I am answering it here tonight. Here's the question: "I don't understand why it is taking so long to get the vaccine out to people. Why are we hearing the vaccine is 'just sitting there?'"

Good question. First thing, is it accurate that there is vaccine "just sitting there?" Yes, it is. But "just sitting there" vaccine falls into two categories.

The first category is vaccine the government is holding back. A decision was made early on to hold back half of the doses delivered from the manufacturers so we would be sure to have enough for second doses to everyone who received a first dose, just in case there's a production problem down the road. This is not a terrible idea.

I understand the Biden administration plans to take a different approach, getting all of the current supply into arms and relying on production capabilities to assure a sufficient supply for second doses three or four weeks (depending on the vaccine) down the road. This is also not a terrible idea.

It has the advantage of getting a lot more people started on immunization sooner, and we all know that first dose gives some partial protection. With this new variant making its way through the population, there is a case to be made for this approach because even partial protection would help to slow down transmission quite a bit.

It has the potential disadvantage that if there is a glitch in production in a couple of weeks, we might find ourselves in the position of people having to wait longer than the recommended period for their second dose. There is clinical trial data available that provides evidence for the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine that this would be no real issue up to six weeks between doses according to the WHO, which has been very conservative on these things. Further data may become available from the UK's plan to extend the delay to as long as 12 weeks; it is possible the WHO will modify its recommendation based on what this experiment shows us.

I have not seen evidence we know anything about delays for the Moderna vaccine; but even if we don't have anything now, we will likely get something soon from the UK's experience. If all goes well here, we may not have enough delayed doses to collect those data ourselves, so what comes from them may well be useful. There is no plan here to deliberately create a delay in dosing; it's going to happen only if things go wrong.

I am not privy to the details of the Biden plan, but I would rest easier if they were holding some portion back, just in case. Could be that's in their thinking, but until someone on the transition team recognizes my importance and properly briefs me, I'm in the dark.

The second reason we have doses "just sitting there" is that the vaccination effort is not going entirely smoothly. Now with any campaign of this breadth, there were going to be some hiccups; but this whole undertaking appears not to have been planned really at all. An effort on this scale that involves all the states and territories of the US is going to need some significant federal coordination, and as nearly as I can determine, none of that happened; doses were just shipped out with a "Good luck, folks."

Complicating the picture is that nearly every state government is pretty strapped for cash at the moment; the costs of this pandemic, both in lost revenues due to decreased economic activity and in enormous unanticipated expenditures for everything from restrictions enforcement to mitigation measures to health care costs. And a program of this magnitude costs money: to rent venues, to pay staff, to store and transport vaccine, to buy syringes and alcohol wipes and PPE for the vaccinators and barriers and such to keep people safe. There are also costs to messaging campaigns to inform citizens who's up next for vaccine and sophisticated software for tracking who's receiving vaccine and notifying them when it's time for a second dose. And then there's the paperwork, lots of that; that costs money too.

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Additionally, the folks most likely to be administering these vaccines are, you know, health care workers who are, you may have noted, somewhat busy saving lives these days. Most of them aren't getting a lot of days off as it is; and we certainly can't take them away from patient care at the moment. States are recruiting retirees, but it is important to recognize that a whole lot of retirees are not folks you want hanging out in crowds during this pandemic; their age places them at significant risk from this virus. Some states are recruiting dentists and pharmacists and even veterinarians to administer vaccine but there are licensing issues there. I'm going to guess there aren't too many states that include administration of injectables to humans in the scope of practice definitions for veterinarians; many don't include it for pharmacists either. So there are regulatory—and training—hurdles to be addressed.

I will admit to some significant dismay that this whole operation was not better planned. Moderna had its vaccine designed something like two days after the viral genome was published, just about a year ago. So it's not like we didn't see this coming, and the logistical challenges in administering somewhere between 330 million and 660 million injections on a schedule to every single person in the country were perfectly predictable. There are people whose entire careers have been built around how to run a vaccination program for enormous numbers of people in as short a time as possible. Why someone didn't call up a bunch of those folks and ask for some help is just utterly beyond me; but here we are. And so there are vaccine doses that aren't getting into people as fast as they should be.

As a matter of fact, one of my concerns with releasing all of the vaccine at once is that we can't even get the stuff we have into people. I am picturing events three or four weeks from now if we have twice as many people coming in for second doses, even while we have more first-timers coming in for their first doses: Is there any way we can manage those kinds of numbers? It doesn't look good so far. Could be second-dose delays will more likely be caused by the administration portion of the program than by the vaccine availability portion. Or maybe not: If we get some skilled federal coordination, could be things settle down; but we have to do better.

There are going to be glitches; it's inevitable in a project of this size. But we need to figure things out so these vaccines get out as quickly as they are produced. We have to exercise precautions for this virus, but we all know the only long-term way out of this quagmire we're in is with these remarkably effective vaccines we are so damned lucky to have. We cannot afford to mess this up.

Derek "Tank" Schottle used to get bullied by the other kids, partly because he was large for his age, partly because he was too gentle to hit back, and partly because he had an intellectual disability. He didn't have the confidence to hold his ground, and so kids beat him up on the playground. Then he found Special Olympics where he had the opportunity to shine. There, he was accepted. There, he was a winner. There, he grew into a leader who was an inspiration to others.

With his new-found confidence, he took a message of hope and love to social media, putting out daily affirmations to more than 100,000 followers over the course of this pandemic. A seven-sport athlete, Schottle, 31, has been on speaking tours and has spoken on national TV to promote Special Olympics when funding was under threat a year ago.

He's on Twitter where his followers include Mark Hamill, Marlee Matlin, Maureen McCormick, Rachel Maddow, Rex Chapman, and JJ Watt. This guy is doing fine. He told AP "I love to spread love and hope for our country and our world. We should all love one another and bring hope and inspiration to other people." Well, OK, let's do that. "Tank" says so, and that's good enough for me.

He was a batboy for the Sugarland Skeeters, the minor league baseball team in Houston, Texas. They had a bobblehead night for him, and fans waited in line to have a photo with him. He received awards in Charlotte, North Carolina, and Concord, Massachusetts. Sometimes cruel people on Twitter or other platforms target him, and that can get him down; but he has a legion of defenders who will climb all over that sort of thing. AP says, "The haters almost always back down." They add this: "A protector being protected. The perfect message."

And it is really.

Be well. I'll come back tomorrow with more.

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Jan. 10 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: +417 (103,318 total) Positivity Rate: 11.7%

Total Tests: 3568 (805,259 total)

Total Persons Tested: 1068 (384,161 total)

Hospitalized: +33 (5904 total) 237 currently hospitalized (+3)

Avera St. Luke's: 8 (+1) COVID-19 Occupied beds, 0 (-0) COVID-19 ICU Beds, 0 (-0) COVID-19 ventilators.

Sanford Aberdeen: 4 (-0) COVID-19 Occupied beds, 0 (-0) COVID-19 ICU Beds, 0 (-0) COVID-19 ventilators.

Deaths: +15 (1585 total)

Females: 7, Males: 8

Age Group: 40s=1, 50s=3, 60s=1, 70s=1, 80+=9

Counties: Brown-2, Brule-1, Butte-1, Codington-1, Dewey-2, Hamlin-1, Hughes-1, Hutchinson-1, Jackson-1, McPherson-1, Minnehaha-1, Oglala Lakota-1, Pennington-1.

Recovered: +402 (96,693 total)

Active Cases: -0 (5040)

Percent Recovered: 93.6%

Vaccinations: +3789 (44073)

Vaccinations Completed: +2435 (6498)

Brown County Vaccinations: +39 (1855) 18 (+7) completed

Beadle (38): +7 positive, +0 recovered (80 active cases)

Brookings (31): +15 positive, +19 recovered (233 active cases)

Brown (68): +28 positive, +22 recovered (276 active cases)

Clark (2): +1 positive, +1 recovered (11 active cases)

Clay (12): +3 positive, +5 recovered (72 active cases)

Codington (72): +13 positive, +15 recovered (201 active cases)

Davison (53): +12 positive, +5 recovered (99) active cases)

Day (21): +1 positive, +2 recovered (28 active cases)

Edmunds (4): +6 positive, +2 recovered (60 active cases)

Faulk (13): +0 positive, +0 recovered (4 active cases)

Grant (35): +1 positive, +0 recovered (29 active cases)

Hanson (3): +0 positive, +1 recovered (11 active cases)

Hughes (29): +5 positive, +2 recovered (98 active cases)

Lawrence (31): +7 positive, +10 recovered (103 active cases)

Lincoln (68): +26 positive, +24 recovered (361 active cases)

Marshall (5): +2 positive, +0 recovered (13 active cases)

McCook (22): +0 positive, +4 recovered (26 active cases)

McPherson (3): +0 positive, +0 recovery (12 active case)

Minnehaha (285): +86 positive, +88 recovered (1176 active cases)

Pennington (144): +42 positive, +52 recovered (641 active cases)

Potter (3): +0 positive, +1 recovered (25 active cases)

Roberts (32): +1 positive, +8 recovered (90 active cases)

Spink (24): +4 positive, +4 recovered (29 active cases)

Walworth (14): +4 positive, +4 recovered (50 active cases)

NORTH DAKOTA

COVID-19 Daily Report, Jan. 8:

- 4.7% rolling 14-day positivity
- 93 new positives
- 2945 susceptible test encounters
- 72 currently hospitalized (-4)
- 1899 active cases (-85)
- 1,352 total deaths (+0)

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County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Persons	Deceased Among Cases	Community Spread	% RT-PCR Test Positivity Rate (Weekly)
Aurora	426	393	789	10	Moderate	17.24%
Beadle	2553	2435	5316	38	Substantial	10.66%
Bennett	367	347	1090	8	Moderate	5.49%
Bon Homme	1496	1444	1910	23	Substantial	14.04%
Brookings	3188	2924	10348	31	Substantial	13.28%
Brown	4657	4313	11303	68	Substantial	22.44%
Brule	653	618	1706	8	Moderate	26.09%
Buffalo	415	402	854	10	Minimal	19.05%
Butte	922	867	2887	20	Substantial	15.96%
Campbell	116	108	224	4	Minimal	25.00%
Charles Mix	1156	1091	3583	13	Substantial	10.84%
Clark	323	310	875	2	Moderate	2.22%
Clay	1681	1597	4662	12	Substantial	17.89%
Codington	3596	3323	8701	72	Substantial	19.61%
Corson	453	439	907	11	Moderate	24.24%
Custer	695	668	2464	9	Substantial	12.79%
Davison	2798	2646	5836	53	Substantial	16.12%
Day	561	512	1582	21	Substantial	19.12%
Deuel	437	396	1018	7	Substantial	11.76%
Dewey	1339	1266	3541	14	Substantial	19.23%
Douglas	395	368	839	9	Substantial	27.78%
Edmunds	415	350	896	5	Substantial	9.09%
Fall River	470	439	2336	13	Substantial	10.59%
Faulk	316	299	619	13	Minimal	14.29%
Grant	849	785	1979	35	Substantial	22.08%
Gregory	492	457	1108	26	Moderate	0.00%
Haakon	237	220	478	9	Moderate	10.00%
Hamlin	631	557	1559	37	Substantial	9.78%
Hand	317	305	716	4	Minimal	0.00%
Hanson	321	307	626	3	Moderate	23.81%
Harding	89	88	160	1	Minimal	0.00%
Hughes	2085	1958	5800	29	Substantial	4.76%
Hutchinson	719	667	2088	20	Substantial	13.21%

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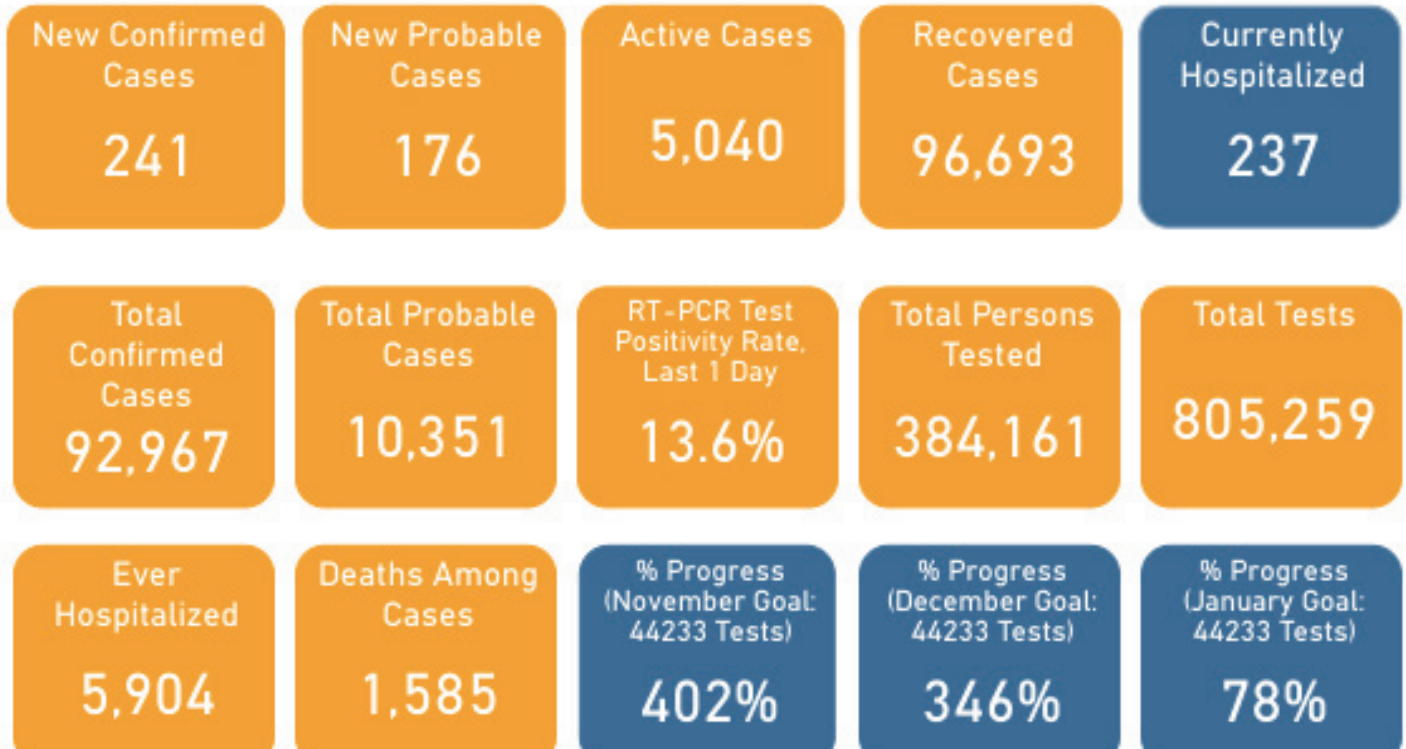
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Hyde	134	130	372	1	Minimal	0.00%
Jackson	267	249	869	12	Minimal	27.27%
Jerauld	265	241	508	16	Minimal	15.79%
Jones	70	67	187	0	Minimal	11.11%
Kingsbury	570	517	1458	13	Substantial	8.11%
Lake	1071	1001	2859	16	Substantial	30.19%
Lawrence	2652	2518	7707	31	Substantial	11.54%
Lincoln	7078	6649	17936	68	Substantial	19.26%
Lyman	553	515	1736	9	Moderate	16.67%
Marshall	269	251	1035	5	Moderate	4.00%
McCook	704	656	1428	22	Substantial	29.31%
McPherson	196	179	506	3	Moderate	2.94%
Meade	2350	2200	6869	24	Substantial	20.97%
Mellette	225	219	670	2	Minimal	10.34%
Miner	243	210	515	7	Moderate	9.52%
Minnehaha	25924	24463	69650	285	Substantial	16.11%
Moody	556	518	1605	14	Substantial	24.44%
Oglala Lakota	1976	1851	6296	37	Substantial	16.17%
Pennington	11797	11014	34948	144	Substantial	20.97%
Perkins	302	266	694	11	Substantial	18.92%
Potter	326	298	740	3	Moderate	8.57%
Roberts	1058	936	3810	32	Substantial	19.55%
Sanborn	313	297	621	3	Minimal	40.00%
Spink	722	669	1906	24	Substantial	10.20%
Stanley	291	275	799	2	Substantial	6.52%
Sully	122	106	253	3	Moderate	10.00%
Todd	1186	1138	3889	19	Substantial	8.37%
Tripp	639	614	1352	13	Substantial	12.12%
Turner	998	906	2430	49	Substantial	22.00%
Union	1721	1554	5547	30	Substantial	14.33%
Walworth	661	597	1663	14	Substantial	23.76%
Yankton	2591	2410	8417	27	Substantial	12.66%
Ziebach	320	280	708	8	Moderate	14.29%
Unassigned	0	0	2060	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	3920	0
10-19 years	11410	0
20-29 years	18757	4
30-39 years	17063	14
40-49 years	14774	30
50-59 years	14652	84
60-69 years	11767	198
70-79 years	6221	345
80+ years	4754	910

SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths Among Cases
Female	54022	761
Male	49296	824

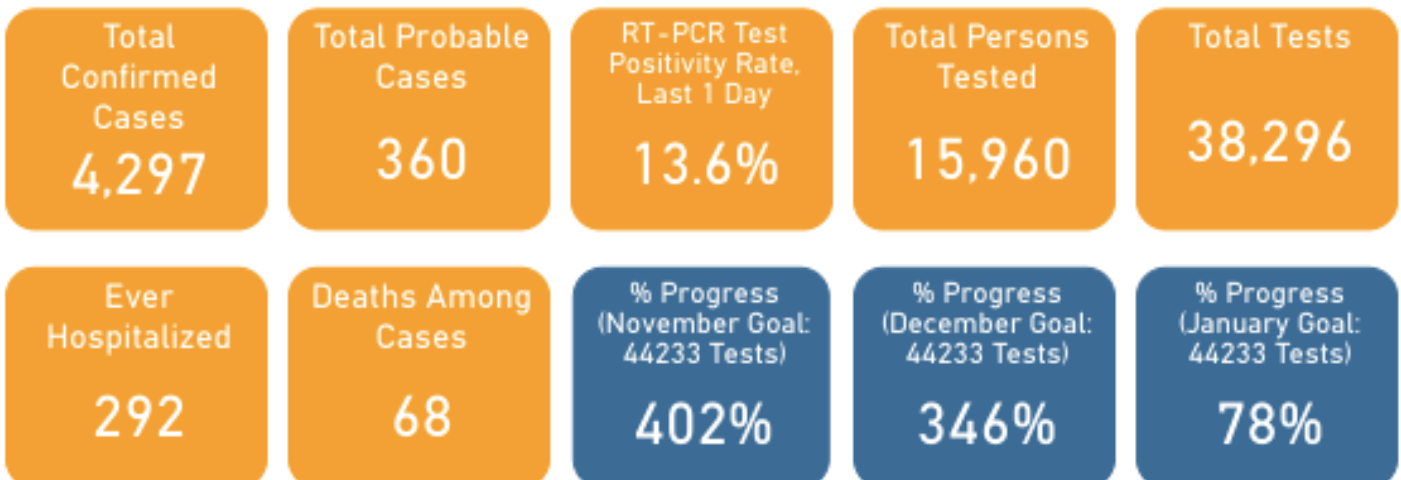
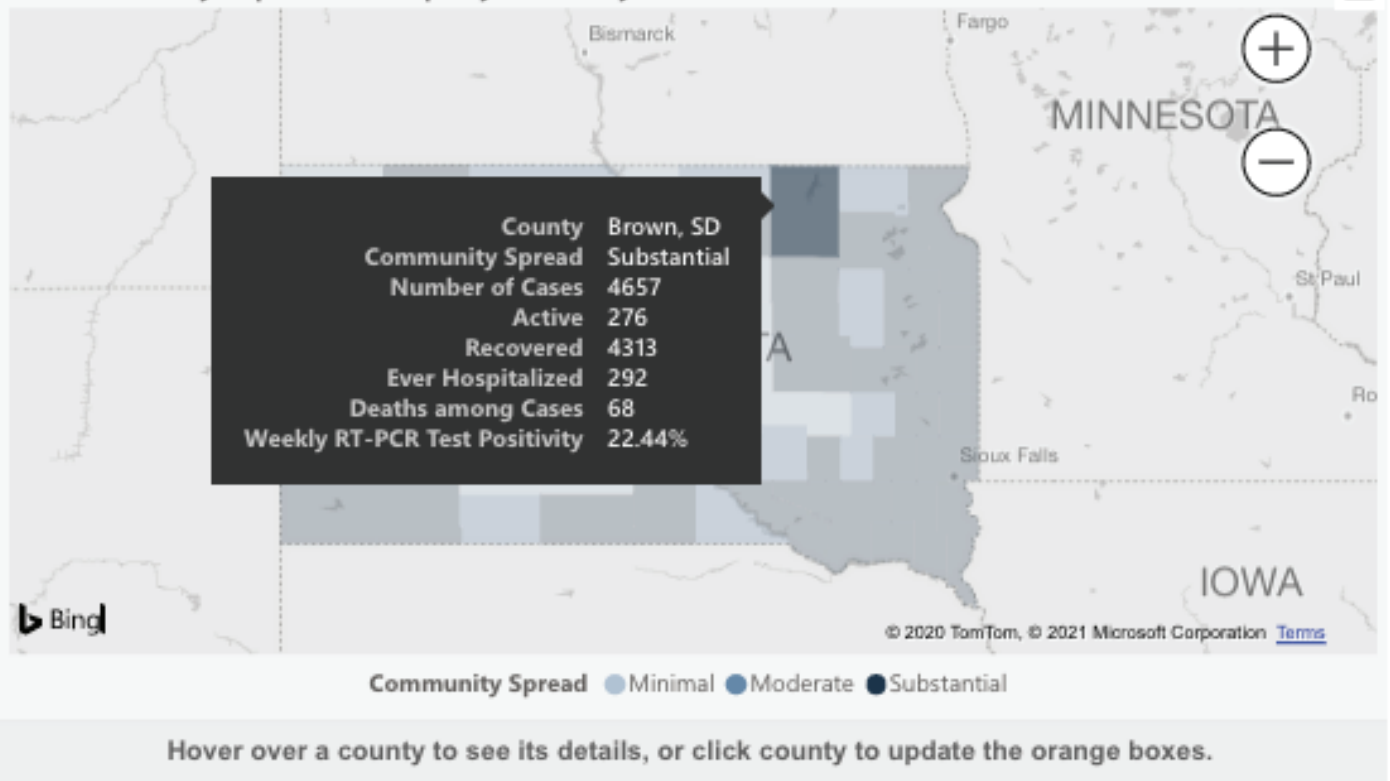
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Brown County



Community Spread Map by County of Residence



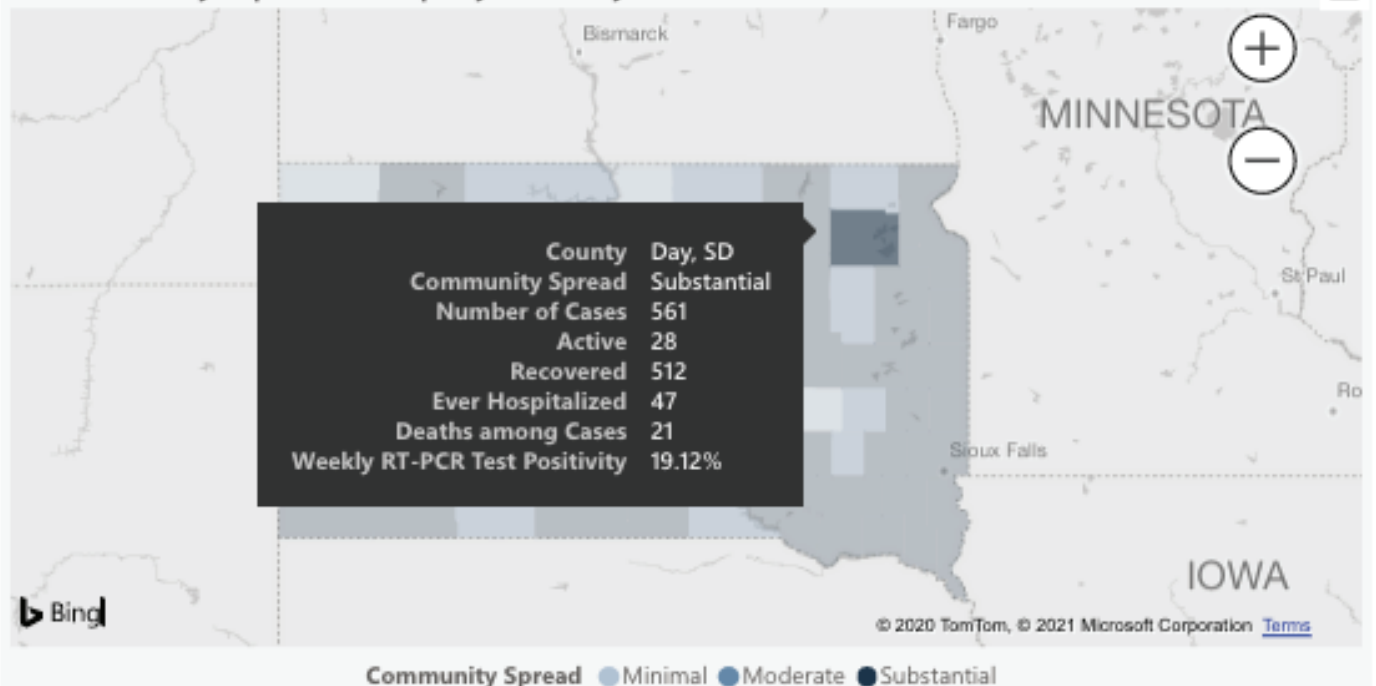
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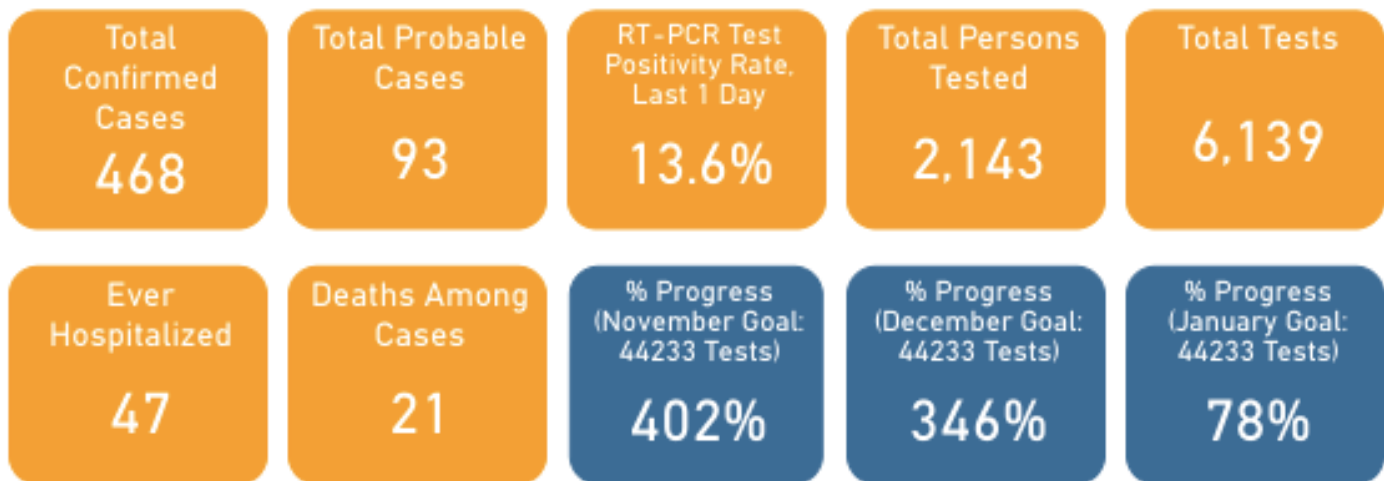
Day County



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

44,073

Total Persons Administered a Vaccine

37,575

Manufacturer	Number of Doses
Moderna	21,596
Pfizer	22,477

Doses	Number of Recipients
Moderna - 1 dose	21,595
Moderna - Series Complete	1
Pfizer - 1 dose	22,477

County	# Doses	# Persons (1 dose)	# Persons (2 doses)	Total # Persons
Aurora	79	79	0	79
Beadle	819	437	191	628
Bennett*	50	46	2	48
Bon Homme*	398	384	7	391
Brookings	1164	780	192	972
Brown	1855	1,819	18	1,837
Brule*	167	163	2	165
Buffalo*	3	3	0	3
Butte	107	103	2	105
Campbell	146	120	13	133
Charles Mix*	303	297	3	300
Clark	119	107	6	113
Clay	678	630	24	654
Codington*	1418	1,064	177	1,241
Corson*	14	12	1	13
Custer*	256	226	15	241
Davison	1172	1,130	21	1,151
Day*	278	262	8	270
Deuel	166	138	14	152
Dewey*	63	61	1	62
Douglas*	175	173	1	174
Edmunds	123	123	0	123
Fall River*	228	222	3	225
Faulk	36	34	1	35
Grant*	382	368	7	375
Gregory*	228	224	2	226
Haakon*	80	80	0	80

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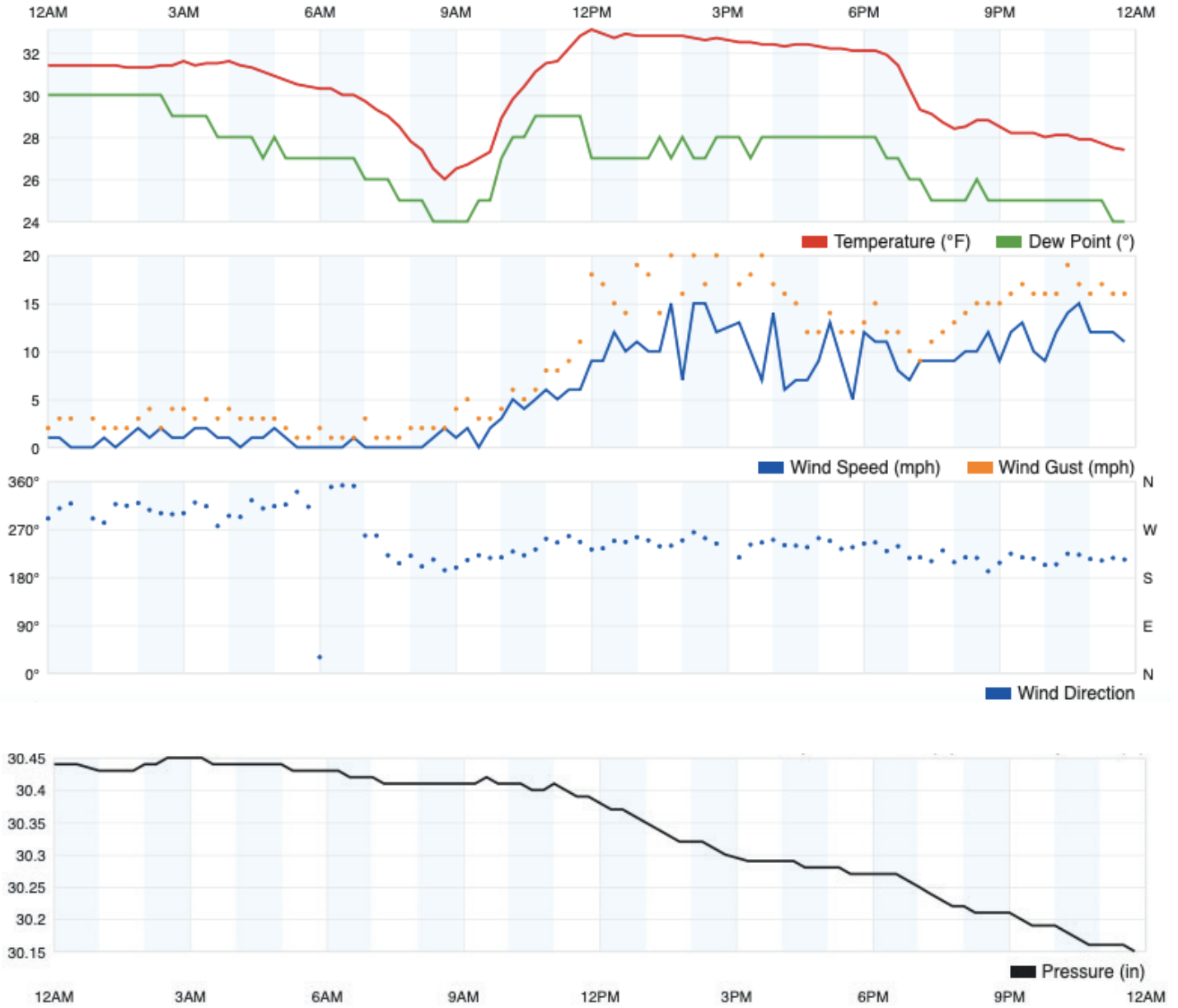
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Hamlin	210	168	21	189
Hand	180	164	8	172
Hanson	60	54	3	57
Harding	1	1	0	1
Hughes*	893	865	14	879
Hutchinson*	541	511	15	526
Hyde*	92	92	0	92
Jackson*	38	38	0	38
Jerauld	73	59	7	66
Jones*	47	43	2	45
Kingsbury	290	218	36	254
Lake	544	254	145	399
Lawrence	441	413	14	427
Lincoln	5511	2,903	1,304	4,207
Lyman*	56	56	0	56
Marshall*	151	145	3	148
McCook	265	179	43	222
McPherson	19	19	0	19
Meade*	557	385	86	471
Mellette*	4	4	0	4
Miner	87	65	11	76
Minnehaha	13984	8,244	2,870	11,114
Moody*	214	186	14	200
Oglala Lakota*	15	7	4	11
Pennington*	4267	2,597	835	3,432
Perkins*	37	37	0	37
Potter	114	112	1	113
Roberts*	280	270	5	275
Sanborn	94	86	4	90
Spink	410	392	9	401
Stanley*	127	121	3	124
Sully	30	24	3	27
Todd*	22	18	2	20
Tripp*	225	225	0	225
Turner	562	482	40	522
Union	202	182	10	192
Walworth*	304	142	81	223
Yankton	1337	1,321	8	1,329
Ziebach*	11	11	0	11
Other	1271	899	186	1,085

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



Sunny

High: 38 °F

Tonight



Partly Cloudy

Low: 20 °F

Tuesday



Mostly Sunny

High: 43 °F

Tuesday
Night



Mostly Cloudy

Low: 24 °F

Wednesday



Partly Sunny

High: 45 °F

Abnormally Mild Temperatures

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

Updated: 1/11/2021 5:54 AM Central

Today

Mostly sunny skies.



H: 34-50°
L: 18-26°

Tuesday

Dry. 20+ degrees above normal.



H: 40-54°
L: 22-30°

Wednesday

20+ degrees above normal.
Wintry mix possible late.



H: 42-56°
L: 28-32°

Thursday

Strong winds. Wintry mix possible.



H: 34-44°
L: 18-24°



Mild-for-January temperatures ramp up through mid-week, close to daily records in some cases, before a strong low pressure system brings strong winds across the area Thursday. There may also be a mix of rain and wintry precipitation later in the week, but models are in poor agreement at this time regarding details.

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Today in Weather History

January 11, 1980: A strong area of low pressure resulted in strong winds of 35 to 45 mph with gusts to 70 mph across Minnesota on the 11th and 12th. Blowing and drifting snow made roads hazardous or impossible. The strong winds also caused some damage. There were areas in western Minnesota that had a lot of blowing dirt.

January 11, 1995: A combination of an ice storm, heavy frost accumulation, and strong winds over a period of several days caused widespread damage to electrical systems resulting in power outages across central and north central South Dakota. The first ice storm occurred on the 11th and the 12th. In the days following, widespread fog developed and resulted in heavy additional deposits of ice and frost on power lines and other surfaces. Much of the damage occurred when strong winds, mainly from the 16 through the 18th, caused the heavily weighted power lines and poles to collapse. Power outages lasted as long as eight days. Several electric cooperatives had never experienced damages of this magnitude. Some traffic accidents resulted from the icing, and many vehicles slid off the roads. Property damage estimated at 3.5 million dollars.

January 11, 2009: A vigorous, but fast-moving winter storm system moved through the Dakotas last night and early today. Although snow accumulations from the storm only ranged from 1 to 4 inches, strong winds behind the system produced significant blowing and drifting snow and widespread blizzard conditions across the area. Reports from trained spotters and law enforcement indicated visibility dropped to below one-quarter mile for several hours, and near zero (white-out conditions) in many rural or unsheltered areas. Sustained north to northwest winds at many locations was 20 to 35 mph, with peak wind gusts as high as 60 to 65 mph. Also, as the arctic airmass surged into the region, temperatures fell some 30 degrees from early this morning to mid-afternoon.

1898: An estimated F4 tornado struck the city of Fort Smith, Arkansas just before midnight. The tornado, which touched down about 100 miles southwest of town, killed 55 people and injured 113 others along its track.

1918 - A tremendous blizzard completely immobilized the Midwest, stopping mail service for two weeks. The vast storm then moved through the Great Lakes Region and the Ohio Valley. Winds reached 60 mph at Toledo OH, and the temperature plunged from 28 above to 15 below zero during passage of the cold front. (David Ludlum)

1963: An F2 tornado was reported in Scott County Indiana, north of Louisville, Kentucky. It was on the ground for 5 miles north of Scottsburg and damaged or destroyed several homes and barns.

1972 - Downslope winds hit the eastern slopes of the Rockies in northern Colorado and southeastern Wyoming. Boulder CO reported wind gusts to 143 mph and twenty-five million dollars property damage. (David Ludlum)

1987 - A storm in the northeastern U.S. buried the mountains of central Vermont with up to 26 inches of snow, and snowfall totals in Maine ranged up to 27 inches at Telos Lake. Winds gusted to 45 mph at Newark NJ and Albany NY. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Snow and high winds in Utah resulted in a fifty car pile-up along Interstate 15. Winds in Wyoming gusted to 115 mph at Rendezvous Peak. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - A cold front which the previous day produced 21 inches of snow at Stampede Pass WA and wind gusts to 75 mph at Mammoth Lakes CA, spread snow across Colorado. Totals in Colorado ranged up to 17 inches at Steamboat Springs. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - Strong northwesterly winds associated with a deep low pressure system crossing the Upper Great Lakes Region ushered cold air into the central U.S. Winds gusted to 72 mph at Fort Dodge IA, and wind gusts reached 75 mph at Yankton SD. Snow and high winds created blizzard conditions in northwestern Minnesota. Squalls produced heavy snow in parts of Upper Michigan and northern Lower Michigan, with 16 inches reported at Wakefield. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2008 - Iraqis in Baghdad woke up to the novelty of falling snowflakes as the city experienced its first snowfall in about 100 years. (NCDC)

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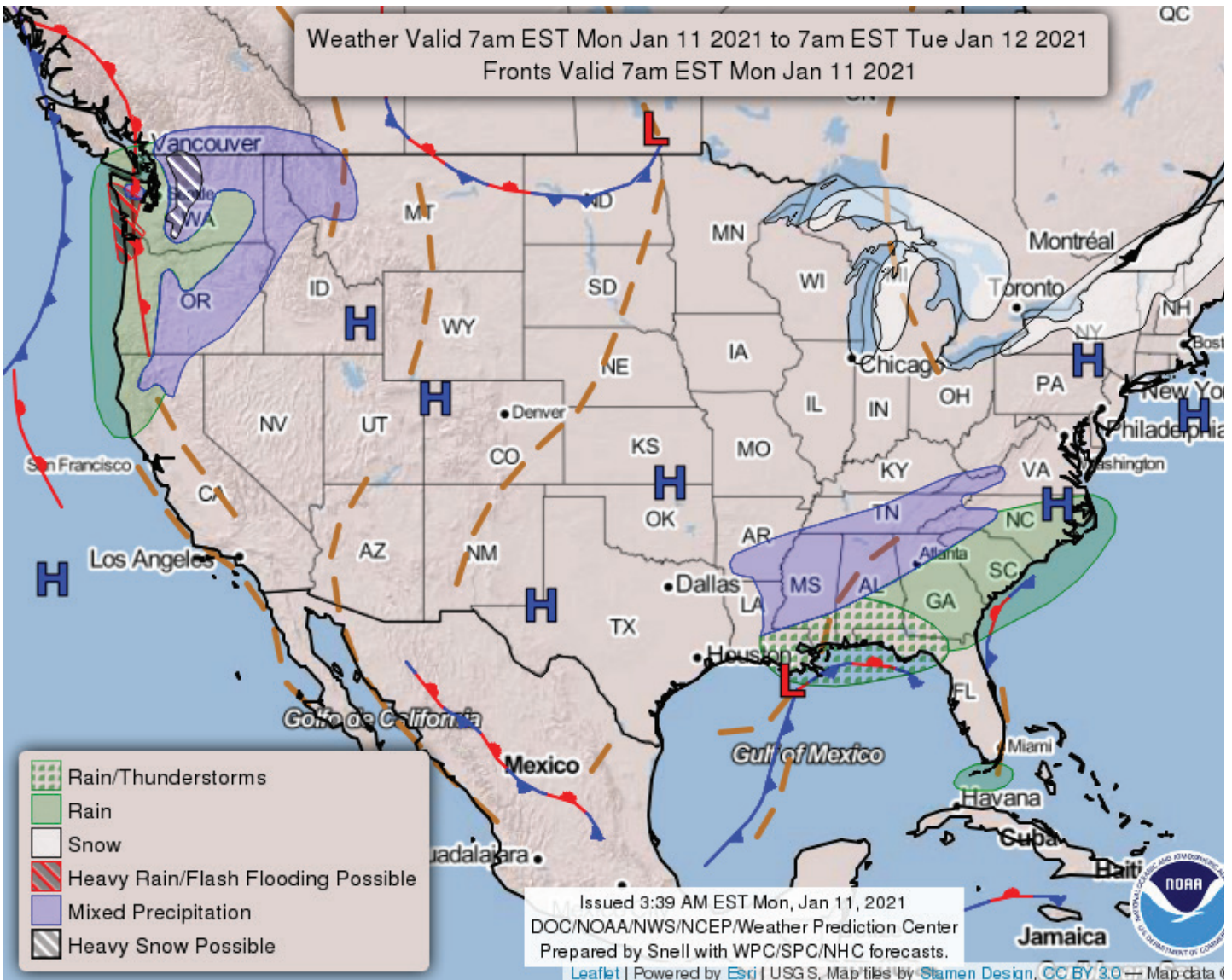
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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 33 °F at 11:52 AM
Low Temp: 26 °F at 8:46 AM
Wind: 21 mph at 2:46 PM
Precip:

Today's Info

Record High: 55° in 1987
Record Low: -31 in 1912
Average High: 22°F
Average Low: 1°F
Average Precip in Jan.: 0.18
Precip to date in Jan.: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 0.18
Precip Year to Date: 0.00
Sunset Tonight: 5:12 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:11 a.m.



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THE SOURCE OF OUR SALVATION

An elderly man was sitting quietly in his rocking chair speaking softly to his beloved grandson. "It took me forty years," he said, "to learn three simple truths. I would like you to learn them this afternoon while you are young. One – I could do nothing by myself to get rid of my sins. Two – that God did not expect me to. And three – that Jesus did it all for me."

David taught those three simple truths centuries ago in one short, significant, simple verse: "Victory comes from You, oh Lord."

A story is told of a prisoner, who with the help of his friends, planned an escape. Through careful planning they smuggled a gun into the prison yard and hid it carefully from others. They informed him that a ladder would be set up against the wall where the searchlight would not expose it. And they told him that a vehicle would be awaiting him at a certain hour.

"But," he asked, "How do I get out of my cell?" "That's up to you," they said. Obviously, he did not escape. He remained in his cell because He could not take the first step.

Our Lord has taken the first step to release us from our sins through His one and only Son to be our Savior. Now, we must take the second step: toward Him or away from Him.

Our Lord is a seeking Lord who will save us from our sin through His salvation but we must take that second step is we want His salvation. His freedom is available if we take that step.

Prayer: We thank You, Heavenly Father, for Your freedom that is ours if we take "that step." Help us, in faith believing, to walk toward You so we can be with You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Victory comes from you, O Lord. May you bless your people. Psalm 3:8

News from the Associated Press

Black Hills winter fishing brings out hearty breed of angler

By JASON GROSS Black Hills Pioneer

SPEARFISH, S.D. (AP) — Spearfish resident Gavin Martz will tell you it takes a special breed of angler to try their luck during the winter months.

"Winter fishing is not exactly for the faint of heart," Martz said. "The waters are really cold; you're out in the middle of winter, and your hands are getting wet."

Martz said winter fishing requires a large amount of dedication.

He added an advantage is that areas seeing a lot of traffic at other times are kind of empty during the winter.

A fairly large contrast exists between winter fishing and other types. The time of year is only one of those differences.

"In winter fishing, you're not going to see very many rises," Martz said. "There will still be times that fish feed on top, just not nearly as frequently." He added a large majority of fishing is going to be done below the water.

Fishing is not as popular during the winter as at other times, according to Martz. He manages the Spearfish Creek Fly Shop and coordinates the guide staff to make sure all trips are going well.

Martz said Rapid Creek and Spearfish Creek are two of the area's most popular fishing spots.

Spearfish Creek feeds out of Spearfish Canyon and goes to the Maurice intake, where it goes into an underground aquifer and redirects into Spearfish to the hydroelectric plant, the Black Hills Pioneer reported.

Anglers mainly catch brown trout and rainbow trout in Spearfish Creek, with whitefish inhabiting the northern end of the creek. The higher percentage of trout is brown, according to Martz.

"You can catch fish anywhere from two inches upwards of two feet out of the creeks," Martz said. "A little bit more commonly, you're kind of in that 12- to 13-inch range. It's really going to depend on which area you're in."

Martz said Rapid City produces larger fish on average, and Spearfish Creek boasts a higher density of fish.

A fishing license is always needed, but a trout stamp is not required in South Dakota.

"One thing that's new, as of this year, is you're required to have a habitat stamp," Martz said. That is added onto a fishing license and applies to fishing trips lasting longer than one day. Annual fees are \$10 for residents and \$25 for nonresidents.

Licenses may be purchased at any outdoor shops or online. A resident annual licenses costs \$28, with youth ages 16 to 18 required to buy a Junior Combination License.

"I enjoy the attachment to nature. It really makes you pay attention to little things that you would have overlooked in the past," Martz said in describing fishing's appeal to him.

The 21-year-old started fly fishing at age 12 and said standing in a river outdoors is a type of medicine.

What would Martz say to someone who wanted to give winter fishing a try?

"My biggest advice is to wear proper clothing," he said. "Don't get overly focused on catching a fish. The biggest thing is having a little more patience."

Martz recommends a good pair of waders is recommended for winter fishing. He also suggests a down coat and dressing in layers to keep the bulk as low as possible.

Anglers who wear gloves prefer different types. Martz wants dexterity in his hands, so he keeps his hands in pockets located in his jacket.

Martz said the COVID-19 pandemic created higher interest levels in fishing this year. He accompanies anglers on trips through the summer and into October, but his final trip in 2020 was on Dec. 1 or 2.

He described ideal winter fishing conditions this way: an occasional warm snap, and fishing between 8 and 10 a.m. The water begins to heat up during those times, according to Martz.

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South Dakota confirms 15 new deaths due to the coronavirus

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota health officials on Sunday confirmed 15 deaths due to the coronavirus in the last day, lifting the totals to 29 over the weekend, 97 in January and 1,585 since the start of the pandemic.

Data compiled Saturday by The COVID Tracking Project ranks the state fifth highest per capita in the country at 178 deaths per 100,000 people. The death count is 39th highest nationwide.

The number of people hospitalized increased by three in the last day, to 237

The update showed 417 positive tests since Saturday, increasing the total number of cases to 103,318. There were 62 children under 19 and 77 people in their 20s included in the new group of positive tests, the state's COVID-19 dashboard showed.

Over the past two weeks, the rolling average number of daily new cases has increased by more than 63, or about 17%, Johns Hopkins University researchers reported.

A total of 37,575 people have received doses of COVID-19 vaccine, including 6,498 who have received both required shots.

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.

Police investigating shooting death of man in Mitchell

MITCHELL, S.D. (AP) — Authorities say they are investigating the shooting death of a man Saturday night in Mitchell.

Mitchell police said in a release that officers responded to a call after 11 p.m. Saturday and found a man with multiple gunshot wounds in the hallway of a building. The man was pronounced dead at the scene.

Police said they don't believe the shooting was a random act. Investigators are interviewing witnesses and collecting surveillance video from the area, according to the release.

No further information has been provided.

Israel announces new settler homes, risking Biden's anger

By JOSEPH KRAUSS Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel on Monday advanced plans to build 800 new settler homes in the occupied West Bank, a move that could strain ties with the incoming administration of President-elect Joe Biden.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office announced the move, saying it would include 100 homes in a settlement where an Israeli woman was killed last month in an attack allegedly carried out by a Palestinian assailant.

The announcement will burnish Netanyahu's right-wing credentials in a tough campaign ahead of March elections, but it could anger Biden, who is opposed to settlement expansion and has clashed with Israel over it in the past.

Israel captured the West Bank and east Jerusalem in the 1967 war, territories the Palestinians want for their future state. Nearly 500,000 Israelis live in settlements scattered across the West Bank. The Palestinians view settlements as a violation of international law and an obstacle to peace, a position with wide international support.

The Palestinian Authority's Foreign Ministry condemned the latest announcement, accusing Israel of "racing against time" to build settlements before President Donald Trump leaves office.

Trump's administration provided unprecedented support to Israel, including by abandoning a decades-old U.S. policy of opposing settlements. U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo last year became the first top U.S. diplomat to visit a West Bank settlement.

Biden has pledged a more even-handed approach in which he will restore aid to the Palestinians that was cut off by Trump and work to revive peace negotiations. The two sides have not held substantive peace talks in more than a decade.

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Israeli opposition leader Yair Lapid, who hopes to unseat Netanyahu in March, called the settlement announcement an "irresponsible step" that would spark a "battle" with the new U.S. administration.

"The Biden administration has not yet taken office and the government is already leading us into an unnecessary confrontation," he tweeted. "The national interest must also be maintained during elections."

The greatest threat to Netanyahu in the coming vote comes from the right, where Gideon Saar, a former ally and staunch supporter of settlements, has broken away and vowed to end his long rule. Polls show Netanyahu's Likud winning the most votes but falling short of a majority coalition in Israel's 120-seat Knesset, or parliament.

The announcement said 100 homes would be built in Tel Manashe, a West Bank settlement where Esther Horgan, a 53-year-old mother of six, was killed last month while jogging in a nearby forest. Israel says it has detained a Palestinian suspect in the attack.

It was not immediately clear how soon the homes would be built, as such construction usually requires approval from several government bodies and a tendering process.

The announcement came as neighboring Egypt hosted the foreign ministers of Jordan, Germany and France to discuss ways of reviving talks aimed at a two-state solution, which is still widely seen as the only way of resolving the decades-old conflict.

Monday's announcement of Israel's settlement plans "does not create the environment conducive to the resumption of negotiations that are the only path to a two-state solution," Jordan's Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi said.

In their joint statement, the ministers called for Israel to "immediately and completely cease all settlement activities, including in east Jerusalem."

Associated Press writers Samy Magdy in Cairo and Areej Hazboun in Jerusalem contributed to this report.

Germany's Merkel: Trump's Twitter eviction 'problematic'

BERLIN (AP) — German Chancellor Angela Merkel considers U.S. President Donald Trump's eviction from Twitter by the company "problematic," her spokesman said Monday.

Twitter permanently suspended Trump from the microblogging platform on Friday, citing a "risk of further incitement of violence" in the wake of the storming of the U.S. Capitol by supporters of the outgoing president.

Asked about Twitter's decision, Merkel's spokesman, Steffen Seibert, said the operators of social media platforms "bear great responsibility for political communication not being poisoned by hatred, by lies and by incitement to violence."

He said it's right not to "stand back" when such content is posted, for example by flagging it.

But Seibert also said that the freedom of opinion is a fundamental right of "elementary significance."

"This fundamental right can be intervened in, but according to the law and within the framework defined by legislators — not according to a decision by the management of social media platforms," he told reporters in Berlin. "Seen from this angle, the chancellor considers it problematic that the accounts of the U.S. president have now been permanently blocked."

Facebook on Thursday suspended Trump's account through Jan. 20, the day of President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration, and possibly indefinitely.

Merkel herself does not have a Twitter account, although Seibert does and many German government ministers do.

South Africa struggles with post-holiday spike in COVID-19

By ANDREW MELDRUM Associated Press

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — South Africa is struggling to cope with a spike in COVID-19 cases that has already overwhelmed some hospitals, as people returning from widespread holiday travel along the coast spread the country's more infectious coronavirus variant.

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Of particular concern is Gauteng province, the country's most populous, which includes the cities of Johannesburg and Pretoria. Authorities say it is already seeing a spike in new infections after people traveled to coastal areas, where the variant is dominant.

"We expect that Gauteng is going to be hit very soon and very hard," said Professor Willem Hanekom, director of the Africa Health Research Institute. "It is anticipated Gauteng will have a steep curve of increased cases and hospitalizations."

The Steve Biko Hospital in the Pretoria area has already reached capacity and is putting COVID-19 patients into a field hospital outside the main building.

In response to the resurgence, South Africa has reimposed restrictions to curb the spread of the virus, including banning alcohol sales, closing bars, enforcing a night curfew and limiting attendance at public gatherings including church services and funerals.

President Cyril Ramaphosa, who has met with his National Coronavirus Command Council and Cabinet over the renewed public health crisis, is expected to address the nation Monday night on the pandemic.

South Africa, with a population of 60 million, has reported 1.2 million confirmed cases of COVID-19, representing more than 30% of all the cases in Africa, which this week exceeded 3 million. It has reported over 33,000 virus-related deaths but experts say all numbers worldwide understate the true toll of the pandemic due to missed cases and limited testing.

South Africa's 7-day rolling average of daily new cases has risen from 19.87 new cases per 100,000 people on Dec. 27 to 31.52 new cases per 100,000 people on Jan. 10, according to Johns Hopkins University.

The 7-day rolling average of daily deaths in South Africa has risen about 75% over the past two weeks, from 0.49 deaths per 100,000 people on Dec. 27 to 0.86 deaths per 100,000 people on Jan. 10.

Neighboring Zimbabwe is also experiencing a resurgence of COVID-19 infections, largely as a result of the high numbers of travelers between the two countries.

Zimbabwean authorities have banned families from transporting dead relatives between cities, part of new measures to stop traditional funeral rites that are believed to be increasing the spread of the disease.

The announcement stops families from taking the dead to their areas of birth for ceremonies and burial. Police have also banned public viewing of bodies and the tradition of having a corpse stay overnight in the family's home before burial.

Follow AP coverage of the coronavirus pandemic at:

<https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-pandemic>

<https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-vaccine>

<https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

Biden chooses veteran diplomat Burns as CIA director

By MATTHEW LEE AP Diplomatic Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — President-elect Joe Biden announced Monday he has chosen veteran diplomat William Burns to be his CIA director.

A former ambassador to Russia and Jordan, Burns, 64, had a 33-year career at the State Department under both Republican and Democratic presidents. He rose through the ranks of the diplomatic corps to become deputy secretary of state before retiring in 2014 to run the Carnegie Endowment of International Peace.

Amid tumult in the State Department after President Donald Trump took office in 2017, Burns held his tongue until last year when he began writing highly critical pieces of the Trump administration's policies in Foreign Affairs and other publications. Burns has been a staunch advocate of rebuilding and restructuring the foreign service, positions Biden has aligned himself with.

"Bill Burns is an exemplary diplomat with decades of experience on the world stage keeping our people and our country safe and secure," Biden said in a statement Monday. "He shares my profound belief that intelligence must be apolitical and that the dedicated intelligence professionals serving our nation deserve

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our gratitude and respect. Ambassador Burns will bring the knowledge, judgment, and perspective we need to prevent and confront threats before they can reach our shores. The American people will sleep soundly with him as our next CIA director.”

Burns was said to have been a candidate to be Biden’s secretary of state. Biden chose Anthony Blinken instead.

If confirmed by the Senate, Burns would succeed Gina Haspel. As the first female CIA director, Haspel guided the agency under Trump, who has frequently disparaged the assessments of U.S. spy agencies, especially about Russia’s interference in the 2016 election to help his campaign.

The president has placed quote marks around the word intelligence in his tweets, implying that he doesn’t agree with the term, and has fired several career intelligence professionals in favor of loyalists, including some with little to no experience in the field.

Burns has received three Presidential Distinguished Service Awards and the highest civilian honors from the Pentagon and the U.S. intelligence community. He has doctoral degrees in international relations from Oxford University, where he studied as a Marshall Scholar.

Burns, a graduate of La Salle University in Philadelphia with advanced degrees from Oxford University, joined the foreign service in 1982 and before being named ambassador to Russia in 2005, served as a top aide to former Secretaries of State William Christopher and Madeleine Albright as well as director of the State Department’s policy planning office.

Burns was a close adviser and confidante to Christopher, Albright, Colin Powell, Condoleezza Rice, Hillary Clinton and John Kerry before his retirement.

In his 2019 book “The Back Channel: A Memoir of American Diplomacy and the Case for Its Renewal,” Burns called for a revamp of American diplomacy, while recalling his days in the field, including helping to spearhead the early stages of the Obama administration’s outreach to Iran in 2013.

Leaders at summit focus on better protecting biodiversity

By Sylvie CORBET Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — Protecting the world’s biodiversity was on the agenda Monday for world leaders at the One Planet Summit, which was being held by videoconference due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The one-day summit will focus on four major topics: protecting terrestrial and marine ecosystems; promoting agroecology, a more sustainable way to grow food; increasing funding to protect biodiversity; and identifying links between deforestation and the health of humans and animals.

About 30 leaders, government officials and heads of international organizations were to attend, including U.N. Secretary General Antonio Guterres, French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. China will be represented by Vice Premier Han Zheng.

The event, organized by France, the United Nations and the World Bank, is taking place in the absence of top officials from the United States, as President-elect Joe Biden, a strong proponent of climate issues, does not take office until Jan. 20. Other notable absences include the leaders of Russia, India and Brazil.

Organizers hope to merge the fight against climate change and the preservation of biodiversity as experts say the two issues are interconnected and any solutions must be as well.

The U.N. stressed that “the COVID-19 pandemic has been a dramatic reminder of the importance of nature for our daily lives and economies.”

“Biodiversity represents the natural capital of the world, yet exploitation, pollution and climate change are bringing irreversible damage to ecosystems,” the U.N. said ahead of the summit.

Monday’s talks seek to prepare negotiations to set biodiversity targets for the next decade at a U.N. conference on biodiversity to be held in China in October, after it was postponed last year due to the pandemic. The U.N.’s global climate summit, the COP26, has also been rescheduled for November.

The summit also intends to boost the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People, which was launched in 2019 by Costa Rica, France and Britain to set a target of protecting at least 30% of the planet, including

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land and sea, by 2030.

A side conference on Monday is focusing on investment for Africa's Great Green Wall project, which involves gigantic efforts to stop the Sahara Desert from spreading further south. Launched in 2007, the program consists in planting an arc of trees running 7,000 kilometers (4,350 miles) across Africa — from Senegal along the Atlantic all the way to Djibouti on the Gulf of Aden.

AP Science and Environment Writers Seth Borenstein and Christina Larson contributed to the story.

Pelosi says House will impeach Trump, pushes VP to oust him

By LISA MASCARO, DARLENE SUPERVILLE and MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Speaker Nancy Pelosi says the House will proceed with legislation to impeach President Donald Trump as she pushes the vice president and the Cabinet to invoke constitutional authority to force him out, warning that Trump is a threat to democracy after the deadly assault on the Capitol.

The House action could start as soon as Monday as pressure increases on Trump to step aside. A Republican senator, Pat Toomey of Pennsylvania, joined Republican Sen. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska in calling for Trump to "resign and go away as soon as possible."

A stunning end to Trump's final 10 days in office was underway as lawmakers warned of the damage the president could still do before Joe Biden was inaugurated Jan. 20. Trump, holed up at the White House, was increasingly isolated after a mob rioted in the Capitol in support of his false claims of election fraud.

Judges across the country, including some nominated by Trump, repeatedly dismissed cases and Attorney General William Barr, a Trump ally, said there was no sign of any widespread fraud. Pelosi emphasized the need for quick action.

"We will act with urgency, because this President represents an imminent threat," Pelosi said in a letter late Sunday to colleagues.

"The horror of the ongoing assault on our democracy perpetrated by this President is intensified and so is the immediate need for action."

On Monday, Pelosi's leadership team will seek a vote on a resolution calling on Vice President Mike Pence and Cabinet officials to invoke the 25th Amendment, with a full House vote expected on Tuesday.

After that, Pence and the Cabinet would have 24 hours to act before the House would move toward impeachment.

During an interview on "60 Minutes" aired Sunday, Pelosi invoked the Watergate era when Republicans in the Senate told President Richard Nixon, "It's over."

"That's what has to happen now," she said.

With impeachment planning intensifying, Toomey said he doubted impeachment could be done before Biden is inaugurated, even though a growing number of lawmakers say that step is necessary to ensure Trump can never hold elected office again.

"I think the president has disqualified himself from ever, certainly, serving in office again," Toomey said. "I don't think he is electable in any way."

Murkowski, long exasperated with the president, told the Anchorage Daily News on Friday that Trump simply "needs to get out." A third, Sen. Roy Blunt, R-Mo., did not go that far, but on Sunday he warned Trump to be "very careful" in his final days in office.

House Democrats were expected to introduce articles of impeachment on Monday. The strategy would be to condemn the president's actions swiftly but delay an impeachment trial in the Senate for 100 days. That would allow President-elect Joe Biden to focus on other priorities as soon as he is inaugurated Jan. 20.

Rep. Jim Clyburn, the third-ranking House Democrat and a top Biden ally, laid out the ideas Sunday as the country came to grips with the siege at the Capitol by Trump loyalists trying to overturn the election results.

"Let's give President-elect Biden the 100 days he needs to get his agenda off and running," Clyburn said. Corporate America began to show its reaction to the Capitol riots by tying them to campaign contributions.

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Blue Cross Blue Shield Association's CEO and President Kim Keck said it will not contribute to those lawmakers — all Republicans — who supported challenges to Biden's Electoral College win. The group "will suspend contributions to those lawmakers who voted to undermine our democracy," Kim said.

Citigroup did not single out lawmakers aligned with Trump's effort to overturn the election, but said it would be pausing all federal political donations for the first three months of the year. Citi's head of global government affairs, Candi Wolff, said in a Friday memo to employees, "We want you to be assured that we will not support candidates who do not respect the rule of law."

Senate Majority Leader Sen. Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., has said an impeachment trial could not begin under the current calendar before Inauguration Day, Jan. 20.

While many have criticized Trump, Republicans have said that impeachment would be divisive in a time of unity.

Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., said that instead of coming together, Democrats want to "talk about ridiculous things like 'Let's impeach a president'" with just days left in office.

Still, some Republicans might be supportive.

Nebraska Sen. Ben Sasse said he would take a look at any articles that the House sent over. Illinois Rep. Adam Kinzinger, a frequent Trump critic, said he would "vote the right way" if the matter were put in front of him.

The Democratic effort to stamp Trump's presidential record — for the second time — with the indelible mark of impeachment had advanced rapidly since the riot.

Rep. David Cicilline, D-R.I., a leader of the House effort to draft impeachment articles accusing Trump of inciting insurrection, said Sunday that his group had 200-plus co-sponsors.

The articles, if passed by the House, could then be transmitted to the Senate for a trial, with senators acting as jurors to acquit or convict Trump. If convicted, Trump would be removed from office and succeeded by the vice president. It would be the first time a U.S. president had been impeached twice.

Potentially complicating Pelosi's decision about impeachment was what it meant for Biden and the beginning of his presidency. While reiterating that he had long viewed Trump as unfit for office, Biden on Friday sidestepped a question about impeachment, saying what Congress did "is for them to decide."

A violent and largely white mob of Trump supporters overpowered police, broke through security lines and windows and rampaged through the Capitol on Wednesday, forcing lawmakers to scatter as they were finalizing Biden's victory over Trump in the Electoral College.

Toomey appeared on CNN's "State of the Union" and NBC's "Meet the Press." Clyburn was on "Fox News Sunday" and CNN. Kinzinger was on ABC's "This Week," Blunt was on CBS' "Face the Nation" and Rubio was on Fox News Channel's "Sunday Morning Futures."

Superville reported from Wilmington, Delaware. Associated Press writers Alexandra Jaffe, Alan Fram and Zeke Miller contributed to this report.

Snow, and now ice, disrupt Spaniards' lives, vaccine rollout

By ARITZ PARRA Associated Press

MADRID (AP) — The Spanish capital is trying to get back on its feet after a 50-year record snowfall that paralyzed large parts of central Spain over the weekend. It has now led to icy weather that is hampering the rollout of the much-needed vaccination against the coronavirus.

With a sharp drop in temperatures on Monday and frost freezing much of the snow, which reached more than 50 centimeters (20 inches) in some urban areas, authorities are calling on people to avoid all but essential trips out of their homes.

Nearly 700 roads remain affected throughout Spain, with winter tires or chains needed on roughly half of them, transit authority DGT said.

In Madrid, authorities are calling on citizens to avoid using the few lanes that civil protection and military battalions, aided by snowplows and bulldozers, have managed to clear for ambulances and emergency

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vehicles.

Much of the city's main services remained closed on Monday, including the main wholesale market, although some supermarkets and newsstands opened for the first time in three days.

Residents, some with crampons and hiking sticks, could be seen warily trying to make their way on snow hardened into ice before disappearing into subway stations.

The underground train system has become the only viable way to commute to work. Commuter trains in Madrid and the high-speed railway between Barcelona and Madrid would resume later on Monday, the national railway company Renfe said.

The airport, which had been closed since Friday evening, saw a dozen flights take off or land on Monday and was expecting to resume full operations "throughout Monday," Transport Minister José Luis Ábalos said in an interview with Spain's TVE. But a new batch of 350,000 doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine that Spain was expecting to receive on Monday at the Madrid airport had to be diverted to the northern city of Vitoria, where a difficult effort to distribute it throughout the rest of the country by land was underway.

Schools were closed on Monday in the regions of Castilla La Mancha, Madrid, and many other areas of Spain.

At least four people have died as a result of flash floods or low temperatures brought by Storm Filomena. The blizzard also trapped over 1,500 people in their vehicles, some of them for up to 24 hours.

Yemen's rebels defiant as aid agencies fear US terror label

By MAGGIE MICHAEL Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — Yemen's Iran-backed rebels on Monday dismissed the U.S. move to designate them a terrorist organization in the final days of the Trump administration while a leading aid agency warned such a designation would deal another "devastating blow" to the impoverished and war-torn nation.

The planned designation, announced by U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo late Sunday, would take effect a day before President-elect Joe Biden is inaugurated Jan. 20. It was not clear whether Biden would overturn the decision.

Yemen is mired in a disastrous humanitarian crisis, with millions of people in wide swaths of the country on the brink of famine as a result of six years of civil war.

Pompeo said he was proceeding with the designation of the rebels, known as Houthis, along with separate terrorist designations for the three top rebel leaders. At the same time, he pledged the U.S. would help absorb the impact on aid groups and allow humanitarian assistance to continue to flow into Yemen.

Hours later, several senior rebel figures slammed Pompeo's announcement.

"We are not fearful," tweeted Mohammed Ali al-Houthi. "America is the source of terrorism. It's directly involved in killing and starving the Yemeni people."

Others said the designation was an attempt to deflect attention from the U.S. political crisis in the wake of the deadly Capitol rioting and efforts to impeach President Donald Trump. "We are honored to be terrorists and the world's gangsters," tweeted the Houthi media official Abdel-Rahman al-Ahnoumi.

In Iran, the Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh condemned the designation as a "doomed-to-failure" action at the end of Trump's administration. He said the U.S. would eventually have to enter into negotiations with the legitimate representatives of Yemen — referring to the Houthis — to find a peaceful solution to the conflict.

Yemen's internationally recognized government described the Houthis as a "terrorist militia" and in a statement issued by its foreign ministry called for a "continuation of the escalation and intensification of the political and legal pressures on the Houthis to pave the way for a peaceful solution to the conflict."

Yemen, on the tip of the Arabian Peninsula, is the scene of the world's worst humanitarian disaster. The war, has killed more than 112,000 people, has left the majority of the country's nearly 30 million people in need of humanitarian aid. The war

The conflict started in 2014 when the Houthis overran the north and the capital, Sanaa. The following year, the Saudi-led coalition intervened to wage war on the Houthis to try to restore the internationally

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recognized President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi's government to power.

In early January, Hadi's government accused the rebels of firing ballistic missiles that targeted a plane with Cabinet members after landing in the southern port city of Aden, an attack that killed more than 25 people. The Houthis denied they were behind the strike.

Following the attack, Yemeni Prime Minister Maeen Abdulmalik Saeed told The Associated Press the rebels need to "realize that if they continue these criminal and terrorist operations, there will be no path to peace."

At the time, Abdulmalik said a terrorist designation would be a step "of great importance" and would "help establish peace in Yemen."

Past rounds of peace talks and cease-fire agreements have faltered and aid agencies, which mostly operate in Houthi-controlled areas, fear any targeting of the rebel group would impact the entire population.

The Norwegian Refugee Council, one of the main humanitarian agencies active in the country, said Monday that Pompeo's planned sanctions "will hamstring the ability of aid agencies to respond" to the humanitarian needs of millions of Yemenis.

"Yemen's faltering economy will be dealt a further devastating blow," said Mohamed Abdi, the group's director for Yemen. "Getting food and medicine into Yemen — a country 80% dependent on imports — will become even more difficult."

Relief organizations have long warned that sanctions could prove catastrophic for efforts to help starving Yemeni civilians caught in the conflict between the Houthis and the Yemeni government, backed by a Saudi-led coalition at war with the rebels.

In his announcement, Pompeo said the U.S. recognizes the designation could impact the humanitarian situation and would take action to counter that.

"We are planning to put in place measures to reduce their impact on certain humanitarian activity and imports into Yemen," he said. Those measures will include the issuance of special licenses by the U.S. Treasury to allow American aid to continue to flow to Yemen and for humanitarian organizations to continue to work there, he said.

Separately, the U.S. has suspended millions of dollars of its aid donations to Houthi-controlled areas after reports of theft and looting of aid. U.N. agencies have long complained of rebels stealing and rerouting food aid.

Associated Press writer Nasser Karimi in Tehran, Iran, contributed to this report.

China: WHO experts arriving Thursday for virus origins probe

BEIJING (AP) — Experts from the World Health Organization are due to arrive in China this week for a long-anticipated investigation into the origins of the coronavirus pandemic, the government said Monday.

The experts will arrive on Thursday and meet with Chinese counterparts, the National Health Commission said in a one-sentence statement that gave no other details.

It wasn't immediately clear whether the experts would be traveling to the central Chinese city of Wuhan, where the coronavirus was first detected in late 2019.

Negotiations for the visit have long been underway. WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus expressed disappointment last week over delays, saying that members of the international scientific team departing from their home countries had already started on their trip as part of an arrangement between the WHO and the Chinese government.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian said China had approved the visit following consultations between the sides and called it an opportunity to "exchange views with Chinese scientists and medical experts on scientific cooperation on the tracing of the origin of the new coronavirus."

"Along with continuous changes in the epidemic situation, our knowledge of the virus deepens, and more early cases are discovered," Zhao told reporters at a daily briefing, adding that the search for the origin

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will likely involve "multiple countries and localities."

China's government has strictly controlled all research at home into the origins of the virus, an Associated Press investigation found, while state-owned media have played up fringe theories that suggest the virus could have originated elsewhere.

The AP investigation found that China's government is handing out hundreds of thousands of dollars in grants to scientists researching the virus' origins in southern China. But it is monitoring their findings and mandating that the publication of any data or research must be approved by a new task force managed by China's Cabinet, under direct orders from President Xi Jinping, according to internal documents obtained by the AP.

The culture of secrecy is believed to have delayed warnings about the pandemic, blocked the sharing of information with the WHO and hampered early testing. Australia and other countries have called for an investigation into the origins of the virus, prompting angry responses from Beijing.

There was no immediate comment from the WHO on Monday's announcement, but U.N. spokesperson Stephane Dujarric had earlier told reporters at U.N. headquarters in New York that Secretary-General Antonio Guterres "is fully supportive of Dr. Tedros' and WHO's efforts to get a team in there."

"It's very important that as the WHO is in the lead in fighting the pandemic, that it also has a leading role in trying to look back at the roots of this pandemic so we can be better prepared for the next one," Dujarric said. "We very much hope" that China's reported comments that it is working with the WHO and looking for a smooth visit "will happen."

The virus' origins have been the source of intense speculation, much of it centered around the likelihood that it was carried by bats and passed to humans through an intermediary species sold as food or medicine in traditional Chinese wet markets.

China has largely stemmed new cases of domestic transmission, but said Monday that scores of people have tested positive for the coronavirus in Hebei province, bordering Beijing.

That outbreak comes amid measures to curb the further spread of the virus during next month's Lunar New Year holiday. Authorities have called on citizens not to travel, ordered schools closed a week early and conducted testing on a massive scale.

China has recorded 87,536 total cases of the virus, including 4,634 deaths. Hospitals are currently treating 673 people for COVID-19, while 506 others are in isolation and under observation after testing positive without showing symptoms., officials said.

The Hebei outbreak has raised particular concern because of the province's proximity to Beijing. Parts of the province are under lockdown and interprovincial travel has been largely cut off, with those entering Beijing to work having to show proof of employment and a clean bill of health.

Beijing has also seen a handful of new cases, prompting authorities to lock down some suburban communities and require residents to show negative test results to access grocery stores and other public spaces.

Capitol assault a more sinister attack than first appeared

By JAY REEVES, LISA MASCARO and CALVIN WOODWARD Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Under battle flags bearing Donald Trump's name, the Capitol's attackers pinned a bloodied police officer in a doorway, his twisted face and screams captured on video. They mortally wounded another officer with a blunt weapon and body-slammed a third over a railing into the crowd.

"Hang Mike Pence!" the insurrectionists chanted as they pressed inside, beating police with pipes. They demanded House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's whereabouts, too. They hunted any and all lawmakers: "Where are they?" Outside, makeshift gallows stood, complete with sturdy wooden steps and the noose. Guns and pipe bombs had been stashed in the vicinity.

Only days later is the extent of the danger from one of the darkest episodes in American democracy coming into focus. The sinister nature of the assault has become evident, betraying the crowd as a force determined to occupy the inner sanctums of Congress and run down leaders — Trump's vice president and the Democratic House speaker among them.

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This was not just a collection of Trump supporters with MAGA bling caught up in a wave.

That revelation came in real time to Rep. Jim McGovern, D-Mass., who briefly took over proceedings in the House chamber as the mob closed in Wednesday and the speaker, Rep. Nancy Pelosi, was spirited to safer quarters moments before everything went haywire.

"I saw this crowd of people banging on that glass screaming," McGovern told The Associated Press on Sunday. "Looking at their faces, it occurred to me, these aren't protesters. These are people who want to do harm."

"What I saw in front of me," he said, "was basically home-grown fascism, out of control."

Pelosi said Sunday "the evidence is that it was a well-planned, organized group with leadership and guidance and direction. And the direction was to go get people." She did not elaborate on that point in a "60 Minutes" interview on CBS.

The scenes of rage, violence and agony are so vast that the whole of it may still be beyond comprehension. But with countless smartphone videos emerging from the scene, much of it from gloating insurrectionists themselves, and more lawmakers recounting the chaos that was around them, contours of the uprising are increasingly coming into relief.

THE STAGING

The mob got explicit marching orders from Trump and still more encouragement from the president's men. "Fight like hell," Trump exhorted his partisans at the staging rally. "Let's have trial by combat," implored his lawyer, Rudy Giuliani, whose attempt to throw out election results in trial by courtroom failed. It's time to "start taking down names and kicking ass," said Republican Rep. Mo Brooks of Alabama.

Criminals pardoned by Trump, among them Roger Stone and Michael Flynn, came forward at rallies on the eve of the attack to tell the crowds they were fighting a battle between good and evil and they were on the side of good. On Capitol Hill, Republican Sen. Josh Hawley of Missouri gave a clenched-fist salute to the hordes outside the Capitol as he pulled up to press his challenge of the election results.

The crowd was pumped. Until a little after 2 p.m., Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell was at the helm for the final minutes of decorum in partnership with Pence, who was serving his ceremonial role presiding over the process.

Both men had backed Trump's agenda and excused or ignored his provocations for four years, but now had no mechanism or will to subvert the election won by Biden. That placed them high among the insurrectionists' targets, no different in the minds of the mob than the "socialists."

"If this election were overturned by mere allegations from the losing side, our democracy would enter a death spiral," McConnell told his chamber, not long before things spiraled out of control in what lawmakers call the "People's House."

THE ASSAULT

Thousands had swarmed the Capitol. They charged into police and metal barricades outside the building, shoving and hitting officers in their way. The assault quickly pushed through the vastly outnumbered police line; officers ran down one man and pummeled him.

In the melee outside, near the structure built for Joe Biden's inauguration on Jan. 20, a man threw a red fire extinguisher at the helmeted head of a police officer. Then he picked up a bullhorn and threw it at officers, too.

The identity of the officer could not immediately be confirmed. But Capitol Police officer Brian Sicknick, who was wounded in the chaos, died the next night; officials say he had been hit in the head with a fire extinguisher.

Shortly after 2 p.m., Capitol Police sent an alert telling workers in a House office building to head to underground transportation tunnels that criss-cross the complex. Minutes later, Pence was taken from the Senate chamber to a secret location and police announced the lockdown of the Capitol. "You may move throughout the building(s) but stay away from exterior windows and doors," said the email blast. "If you

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are outside, seek cover.”

At 2:15 p.m., the Senate recessed its Electoral College debate and a voice was heard over the chamber’s audio system: “The protesters are in the building.” The doors of the House chamber were barricaded and lawmakers inside it were told they may need to duck under their chairs or relocate to cloakrooms off the House floor because the mob has breached the Capitol Rotunda.

Even before the mob reached sealed doors of the House chamber, Capitol Police pulled Pelosi away from the podium, she told “60 Minutes.”

“I said, ‘No, I want to be here,’” she said. “And they said, ‘Well, no, you have to leave.’ I said, ‘No, I’m not leaving.’ They said, ‘No, you must leave.’” So she did.

At 2:44 p.m., as lawmakers inside the House chamber prepared to be evacuated, a gunshot was heard from right outside, in the Speaker’s Lobby on the other side of the barricaded doors. That’s when Ashli Babbitt, wearing a Trump flag like a cape, was shot to death on camera as insurrectionists railed, her blood pooling on the white marble floor.

The Air Force veteran from California had climbed through a broken window into the Speaker’s Lobby before a police officer’s gunshot felled her.

Back in the House chamber, a woman in the balcony was seen and heard screaming. Why she was doing that only became clear later when video circulated. She was screaming a prayer.

Within about 10 minutes of the shooting, House lawmakers and staff members who had been cowering during the onslaught, terror etched into their faces, had been taken from the chamber and gallery to a secure room. The mob broke into Pelosi’s offices while members of her staff hid in one of the rooms of her suite.

“The staff went under the table barricaded the door, turned out the lights, and were silent in the dark,” she said. “Under the table for two and a half hours.”

On the Senate side, Capitol Police had circled the chamber and ordered all staff and reporters and any nearby senators into the chamber and locked it down. At one point about 200 people were inside; an officer armed with what appeared to be a semi-automatic weapon stood between McConnell and the Democratic leader, Sen. Chuck Schumer.

Authorities then ordered an evacuation and rushed everyone inside to a secure location, the Senate parliamentary staff scooping up the boxes holding the Electoral College certificates.

Although the Capitol’s attackers had been sent with Trump’s exhortation to fight, they appeared in some cases to be surprised that they had actually made it in.

When they breached the abandoned Senate chamber, they milled around, rummaged through papers, sat at desks and took videos and pictures. One of them climbed to the dais and yelled, “Trump won that election!” Two others were photographed carrying flex cuffs typically used for mass arrests.

But outside the chamber, the mob’s hunt was still on for lawmakers. “Where are they?” people could be heard yelling.

That question could have also applied to reinforcements — where were they?

At about 5:30 p.m., once the National Guard had arrived to supplement the overwhelmed Capitol Police force, a full-on effort began to get the attackers out.

Heavily armed officers brought in as reinforcements started using tear gas in a coordinated fashion to get people moving toward the door, then combed the halls for stragglers. As darkness fell, they pushed the mob farther out onto the plaza and lawn, using officers in riot gear in full shields and clouds of tear gas, flash-bangs and percussion grenades.

At 7:23 p.m., officials announced that people hunkered down in two nearby congressional office buildings could leave “if anyone must.”

Within the hour, the Senate had resumed its work and the House followed, returning the People’s House to the control of the people’s representatives. Lawmakers affirmed Biden’s election victory early the next morning, shell-shocked by the catastrophic failure of security.

Rep. Maxine Waters, D-Ca., told AP on Sunday it was as if Capitol Police “were naked” against the at-

tackers. "It turns out it was the worst kind of non-security anybody could ever imagine."

Said McGovern: "I was in such disbelief this could possibly happen. These domestic terrorists were in the People's House, desecrating the People's House, destroying the People's House."

Associated Press writers Dustin Weaver in Washington and Michael Casey in Concord, New Hampshire, contributed to this report. Reeves reported from Birmingham, Alabama.

Biden faces challenge in guiding America past Trump era

By ALEXANDRA JAFFE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President-elect Joe Biden appeared on television last week as a bipartisan group of lawmakers huddled in an undisclosed location to protect them from a violent mob that was ransacking the U.S. Capitol.

"The whole room went silent," Sen. Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn., recalled as everyone listened to Biden denounce the insurrection and call for calm.

The respectful manner in which the lawmakers listened to Biden during one of America's darkest moments gave Klobuchar hope that the new president has an opportunity to guide the country past the tumultuous final stretch of Donald Trump's presidency.

That's quickly becoming one of Biden's top tasks as he prepares to take office on Jan. 20. It's an immensely complex challenge, requiring him to balance demands for accountability after Trump incited the riot against those who worry about further dividing the country.

Any misstep could not only intensify the nation's polarization, but threaten Biden's ability to win quick congressional approval of his Cabinet picks and other priorities such as coronavirus response legislation.

For now, Biden seems content to leave decisions about Trump's fate to Congress.

"What the Congress decides to do is for them to decide," Biden told reporters last week. "But I'm going to have to and they're going to have to be ready to hit the ground running, because when Kamala (Harris) and I are sworn in, we're going to be introducing, immediately, significant pieces of legislation that will deal with the virus, deal with the economy, and deal with economic growth."

Two Republican senators, Lisa Murkowski of Alaska and Patrick Toomey of Pennsylvania, have called on Trump to resign.

Absent that, House Democrats are moving quickly to introduce articles of impeachment on Monday and vote as soon as Tuesday. That would give an outlet for lawmakers to formally condemn Trump, but would delay a Senate trial until after Biden addresses other priorities during his first 100 days.

Biden essentially framed his presidential campaign as a response to Trump, pledging to "restore the soul" of America. He has said he decided to seek the White House after watching Trump say there were "very fine people on both sides" of a deadly white supremacist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia.

Still, the insurrection sharpens the debate over how to break with the Trump era.

Many Democrats say the best way for Biden to unify the nation and restore faith in government is to achieve tangible results on issues that matter to all Americans, including the coronavirus pandemic and the economy.

"We need to get the vaccine out," she said. "We need to get the economy back to where it was so that's number one on his agenda number one on our agenda so you start with what's number one on everyone's agenda."

Steve Israel, a former New York Democratic congressman, said that in his experience in Congress, when lawmakers "sense that things are going too far, you want to take a few steps back."

"I think that there are a lot of Republicans now who are going to want to take a few steps back towards the middle," he said.

But he also emphasized that if Biden hopes to move past Trump, he'll need to move fast to show that bipartisan action is possible.

"If President Biden tests the appetite of Republicans to try and get a quick and substantive win on a

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COVID relief package, or perhaps infrastructure investments, that will send a message to the entire country that bipartisanship and healing is possible," he said.

Biden will also have to navigate a number of ongoing investigations into Trump's actions during the U.S. Capitol breach and in trying to pressure state officials to overturn the results of the election in his favor.

He has repeatedly said that his Justice Department will remain entirely independent and that he won't interfere in any ongoing investigations into his predecessor.

Democrats say that's exactly the tone they'd like him to take. But it's also important, as Vermont Sen. Patrick Leahy put it, to hold those involved in the events of this week accountable.

"There were an enormous number of crimes, felonies, that were committed. We have to make sure those are handled," he said. "If we just totally ignore it, we tell everybody else you can commit any crime you want because the Congress will ignore it."

So far, at least 90 people have been arrested on charges ranging from misdemeanor curfew violations to felonies related to assaults on police officers, possessing illegal weapons and making death threats against House Speaker Nancy Pelosi of California.

While Democrats emphasize that they want Biden to focus on the issues confronting his administration and not the investigations into his predecessor, they also say it's important to address the systemic issues again laid bare by the unequal police treatment of the violent Capitol rioters.

Many have noted that the police presence and response to the largely white mob was far smaller and less aggressive than that seen at a number of peaceful Black Lives Matter protests where the crowd was much more diverse. It's important, said Democratic strategist Karen Finney, for Biden to acknowledge that.

"This is who we are but it's not who we have to be," she said. "If that's the message, it would be a powerful one to try to start to bring us together."

The last time the nation faced such serious questions about how a new president would respond to the actions of his predecessor was in 1974. Gerald Ford assumed the presidency after Richard Nixon resigned in disgrace over his role in the Watergate break-in.

Ford ultimately pardoned Nixon, a move that was initially deeply unpopular but was later viewed as an important step toward healing.

Historian Mark Updegrave, the president and CEO of the LBJ Foundation, said that because of the magnitude of Trump's actions — and the fact that the country is far more divided over his presidency than they were on Nixon's — it's better for Biden to stay away from any actions taken against Trump once he leaves office.

"Richard Nixon, while he lied to the American people and participated in obstructing justice in the Watergate investigation, he did not orchestrate an insurrection on our Capitol and try to overturn the election," he said.

"Biden has to be very conscious of dealing with President Trump," Updegrave continued. "I think it's probably rightfully left in the hands of Congress right now, and the judicial branch."

Klobuchar will play a leading role into a bipartisan investigation into what went wrong at the Capitol, and said whatever her team finds, it will be up to the Justice Department to decide how to act.

But the senator said the inauguration itself may offer the most important opportunity for Biden to set a forward-looking tone.

"I can't think of another year that the peaceful transition of power was more important than this one," she said.

80% say Tokyo Olympics should be called off or won't happen

By STEPHEN WADE AP Sports Writer

TOKYO (AP) — More than 80% of people in Japan who were surveyed in two polls in the last few days say the Tokyo Olympics should be canceled or postponed, or say they believe the Olympics will not take place.

The polls were conducted by the Japanese news agency Kyodo and TBS — the Tokyo Broadcasting System.

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The results are bad news for Tokyo organizers and the International Olympic Committee as they continue to say the postponed Olympics will open on July 23.

Tokyo is battling a surge of COVID-19 cases that prompted the national government last week to call a state of emergency. In declaring the emergency, Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga said he was confident the Olympics would be held.

Japan has controlled the virus relatively well but the surge has heightened skepticism about the need for the Olympics and the danger of potentially bringing 15,000 Olympic and Paralympic athletes into the country.

The Olympics could also attract tens of thousands of coaches, judges, officials, VIPs, sponsors, media and broadcasters. It is not clear if fans from abroad will be allowed, or if local fans will attend events.

Japan has attributed about 3,800 deaths to COVID-19 in a country of 126 million.

The TBS poll asked if the Olympics can be held. In the telephone survey with 1,261 responding, 81% replied "no" with only 13% answering "yes." The "no" responses increased 18 percentage points from a similar survey in December.

In Kyodo's poll, 80.1% of respondents in a telephone survey said the Olympics should be canceled or rescheduled. The same question in December found 63% calling for cancellation or postponement.

Kyodo said the survey covered 715 randomly selected households with eligible voters. Neither poll listed a margin of error.

Japan is officially spending \$15.4 billion to hold the Olympics, although several government audits show the number is about \$25 billion. All but \$6.7 billion is public money.

The Switzerland-based IOC earns 91% of its income from selling broadcast rights and sponsorships.

The American network NBC agreed in 2011 to a \$4.38 billion contract with the IOC to broadcast four Olympics through the Tokyo. In 2014 it agreed to pay an added \$7.75 billion for six more games — Winter and Summer — through 2032.

More AP sports: <https://apnews.com/apf-sports> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Records show fervent Trump fans fueled US Capitol takeover

By MICHAEL BIESECKER, MICHAEL KUNZELMAN, GILLIAN FLACCUS and JIM MUSTIAN Associated Press WASHINGTON (AP) — They came from across America, summoned by President Donald Trump to march on Washington in support of his false claim that the November election was stolen and to stop the congressional certification of Democrat Joe Biden as the victor.

"Big protest in D.C. on January 6th," Trump tweeted a week before Christmas. "Be there, will be wild!"

The insurrectionist mob that showed up at the president's behest and stormed the U.S. Capitol was overwhelmingly made up of longtime Trump supporters, including Republican Party officials, GOP political donors, far-right militants, white supremacists, members of the military and adherents of the QAnon myth that the government is secretly controlled by a cabal of Satan-worshipping pedophile cannibals. Records show that some were heavily armed and included convicted criminals, such as a Florida man recently released from prison for attempted murder.

The Associated Press reviewed social media posts, voter registrations, court files and other public records for more than 120 people either facing criminal charges related to the Jan. 6 unrest or who, going maskless amid the pandemic, were later identified through photographs and videos taken during the melee.

The evidence gives lie to claims by right-wing pundits and Republican officials such as Rep. Matt Gaetz, R-Fla., that the violence was perpetrated by left-wing antifa thugs rather than supporters of the president.

"If the reports are true," Gaetz said on the House floor just hours after the attack, "some of the people who breached the Capitol today were not Trump supporters. They were masquerading as Trump supporters and, in fact, were members of the violent terrorist group antifa."

Steven D'Antuono, the assistant director in charge of the FBI's Washington field office, told reporters that investigators had seen "no indication" antifa activists were disguised as Trump supporters in Wednesday's

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riot. The AP found that many of the rioters had taken to social media after the November election to retweet and parrot false claims by Trump that the vote had been stolen in a vast international conspiracy. Several had openly threatened violence against Democrats and Republicans they considered insufficiently loyal to the president. During the riot, some livestreamed and posted photos of themselves at the Capitol. Afterwards, many bragged about what they had done.

As the mob smashed through doors and windows to invade the Capitol, a loud chant went up calling for the hanging of Vice President Mike Pence, the recent target of a Trump Twitter tirade for not subverting the Constitution and overturning the legitimate vote tally. Outside, a wooden scaffold had been erected on the National Mall, a rope noose dangling at the ready.

So far, at least 90 people have been arrested on charges ranging from misdemeanor curfew violations to felonies related to assaults on police officers, possessing illegal weapons and making death threats against House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif.

Among them was Lonnie Leroy Coffman, 70, an Alabama grandfather who drove to Washington to attend Trump's "Save America Rally" in a red GMC Sierra pickup packed with an M4 assault rifle, multiple loaded magazines, three handguns and 11 Mason jars filled with homemade napalm, according to court filings.

The truck was found during a security sweep involving explosives-sniffing dogs after two pipe bombs were found and disarmed Wednesday near the national headquarters of the Republican and Democratic parties. Coffman was arrested that evening when he returned to the truck carrying a 9mm Smith & Wesson handgun and a .22-caliber derringer pistol in his pockets. Federal officials said Coffman is not suspected of planting the pipe bombs, though he was charged with having Molotov cocktails in the bed of his truck.

His grandson, Brandon Coffman, told the AP on Friday his grandfather was a Republican who had expressed admiration for Trump at holiday gatherings. He said he had no idea why Coffman would show up in the nation's capital armed for civil war.

Also facing federal charges is Cleveland Grover Meredith Jr., a Georgia man who in the wake of the election had protested outside the home of Republican Gov. Brian Kemp, whom Trump had publicly blamed for his loss in the state. Meredith drove to Washington last week for the "Save America" rally but arrived late because of a problem with the lights on his trailer, according to court filings that include expletive-laden texts.

"Headed to DC with a (s---) ton of 5.56 armor-piercing ammo," he texted friends and relatives on Jan. 6, adding a purple devil emoji, according to court filings. The following day, he texted to the group: "Thinking about heading over to Pelosi (C---'s) speech and putting a bullet in her noggin on Live TV." He once again added a purple devil emoji, and wrote he might hit her with his truck instead. "I'm gonna run that (C---) Pelosi over while she chews on her gums. ... Dead (B---) Walking. I predict that within 12 days, many in our country will die."

Meredith, who is white, then texted a photo of himself in blackface. "I'm gonna walk around DC FKG with people by yelling 'Allahu ak Bar' randomly."

A participant in the text exchange provided screenshots to the FBI, who tracked Meredith to a Holiday Inn a short walk from the Capitol. They found a compact Tavor X95 assault rifle, a 9mm Glock 19 handgun and about 100 rounds of ammunition, according to court filings. The agents also seized a stash of THC edibles and a vial of injectable testosterone.

Meredith is charged with transmitting a threat, as well as felony counts for possession of firearms and ammunition.

Michael Thomas Curzio was arrested in relation to the riots less than two years after he was released from a Florida prison in 2019 after serving an eight-year sentence for attempted murder. Court records from Florida show that he shot the boyfriend of his former girlfriend in a fight at her home.

Federal law enforcement officials vowed Friday to bring additional charges against those who carried out the attack on the Capitol, launching a nationwide manhunt for dozens of suspects identified from photographic evidence

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The FBI has opened a murder probe into the death of Capitol Police Officer Brian D. Sicknick, who was hit in the head with a fire extinguisher, according to law enforcement officials who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the ongoing investigation publicly. He died at a hospital.

The Trump supporters who died in the riot were Kevin D. Greeson, 55, of Athens, Alabama; Benjamin Philips, 50, of Ringtown, Pennsylvania; Ashli Babbitt, 35, of San Diego; and Rosanne Boyland, 34, of Kenesaw, Georgia.

Boyland's sister told the AP on Friday she was an adherent of the QAnon conspiracy theory that holds Trump is America's savior. Her Facebook page featured photos and videos praising Trump and promoting fantasies, including one theory that a shadowy group was using the coronavirus to steal elections. Boyland's final post on Twitter — a retweet of a post by White House social media director Dan Scavino — was a picture of thousands of people surrounding the Washington Monument on Wednesday.

"She would text me some things, and I would be like, 'Let me fact-check that.' And I'd sit there and I'd be like, 'Well, I don't think that's actually right,'" Lonna Cave, Boyland's sister, said. "We got in fights about it, arguments."

The AP's review found that QAnon beliefs were common among those who heeded Trump's call to come to Washington.

Doug Jensen, 41, was arrested by the FBI on Friday in Des Moines, Iowa, after returning home from the riot. An AP photographer captured images of him confronting Capitol Police officers outside of the Senate chamber on Wednesday.

Jensen was wearing a black T-shirt emblazoned with a large Q and the phrase "Trust The Plan," a reference to QAnon. Video posted online during the storming of the Capitol also appears to show Jensen, who is white, pursuing a Black police officer up an interior flight of stairs as a mob of people trails several steps behind. At several points, the officer says "get back," but to no avail.

Jensen's older brother, William Routh, told the AP on Saturday that Jensen believed that the person posting as Q was either Trump or someone very close to the president.

"I feel like he had a lot of influence from the internet that confused or obscured his views on certain things," said Routh, of Clarksville, Arkansas, who described himself as a Republican Trump supporter. "When I talked to him, he thought that maybe this was Trump telling him what to do."

Jensen's employer, Forrest & Associate Masonry in Des Moines, announced Friday that he had been fired.

Tara Coleman, a 40-year-old mother who lives in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, was arrested at the Capitol for a curfew violation and for unlawful entry. On her Facebook page, Coleman re-posted articles supporting the QAnon beliefs about a "deep state" conspiracy to target children. The AP could not find a working phone number for Coleman and her attorney, Peter Cooper, did not respond to an email seeking comment.

And Jake Chansley, who calls himself the "QAnon Shaman" and has long been a fixture at Trump rallies, surrendered to the FBI field office in Phoenix on Saturday. News photos show him at the riot shirtless, with his face painted and wearing a fur hat with horns, carrying a U.S. flag attached to a wooden pole topped with a spear.

Chansley's unusual headwear is visible in a Nov. 7 AP photo at a rally of Trump supporters protesting election results outside of the Maricopa County election center in Phoenix. In that photo, Chansley, who also has gone by the last name Angeli, held a sign that read, "HOLD THE LINE PATRIOTS GOD WINS." He also expressed his support for the president in an interview with the AP that day.

The FBI identified Chansley by his distinctive tattoos, which include bricks circling his biceps in an apparent reference to Trump's border wall. Chansley didn't respond last week to messages seeking comment to one of his social media accounts.

There were also current and former members of the U.S. military in the crowd.

Army commanders at Fort Bragg in North Carolina are investigating Capt. Emily Rainey's involvement in the Wednesday rally. The 30-year-old psychological operations officer told the AP she led 100 members of Moore County Citizens for Freedom who traveled to Washington to "stand against election fraud" and support Trump. She insisted she acted within Army regulations and that no one in her group entered the

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Capitol or broke the law.

"I was a private citizen and doing everything right and within my rights," Rainey told the AP.

Retired Air Force Lt. Col. Larry Rendall Brock Jr. of Texas was charged in federal court on Sunday after he was identified in photos showing him standing in the well of the Senate, wearing a military-style helmet and body armor while holding a pair of zip-tie handcuffs.

The insurrectionist mob also included members of the neofascist group known as the Proud Boys, whom Trump urged to "stand back and stand by" when asked to condemn them by a moderator during a presidential debate in September.

Nicholas R. Ochs, 34, was arrested Saturday after returning home to Hawaii, where he is the founder of the local Proud Boys chapter. On Wednesday, Ochs posted a photo of himself on Twitter inside the Capitol, grinning broadly and smoking a cigarette. According to court filings, the FBI matched photos of Ochs taken during the riot to photos taken when Ochs campaigned unsuccessfully last year as the Republican nominee for a seat in the Hawaii statehouse.

Proud Boys leader Henry "Enrique" Tarrío was arrested Monday in Washington on weapons charges and ordered to stay out of the nation's capital. Tarrío is accused of vandalizing a Black Lives Matter banner at a historic Black church last month.

Jay Robert Thaxton, 46, was arrested near the Capitol for curfew violations on Wednesday. A North Carolina man with the same name has also been linked to the Proud Boys. He told The Stanly News & Press in 2019 that he was a Proud Boys supporter but wouldn't say if he was an official member of the group. Another North Carolina newspaper, The Jacksonville Daily News, published a photo of Thaxton wearing a "Make America Great Again" hat at a 2019 protest over the removal of Confederate statues.

A man who answered a telephone number associated with Thaxton hung up on an AP reporter. The recipient of a text message to the same number responded with an expletive.

Also arrested at the Capitol was William Arthur Leary, who owns a manufactured housing business in Utica, New York. In an interview Friday, Leary told the AP that he strongly believes the election was stolen from Trump and that he went to Washington to show his support.

Leary said he doesn't trust information reported by the mainstream media and that one of his main sources of information was Infowars, the far-right conspiracy site run by Alex Jones. He denied he ever set foot in the Capitol and complained that he was held for more than 24 hours and had his cell phone seized.

"They treated us like animals," he complained. "They took all our phones. I didn't get to make a phone call to tell anybody where I was."

Leary said he remembers seeing a woman, Kristina Malimon, 28, sobbing at the detention center because she had been separated and not allowed to translate for her mother, who primarily speaks Russian. Both women had been charged with curfew violation and unlawful entry. According to a video posted on her Instagram account, the younger Malimon says she was born in Moldova, where her family had faced persecution under the Soviet-era regime for their Christian beliefs.

Malimon, who traveled to D.C. from Portland, Oregon, is vice chairwoman of the Young Republicans of Oregon, according to the group's website and is also listed as an "ambassador" for the pro-Trump group Turning Point USA. Her social media feeds are full of photos taken at Trump events, including the earlier "Million MAGA March" held in Washington last month. She also posted photos of herself posing with Donald Trump Jr. and Roger Stone, who was convicted of crimes including obstruction of justice and pardoned by Trump on Christmas Eve.

Media reports from Oregon quoted Malimon in August as the primary organizer of a Trump boat parade on the Willamette River, where big waves created by speeding boats flying Trump flags swamped and sank a smaller boat that was not participating, throwing a family into the water to be rescued by the sheriff's department.

"Oregon, today you came out and showed your love and support for our wonderful President, Donald J. Trump thank you!" Kristina Malimon wrote on Facebook following the parade.

Malimon also served as a Republican poll watcher in Georgia and spoke at an event organized by the Trump campaign in December, claiming to have seen voting machines and tabulation computers in Savan-

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nah, Georgia, with suspiciously blinking green lights she interpreted as a sign they were being secretly controlled by outside hackers — a claim debunked as false by GOP election officials in the state.

A phone number listed for Kristina Malimon rang without being answered on Friday. At the address listed for her in southeast Portland on Friday night, her teenage brother answered the door as other family members, including young children, ran around.

The family spoke Russian to each other and the brother, Nick Malimon, translated. He said his sister was still in Washington but had called the family following her release from jail and didn't seem upset about her arrest.

Others are facing consequences even beyond arrest.

A Texas sheriff announced Thursday that he had reported one of his lieutenants to the FBI after she posted photos of herself on social media with a crowd outside the Capitol. Bexar County Sheriff Javier Salazar said Lt. Roxanne Mathai, a 46-year-old jailer, had the right to attend the rally but he's investigating whether she may have broken the law.

One of the posts Mathai shared was a photo that appeared to be taken Wednesday from among the mass of Trump supporters outside the Capitol, "Not gonna lie.....aside from my kids, this was, indeed, the best day of my life. And it's not over yet."

A lawyer for Mathai, a mother and longtime San Antonio resident, said she attended the Trump rally but never entered the Capitol.

Attorney Hector Cortes said Mathai's contract bars her from speaking directly with the press but that she welcomes an FBI investigation and that her actions were squarely within the bounds of the First Amendment.

Brad Rukstales, a Republican political donor and CEO of Cogensia, a Chicago-based data analytics firm, was arrested with a group of a half-dozen Trump supporters who clashed with officers Wednesday inside the Capitol. Campaign finance reports show Rukstales contributed more than \$25,000 to Trump's campaign and other GOP committees during to 2020 election cycle.

He told a local CBS news channel last week that he had entered the Capitol and apologized. He was fired Friday and did not respond to calls and emails seeking comment.

Derrick Evans, a Republican recently sworn in as a delegate to the West Virginia House, resigned Saturday following his arrest on two charges related to the Capitol riot. He had streamed video of himself charging into the building with the mob.

"They're making an announcement now saying if Pence betrays us you better get your mind right because we're storming the building," Evans, 35, says in the video, as the door to the Capitol building is smashed and rioters rush through. "The door is cracked! ... We're in, we're in! Derrick Evans is in the Capitol!"

On Saturday he issued a statement saying he regretted taking part.

"I take full responsibility for my actions, and deeply regret any hurt, pain or embarrassment I may have caused my family, friends, constituents and fellow West Virginians," the statement said.

Kunzelman reported from College Park, Maryland, Flaccus from Portland, Oregon, and Mustian from New York. Associated Press writers Jake Bleiberg in Dallas; Michael R. Sisak in New York; Michael Balsamo in Washington; Rebecca Boone in Boise, Idaho; James LaPorta in Delray Beach, Florida; and Heather Hollingsworth in Mission, Kansas, contributed to this report.

Follow Associated Press investigative reporter Michael Biesecker at <http://twitter.com/mbieseck>

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Saar, longtime Netanyahu ally, emerges as his top challenger

By TIA GOLDENBERG Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — For years, Gideon Saar was one of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's most loyal and vocal supporters, serving as Cabinet secretary and government minister.

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Now, the telegenic Saar, armed with extraordinary political savvy and a searing grudge against his former boss, could prove to be Netanyahu's greatest challenge.

After breaking away from the Likud Party to form his own faction, Saar is running against Netanyahu in March elections and has emerged as the long-serving leader's top rival.

The challenge caps the stunning decline of the Saar-Netanyahu relationship, pitting a cunning political mind against his former mentor in a deeply personal battle drenched in past grievances.

A secular resident of culturally liberal Tel Aviv with a celebrity news anchor wife, Saar, 54, is a hard-line nationalist long seen as an heir to the Likud Party leadership. After unsuccessfully challenging Netanyahu in a leadership race and then being denied a government position as retribution, Saar last month broke out on his own. He said his aim was to topple Netanyahu for turning the Likud into a tool for personal survival at a time when he is on trial on corruption charges.

Saar's chances of becoming prime minister in the next elections are far from certain and polling forecasts his New Hope party coming in second place after Likud. But his entry into the race reconfigures the playing field and could complicate Netanyahu's task of forming a coalition government, perhaps sidelining the Israeli leader after more than a decade at the helm.

"If there's someone who can beat Netanyahu it is Gideon Saar," said Sharren Haskel, a former Likud lawmaker who quit the party to join Saar. "He is the only one who can stand up against Netanyahu because of his ideology, his experience and his capabilities."

Haskel, together with other Saar allies in Likud, concocted a plan to thwart a bill that might avert elections. In a late-night maneuver, they defied the party by skipping the vote or voting against the bill, catching Netanyahu off guard and prompting the government's collapse. They even coordinated the move with members of opposing parties who hid in the Knesset parking lot until moments before the vote, attesting to Saar's political savvy, the lengths he is prepared to go to bring down Netanyahu and his potential ability to reach across the aisle.

While Saar has brought hope to some that Netanyahu's rule is on the rocks, a victory would probably not mean significant changes in policies, particularly toward the Palestinians. Saar, like Netanyahu, is a hard-line nationalist opposed to Palestinian independence.

These right-wing credentials appear to be playing to his favor. Contrary to other recent Netanyahu challengers who have tried to appeal to a broader, centrist swath of Israelis, Saar is siphoning away both the votes of disillusioned Netanyahu supporters as well as Likud lawmakers. At least four defectors have joined him, including former Netanyahu confidant Zeev Elkin.

"He is attacking from the right," said Hebrew University political scientist Reuven Hazan. "It is a different game entirely."

Three previous elections since 2019 ended in deadlock between Netanyahu and his then-challenger, former military chief Benny Gantz. The most recent vote in March culminated in a power-sharing agreement that crumbled last month after months of dysfunction.

Saar entered politics in 1999, serving as Cabinet secretary in the first Netanyahu government. He became a Likud legislator in 2002 and remained loyal to the party and Netanyahu, even when the party plummeted in 2006 elections.

Since Netanyahu's return to the premiership in 2009, Saar has held the powerful posts of education and interior minister, pushing hard-line policies against illegal migrants alongside a more socially liberal doctrine that extended public education to preschoolers. He repeatedly won the top spot in Likud party primaries, just beneath Netanyahu.

After marrying popular Israeli news anchor Geula Even-Saar — a second marriage for both of them — he took a five-year hiatus from public life. Saar returned to politics in 2019, but was promptly confined to the backbenches after challenging Netanyahu in a Likud primary.

Now, freed from Netanyahu's grasp on Likud, Saar may have a fighting chance.

In announcing his departure, Saar said he could no longer serve under Netanyahu.

"A change in the country's leadership is needed," Saar said. "Today, Israel needs unity and stability."

Netanyahu can't, and won't be able to, provide either."

Since he bolted, the Likud has tried to paint Saar as a leftist in disguise, but his record indicates otherwise. Saar has been a longtime opponent of the two-state solution for Israel and the Palestinians, the long-standing international consensus for ending the conflict.

"He is more right-wing than Bibi by far," said political analyst Avraham Diskin, who said he has known Saar for years. He was referring to Netanyahu by his nickname. "But he is a pragmatic person, not a fanatic. He is cautious and level-headed," he said, indicating that he may rein himself in under pressure from the international community.

Saar supports building up West Bank settlements and annexing parts of the West Bank, while granting some autonomy to the Palestinians living in the territory. That would fall far short of their demands for an independent state that includes all of the West Bank, east Jerusalem and Gaza. Israel captured the three areas in 1967, though it withdrew from Gaza in 2005.

"There is no two-state solution; there is at most a two-state slogan," Saar told the Times of Israel in 2018. "The establishment of a Palestinian state a few miles away from Ben-Gurion Airport and Israel's major population centers would create a security and demographic danger to Israel."

While some Israelis who don't espouse those views are still eager to support Saar as a replacement to Netanyahu, others say his rise only elevates another hard-line nationalist.

"The next prime minister of Israel will be a full-blown total man of the right, uncompromising and pitiless," columnist Gideon Levy wrote in the liberal Haaretz daily. "The choice is between two ultra-nationalists, Netanyahu or Saar: Bibi or Gidi. There probably will be no other viable candidate. This is a dismal reality, but a very sobering one."

Capitol police were overrun, little defense against rioters

By COLLEEN LONG, MICHAEL BALSAMO and LISA MASCARO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Despite ample warnings about pro-Trump demonstrations in Washington, U.S. Capitol Police did not bolster staffing on Wednesday and made no preparations for the possibility that the planned protests could escalate into massive violent riots, according to several people briefed on law enforcement's response.

The revelations shed new light on why Capitol Police were so quickly overrun by rioters. The department had the same number of officers in place as on a routine day. While some of those officers were outfitted with equipment for a protest, they were not staffed or equipped for a riot.

Once the mob began to move on the Capitol, a police lieutenant issued an order not to use deadly force, which explains why officers outside the building did not draw their weapons as the crowd closed in. Officers are sometimes ordered against escalating a situation by drawing their weapons if superiors believe doing so could lead to a stampede or a shootout.

In this instance, it also left officers with little ability to resist the mob. In one video from the scene, an officer puts up his fists to try to push back a crowd pinning him and his colleagues against a door. The crowd jeers "You are not American!" and one man tries to prod him with the tip of an American flag.

"They were left naked," Rep. Maxine Waters, D-California, said of the police in an interview with AP. She had raised security concerns in a Dec. 28 meeting of House Democrats and grilled Steven Sund, the Capitol Police chief, during an hourlong private call on New Year's Eve. "It turns out it was the worst kind of non-security anybody could ever imagine."

The Capitol Police's lackluster response to the riots, poor planning and failure to anticipate the seriousness of the threat have drawn condemnation from lawmakers and prompted the ouster of the department's chief and the Sergeants at Arms of both the House and Senate.

As the full extent of the insurrection becomes clear, the FBI is also investigating whether some of the rioters had plans to kidnap members of Congress and hold them hostage.

Investigators are particularly focused on why some of them were seen carrying plastic zip-tie handcuffs and had apparently accessed areas of the Capitol generally difficult for the public to locate, according to

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an official.

The official was among four officials briefed on Wednesday's incident who spoke to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the ongoing investigation publicly.

Larry Rendell Brock, of Texas, and Eric Gavelek Munchel, of Tennessee, who both were photographed with plastic restraints as they broke into the Capitol, were arrested by the FBI on Sunday. Prosecutors said Brock also donned a green helmet, tactical vest and camouflage jacket.

The crowd that arrived in Washington on Wednesday was no surprise. Trump had been urging his supporters to come to the capital and some hotels had been booked to 100% capacity - setting off alarm bells because tourism in Washington has cratered amid the pandemic. Justice officials, FBI and other agencies began to monitor flights and social media for weeks and were expecting massive crowds.

A leader of the far-right extremist group Proud Boys was arrested coming into the city with high-powered magazine clips emblazoned with the group's logo, police said. The clips were not loaded, but he was planning to attend a rally near the White House.

Capitol Police leaders, however, had prepared for a free speech demonstration. No fencing was erected outside the Capitol and no contingency plans were prepared in case the situation escalated, according to people briefed.

Rep. Jason Crow, a Democrat from Colorado, said Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy told lawmakers on Sunday that the Defense Department and law enforcement officials had prepared for a crowd similar to protests in November and December, in the "low thousands" and that they had been preparing for small, disparate violent events, like stabbings and fist fights. McCarthy also said Sund and Mayor Muriel Bowser had called for urgent reinforcements from the Defense Department as the crowd surged toward officers but were "unable to articulate what resources are needed and in what locations, due to chaos."

Waters grilled Sund on exactly these kinds of questions -- about the Proud Boys and other groups coming, about keeping them off the Capitol plaza. The police chief insisted they knew what they were doing.

"He kept assuring me he had it under control — they knew what they were doing," she said. "Either he's incompetent, or he was lying or he was complicit."

Those decisions left the officers policing the Capitol like sitting ducks, the officials said, with little guidance and no cohesive plan on how to deal with the flood of rioters streaming into the building.

The department's leaders were also scattered during the riots. The chief of police was with Vice President Mike Pence in a secure location, and other high-ranking officials had been dispatched to the scene of bombs found outside the nearby headquarters of the Republican and Democratic national committees.

The rioters had more equipment and they weren't afraid to use it, said Ashan Benedict, who leads the Washington field division for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and was there that day.

"They had apparently more bear spray and pepper spray and chemical munitions than we did," Benedict said. "We're coming up with plans to counteract their chemical munitions with some of our own less-than-lethal devices, so these conversations are going on as this chaos is unfolding in front of my eyes."

Officers have been criticized for their actions after snippets of videos taken by the rioters showed some posing for selfies, acquiescing to demands by screaming rioters to move aside so they could stream inside the building.

But other videos show officers trying in vain to keep the crowd from breaking into the building. One disturbing video shows a bloodied Metropolitan police officer screaming for help as he's crushed by protesters inside the Capitol building. The young officer is pinned between a riot shield and metal door. Bleeding from the mouth, he cries out in pain and screams, "Help!"

In another stunning video, a lone police officer tries to hold off a mob of demonstrators from breaking into the lobby. He fails.

One officer died in the riot and at least a dozen were injured. The officials wouldn't reveal the specific number of officers on-duty over concerns about disclosing operational details, but confirmed that the numbers were on par with a routine protest and day where lawmakers would be present.

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Capitol Police officials did brief lawmakers ahead of Wednesday, saying they expected large numbers of protesters to attend a rally near the White House, but offered no indication they were making preparations for an en masse movement of the crowd to the Capitol, according to one Republican congressional aide. Still, they advised lawmakers to plan to use the underground tunnels that connect House office buildings to the Capitol.

Benedict was at the bomb scene when Capitol Police captains there told him their officers were being overrun.

He immediately activated the special response team that was standing by and began to call in every ATF agent who works for him in Washington.

When they began entering the Capitol complex at 2:40 p.m., the hallways were packed with rioters.

Eventually, federal agents were able to secure the Capitol Rotunda.

"We just started moving crowds of people out of the Capitol Complex and then going through one by one, each room and rooms off of rooms, to identify friendlies from hostiles," he said.

Associated Press writers Zeke Miller, Lolita Baldor, Mike Balsamo, Alan Fram and Mary Clare Jalonick contributed to this report.

Trump remains defiant amid calls to resign

By JILL COLVIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump enters the last days of his presidency isolated and shunned by former allies and members of his own party as he faces a second impeachment and growing calls for his resignation after his supporters launched an assault on the nation's Capitol in an effort to disrupt the peaceful transfer of power.

Cut off from the social media channels that have been the lifeblood of his presidency, Trump will nonetheless try to go on offense in his last 10 days, with no plans of resigning.

Instead, Trump is planning to lash out against the companies that have now denied him his Twitter and Facebook bullhorns. And aides hope he will spend his last days trying to trumpet his policy accomplishments, beginning with a trip to Alamo, Texas, on Tuesday to highlight his administration's efforts to curb illegal immigration and border wall construction.

Trump's decision to travel to Alamo — named after the San Antonio mission where a small group of Texans fighting for independence against the Mexican government were defeated after a 13-day siege — served as a symbol of his defiance as he faces the most volatile end of any presidency in modern history.

Trump has not taken any responsibility for his role in inciting Wednesday's violence amid a rebellion from members of his own party and ongoing efforts to remove him from office. A second Republican senator, Pat Toomey of Pennsylvania, on Sunday called for Trump's resignation after Sen. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska told the Anchorage Daily News: "I want him out."

It was a stunning reversal for a man who had once been considered the leading contender for his party's nomination in 2024, and could now be stripped of his ability to run for a second term.

A new ABC News/Ipsos poll released Sunday found that over half of Americans — 56% — believe that Trump should be removed from office before his term ends. And two-thirds of respondents - 67% — said he deserves a "good amount" or a "great deal" of blame for the rioting last week.

Trump had delivered a speech to his supporters in which he repeatedly said the election was being stolen and urged them to "fight" before they rushed the Capitol as lawmakers were in the process of certifying Biden's wins. The violent crowd forced its way inside, ransacked the building and sent terrified staff and lawmakers, including the vice president, into hiding. Five, including a Capitol police officer, died.

Rattled by the violent insurrection and images of MAGA-loyalists hunting for them in the Capitol's hallways, House Democrats moved quickly toward a second impeachment this week, though Republican Senate Leader Mitch McConnell has said a trial in his chamber would not begin before Biden takes office.

While people close to Trump said they would certainly prefer he not become the only president in the

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nation's history to be impeached a second time, Jason Miller, a close adviser, noted that Trump's popularity rose after his first impeachment trial. And he argued that, if they moved forward, Democrats risk turning public sentiment against them and impeding Biden's agenda by continuing to focus on Trump even after he has left the White House.

"As I said to the president this morning, never discount national Democrats' ability to galvanize the Republican base behind you," said Miller, arguing that, if "national Democrats were to go down that path, I think it would boomerang on them very severely."

"Joe Biden doesn't want to spend the first 100 days of his presidency having to own a vindictive and overreaching impeachment trial," he added.

Concerns continued to bubble through the weekend about how Trump, who thrives on chaos and attention, might respond. Wednesday's episode cut to the core of the nation's self-identity — that of a functioning, stable republic — sparking soul searching in Washington and around the world.

But Trump, who once delighted in how quickly the missives he'd type on his smartphone would land as "BREAKING NEWS" chyrons on the cable news networks, has not expressed contrition, and has instead been consumed by anger. Trump has been described as apoplectic over the loss of his Twitter platform and is now without an outlet for releasing that anger.

And he remains surrounded by an ever shrinking coterie of aides as more mull early departures and he rages at others, including Pence, who had spent the last four years as his most loyal soldier.

The two men have not spoken since Wednesday when Pence informed Trump that he would not be going along with Trump's unconstitutional scheme to throw out legal electoral voters in his bid to overturn the election. Pence had never had that power in the first place, but that didn't stop Trump from insisting he did, both publicly and privately, turning Pence into a scapegoat who could be blamed for Trump's defeat.

Pence allies are now livid about the president, whom they believe not only set him up for failure, but put his life — and the life of his wife, daughter and brother, who were with him at the Capitol — in physical danger. After repeatedly claiming Pence could unilaterally reverse the election's outcome at Wednesday's rally, Trump then tweeted that Pence lacked the courage "to do what should have been done to protect our Country" as the siege was underway and never bothered to check in on Pence's safety, according to a person close to Pence.

Still, there is no indication that Pence is seriously considering moving to invoke the 25th Amendment to remove Trump from power, as calls continue for him to make that move. Aides have not, however, ruled it out explicitly, keeping the option on the table in case Trump takes further action that might warrant discussion, according to two people close to him who, like others, spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss internal planning.

"What I've heard from fellow Republicans is that they've had enough," said former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, a longtime friend and informal adviser. He told ABC's "This Week" that he considered Trump's conduct grounds for impeachment, saying, "If inciting to insurrection isn't, then I don't really know what is."

Christie also criticized Trump for refusing to lower the White House flags to half-staff in honor of Brian Sicknick, the Capitol police officer who died of injuries sustained as he tried to ward off the riotous mob, calling it a "national disgrace."

Hours later, the White House quietly lowered the flags, though Trump has still offered no public comment on the officer's death.

Meanwhile, Trump has largely been absent from his presidential duties since he lost the election, consumed instead with base conspiracies about mass voter fraud that his own government has rejected, even as the coronavirus pandemic spirals further out of control.

While his legacy will surely forever be stained by Wednesday's violence, aides nonetheless are pushing Trump to spend his final days trumpeting his policy achievements. Events have been discussed to highlight his administration's efforts to bolster Mideast peace, roll back regulations, support jobs and manufacturing and curb China's power, though previous such efforts have been rebuffed.

While it is unclear whether such action would have any practical impact, Trump is also mulling potential executive action as he escalates his war against big tech after he was banned by Twitter and Facebook

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and as Amazon moves to shut down platforms like the conservative favorite Parler amid concerns about potential future violence ahead of President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration on January 20.

___ Associated Press writers Zeke Miller and Darlene Superville contributed to this report.

Analysis: A GOP reckoning after turning blind eye to Trump

By JULIE PACE AP Washington Bureau Chief

WASHINGTON (AP) — At the heart of the violent insurrection at the U.S. Capitol was a lie, one that was allowed to fester and flourish by many of the same Republicans now condemning President Donald Trump for whipping his supporters into a frenzy with his false attacks on the integrity of the 2020 election.

The response from some of those GOP officials now? We didn't think it would come to this.

"People took him literally. I never thought I would see that," said Mick Mulvaney, Trump's former chief of staff. Mulvaney resigned his post as special envoy to Northern Ireland last week after the riots.

That argument reveals the extent to which many Republicans have willingly turned a blind eye throughout Trump's presidency to some of the forces coursing through America. Each time Trump promoted a conspiracy theory or openly flirted with extremist groups, Republicans assumed there were still some limits to how far he and his most loyal supporters would go.

Few seemed concerned about the worst-case scenarios, dismissing fears of violence or authoritarianism as liberal fever dreams.

Pennsylvania Sen. Pat Toomey, who backed Trump in the 2020 election but is now calling for him to resign, cast Trump's actions after his loss as a dark shift, despite the fact that the president laid the groundwork for challenging the election before the first votes were cast.

"He descended into a level of madness and engaged in a level of activity that was just absolutely unthinkable," Toomey said on Sunday.

If some Republicans had reservations about Trump before the election, they often appeared to be overshadowed by their belief that there would be a political price to pay for openly challenging the president. Even after Trump's loss to President-elect Joe Biden, GOP lawmakers worried about the hold he would have on their party in the coming years and the prospect of a primary challenge in their races if they crossed him. Well aware of this reality, Trump tried to box Republicans in further by vowing to run again in 2024, even without conceding the 2020 election.

And so most GOP officials gave the president time and space to falsely attack the integrity of the November election, spread a vast array of misinformation and delegitimize Biden's victory in the eyes of millions of Americans. Most privately acknowledged Biden's victory, but rationalized that the best way to help ease Trump out of office was to give him space to come to grips with his loss.

But that never came to pass. Even as judges across the country, including some nominated by Trump, dismissed case after case and Attorney General William Barr, a Trump stalwart, said there was no sign of any widespread election malfeasance, the president kept up his baseless attacks.

Some Republicans were complicit in the falsehood with their silence, while others were active participants.

More than 120 GOP lawmakers asked the Supreme Court to overturn the will of the voters in key battleground states, an unprecedented step the high court refused to consider. As late as Wednesday morning, 150 lawmakers in the House and Senate promised to object to the election results in Congress, helping fuel the impression among some Trump supporters that there was still an avenue available for subverting Biden's victory. Missouri Sen. Josh Hawley, eager to capture the support of Trump's backers in the coming years, pumped his fist to supporters on his way into the Capitol that morning to object to the results of a free and fair election.

There were exceptions. Utah Sen. Mitt Romney, long a critic of the president and the only Republican senator who voted to convict Trump during his impeachment trial early last year, warned about the dangerous consequences of letting Trump's election conspiracies flourish. So did Republican officials in Georgia, who withstood direct pressure from the president to "find" him more votes and overturn Biden's victory in the state. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell waited until mid-December to recognize Biden's victory, then aggressively warned his members against challenging the election results in Congress.

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But for many Republicans, it was only on Wednesday, when their own lives were put at risk by the violent mob that stormed the Capitol, that the consequences of the president's dangerous disinformation campaign became clear.

"Count me out. Enough is enough," said South Carolina Sen. Lindsey Graham, one of Trump's most ardent backers throughout the last four years. Graham was later surrounded by angry Trump supporters at a Washington-area airport, who accused him of being a traitor to the cause of overturning the election.

Several senators who intended to object to the election results also changed their minds in the hours after the insurrection, suggesting they had never really believed in the fraud allegations in the first place. Among them: Sen. Kelly Loeffler of Georgia, who lost a Senate runoff two days before the riots. Loeffler had thrown her support behind the election objections in a last-minute bid to energize Trump backers in her state.

It wasn't hard to see why she thought that might be a winning strategy. An AP VoteCast survey of the electorate in Georgia showed that about three-quarters of voters who backed Republican candidates in the runoffs said Biden was not legitimately elected, despite there being no credible evidence to support that assertion.

Republicans must now contend with the reality that millions of their party's supporters believe a lie so powerful that it sparked an insurrection against Congress. And within their own ranks, nearly 150 lawmakers still backed challenges to the election after Congress reconvened following the assault on the Capitol.

And then there is this: While a vast majority — 88% — of Americans oppose the rioters' actions, nearly a fifth of Republicans — 18% — said they support them, according to a new PBS Newshour/Marist poll.

Editor's Note: Julie Pace has covered the White House and politics for the AP since 2007. Follow her at <http://twitter.com/jpaceDC>

PGA Championship leaving Trump National in '22 tournament

By DOUG FERGUSON AP Golf Writer

KAPALUA, Hawaii (AP) — The PGA of America cut ties to President Donald Trump when it voted Sunday to take the PGA Championship event away from his New Jersey golf course next year.

The vote comes four days after the Trump-fueled riot at the nation's Capitol as Congress was certifying the election victory of President-elect Joe Biden. This is the second time in just over five years the PGA of America removed one of its events from a Trump course.

PGA President Jim Richerson says the board voted to exercise its right to "terminate the agreement" with Trump National in Bedminster, New Jersey.

"We find ourselves in a political situation not of our making," Seth Waugh, the CEO of the PGA of America, said in a telephone interview. "We're fiduciaries for our members, for the game, for our mission and for our brand. And how do we best protect that? Our feeling was given the tragic events of Wednesday that we could no longer hold it at Bedminster. The damage could have been irreparable. The only real course of action was to leave."

The PGA of America, which has some 29,000 golf professionals who mostly teach the game, signed the deal with Trump National in 2014.

It canceled the PGA Grand Slam of Golf in 2015 at Trump National Los Angeles Golf Club after Trump's disparaging remarks about Mexican immigrants when he announced he was seeking the Republican nomination for president. The event was canceled for good the following spring.

The shocking insurrection Wednesday rattled the country, and in golf circles, attention quickly focused on whether the PGA of America would keep its premier championship — and one of golf's four major championships — at Trump's course in 2022.

"Our decision wasn't about speed and timing," Waugh said. "What matters most to our board and leadership is protecting our brand and reputation, and the ability for our members to lead the growth of the game, which they do through so many powerful programs in their communities."

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The Trump Organization said in a statement it has "a beautiful partnership with the PGA of America and are incredibly disappointed with their decision."

"This is a breach of a binding contract and they have no right to terminate the agreement," the statement said. "As an organization we have invested many, many millions of dollars in the 2022 PGA Championship at Trump National Golf Club, Bedminster. We will continue to promote the game of golf on every level and remain focused on operating the finest golf courses anywhere in the world."

Waugh declined to say whether the PGA of America expected any legal challenges from the Trump Organization.

Trump had delivered a speech to his supporters in which he repeatedly made baseless claims that the election was stolen from him and urged them to "fight."

They stormed the U.S. Capitol as lawmakers were in the process of certifying President-elect Joe Biden's victory. After forcing their way inside, the violent crowd ransacked the building and sent terrified staff and lawmakers into hiding. Five people, including a Capitol police officer, died.

A new ABC News/Ipsos poll released Sunday found that 67% of respondents said Trump deserves a "good amount" or a "great deal" of blame for the insurrection.

"This is not because of any pressures we feel. We're not being forced into a decision," Waugh said. "We had to make a business decision. It's a perpetual institution. My job is to hand it off better than when I found it. One hundred years from now, we still want to be vibrant."

The PGA of America, which operates separately from the PGA Tour and its week-to-week tournaments, previously held the Senior PGA Championship at Trump's course outside Washington in 2017. That was the same year the USGA staged the U.S. Women's Open at Trump National in Bedminster.

Trump also owns Turnberry in Scotland, one of the most picturesque links in the British Open rotation most famous for the "Duel in Sun" between Tom Watson and Jack Nicklaus in 1977, and most recently Stewart Cink beating a 59-year-old Watson in 2009. The R&A, which determines the British Open rotation, has not returned to Turnberry since Trump took over.

He also owns Trump Doral outside Miami, for years a venerable stop on the PGA Tour schedule and most recently a World Golf Championship site. Trump's presence made it difficult to find a corporate sponsor, and the tournament moved to Mexico in 2017.

Waugh said the PGA of America already had a team in place in New Jersey to start work on selling the events to the public and local sponsorship. Now it's about finding a place to play the PGA Championship, which dates to 1916, for next year.

The PGA is at Kiawah Island in South Carolina in May.

"We've had a number of places reach out already," Waugh said. "We think we'll have a bunch of options."

The unfolding of 'home-grown fascism' in Capitol assault

By JAY REEVES, LISA MASCARO and CALVIN WOODWARD Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Under battle flags bearing Donald Trump's name, the Capitol's attackers pinned a bloodied police officer in a doorway, his twisted face and screams captured on video. They mortally wounded another officer with a blunt weapon and body-slammed a third over a railing into the crowd.

"Hang Mike Pence!" the insurrectionists chanted as they pressed inside, beating police with pipes. They demanded House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's whereabouts, too. They hunted any and all lawmakers: "Where are they?" Outside, makeshift gallows stood, complete with sturdy wooden steps and the noose. Guns and pipe bombs had been stashed in the vicinity.

Only days later is the extent of the danger from one of the darkest episodes in American democracy coming into focus. The sinister nature of the assault has become evident, betraying the crowd as a force determined to occupy the inner sanctums of Congress and run down leaders — Trump's vice president and the Democratic House speaker among them.

This was not just a collection of Trump supporters with MAGA bling caught up in a wave.

That revelation came in real time to Rep. Jim McGovern, D-Mass., who briefly took over proceedings in

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the House chamber as the mob closed in Wednesday and the speaker, Rep. Nancy Pelosi, was spirited to safer quarters moments before everything went haywire.

"I saw this crowd of people banging on that glass screaming," McGovern told The Associated Press on Sunday. "Looking at their faces, it occurred to me, these aren't protesters. These are people who want to do harm."

"What I saw in front of me," he said, "was basically home-grown fascism, out of control."

Pelosi said Sunday "the evidence is that it was a well-planned, organized group with leadership and guidance and direction. And the direction was to go get people." She did not elaborate on that point in a "60 Minutes" interview on CBS.

The scenes of rage, violence and agony are so vast that the whole of it may still be beyond comprehension. But with countless smartphone videos emerging from the scene, much of it from gloating insurrectionists themselves, and more lawmakers recounting the chaos that was around them, contours of the uprising are increasingly coming into relief.

THE STAGING

The mob got explicit marching orders from Trump and still more encouragement from the president's men. "Fight like hell," Trump exhorted his partisans at the staging rally. "Let's have trial by combat," implored his lawyer, Rudy Giuliani, whose attempt to throw out election results in trial by courtroom failed. It's time to "start taking down names and kicking ass," said Republican Rep. Mo Brooks of Alabama.

Criminals pardoned by Trump, among them Roger Stone and Michael Flynn, came forward at rallies on the eve of the attack to tell the crowds they were fighting a battle between good and evil and they were on the side of good. On Capitol Hill, Republican Sen. Josh Hawley of Missouri gave a clenched-fist salute to the hordes outside the Capitol as he pulled up to press his challenge of the election results.

The crowd was pumped. Until a little after 2 p.m., Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell was at the helm for the final minutes of decorum in partnership with Pence, who was serving his ceremonial role presiding over the process.

Both men had backed Trump's agenda and excused or ignored his provocations for four years, but now had no mechanism or will to subvert the election won by Biden. That placed them high among the insurrectionists' targets, no different in the minds of the mob than the "socialists."

"If this election were overturned by mere allegations from the losing side, our democracy would enter a death spiral," McConnell told his chamber, not long before things spiraled out of control in what lawmakers call the "People's House."

THE ASSAULT

Thousands had swarmed the Capitol. They charged into police and metal barricades outside the building, shoving and hitting officers in their way. The assault quickly pushed through the vastly outnumbered police line; officers ran down one man and pummeled him.

In the melee outside, near the structure built for Joe Biden's inauguration on Jan. 20, a man threw a red fire extinguisher at the helmeted head of a police officer. Then he picked up a bullhorn and threw it at officers, too.

The identity of the officer could not immediately be confirmed. But Capitol Police officer Brian Sicknick, who was wounded in the chaos, died the next night; officials say he had been hit in the head with a fire extinguisher.

Shortly after 2 p.m., Capitol Police sent an alert telling workers in a House office building to head to underground transportation tunnels that criss-cross the complex. Minutes later, Pence was taken from the Senate chamber to a secret location and police announced the lockdown of the Capitol. "You may move throughout the building(s) but stay away from exterior windows and doors," said the email blast. "If you are outside, seek cover."

At 2:15 p.m., the Senate recessed its Electoral College debate and a voice was heard over the chamber's

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audio system: "The protesters are in the building." The doors of the House chamber were barricaded and lawmakers inside it were told they may need to duck under their chairs or relocate to cloakrooms off the House floor because the mob has breached the Capitol Rotunda.

Even before the mob reached sealed doors of the House chamber, Capitol Police pulled Pelosi away from the podium, she told "60 Minutes."

"I said, 'No, I want to be here,'" she said. "And they said, 'Well, no, you have to leave.' I said, 'No, I'm not leaving.' They said, 'No, you must leave.'" So she did.

At 2:44 p.m., as lawmakers inside the House chamber prepared to be evacuated, a gunshot was heard from right outside, in the Speaker's Lobby on the other side of the barricaded doors. That's when Ashli Babbitt, wearing a Trump flag like a cape, was shot to death on camera as insurrectionists railed, her blood pooling on the white marble floor.

The Air Force veteran from California had climbed through a broken window into the Speaker's Lobby before a police officer's gunshot felled her.

Back in the House chamber, a woman in the balcony was seen and heard screaming. Why she was doing that only became clear later when video circulated. She was screaming a prayer.

Within about 10 minutes of the shooting, House lawmakers and staff members who had been cowering during the onslaught, terror etched into their faces, had been taken from the chamber and gallery to a secure room. The mob broke into Pelosi's offices while members of her staff hid in one of the rooms of her suite.

"The staff went under the table barricaded the door, turned out the lights, and were silent in the dark," she said. "Under the table for two and a half hours."

On the Senate side, Capitol Police had circled the chamber and ordered all staff and reporters and any nearby senators into the chamber and locked it down. At one point about 200 people were inside; an officer armed with what appeared to be a semi-automatic weapon stood between McConnell and the Democratic leader, Sen. Chuck Schumer.

Authorities then ordered an evacuation and rushed everyone inside to a secure location, the Senate parliamentary staff scooping up the boxes holding the Electoral College certificates.

Although the Capitol's attackers had been sent with Trump's exhortation to fight, they appeared in some cases to be surprised that they had actually made it in.

When they breached the abandoned Senate chamber, they milled around, rummaged through papers, sat at desks and took videos and pictures. One of them climbed to the dais and yelled, "Trump won that election!" Two others were photographed carrying flex cuffs typically used for mass arrests.

But outside the chamber, the mob's hunt was still on for lawmakers. "Where are they?" people could be heard yelling.

That question could have also applied to reinforcements — where were they?

At about 5:30 p.m., once the National Guard had arrived to supplement the overwhelmed Capitol Police force, a full-on effort began to get the attackers out.

Heavily armed officers brought in as reinforcements started using tear gas in a coordinated fashion to get people moving toward the door, then combed the halls for stragglers. As darkness fell, they pushed the mob farther out onto the plaza and lawn, using officers in riot gear in full shields and clouds of tear gas, flash-bangs and percussion grenades.

At 7:23 p.m., officials announced that people hunkered down in two nearby congressional office buildings could leave "if anyone must."

Within the hour, the Senate had resumed its work and the House followed, returning the People's House to the control of the people's representatives. Lawmakers affirmed Biden's election victory early the next morning, shell-shocked by the catastrophic failure of security.

Rep. Maxine Waters, D-Ca., told AP on Sunday it was as if Capitol Police "were naked" against the attackers. "It turns out it was the worst kind of non-security anybody could ever imagine."

Said McGovern: "I was in such disbelief this could possibly happen. These domestic terrorists were in

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the People's House, desecrating the People's House, destroying the People's House."

Associated Press writers Dustin Weaver in Washington and Michael Casey in Concord, New Hampshire, contributed to this report. Reeves reported from Birmingham, Alabama.

Trump remains defiant amid calls to resign

By JILL COLVIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump enters the last days of his presidency isolated and shunned by former allies and members of his own party as he faces a second impeachment and growing calls for his resignation after his supporters launched an assault on the nation's Capitol in an effort to disrupt the peaceful transfer of power.

Cut off from the social media channels that have been the lifeblood of his presidency, Trump will nonetheless try to go on offense in his last 10 days, with no plans of resigning.

Instead, Trump is planning to lash out against the companies that have now denied him his Twitter and Facebook bullhorns. And aides hope he will spend his last days trying to trumpet his policy accomplishments, beginning with a trip to Alamo, Texas, on Tuesday to highlight his administration's efforts to curb illegal immigration and border wall construction.

Trump's decision to travel to Alamo — named after the San Antonio mission where a small group of Texans fighting for independence against the Mexican government were defeated after a 13-day siege — served as a symbol of his defiance as he faces the most volatile end of any presidency in modern history.

Trump has not taken any responsibility for his role in inciting Wednesday's violence amid a rebellion from members of his own party and ongoing efforts to remove him from office. A second Republican senator, Pat Toomey of Pennsylvania, on Sunday called for Trump's resignation after Sen. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska told the Anchorage Daily News: "I want him out."

It was a stunning reversal for a man who had once been considered the leading contender for his party's nomination in 2024, and could now be stripped of his ability to run for a second term.

A new ABC News/Ipsos poll released Sunday found that over half of Americans — 56% — believe that Trump should be removed from office before his term ends. And two-thirds of respondents - 67% — said he deserves a "good amount" or a "great deal" of blame for the rioting last week.

Trump had delivered a speech to his supporters in which he repeatedly said the election was being stolen and urged them to "fight" before they rushed the Capitol as lawmakers were in the process of certifying Biden's wins. The violent crowd forced its way inside, ransacked the building and sent terrified staff and lawmakers, including the vice president, into hiding. Five, including a Capitol police officer, died.

Rattled by the violent insurrection and images of MAGA-loyalists hunting for them in the Capitol's hallways, House Democrats moved quickly toward a second impeachment this week, though Republican Senate Leader Mitch McConnell has said a trial in his chamber would not begin before Biden takes office.

While people close to Trump said they would certainly prefer he not become the only president in the nation's history to be impeached a second time, Jason Miller, a close adviser, noted that Trump's popularity rose after his first impeachment trial. And he argued that, if they moved forward, Democrats risk turning public sentiment against them and impeding Biden's agenda by continuing to focus on Trump even after he has left the White House.

"As I said to the president this morning, never discount national Democrats' ability to galvanize the Republican base behind you," said Miller, arguing that, if "national Democrats were to go down that path, I think it would boomerang on them very severely."

"Joe Biden doesn't want to spend the first 100 days of his presidency having to own a vindictive and overreaching impeachment trial," he added.

Concerns continued to bubble through the weekend about how Trump, who thrives on chaos and attention, might respond. Wednesday's episode cut to the core of the nation's self-identity — that of a functioning, stable republic — sparking soul searching in Washington and around the world.

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But Trump, who once delighted in how quickly the missives he'd type on his smartphone would land as "BREAKING NEWS" chyrons on the cable news networks, has not expressed contrition, and has instead been consumed by anger. Trump has been described as apoplectic over the loss of his Twitter platform and is now without an outlet for releasing that anger.

And he remains surrounded by an ever shrinking coterie of aides as more mull early departures and he rages at others, including Pence, who had spent the last four years as his most loyal soldier.

The two men have not spoken since Wednesday when Pence informed Trump that he would not be going along with Trump's unconstitutional scheme to throw out legal electoral voters in his bid to overturn the election. Pence had never had that power in the first place, but that didn't stop Trump from insisting he did, both publicly and privately, turning Pence into a scapegoat who could be blamed for Trump's defeat.

Pence allies are now livid about the president, whom they believe not only set him up for failure, but put his life — and the life of his wife, daughter and brother, who were with him at the Capitol — in physical danger. After repeatedly claiming Pence could unilaterally reverse the election's outcome at Wednesday's rally, Trump then tweeted that Pence lacked the courage "to do what should have been done to protect our Country" as the siege was underway and never bothered to check in on Pence's safety, according to a person close to Pence.

Still, there is no indication that Pence is seriously considering moving to invoke the 25th Amendment to remove Trump from power, as calls continue for him to make that move. Aides have not, however, ruled it out explicitly, keeping the option on the table in case Trump takes further action that might warrant discussion, according to two people close to him who, like others, spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss internal planning.

"What I've heard from fellow Republicans is that they've had enough," said former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, a longtime friend and informal adviser. He told ABC's "This Week" that he considered Trump's conduct grounds for impeachment, saying, "If inciting to insurrection isn't, then I don't really know what is."

Christie also criticized Trump for refusing to lower the White House flags to half-staff in honor of Brian Sicknick, the Capitol police officer who died of injuries sustained as he tried to ward off the riotous mob, calling it a "national disgrace."

Hours later, the White House quietly lowered the flags, though Trump has still offered no public comment on the officer's death.

Meanwhile, Trump has largely been absent from his presidential duties since he lost the election, consumed instead with base conspiracies about mass voter fraud that his own government has rejected, even as the coronavirus pandemic spirals further out of control.

While his legacy will surely forever be stained by Wednesday's violence, aides nonetheless are pushing Trump to spend his final days trumpeting his policy achievements. Events have been discussed to highlight his administration's efforts to bolster Mideast peace, roll back regulations, support jobs and manufacturing and curb China's power, though previous such efforts have been rebuffed.

While it is unclear whether such action would have any practical impact, Trump is also mulling potential executive action as he escalates his war against big tech after he was banned by Twitter and Facebook and as Amazon moves to shut down platforms like the conservative favorite Parler amid concerns about potential future violence ahead of President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration on January 20.

___ Associated Press writers Zeke Miller and Darlene Superville contributed to this report.

Records show fervent Trump fans fueled US Capitol takeover

By MICHAEL BIESECKER, MICHAEL KUNZELMAN, GILLIAN FLACCUS and JIM MUSTIAN Associated Press WASHINGTON (AP) — They came from across America, summoned by President Donald Trump to march on Washington in support of his false claim that the November election was stolen and to stop the congressional certification of Democrat Joe Biden as the victor.

"Big protest in D.C. on January 6th," Trump tweeted a week before Christmas. "Be there, will be wild!" The insurrectionist mob that showed up at the president's behest and stormed the U.S. Capitol was

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overwhelmingly made up of longtime Trump supporters, including Republican Party officials, GOP political donors, far-right militants, white supremacists, members of the military and adherents of the QAnon myth that the government is secretly controlled by a cabal of Satan-worshiping pedophile cannibals. Records show that some were heavily armed and included convicted criminals, such as a Florida man recently released from prison for attempted murder.

The Associated Press reviewed social media posts, voter registrations, court files and other public records for more than 120 people either facing criminal charges related to the Jan. 6 unrest or who, going maskless amid the pandemic, were later identified through photographs and videos taken during the melee.

The evidence gives lie to claims by right-wing pundits and Republican officials such as Rep. Matt Gaetz, R-Fla., that the violence was perpetrated by left-wing antifa thugs rather than supporters of the president.

"If the reports are true," Gaetz said on the House floor just hours after the attack, "some of the people who breached the Capitol today were not Trump supporters. They were masquerading as Trump supporters and, in fact, were members of the violent terrorist group antifa."

Steven D'Antuono, the assistant director in charge of the FBI's Washington field office, told reporters that investigators had seen "no indication" antifa activists were disguised as Trump supporters in Wednesday's riot.

The AP found that many of the rioters had taken to social media after the November election to retweet and parrot false claims by Trump that the vote had been stolen in a vast international conspiracy. Several had openly threatened violence against Democrats and Republicans they considered insufficiently loyal to the president. During the riot, some livestreamed and posted photos of themselves at the Capitol. Afterwards, many bragged about what they had done.

As the mob smashed through doors and windows to invade the Capitol, a loud chant went up calling for the hanging of Vice President Mike Pence, the recent target of a Trump Twitter tirade for not subverting the Constitution and overturning the legitimate vote tally. Outside, a wooden scaffold had been erected on the National Mall, a rope noose dangling at the ready.

So far, at least 90 people have been arrested on charges ranging from misdemeanor curfew violations to felonies related to assaults on police officers, possessing illegal weapons and making death threats against House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif.

Among them was Lonnie Leroy Coffman, 70, an Alabama grandfather who drove to Washington to attend Trump's "Save America Rally" in a red GMC Sierra pickup packed with an M4 assault rifle, multiple loaded magazines, three handguns and 11 Mason jars filled with homemade napalm, according to court filings.

The truck was found during a security sweep involving explosives-sniffing dogs after two pipe bombs were found and disarmed Wednesday near the national headquarters of the Republican and Democratic parties. Coffman was arrested that evening when he returned to the truck carrying a 9mm Smith & Wesson handgun and a .22-caliber derringer pistol in his pockets. Federal officials said Coffman is not suspected of planting the pipe bombs, though he was charged with having Molotov cocktails in the bed of his truck.

His grandson, Brandon Coffman, told the AP on Friday his grandfather was a Republican who had expressed admiration for Trump at holiday gatherings. He said he had no idea why Coffman would show up in the nation's capital armed for civil war.

Also facing federal charges is Cleveland Grover Meredith Jr., a Georgia man who in the wake of the election had protested outside the home of Republican Gov. Brian Kemp, whom Trump had publicly blamed for his loss in the state. Meredith drove to Washington last week for the "Save America" rally but arrived late because of a problem with the lights on his trailer, according to court filings that include expletive-laden texts.

"Headed to DC with a (s---) ton of 5.56 armor-piercing ammo," he texted friends and relatives on Jan. 6, adding a purple devil emoji, according to court filings. The following day, he texted to the group: "Thinking about heading over to Pelosi (C---'s) speech and putting a bullet in her noggin on Live TV." He once again added a purple devil emoji, and wrote he might hit her with his truck instead. "I'm gonna run that (C---) Pelosi over while she chews on her gums. ... Dead (B---) Walking. I predict that within 12 days,

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many in our country will die.”

Meredith, who is white, then texted a photo of himself in blackface. “I’m gonna walk around DC FKG with people by yelling ‘Allahu ak Bar’ randomly.”

A participant in the text exchange provided screenshots to the FBI, who tracked Meredith to a Holiday Inn a short walk from the Capitol. They found a compact Tavor X95 assault rifle, a 9mm Glock 19 handgun and about 100 rounds of ammunition, according to court filings. The agents also seized a stash of THC edibles and a vial of injectable testosterone.

Meredith is charged with transmitting a threat, as well as felony counts for possession of firearms and ammunition.

Michael Thomas Curzio was arrested in relation to the riots less than two years after he was released from a Florida prison in 2019 after serving an eight-year sentence for attempted murder. Court records from Florida show that he shot the boyfriend of his former girlfriend in a fight at her home.

Federal law enforcement officials vowed Friday to bring additional charges against those who carried out the attack on the Capitol, launching a nationwide manhunt for dozens of suspects identified from photographic evidence

The FBI has opened a murder probe into the death of Capitol Police Officer Brian D. Sicknick, who was hit in the head with a fire extinguisher, according to law enforcement officials who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the ongoing investigation publicly. He died at a hospital.

The Trump supporters who died in the riot were Kevin D. Greeson, 55, of Athens, Alabama; Benjamin Philips, 50, of Ringtown, Pennsylvania; Ashli Babbitt, 35, of San Diego; and Rosanne Boyland, 34, of Kenesaw, Georgia.

Boyland’s sister told the AP on Friday she was an adherent of the QAnon conspiracy theory that holds Trump is America’s savior. Her Facebook page featured photos and videos praising Trump and promoting fantasies, including one theory that a shadowy group was using the coronavirus to steal elections. Boyland’s final post on Twitter — a retweet of a post by White House social media director Dan Scavino — was a picture of thousands of people surrounding the Washington Monument on Wednesday.

“She would text me some things, and I would be like, ‘Let me fact-check that.’ And I’d sit there and I’d be like, ‘Well, I don’t think that’s actually right,’” Lonna Cave, Boyland’s sister, said. “We got in fights about it, arguments.”

The AP’s review found that QAnon beliefs were common among those who heeded Trump’s call to come to Washington.

Doug Jensen, 41, was arrested by the FBI on Friday in Des Moines, Iowa, after returning home from the riot. An AP photographer captured images of him confronting Capitol Police officers outside of the Senate chamber on Wednesday.

Jensen was wearing a black T-shirt emblazoned with a large Q and the phrase “Trust The Plan,” a reference to QAnon. Video posted online during the storming of the Capitol also appears to show Jensen, who is white, pursuing a Black police officer up an interior flight of stairs as a mob of people trails several steps behind. At several points, the officer says “get back,” but to no avail.

Jensen’s older brother, William Routh, told the AP on Saturday that Jensen believed that the person posting as Q was either Trump or someone very close to the president.

“I feel like he had a lot of influence from the internet that confused or obscured his views on certain things,” said Routh, of Clarksville, Arkansas, who described himself as a Republican Trump supporter. “When I talked to him, he thought that maybe this was Trump telling him what to do.”

Jensen’s employer, Forrest & Associate Masonry in Des Moines, announced Friday that he had been fired.

Tara Coleman, a 40-year-old mother who lives in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, was arrested at the Capitol for a curfew violation and for unlawful entry. On her Facebook page, Coleman re-posted articles supporting the QAnon beliefs about a “deep state” conspiracy to target children. The AP could not find a working phone number for Coleman and her attorney, Peter Cooper, did not respond to an email seeking comment.

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And Jake Chansley, who calls himself the "QAnon Shaman" and has long been a fixture at Trump rallies, surrendered to the FBI field office in Phoenix on Saturday. News photos show him at the riot shirtless, with his face painted and wearing a fur hat with horns, carrying a U.S. flag attached to a wooden pole topped with a spear.

Chansley's unusual headwear is visible in a Nov. 7 AP photo at a rally of Trump supporters protesting election results outside of the Maricopa County election center in Phoenix. In that photo, Chansley, who also has gone by the last name Angeli, held a sign that read, "HOLD THE LINE PATRIOTS GOD WINS." He also expressed his support for the president in an interview with the AP that day.

The FBI identified Chansley by his distinctive tattoos, which include bricks circling his biceps in an apparent reference to Trump's border wall. Chansley didn't respond last week to messages seeking comment to one of his social media accounts.

There were also current and former members of the U.S. military in the crowd.

Army commanders at Fort Bragg in North Carolina are investigating Capt. Emily Rainey's involvement in the Wednesday rally. The 30-year-old psychological operations officer told the AP she led 100 members of Moore County Citizens for Freedom who traveled to Washington to "stand against election fraud" and support Trump. She insisted she acted within Army regulations and that no one in her group entered the Capitol or broke the law.

"I was a private citizen and doing everything right and within my rights," Rainey told the AP.

Retired Air Force Lt. Col. Larry Rendall Brock Jr. of Texas was charged in federal court on Sunday after he was identified in photos showing him standing in the well of the Senate, wearing a military-style helmet and body armor while holding a pair of zip-tie handcuffs.

The insurrectionist mob also included members of the neofascist group known as the Proud Boys, whom Trump urged to "stand back and stand by" when asked to condemn them by a moderator during a presidential debate in September.

Nicholas R. Ochs, 34, was arrested Saturday after returning home to Hawaii, where he is the founder of the local Proud Boys chapter. On Wednesday, Ochs posted a photo of himself on Twitter inside the Capitol, grinning broadly and smoking a cigarette. According to court filings, the FBI matched photos of Ochs taken during the riot to photos taken when Ochs campaigned unsuccessfully last year as the Republican nominee for a seat in the Hawaii statehouse.

Proud Boys leader Henry "Enrique" Tarrío was arrested Monday in Washington on weapons charges and ordered to stay out of the nation's capital. Tarrío is accused of vandalizing a Black Lives Matter banner at a historic Black church last month.

Jay Robert Thaxton, 46, was arrested near the Capitol for curfew violations on Wednesday. A North Carolina man with the same name has also been linked to the Proud Boys. He told The Stanly News & Press in 2019 that he was a Proud Boys supporter but wouldn't say if he was an official member of the group. Another North Carolina newspaper, The Jacksonville Daily News, published a photo of Thaxton wearing a "Make America Great Again" hat at a 2019 protest over the removal of Confederate statues.

A man who answered a telephone number associated with Thaxton hung up on an AP reporter. The recipient of a text message to the same number responded with an expletive.

Also arrested at the Capitol was William Arthur Leary, who owns a manufactured housing business in Utica, New York. In an interview Friday, Leary told the AP that he strongly believes the election was stolen from Trump and that he went to Washington to show his support.

Leary said he doesn't trust information reported by the mainstream media and that one of his main sources of information was Infowars, the far-right conspiracy site run by Alex Jones. He denied he ever set foot in the Capitol and complained that he was held for more than 24 hours and had his cell phone seized.

"They treated us like animals," he complained. "They took all our phones. I didn't get to make a phone call to tell anybody where I was."

Leary said he remembers seeing a woman, Kristina Malimon, 28, sobbing at the detention center because she had been separated and not allowed to translate for her mother, who primarily speaks Russian. Both women had been charged with curfew violation and unlawful entry. According to a video posted on

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her Instagram account, the younger Malimon says she was born in Moldova, where her family had faced persecution under the Soviet-era regime for their Christian beliefs.

Malimon, who traveled to D.C. from Portland, Oregon, is vice chairwoman of the Young Republicans of Oregon, according to the group's website and is also listed as an "ambassador" for the pro-Trump group Turning Point USA. Her social media feeds are full of photos taken at Trump events, including the earlier "Million MAGA March" held in Washington last month. She also posted photos of herself posing with Donald Trump Jr. and Roger Stone, who was convicted of crimes including obstruction of justice and pardoned by Trump on Christmas Eve.

Media reports from Oregon quoted Malimon in August as the primary organizer of a Trump boat parade on the Willamette River, where big waves created by speeding boats flying Trump flags swamped and sank a smaller boat that was not participating, throwing a family into the water to be rescued by the sheriff's department.

"Oregon, today you came out and showed your love and support for our wonderful President, Donald J. Trump thank you!" Kristina Malimon wrote on Facebook following the parade.

Malimon also served as a Republican poll watcher in Georgia and spoke at an event organized by the Trump campaign in December, claiming to have seen voting machines and tabulation computers in Savannah, Georgia, with suspiciously blinking green lights she interpreted as a sign they were being secretly controlled by outside hackers — a claim debunked as false by GOP election officials in the state.

A phone number listed for Kristina Malimon rang without being answered on Friday. At the address listed for her in southeast Portland on Friday night, her teenage brother answered the door as other family members, including young children, ran around.

The family spoke Russian to each other and the brother, Nick Malimon, translated. He said his sister was still in Washington but had called the family following her release from jail and didn't seem upset about her arrest.

Others are facing consequences even beyond arrest.

A Texas sheriff announced Thursday that he had reported one of his lieutenants to the FBI after she posted photos of herself on social media with a crowd outside the Capitol. Bexar County Sheriff Javier Salazar said Lt. Roxanne Mathai, a 46-year-old jailer, had the right to attend the rally but he's investigating whether she may have broken the law.

One of the posts Mathai shared was a photo that appeared to be taken Wednesday from among the mass of Trump supporters outside the Capitol, "Not gonna lie.....aside from my kids, this was, indeed, the best day of my life. And it's not over yet."

A lawyer for Mathai, a mother and longtime San Antonio resident, said she attended the Trump rally but never entered the Capitol.

Attorney Hector Cortes said Mathai's contract bars her from speaking directly with the press but that she welcomes an FBI investigation and that her actions were squarely within the bounds of the First Amendment.

Brad Rukstales, a Republican political donor and CEO of Cogensia, a Chicago-based data analytics firm, was arrested with a group of a half-dozen Trump supporters who clashed with officers Wednesday inside the Capitol. Campaign finance reports show Rukstales contributed more than \$25,000 to Trump's campaign and other GOP committees during to 2020 election cycle.

He told a local CBS news channel last week that he had entered the Capitol and apologized. He was fired Friday and did not respond to calls and emails seeking comment.

Derrick Evans, a Republican recently sworn in as a delegate to the West Virginia House, resigned Saturday following his arrest on two charges related to the Capitol riot. He had streamed video of himself charging into the building with the mob.

"They're making an announcement now saying if Pence betrays us you better get your mind right because we're storming the building," Evans, 35, says in the video, as the door to the Capitol building is smashed and rioters rush through. "The door is cracked! ... We're in, we're in! Derrick Evans is in the Capitol!"

On Saturday he issued a statement saying he regretted taking part.

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"I take full responsibility for my actions, and deeply regret any hurt, pain or embarrassment I may have caused my family, friends, constituents and fellow West Virginians," the statement said.

Kunzelman reported from College Park, Maryland, Flaccus from Portland, Oregon, and Mustian from New York. Associated Press writers Jake Bleiberg in Dallas; Michael R. Sisak in New York; Michael Balsamo in Washington; Rebecca Boone in Boise, Idaho; James LaPorta in Delray Beach, Florida; and Heather Hollingsworth in Mission, Kansas, contributed to this report.

Follow Associated Press investigative reporter Michael Biesecker at <http://twitter.com/mbieseck>

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Pelosi says House will impeach Trump, pushes VP to oust him

By LISA MASCARO, DARLENE SUPERVILLE and MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said Sunday the House will proceed with legislation to impeach President Donald Trump as she pushes the vice president and the Cabinet to invoke constitutional authority force him out, warning that Trump is a threat to democracy after the deadly assault on the Capitol.

The House action could start as soon as Monday as pressure increases on Trump to step aside. A Republican senator, Pat Toomey of Pennsylvania, joined Republican Sen. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska in calling for Trump to "resign and go away as soon as possible."

A stunning end to Trump's final 10 days in office was underway as lawmakers warned of the damage the president could still do before Joe Biden was inaugurated Jan. 20. Trump, holed up at the White House, was increasingly isolated after a mob rioted in the Capitol in support of his false claims of election fraud.

"We will act with urgency, because this President represents an imminent threat," Pelosi said in a letter late Sunday to colleagues.

"The horror of the ongoing assault on our democracy perpetrated by this President is intensified and so is the immediate need for action."

On Monday, Pelosi's leadership team will seek a vote on a resolution calling on Vice President Mike Pence and Cabinet officials to invoke the 25th Amendment, with a full House vote expected on Tuesday.

After that, Pence and the Cabinet would have 24 hours to act before the House would move toward impeachment.

During an interview on "60 Minutes" aired Sunday, Pelosi invoked the Watergate era when Republicans in the Senate told President Richard Nixon, "It's over."

"That's what has to happen now," she said.

With impeachment planning intensifying, Toomey said he doubted impeachment could be done before Biden is inaugurated, even though a growing number of lawmakers say that step is necessary to ensure Trump can never hold elected office again.

"I think the president has disqualified himself from ever, certainly, serving in office again," Toomey said. "I don't think he is electable in any way."

Murkowski, long exasperated with the president, told the Anchorage Daily News on Friday that Trump simply "needs to get out." A third, Sen. Roy Blunt, R-Mo., did not go that far, but on Sunday he warned Trump to be "very careful" in his final days in office.

House Democrats were expected to introduce articles of impeachment on Monday. The strategy would be to condemn the president's actions swiftly but delay an impeachment trial in the Senate for 100 days. That would allow President-elect Joe Biden to focus on other priorities as soon as he is inaugurated Jan. 20.

Rep. Jim Clyburn, the third-ranking House Democrat and a top Biden ally, laid out the ideas Sunday as the country came to grips with the siege at the Capitol by Trump loyalists trying to overturn the election results.

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"Let's give President-elect Biden the 100 days he needs to get his agenda off and running," Clyburn said. Corporate America began to show its reaction to the Capitol riots by tying them to campaign contributions. Blue Cross Blue Shield Association's CEO and President Kim Keck said it will not contribute to those lawmakers — all Republicans — who supported challenges to Biden's Electoral College win. The group "will suspend contributions to those lawmakers who voted to undermine our democracy," Kim said.

Citigroup did not single out lawmakers aligned with Trump's effort to overturn the election, but said it would be pausing all federal political donations for the first three months of the year. Citi's head of global government affairs, Candi Wolff, said in a Friday memo to employees, "We want you to be assured that we will not support candidates who do not respect the rule of law."

Senate Majority Leader Sen. Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., has said an impeachment trial could not begin under the current calendar before Inauguration Day, Jan. 20.

While many have criticized Trump, Republicans have said that impeachment would be divisive in a time of unity.

Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., said that instead of coming together, Democrats want to "talk about ridiculous things like 'Let's impeach a president'" with just days left in office.

Still, some Republicans might be supportive.

Nebraska Sen. Ben Sasse said he would take a look at any articles that the House sent over. Illinois Rep. Adam Kinzinger, a frequent Trump critic, said he would "vote the right way" if the matter were put in front of him.

The Democratic effort to stamp Trump's presidential record — for the second time — with the indelible mark of impeachment had advanced rapidly since the riot.

Rep. David Cicilline, D-R.I., a leader of the House effort to draft impeachment articles accusing Trump of inciting insurrection, said Sunday that his group had 200-plus co-sponsors.

The articles, if passed by the House, could then be transmitted to the Senate for a trial, with senators acting as jurors to acquit or convict Trump. If convicted, Trump would be removed from office and succeeded by the vice president. It would be the first time a U.S. president had been impeached twice.

Potentially complicating Pelosi's decision about impeachment was what it meant for Biden and the beginning of his presidency. While reiterating that he had long viewed Trump as unfit for office, Biden on Friday sidestepped a question about impeachment, saying what Congress did "is for them to decide."

A violent and largely white mob of Trump supporters overpowered police, broke through security lines and windows and rampaged through the Capitol on Wednesday, forcing lawmakers to scatter as they were finalizing Biden's victory over Trump in the Electoral College.

Toomey appeared on CNN's "State of the Union" and NBC's "Meet the Press." Clyburn was on "Fox News Sunday" and CNN. Kinzinger was on ABC's "This Week," Blunt was on CBS' "Face the Nation" and Rubio was on Fox News Channel's "Sunday Morning Futures."

Superville reported from Wilmington, Delaware. Associated Press writers Alexandra Jaffe, Alan Fram and Zeke Miller contributed to this report.

Capitol police were overrun, 'left naked' against rioters

By COLLEEN LONG, MICHAEL BALSAMO and LISA MASCARO Associated Press
WASHINGTON (AP) — Despite ample warnings about pro-Trump demonstrations in Washington, U.S. Capitol Police did not bolster staffing on Wednesday and made no preparations for the possibility that the planned protests could escalate into massive violent riots, according to several people briefed on law enforcement's response.

The revelations shed new light on why Capitol Police were so quickly overrun by rioters. The department had the same number of officers in place as on a routine day. While some of those officers were outfitted with equipment for a protest, they were not staffed or equipped for a riot.

Once the mob began to move on the Capitol, a police lieutenant issued an order not to use deadly force, which explains why officers outside the building did not draw their weapons as the crowd closed in. Of-

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Officers are sometimes ordered against escalating a situation by drawing their weapons if superiors believe doing so could lead to a stampede or a shootout.

In this instance, it also left officers with little ability to resist the mob. In one video from the scene, an officer puts up his fists to try to push back a crowd pinning him and his colleagues against a door. The crowd jeers "You are not American!" and one man tries to prod him with the tip of an American flag.

"They were left naked," Rep. Maxine Waters, D-California, said of the police in an interview with AP. She had raised security concerns in a Dec. 28 meeting of House Democrats and grilled Steven Sund, the Capitol Police chief, during an hourlong private call on New Year's Eve. "It turns out it was the worst kind of non-security anybody could ever imagine."

The Capitol Police's lackluster response to the riots, poor planning and failure to anticipate the seriousness of the threat have drawn condemnation from lawmakers and prompted the ouster of the department's chief and the Sergeants at Arms of both the House and Senate.

As the full extent of the insurrection becomes clear, the FBI is also investigating whether some of the rioters had plans to kidnap members of Congress and hold them hostage.

Investigators are particularly focused on why some of them were seen carrying plastic zip-tie handcuffs and had apparently accessed areas of the Capitol generally difficult for the public to locate, according to an official.

The official was among four officials briefed on Wednesday's incident who spoke to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the ongoing investigation publicly.

Larry Rendell Brock, of Texas, and Eric Gavelek Munchel, of Tennessee, who both were photographed with plastic restraints as they broke into the Capitol, were arrested by the FBI on Sunday. Prosecutors said Brock also donned a green helmet, tactical vest and camouflage jacket.

The crowd that arrived in Washington on Wednesday was no surprise. Trump had been urging his supporters to come to the capital and some hotels had been booked to 100% capacity - setting off alarm bells because tourism in Washington has cratered amid the pandemic. Justice officials, FBI and other agencies began to monitor flights and social media for weeks and were expecting massive crowds.

A leader of the far-right extremist group Proud Boys was arrested coming into the city with high-powered magazine clips emblazoned with the group's logo, police said. The clips were not loaded, but he was planning to attend a rally near the White House.

Capitol Police leaders, however, had prepared for a free speech demonstration. No fencing was erected outside the Capitol and no contingency plans were prepared in case the situation escalated, according to people briefed.

Rep. Jason Crow, a Democrat from Colorado, said Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy told lawmakers on Sunday that the Defense Department and law enforcement officials had prepared for a crowd similar to protests in November and December, in the "low thousands" and that they had been preparing for small, disparate violent events, like stabbings and fist fights. McCarthy also said Sund and Mayor Muriel Bowser had called for urgent reinforcements from the Defense Department as the crowd surged toward officers but were "unable to articulate what resources are needed and in what locations, due to chaos."

Waters grilled Sund on exactly these kinds of questions -- about the Proud Boys and other groups coming, about keeping them off the Capitol plaza. The police chief insisted they knew what they were doing.

"He kept assuring me he had it under control — they knew what they were doing," she said. "Either he's incompetent, or he was lying or he was complicit."

Those decisions left the officers policing the Capitol like sitting ducks, the officials said, with little guidance and no cohesive plan on how to deal with the flood of rioters streaming into the building.

The department's leaders were also scattered during the riots. The chief of police was with Vice President Mike Pence in a secure location, and other high-ranking officials had been dispatched to the scene of bombs found outside the nearby headquarters of the Republican and Democratic national committees.

The rioters had more equipment and they weren't afraid to use it, said Ashan Benedict, who leads the Washington field division for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and was there that

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day.
"They had apparently more bear spray and pepper spray and chemical munitions than we did," Benedict said. "We're coming up with plans to counteract their chemical munitions with some of our own less-than-lethal devices, so these conversations are going on as this chaos is unfolding in front of my eyes."

Officers have been criticized for their actions after snippets of videos taken by the rioters showed some posing for selfies, acquiescing to demands by screaming rioters to move aside so they could stream inside the building.

But other videos show officers trying in vain to keep the crowd from breaking into the building. One disturbing video shows a bloodied Metropolitan police officer screaming for help as he's crushed by protesters inside the Capitol building. The young officer is pinned between a riot shield and metal door. Bleeding from the mouth, he cries out in pain and screams, "Help!"

In another stunning video, a lone police officer tries to hold off a mob of demonstrators from breaking into the lobby. He fails.

One officer died in the riot and at least a dozen were injured. The officials wouldn't reveal the specific number of officers on-duty over concerns about disclosing operational details, but confirmed that the numbers were on par with a routine protest and day where lawmakers would be present.

Capitol Police officials did brief lawmakers ahead of Wednesday, saying they expected large numbers of protesters to attend a rally near the White House, but offered no indication they were making preparations for an en masse movement of the crowd to the Capitol, according to one Republican congressional aide. Still, they advised lawmakers to plan to use the underground tunnels that connect House office buildings to the Capitol.

Benedict was at the bomb scene when Capitol Police captains there told him their officers were being overrun.

He immediately activated the special response team that was standing by and began to call in every ATF agent who works for him in Washington.

When they began entering the Capitol complex at 2:40 p.m., the hallways were packed with rioters. Eventually, federal agents were able to secure the Capitol Rotunda.

"We just started moving crowds of people out of the Capitol Complex and then going through one by one, each room and rooms off of rooms, to identify friendlies from hostiles," he said.

Associated Press writers Zeke Miller, Lolita Baldor, Mike Balsamo, Alan Fram and Mary Clare Jalonick contributed to this report.

Lawmakers who voted against Biden are denounced back home

By JEFFREY COLLINS Associated Press

Republican members of Congress who voted against certifying Joe Biden's presidential victory, even after a mob broke into the Capitol, are being denounced by critics in their home districts who demand that they resign or be ousted.

Protesters, newspaper editorial boards and local-level Democrats have urged the lawmakers to step down or for their colleagues to kick them out. The House and Senate can remove members with a two-thirds vote or censure or reprimand with a majority.

Rep. Madison Cawthorn "needs to be held accountable for his seditious behavior and for the consequences resulting from said behavior," a group of Democratic officials wrote in a letter asking House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to expel the North Carolina freshman who took his oath of office on Jan. 3.

Cawthorn said he had a constitutional duty to vote against Biden. He condemned the violence in Wednesday's attack, but compared it to last summer's protests over police brutality.

A Capitol police officer died and an officer shot and killed a woman in the mob. Three other people died from medical emergencies in the chaos, which forced lawmakers and staff members to go into hiding as the rioters roamed the halls of one of America's most hallowed buildings.

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Pelosi and other Democratic leaders in Congress are pushing to have President Donald Trump impeached for encouraging the insurrection and refusing to act to stop the violence. But they have been quiet about whether lawmakers who backed the untrue claims of voter fraud that led to the melee should be punished.

Most previous expulsions have been for members who backed the Confederacy during the Civil War or for taking bribes.

In St. Louis on Saturday, several hundred people protested against Sen. Josh Hawley, the first-term Missouri Republican who led efforts in the Senate to overturn Biden's election. The protestors painted "RESIGN HAWLEY" in large yellow letters in the middle of the street.

A caravan of about 40 cars circled Sen. Ron Johnson's office in Madison, Wisconsin, urging him to resign. Johnson initially supported Trump's baseless claims of election fraud, but after the riot, he voted in favor of Biden's win. Johnson condemned the violence but did not back off voter fraud allegations.

The editorial boards of two of Wisconsin's biggest newspapers called for Johnson to resign, joining with editorials published across the country that targeted GOP politicians.

The Houston Chronicle, long a critic of Sen. Ted Cruz, said in an editorial that the Republican knew exactly what he was doing and what might happen when he took to the Senate floor to dispute the election results.

"Those terrorists wouldn't have been at the Capitol if you hadn't staged this absurd challenge to the 2020 results in the first place," the newspaper wrote.

Cruz has called the attack a despicable act of terrorism, but he continues to push for a commission to investigate the presidential election.

In Alabama, the Decatur Daily called for local Rep. Mo Brooks to resign. The York Dispatch in Pennsylvania said congressman Scott Perry is "a disgrace to Pennsylvania and our democracy," and if he still believes Biden's election is fraudulent, he should resign because that means his election was bogus too. Perry condemned the Capitol violence.

The Danville Register & Bee in Virginia said its representative, Bob Good, needs to go because his words struck the matches that led to the destructive mobs. Good said his vote was to protect his constituents.

The invading Trump loyalists "confronted security personnel, and there were injuries and even deaths," the paper's editorial board wrote. "And you are just as guilty as they were."

This story has been edited to delete a sentence that incorrectly stated that racial injustice demonstrations never breached a government building during official business.

Arnold Schwarzenegger compares US Capitol mob to Nazis

By BOBBY CAINA CALVAN Associated Press

Former California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger compared the mob that stormed the U.S. Capitol to the Nazis and called President Donald Trump a failed leader who "will go down in history as the worst president ever."

The Republican said in a video he released on social media on Sunday that "Wednesday was the Night of Broken Glass right here in the United States." In 1938, Nazis in Germany and Austria vandalized Jewish homes, schools and businesses during an attack that became known as Kristallnacht or "the Night of Broken Glass."

"The broken glass was in the windows of the United States Capitol. But the mob did not just shatter the windows of the Capitol, they shattered the ideas we took for granted," he said. "They trampled the very principles on which our country was founded."

Schwarzenegger, who was born in Austria, compared the Proud Boys — a far-right American extremist group — to the Nazis. Some Proud Boys leaders were arrested in the nation's capital, before and after Wednesday's riots.

"President Trump sought to overturn the results of the election — and of a fair election," Schwarzenegger said in the video. "He sought a coup by misleading people with lies."

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Schwarzenegger called Trump a failed leader and said he took solace that Trump's presidency was coming to an end and "would soon be as irrelevant as an old tweet."

He called for national unity and vowed his support for President-elect Joe Biden after mobs loyal to Trump broke into the U.S. Capitol, causing a temporary suspension of the electoral count. Members of Congress later returned and certified the results.

Five people died, including a Capitol police officer. Scores of rioters have been arrested and many more are being sought after the brazen attack.

"And to those who think they can overturn the United States Constitution, know this: You will never win," Schwarzenegger said.

During the video, which runs for more than seven and a half minutes, Schwarzenegger likened American democracy to the sword he brandished in his early role as "Conan the Barbarian," which he said only grows stronger when it is tempered.

Schwarzenegger, best known for his movie role as the Terminator, was elected as California's governor in 2003 during a special recall election. He was later elected to a full term.

"I believe, as shaken as we are about the events of recent days, we will come out stronger because we now understand what can be lost," he said, adding that those behind Wednesday's riots — and those that fomented them — will be held accountable.

Trump-supporting Christian leaders and their Sunday messages

MARIAM FAM, ELANA SCHOR, and DAVID CRARY Associated Press

Support for President Donald Trump has been consistently strong among evangelicals, with some professing that he has been the best friend Christians have had in the White House.

On the first Sunday since a mob of his supporters seeking to overturn President-elect Joe Biden's election stormed the U.S. Capitol and five people including a police officer died, the messages from the pulpits of Christian leaders who've backed Trump were as disparate as the opinions of the nation's citizenry.

They ranged from recitations of debunked conspiracy theories of who was responsible, to calls for healing and following Jesus Christ rather than any individual person, to sermons that made no mention of Wednesday's chaos and what it means for the future.

Here is a look at what some were preaching to their flocks:

OWENSBORO, Kentucky

Brian Gibson, pastor and founder of HIS Church, spoke to his Christian congregation and online viewers about his bus tour around the U.S. the past month to speak with supporters of President Trump.

"I stand up and represent Jesus Christ of Nazareth, and I preach to stand for the First Amendment. I intend to keep this nation a free nation. HIS Church, we intend to keep this nation a free nation," he said, referencing both the president's recent banning from social media platforms and restrictions on church assembly during the pandemic.

Gibson was onstage Jan. 5 at a "Prayer to Save America" event billed as a combination worship service and rally for Trump the day before congressional certification of the electoral votes. As he described the events of the 6th, Gibson questioned how easily the Capitol was breached, raising debunked assertions that antifa supporters were among the violent mob.

"So now I know some, some bad actors went in and I believe potentially there were antifa up there. I think more and more I know there were antifa up there, insiders up there that started that action. And I also know that some Trump supporters followed their lead without a shadow of a doubt because you don't get 2 million people together without having some radicals in the crowd or some simple people in the crowd that you could lead anywhere, right?" he asked.

SACRAMENTO, California

The Rev. Samuel Rodriguez, the president of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference who

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delivered a prayer at Trump's inauguration and has also advised him, told his congregation Sunday that America needs to hear a message of repentance.

"We must all repent, even the church needs to repent. The American nation will be healed when the American church repents," he said to some cheers and applause.

"We must repent for making the person who occupies the White House more important than the one who occupies our hearts. We must repent for permitting the donkey and the elephant to divide what the Lamb died for on the cross," Rodriguez said. "We must repent for voting for individuals whose policies run counter to the word of God and the spirit of the living God."

Rodriguez, the lead pastor of New Season, said he was praying for a season of "instead of" — "Instead of destroying property, building altars. Instead of confrontation, conversations. ... Instead of many under fear, one nation under God."

SAN ANTONIO

The Rev. John Hagee of Cornerstone Church, a staunch supporter of Trump, did not mention the president by name but criticized the assault on Congress by what he called "a rebellious mob."

"The Secret Service had to escort the vice president of the United States to safety out of the Capitol building. Gun shots were fired. Tear gas was deployed in the Capitol Rotunda. People were killed. ... This was an assault on law. Attacking the Capitol was not patriotism, it was anarchy," Hagee said.

His words drew tepid applause from the crowd at his megachurch, but they soon after gave Hagee a standing ovation when he rallied support for law enforcement: "This is what happens when you mob the police. This is what happens when you fire the police."

"This is what happens when you watch a policeman shot and belittle his sacrifice for the public," he continued. "Wake up, America! America and democracy cannot function without the rule of law. We back the blue."

APOPKA, Florida

Paula White-Cain, a longtime spiritual counselor to Trump and who served as a faith adviser in his White House, made a subtle allusion to the insurrection ahead of her Sunday sermon.

Calling the nation "deeply divided," White-Cain condemned "lawlessness" and added that "my hope is never rested in any person, any man. My hope is in Jesus Christ."

White, who delivered a post-election prayer service in which she called upon "angelic reinforcement" to help achieve victory, also reaffirmed her commitment to the First Amendment — an echo of the warnings from some conservatives this week that their freedom of speech was threatened.

COEUR, D'ALENE, Idaho

The Rev. Tim Remington, the conservative Christian pastor of The Altar church, avoided specific references to Trump and the attack on the Capitol, but offered plenty of politically charged warnings.

"The next two weeks are probably the most important two weeks in the history of America," said Remington, who in the spring led in-person services in defiance of a stay-at-home order issued by the governor. "I pray the army of the Lord is ready."

He targeted the media in particular for criticism.

"I rebuke the news in the name of Jesus," Remington said. "We ask that this false garbage come to an end. ... It's the lies, communism, socialism. I don't know how we've put up with it this long."

And without going into specifics, he said America "is not seeking the truth."

"For them to suppress another person's opinion — it's wrong, it's unconstitutional," he said. "God have mercy."

CLEVELAND HEIGHTS, Ohio

The Rev. Darrell Scott, the Black senior pastor of New Spirit Revival Center, did not mention the events in Washington.

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Scott, an early supporter of Trump's 2016 campaign who worked with the administration on urban and prison issues, once praised the administration as "probably the most proactive administration regarding urban America and the faith-based community in my lifetime."

But there was no talk of the president Sunday in a livestreamed service entitled "What God Has for Me," in which Scott focused on encouraging congregants to recognize God's involvement in their lives.

Associated Press reporters Sally Stapleton, Luis Andres Henao and Gary Fields contributed to this report.

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Cops: Chicago shooter who killed 3 posted social media rants

By SOPHIA TAREEN Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — A man who police say killed three people and wounded four others during a series of shootings in and around Chicago posted nonsensical and expletive-laced videos in the days and hours leading up to the attacks.

Investigators on Sunday were trying to determine a motive for the Saturday afternoon attacks in which police say 32-year-old Jason Nightengale apparently chose his victims at random. Police killed Nightengale in a shootout just north of the city about four hours after authorities say he shot his first victim in the head in a South Side parking garage.

Those killed included a 30-year-old University of Chicago student from China named Yiran Fan, Anthony Faulkner, 20, and Aisha Nevell, 46, a security guard. Wounded were a 77-year-old woman, 81-year-old woman and a 15-year-old girl, according to Chicago Police Superintendent David Brown. Another woman was shot in the neck in Evanston, police in the suburb said.

Authorities didn't release many details about Nightengale, a Chicago man whose LinkedIn page listed work over the years as a janitor, security guard and forklift operator. But a series of disturbing videos posted to Facebook over two years under Nightengale's middle name, Oliver, offered clues as to his state of mind.

In one posted Thursday, Nightengale held a gun to the camera and muttered unintelligible statements as he appeared to be driving. A police official who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak publicly about the investigation confirmed it was Nightengale in the video.

"No music. No. No music," Nightengale says in the video, his speech slurred. "I don't need no seat belt. I'm coming, girl."

He posted dozens of other short videos, including several in the hours before the first attack, which were viewable until the page was taken down Sunday. In one, he says, "I'm going to blow up the whole community." In another, Nightengale appears to groove to the Bee Gee's "Staying Alive" while laughing.

The shootings began shortly before 2 p.m. Saturday with the killing of Fan, who was shot in the head while sitting in his car in a parking garage in the Hyde Park neighborhood, Brown said.

After that, Nightengale "just randomly" walked into an apartment building a block away, where he shot the female security guard and the 77-year-old woman, who was getting her mail, Brown said. The guard was pronounced dead at a hospital and the other woman was hospitalized in critical condition.

From there, Nightengale went to another nearby building and stole a car from a man he knew. He then opened fire at a convenience store, killing the 20-year-old man and wounding the 81-year-old woman in the head and neck. The woman was in critical condition.

After leaving the store, Nightengale shot a 15-year-old girl who was riding in a car with her mother, leaving the girl in critical condition, police said. He then went back to the convenience store and fired on officers who were investigating the earlier shooting. None of them were injured, Brown said.

Nightengale then drove about 10 miles (16 kilometers) north to Evanston, which borders Chicago, where police responded to a report of shots that had been fired inside a CVS. Nightengale had apparently walked into the pharmacy, announced that he was robbing it and fired off shots that didn't hit anyone, authorities

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said. He then went across the street to an IHOP restaurant, where he shot a woman in the neck. She was in critical condition, Evanston police Chief Demitrous Cook told reporters.

Nightengale left the restaurant and was confronted by officers in a parking lot, leading to a shootout in which he was shot and killed, Cook said.

Evanston police Sgt. Ken Carter said Nightengale appeared to have a connection to Evanston, but he did not have further details. He said Sunday that an outside agency would take over the investigation since Evanston police were involved in the fatal shooting.

Chicago police released an October 2018 booking photo of Nightengale that was taken after he was charged with multiple driving-related offenses, including driving on a suspended license. His criminal record started in 2005 and included arrests for gun and drug violations, aggravated assault, and a 2019 domestic battery case, according to WLS-TV.

An attorney for Nightengale couldn't be located Sunday.

Friends were shocked to hear of the shootings, describing Nightengale as a devoted father to twin girls who had a charismatic personality and a sense of humor but who had been through tough times.

Tommy Taylor remembered meeting Nightengale at a movies in the park event in Rogers Park, a Chicago neighborhood that borders Evanston. They hung out over the years.

"From all the years I knew him, he had always been a good guy and funny guy," Taylor said. "Something had to happen in order for him to break him like that."

University of Chicago officials said Fan was working toward a doctorate in a joint program between the university's schools of business and economics, and that his family in China had been notified of his death.

"We know that this shocking incident brings grief to our entire community and concern for the wellbeing and safety of others," the university said in a news release. "In the days ahead we will come together as a community to mourn, and to lift up fellow members of our community in this difficult and very sad time. Please join us in wishing consolation and healing for our student's loved ones."

Brown said the information he shared at the news conference was preliminary and could change. He said investigators had little information about Nightengale but plan to release more details as they get them.

"When you hear this whole story, it seems that you have a crystal ball of what he's doing next, and we all know we don't have a crystal ball where he goes next nor do we have this on any of our" police surveillance cameras, Brown said. "We are responding to the scene as these crimes are happening, getting information, and again, he's going to the next while we are trying to keep up with what's happened previously."

Associated Press writer Herbert G. McCann contributed to this report.

Follow Sophia Tareen on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/sophiatareen>

EXPLAINER: Can social media companies boot Trump? Yes

By KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Social media companies decided this past week they had finally seen enough from President Donald Trump.

Facebook and Instagram suspended Trump at least until Inauguration Day. Twitch and Snapchat also disabled Trump's accounts. To top it all off, Twitter ended a nearly 12-year run and shuttered his account, severing an instant line of communication to his 89 million followers.

Conservatives are crying foul.

"Free Speech Is Under Attack! Censorship is happening like NEVER before! Don't let them silence us. Sign up at <http://DONJR.COM> to stay connected!" his eldest son, Donald Trump Jr., tweeted Friday.

CAN TWITTER AND FACEBOOK LEGALLY TAKE SUCH ACTION?

The short answer is yes.

As the Congressional Research Service has explained in a report for federal lawmakers and their staffs,

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lawsuits predicated on a website's decision to remove content largely fail. That's because the free speech protections set out in the First Amendment generally apply only to when a person is harmed by an action of the government.

"The First Amendment doesn't apply to private sector organizations. That's not how this works," said Chris Krebs, when asked Sunday whether censorship by social media companies violated freedom of speech protections.

Krebs oversaw election cybersecurity efforts at the Department of Homeland Security until Trump fired him when he disputed election fraud claims. Speaking on CBS's "Face the Nation" Sunday, he explained that companies enforce their own standards and policies for users.

That's what happened at Twitter on Friday.

WHAT RATIONALE DID TWITTER TAKE FOR ITS ACTIONS?

The company said after reviewing Trump's account in the context of the riot at the Capitol on Wednesday, it was concerned about two tweets he sent Friday that Twitter said could incite violence. They were:

— "The 75,000,000 great American Patriots who voted for me, AMERICA FIRST, and MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN, will have a GIANT VOICE long into the future. They will not be disrespected or treated unfairly in any way, shape or form!!!"

— "To all of those who have asked, I will not be going to the Inauguration on January 20th."

The first tweet, the company said, was received by some supporters as further confirmation that the Nov. 3 election was not legitimate — but in fact, the notion of widespread voter fraud is a baseless claim. The use of the words "American Patriots" to describe some of his supporters was also interpreted as support for those committing violent acts at the Capitol.

The company said the second tweet could serve as encouragement to those considering violent acts that the inauguration ceremonies on Jan. 20 would be a "safe" target since he would not be attending.

"Our determination is that the two Tweets above are likely to inspire others to replicate the violent acts that took place on January 6, 2021, and that there are multiple indicators that they are being received and understood as encouragement to do so," Twitter wrote.

VIRUS TODAY: Lag in vaccinations underscores lack of support

The Associated Press undefined

Here's what's happening Sunday with the pandemic in the U.S.:

— Public health officials have complained for months that they do not have enough support or money to get COVID-19 vaccines quickly into arms. Now the slower-than-expected start to the largest vaccination effort in U.S. history is proving them right. As they work to ramp up the shots, state and local public health departments across the U.S. cite a variety of obstacles, most notably a lack of leadership from the federal government. Many officials worry that they are losing precious time at the height of the pandemic, and the delays could cost lives.

— House lawmakers may have been exposed to someone who tested positive for COVID-19 while they sheltered at an undisclosed location during the Capitol siege by a violent mob loyal to President Donald Trump. The Capitol's attending physician notified all lawmakers Sunday of the virus exposure and urged them to be tested. The infected individual was not named.

— In a growing consensus, religious leaders at the forefront of the anti-abortion movement in the United States are telling followers that the leading vaccines available to combat COVID-19 are acceptable to take, given their remote and indirect connection to lines of cells derived from aborted fetuses.

THE NUMBERS: According to data through Jan. 9 from Johns Hopkins University, the seven-day rolling average for daily new deaths in the U.S. rose over the past two weeks from 2,243.3 on Dec. 26 to 3,174 on Jan. 9.

DEATH TOLL: The number of COVID-19-related deaths in the U.S. stands at 372,522.

QUOTABLE: "To ask God for help but then refuse the vaccine makes no more sense than calling 911 when your house is on fire, but refusing to allow the firemen in. There is no legitimate faith-based reason for refusing to take the vaccine." — Southern Baptist megachurch pastor Robert Jeffress, who has called

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the vaccines a "present from God."

ICYMI: Ten months into America's viral outbreak, low-income workers are still bearing the brunt of job losses. Layoffs remain heavily concentrated in the industries that have suffered most because they involve the kind of face-to-face contact that's now nearly impossible: restaurants, bars and hotels, theaters, sports arenas and concert halls. With the virus transforming consumer spending habits, economists believe some portion of these service jobs won't return even after the economy has regained its footing.

Find AP's full coverage of the coronavirus pandemic at <https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-pandemic>.

US diplomats in extraordinary protest against Trump for riot

By MATTHEW LEE AP Diplomatic Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — In a highly unusual move, American diplomats have drafted two cables condemning President Donald Trump's incitement of the deadly assault on the Capitol and calling for administration officials to possibly support invoking the 25th Amendment to remove him from office.

Using what is known as the State Department's "dissent channel," career foreign and civil service officers said they fear last Wednesday's siege may badly undermine U.S. credibility to promote and defend democratic values abroad.

"Failing to publicly hold the president to account would further damage our democracy and our ability to effectively accomplish our foreign policy goals abroad," according to the second of the two cables, which were circulated among diplomats late last week and then sent to State Department leadership.

The cable called on Pompeo to support any lawful effort by Vice President Mike Pence and other Cabinet members to protect the country including through "the possible implementation of the procedures provided for in Article 4 of the 25th Amendment, if appropriate." The amendment allows for the vice president and a majority of the Cabinet to declare a president unfit for office, and the vice president then becomes acting president.

The cables were an extraordinary protest against a sitting U.S. president by American diplomats, who have long complained that the Trump administration has ignored and diminished their role and expertise. The dissent channel is normally used to oppose specific foreign policy decisions. The two most recent cables appear to be unprecedented in their scope and characterization of the president as a danger to the country.

The cables also reflect anger at the response to the riot by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, a loyal Trump ally.

Pompeo has condemned the violence at the Capitol but has pointedly not addressed the role Trump played in encouraging his supporters who stormed the building. Nor has Pompeo addressed the aftermath or acknowledged that American diplomats overseas may now face new difficulty in promoting democracy.

Trump himself has railed about what he sees as disloyalty at the State Department. He once referred to it publicly — and in front of Pompeo and reporters — as "the deep State Department," a reference to what Trump and his supporters believe is a cabal of entrenched bureaucrats intent on subverting his policies.

It was not immediately clear how many diplomats signed the cables, both of which were viewed by The Associated Press.

The State Department did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

"It is essential that the Department of State explicitly denounce President Trump's role in this violent attack on the U.S. government," said the first of the two cables, which added that the president's own comments should not be used "as he is not a credible voice on this matter."

"Just as we routinely denounce foreign leaders who use violence and intimidation to interfere in peaceful democratic processes and override the will of their voters, the department's public statements about this episode should also mention President Trump by name. It is critical that we communicate to the world that in our system, no one -- not even the president -- is above the law or immune from public criticism."

"This would be a first step towards repairing the damage to our international credibility," it said. "It would

allow the beacon of democracy to shine on despite this dark episode. It would also send a strong message to our friends and adversaries that the Department of State applies an ethos of integrity and objective standards when it condemns assaults on democracy at home or abroad.”

It also said Pompeo should support any effort by Vice President Mike Pence and other Cabinet members to invoke the 25th Amendment to remove Trump from office.

Oaths questioned as Trump’s backers fight against loss

By ANTHONY IZAGUIRRE Associated Press

Before they take office, elected officials swear to uphold the U.S. Constitution. But what happens when they are accused of doing the opposite?

As some Republicans in Congress continued to back President Donald Trump’s doomed effort to overturn the election, critics — including President-elect Joe Biden — alleged that they had violated their oaths and instead pledged allegiance to Trump.

The oaths, which rarely attract much attention, have become a common subject in the final days of the Trump presidency, being invoked by members of both parties as they met Wednesday to affirm Biden’s win and a violent mob of Trump supporters stormed the U.S. Capitol.

“They also swore on a Bible to uphold the Constitution, and that’s where they really are stepping outside and being in dereliction of duty,” said former New Jersey Gov. Christine Todd Whitman, a Republican who served as EPA administrator during former President George W. Bush’s administration. “They swore to uphold the Constitution against all our enemies, foreign or domestic, and they are ignoring that.”

The oaths vary slightly between government bodies, but elected officials generally swear to defend the Constitution. The Senate website says its current oath is linked to the 1860s, “drafted by Civil War-era members of Congress intent on ensnaring traitors.”

Alaska Sen. Lisa Murkowski, a Republican, vowed to honor the oath she took and affirm the results of the presidential election while urging colleagues to do the same. Republican Sen. Todd Young, of Indiana, was seen in a video posted to social media telling Trump supporters outside a Senate office building that he took an oath to the Constitution under God and asked, “Do we still take that seriously in this country?”

Corey Brettschneider, a political science professor at Brown University and author of “The Oath and the Office: A Guide to the Constitution for Future Presidents,” said the oath must be taken seriously and that Americans have to demand its enforcement or “the risk is to the entire system.” He said he would support censures, a formal statement of disapproval, for officials who clearly violate their oaths.

“The worst that could happen is that people roll their eyes at the oath and they say, ‘Oh, none of them mean it,’ and I think what we’ve got to do at a time of crisis is exactly the opposite — is to say, this does mean something,” Brettschneider said. “When you break the law, you need to be held to account, and that’s what’s really up to the American people to be outraged when Trump does what he’s done.”

Republicans who have filed or supported lawsuits challenging Biden’s win in November have claimed, without evidence, that the election was rigged against Trump. Their cases have failed before courts all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. Both Republican and Democratic officials have deemed the election results legitimate and free of any widespread fraud.

The oaths were mentioned often Wednesday during a joint session of Congress meant to confirm Biden’s victory. Some Republicans who launched objections to the election results claimed their oaths required them to do so, while Democrats urged their counterparts to honor their oaths and affirm Biden as the next president.

“The oath that I took this past Sunday to defend and support the Constitution makes it necessary for me to object to this travesty,” said Rep. Lauren Boebert, a newly elected Republican from Colorado.

As lawmakers met, violent protestors loyal to Trump stormed the Capitol in an insurrection intended to keep Biden from replacing Trump in the White House. While authorities struggled to regain control, Biden called on Trump to abide by his oath and move to ease tensions.

“I call on President Trump to go on national television now to fulfill his oath and defend the Constitution and demand an end to this siege,” Biden said.

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The GOP effort to block the formal confirmation of Biden's win eventually failed after Republicans recycled arguments of fraud and other irregularities that have failed to gain traction.

Democrats were quick to condemn Republicans who continued to oppose the results.

Rep. Adam Schiff of California asked, "Does our oath to uphold the Constitution, taken just days ago, mean so very little? I think not." He added that "an oath is no less broken when the breaking fails to achieve its end."

Rep. Cori Bush, a Democrat from Missouri, said she would introduce a resolution calling for the expulsion of Republicans who moved to invalidate the election results.

"I believe the Republican members of Congress who have incited this domestic terror attack through their attempts to overturn the election must face consequences," she tweeted. "They have broken their sacred oath of office."

Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel, a Democrat, said officials who continued to support Trump's baseless claims of fraud violated their oath, and their rhetoric emboldened the rioters who stormed the Capitol.

"They have an allegiance that they have sworn — not to the Constitution and not the United States of America, but to one man, and that man is Donald Trump," she said. "And they refuse to walk away from that no matter what he says, no matter what he does, and I think history will not judge them kindly for that."

Izaguirre reported from Lindenhurst, New York. Associated Press Writer Christina A. Cassidy in Atlanta contributed to this report.

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Vaccine rollout confirms public health officials' warnings

By MICHELLE R. SMITH and CANDICE CHOI Associated Press

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (AP) — Public health officials sounded the alarm for months, complaining that they did not have enough support or money to get COVID-19 vaccines quickly into arms. Now the slower-than-expected start to the largest vaccination effort in U.S. history is proving them right.

As they work to ramp up the shots, state and local public health departments across the U.S. cite a variety of obstacles, most notably a lack of leadership from the federal government. Many officials worry that they are losing precious time at the height of the pandemic, and the delays could cost lives.

States lament a lack of clarity on how many doses they will receive and when. They say more resources should have been devoted to education campaigns to ease concerns among people leery of getting the shots. And although the federal government recently approved \$8.7 billion for the vaccine effort, it will take time to reach places that could have used the money months ago to prepare to deliver shots more efficiently.

Such complaints have become a common refrain in a nation where public health officials have been left largely on their own to solve complex problems.

"The recurring theme is the lack of a national strategy and the attempt to pass the buck down the line, lower and lower, until the poor people at the receiving end have nobody else that they can send the buck to," said Gianfranco Pezzino, who was the public health officer in Shawnee County, Kansas, until retiring last month.

Operation Warp Speed, the federal vaccine program, had promised to distribute enough doses to immunize 20 million people in the U.S. in December. It missed that target, and as of Friday, about 6.6 million people had received their first shot, according to a tracker from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. About 22 million doses have been delivered to states.

The American Hospital Association has estimated that 1.8 million people need to be vaccinated daily from Jan. 1 to May 31 to reach widespread immunity by the summer. The current pace is more than 1

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million people per day below that.

President-elect Joe Biden on Friday called the rollout a “travesty,” noting the lack of a national plan to get doses into arms and reiterating his commitment to administer 100 million shots in his first 100 days. He has not shared details and was expected to discuss the effort this week. His office announced a plan to release most doses right away, rather than holding second doses in reserve, the more conservative approach taken by the Trump administration.

The Trump administration defined its primary role as developing coronavirus vaccines and delivering them to states, which would then take over and ensure that vaccine doses traveled “the last mile” into arms. Each state had to develop its own plan, including issuing guidelines for who gets vaccinated first. Several health experts complained about that approach, saying it led to confusion and a patchwork response.

“Let’s just say that I was disappointed how they handled testing, and the vaccine deployment has reminded me of how disappointed I was when they handled testing,” said Dr. Mysheika Roberts, health commissioner in Columbus, Ohio.

Several public health officials and experts say they believe some of the early glitches are smoothing out. Marcus Plescia, chief medical officer for the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, said the slow start should not be surprising given the immense scale of the task.

“It was not going to be seamless,” he said.

Still, Plescia said the federal government could have done more ahead of the rollout — such as releasing billions of dollars earlier to help with staffing, technology and other operational needs.

An ongoing investigation by The Associated Press and Kaiser Health News detailed how state and local health departments have been underfunded for decades. Public health officials have warned since the spring that they lacked the staff, money and tools they needed to deploy a vaccine. The money was not approved until the end of December.

Vaccine distribution involves a long, complex chain of events. Every dose must be tracked. Providers need to know how much staffing they will need. Eligible people must be notified to schedule their shots, given the vaccine’s handling requirements and the need to observe people for 15 minutes after the shot — all while social distancing is observed.

It’s difficult to plan too far ahead because the number of doses the state receives can fluctuate. Hospitals cannot give all their workers shots on the same day because of possible side effects and staffing issues, so they must be spaced out.

Rhode Island health officials said it can take up to seven days to get doses out to people once they are received. Officials in several states, including Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, Kentucky and New Jersey, said the lack of supply is one of the biggest obstacles to getting more people vaccinated.

Some communities have seen large numbers of medical workers put off getting the shot, even though they are first in line. Columbus, Ohio, has had lower-than-expected demand among top priority groups, including emergency medical workers.

A public education campaign could have helped address the hesitancy among health care workers that has slowed the rollout of the first shots, said James Garrow, a spokesman for the Philadelphia health department. Instead, officials for months talked about the speed at which they were developing the vaccines — which did not help alleviate concerns that it might not be safe.

“There just hasn’t been good messaging about the safety and the purposefulness of the safety protocols,” Garrow said.

The federal government has done little to provide information resources that local officials can tailor to their own communities, to address concerns of people such as pregnant women or Black men living in rural areas, said Dr. Michael Osterholm, an infectious disease expert at the University of Minnesota, who is a member of Biden’s COVID-19 advisory board.

“You don’t need 50 different states trying to do this kind of work. What you want to have is a smorgasbord of information sources that address different populations that any one state can use,” Osterholm said. “That’s what we don’t have right now.”

Some states are getting creative. Oregon held a mass vaccination event at the state fairgrounds with

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the help of the National Guard. The governor said it aimed to vaccinate 250 people per hour. New Jersey planned to open six vaccine "megasites" where officials hope more than 2,000 people per day can eventually get their shots.

But without a federal plan, such efforts can amount to "throwing spaghetti at a wall to see what sticks," said Chrissie Juliano of the Big Cities Health Coalition, which represents metropolitan health departments.

What's needed is a national, wartime-type effort to get vaccines out to as many people as possible, multiple experts said. Medical emergencies can be covered 24 hours a day, seven days a week, said Pezino, who is also a senior fellow at the Kansas Health Institute. Why not make vaccinations available on that schedule?

"It is possible. It is feasible," he said. "I don't see the level of urgency, the feeling of urgency in anybody around here. And that's really, honestly, that's the only thing that could make a difference."

Choi reported from New York. Associated Press Writer Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar in Washington also contributed to this report.

Follow Smith at <http://twitter.com/MRSmithAP> and Choi at <https://twitter.com/candicechoi>

Possible virus exposure for lawmakers sheltering during riot

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — House lawmakers may have been exposed to someone testing positive for COVID-19 while they sheltered at an undisclosed location during the Capitol siege by a violent mob loyal to President Donald Trump.

The Capitol's attending physician notified all lawmakers Sunday of the virus exposure and urged them to be tested. The infected individual was not named.

Dr. Brian Moynihan wrote that "many members of the House community were in protective isolation in the large room — some for several hours" on Wednesday. He said "individuals may have been exposed to another occupant with coronavirus infection."

Dozens of lawmakers were whisked to the secure location after pro-Trump insurrectionists stormed the Capitol that day, breaking through barricades to roam the halls and offices and ransacking the building.

Some members of Congress huddled for hours in the large room, while others were there for a shorter period.

No further details were provided on which person has tested positive for the virus.

Some lawmakers and staff were furious after video surfaced of Republican lawmakers not wearing their masks in the room during lockdown.

Newly elected Georgia Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, a presidential ally aligned with a pro-Trump conspiracy group, was among those Republicans not wearing masks.

Trump is now facing impeachment after having incited supporters who were rallying near the White House before they marched to the Capitol. The House could vote on impeachment in a matter of days, less than two weeks before Democratic President-elect Joe Biden is inaugurated on Jan. 20.

A Capitol Police officer died after he was hit in the head with a fire extinguisher as rioters descended on the building and many other officers were injured. A woman from California was shot to death by Capitol Police and three other people died after medical emergencies during the chaos.

Authorities on Sunday announced the death of a 51-year-old Capitol Police officer. Two people familiar with the matter said the officer's death was an apparent suicide. Officer Howard Liebengood had been assigned to the Senate Division and was with the department since 2005. He is the son of a former Senate sergeant-at-arms.

It was not clear whether his death was connected to Wednesday's events.

The officials were not authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

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Associated Press writers Colleen Long and Michael Balsamo contributed to this report.

New law cracks down on shell companies to combat corruption

By JOSHUA GOODMAN Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — For years as a federal prosecutor in New York, Daniel R. Alonso led teams that had to search through a maze of anonymously owned corporate entities to expose criminal activity.

“It required all kinds of shoe-leather investigating to identify who was really behind these shell companies,” recalled Alonso. “You’d have to subpoena bank records and lawyers, as well as human sources, and even then you frequently hit a dead end.”

Now, thanks to a watershed overhaul of U.S. money laundering laws, locating the proceeds from foreign bribery, drug trafficking and financing for terrorists could be as easy as a few keystrokes.

The new legislation quietly passed by Congress last month after a decade-long fight is the most sweeping banking reform of its kind since passage of the Patriot Act, in the aftermath of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

For the first time, shell companies will be required to provide the names of their owners or face stiff penalties and jail sentences. The information will be stored in a confidential database accessible to federal law enforcement and shared with banks who are often unwitting accomplices to international corruption.

“It’s not an overstatement that this law is a game changer in some serious ways,” said Alonso, who is now in private practice advising clients on foreign corruption and anti-money laundering issues.

The Corporate Transparency Act was tucked into a defense spending bill first vetoed by President Donald Trump and then overridden by Congress on New Year’s Day.

It was introduced by Rep. Carolyn Maloney, a New York Democrat, in 2010 and early on faced opposition from banks and business groups worried about red tape as well as states such as Delaware and Wyoming, which reap important revenues from the registration every year in the U.S. of nearly 2 million corporations and limited liability companies.

But a string of international financial scandals involving soccer’s governing body FIFA and the 1MDB development bank from Malaysia, as well as the leaking of the so-called Panama Papers, eventually softened criticism by revealing the prominent role played by secretive shell companies in hiding the proceeds from illicit activity.

The U.S. financial system -- the world’s largest and most stable -- has long been a magnet for dirty money. But the tools to prevent abuse by bad actors haven’t kept pace with technology and a proliferation of instant, online transactions across borders.

The new law seeks to strengthen controls by creating a registry managed by the Treasury Department that will contain the names of the true owners of both domestically-created shell companies as well as foreign ones conducting business in the U.S.

Creating a shell company in states like Delaware requires little more than a payment of a \$90 fee and a one-page letter listing the entity’s the name, P.O. Box and a registered agent who is frequently a law firm dedicated to churning out companies in bulk. The true owners are rarely listed, their identities hidden under a web of subsidiaries. But once created, the entities can be used to purchase legitimate assets, such as real estate, using ill-gotten funds furtively transferred into a U.S. bank account.

One such Delaware-based company, Essential Consultants LLC, was used by Trump’s former personal attorney, Michael Cohen, to conceal hush money payments to porn star Stormy Daniels. Others registered in the state have been tied to corrupt military officers in Venezuela, drug trafficking guerrillas from Colombia and former Zimbabwean dictator Robert Mugabe.

“Congress was late to acknowledge that secrecy is alive and well in the United States,” said David P. Weber, a former U.S. Treasury investigator who was one of two experts to review the Panama Papers before publication. He now is a forensic accounting professor at Salisbury University in Maryland. “Kleptocrats and corrupt foreign officials did not need secret bank accounts in Switzerland. They were right here.”

Less touted, the law also dramatically expands awards for whistleblowers. Specifically, individuals who

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come forward with evidence of financial malfeasance are entitled to receive up to 30% of money seized by the Treasury or Justice Departments when their information leads to successful law enforcement actions. Previously, awards were capped at \$150,000.

"This could end up being the secret sauce," said Michael Nadler, a recently retired federal prosecutor in Miami who has brought charges against dozens of corrupt Venezuelan officials. "It has the potential to weaponize low-ranking company officers who have access to sensitive client information and see criminal behavior."

The Justice Department will also have expanded powers to demand foreign bank account records when they suspect criminal activity. And the law also extends oversight to the trade in high-value antiquities. Expensive artwork -- a frequent vehicle to hide the proceeds of corruption -- may also be brought within the reach of anti-money laundering laws pending a study the government must produce within a year.

While it may take some time for the law's impact to be felt, experts believe it will drive away from the U.S. some of the dirty money from abroad that has driven up real estate prices in major cities like New York, Miami and Los Angeles.

But nobody expects crime and corruption to stop. One weakness of the law, says former Treasury investigator Weber, is that it will push crimes further into the darkness, away from the U.S. to less reputable jurisdictions where secrecy remains.

"In many ways," he said, "this is like a multi-million dollar game of whack-a-mole."

Follow Goodman on Twitter: @APJoshGoodman

Protesters detained for criticizing Kazakhstan's vote

MOSCOW (AP) — Dozens of people protesting Kazakhstan's opposition-free election were detained in the country's capital and in its principal city, but were released after several hours.

Five parties are competing Sunday for seats in the lower house of parliament, but all are loyal to the government. The country's only registered opposition party declined to field candidates.

More than 30 demonstrators were detained in the principal city of Almaty, according to the news agency Akipress. The Interfax news agency said more protesters were also detained in the capital, Nur-Sultan.

Deputy Interior Minister Arystangani Zapparov said late Sunday that all those detained had been released without charges.

The ruling Nur Otan party is expected to maintain or increase its current domination of the parliament of the former Soviet republic, which is rich in oil, gas and mineral resources.

The party is headed by former President Nursultan Nazarbayev, who was in power from independence in 1991 until his resignation last year.

Although he stepped down, he retains significant power as head of the national security council.

Oil companies lock in drilling, challenging Biden on climate

By MATTHEW BROWN and CATHY BUSSEWITZ Associated Press

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — In the closing months of the Trump administration, energy companies stockpiled enough drilling permits for western public lands to keep pumping oil for years and undercut President-elect Joe Biden's plans to curb new drilling because of climate change, according to public records and industry analysts.

An Associated Press analysis of government data shows the permit stockpiling has centered on oil-rich federal lands in New Mexico and Wyoming. It accelerated during the fall as Biden was cementing his lead over President Donald Trump and peaked in December, aided by speedier permitting approvals since Trump took office.

The goal for companies is to lock in drilling rights on oil and gas leases on vast public lands where they make royalty payments on any resources extracted. Biden wants to end new drilling on those same lands

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as part of his overhaul of how Americans get energy, with the goal of making the nation carbon neutral by 2050.

Companies submitted more than 3,000 drilling permit applications in a three-month period that included the election, according to data from the U.S. Bureau of Land Management. Officials approved almost 1,400 drilling applications during that time amidst the pandemic. That's the highest number of approvals during Trump's four-year term, according to AP's analysis.

In Colorado, a dozen permits are approved or pending to drill in Pawnee National Grassland, a birding destination where wildflowers and cactuses bloom below the buttes.

In Wyoming's Thunder Basin National Grassland, a prairie expanse that abounds with wildlife and offers hiking, fishing and hunting, oil companies EOG Resources and Devon Energy — which amassed the most federal permits this year — have permission to drill three dozen wells among fields of sage brush.

The administration issued more than 4,700 drilling permits in 2020 — comparable to approval numbers from early last decade when oil topped \$100 a barrel, roughly twice the current price.

INVITATION TO DRILL

Making it easier to drill was a centerpiece of Trump's effort to boost American energy production in part by enticing companies onto lands and offshore areas run by the U.S. departments of Interior and Agriculture.

Under Trump, crude production from federal and tribal lands and waters increased sharply, topping a billion barrels in 2019. That was up by almost a third from the last year of the Obama administration.

But this year the coronavirus pandemic and crashing oil prices caused many companies to curtail their activity.

With markets still in flux and oil producers slashing budgets, major companies nevertheless have been acquiring enough permits to keep pumping through Biden's upcoming term. The government approved about 500 new drilling permits in September, more than double the same month in 2019.

The oil industry's fear is that Biden will follow through on campaign pledges and make it impossible or much harder to drill on public lands. "You go from having a champion in the White House, who steers the entire federal apparatus to wanting you to be successful, to someone who is hostile to the industry," said Tom Pyle, a former Republican aide on Capitol Hill who now leads the industry group American Energy Alliance.

For Biden supporters, the stockpiling threatens parts of an ambitious climate agenda before the Democrat can get into the White House. Oil and gas extracted from public lands and waters generates the equivalent of almost 550 million tons (500 metric tons) of greenhouse gases annually, the U.S. Geological Survey said in a 2018 study.

Trump administration critics say officials enabled the industry to reach its goals, noting that Interior Secretary David Bernhardt and others have boasted how speedily permits were processed.

Bureau of Land Management spokesman Chris Tollefson said the agency had streamlined permitting while still following environmental laws.

"Markets, not the BLM, determine how oil and gas developers decide to acquire and develop leases," he said.

Processing times for completed applications to the BLM have dropped from almost 140 days on average in the last year of Obama's administration to 44 days in fiscal year 2019, according to congressional testimony by Interior officials. In 2020, some companies had permits awarded in a little over a month, AP found. Other permits took longer but an average could not be determined.

YEARS WORTH OF PERMITS

To undo the late-term awarding of so many permits, a former senior Interior Department official said the Biden administration could be forced to pay millions of dollars to companies to get them to relinquish drilling rights. Such a scenario played out in pristine areas of Montana where officials spent decades trying to buy out companies with drilling leases near Glacier National Park.

"This is classic, end of administration stuff, but for the Trump administration it's on steroids," said Jim Lyons, deputy assistant secretary of Interior under Obama.

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Houston-based EOG Resources amassed the most permits this year — 1,024 — including 549 since September, according to AP's analysis.

In total, EOG has about 2,500 federal permits approved or in progress. "If he (Biden) tries to impose some regulations on how new federal permits are issued, we certainly already have an inventory, a large inventory, of existing federal permits that will sustain activity for several years," company CEO Lloyd Helms told a November investors conference.

Oklahoma-based Devon Energy collected the second-highest number this year. As the presidential campaign wore on this summer, Devon executives assured investors that the company was amassing permits. By October, Vice President David Harris said the company had enough "federal drilling permits in hand that essentially cover all of our desired activity over the next presidential term."

Devon's more than 500 permits secured this year resulted from a long-term business strategy, not a political calculation, said spokeswoman Lisa Adams. "It was something in the works for years," Adams said.

POTENTIAL MORATORIUM

Biden is nominating New Mexico Rep. Deb Haaland as interior secretary. And Haaland, who co-sponsored the Green New Deal by liberal Democrats, has said she opposes fracking and drilling on public land.

Even if Biden doesn't immediately ban new permits, he could place a moratorium on them to study the situation in more detail, said Leo Mariani, managing director of equity research at KeyBank Capital Markets.

Most companies have up to two years to act on federal permits, so a one-year moratorium wouldn't have much impact on oil supply and they could shift production to private or state-owned land, Mariani said.

But such a shift would come at a cost, because royalty rates on private or state-owned land can be twice as much as federal land. "Because the break-evens are so much lower, you're not going to see every dollar re-allocated to other places," said Parker Fawcett, analyst for S&P Global Platts Analytics.

With a ban on new federal drilling permits, U.S. production could fall by about 1 million barrels per day, or about 10%, by 2024, Fawcett estimates. "You will have a supply impact."

Producers started talking about mitigating their risks about a year ago after Democratic presidential candidate and Sen. Elizabeth Warren said she would ban fracking on federal lands, said Artem Abramov, partner and head of shale research at Rystad Energy.

Then companies began amassing federal drilling permits at more than \$10,000 apiece.

More than 60% of the permit applications filed over the past year were in New Mexico, where about a quarter of the state budget comes from oil and gas revenues. And 20% of the permit applications were filed in Wyoming, where Gov. Mark Gordon says the state budget has taken a one-third revenue hit mainly because of the oil downturn.

"I definitely wouldn't expect the New Mexican state government to support radical moves," Abramov said. "They would push Biden toward a more gradual approach" to the oil and gas industry.

Bussewitz reported from New York. Associated Press writers Morgan Lee in New Mexico and Mead Gruver in Wyoming contributed to this report.

On Twitter follow Matthew Brown: @MatthewBrownAP and Cathy Bussewitz: @cbussewitz

Chinese state media blast latest Pompeo move on Taiwan

By KEN MORITSUGU Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — China's state media lashed out at the latest move on Taiwan by the departing Trump administration, accusing U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo of "seeking to maliciously inflict a long-lasting scar on China-U.S. ties."

A writer for the official Xinhua News Agency also said in a commentary Sunday that the lifting of long-standing restrictions on U.S. government contacts with Taiwanese counterparts proves that Pompeo "is only interested in stoking unwarranted confrontations, and has no interest in world peace."

Another commentary posted online by CGTN, the English-language channel of state broadcaster CCTV,

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called Pompeo's announcement "a cowardly act of sabotage" of the next U.S. administration.

"The Trump administration, in its continuing efforts to burn the house down before leaving office, has crossed a dangerous red line with China days before incoming President Joe Biden takes office," the commentary read in part.

Biden takes office on Jan. 20.

There was no immediate comment from the Chinese government on Pompeo's decision to end State Department restrictions on how U.S. officials can interact with Taiwan, which he said had been implemented to appease the Communist regime in Beijing.

"No more," Pompeo declared in a statement Saturday. "Today I am announcing that I am lifting all of these self-imposed restrictions."

Taiwan is a sensitive issue for China's ruling Communist Party, which considers the self-governing island of 23.6 million people a renegade province that should be brought under its rule.

Under the one-China policy, the U.S. recognizes Beijing as the government of China and doesn't have diplomatic relations with Taiwan. However, it maintains unofficial contacts including a de facto embassy in Taipei, the capital, and supplies military equipment for the island's defense.

Taiwan's leaders welcomed Pompeo's announcement.

"We are expressing our gratitude toward the U.S. for speaking out and supporting Taiwan," Premier Su Tseng-chang told reporters. "We also hope to interact actively with each other further, so that Taiwan could have an even bigger space in the international society."

He and Foreign Minister Joseph Wu, who thanked Pompeo on Twitter, emphasized the values of freedom and democracy shared by Taiwan and the U.S. — a contrast to China's authoritarian one-party state.

Pompeo's announcement came two days after he said he would send Kelly Craft, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, to Taiwan for meetings this week. She is due to arrive on Wednesday.

Craft's trip follows one by Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar in August, the first Cabinet member to visit Taiwan since 2014, and another by Under Secretary of State Keith Krach in September.

China, which opposes Taiwan having its own foreign relations, sharply criticizes all such interaction. It stepped up aerial patrols off Taiwan last year and used its diplomatic clout to block Taiwan from participating in international forums, such as the World Health Organization's annual meeting.

Hu Xijin, the editor of China's state-owned Global Times newspaper, tweeted that if Pompeo's announcement is the new starting point for America's Taiwan policy, it will also mark the start of the countdown for the survival of Taiwan's government.

"(China's) fighter jets can fly over Taiwan island anytime," he tweeted. "The option of using military means to solve (the) Taiwan question will also be put on the table."

Hu's tweet was later deleted, but the reason was not clear.

Pompeo said that the U.S. maintains relationships with unofficial partners around the world, and that Taiwan is no exception.

Associated Press writer Kevin Freking in Washington contributed to this report.

In wake of Capitol riot, Americans struggle for answers

By ADAM GELLER, ADRIAN SAINZ and TAMARA LUSH Associated Press

This past week, Americans watched as the hallowed chambers of the Capitol were overrun and defiled, not by some foreign enemy of democracy but a mob of their fellow citizens.

And then they tried to make sense of it.

In letters to the editor and posts on social media, they raised their voices. In Iowa, a lifelong Republican mourned the shredding of the country's political norms. In Tennessee, a pastor and activist, alarmed by the rioters' behavior, wondered if it might provide an impetus for change. In Mississippi, a young teacher worried what her students will make of the violence.

Days later, their anger, fear and uncertainties still linger. Answers have not come easily.

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“In my 72-plus years I have taken many oaths. To my faith in the triune God when I was confirmed ... To my God and to my country as a Boy Scout ... Not once did I swear allegiance to the individual holding the office of president of the United States. I swore allegiance to the United States of America and its Constitution. Not once did I swear to riot, and storm and break into the U.S. Capitol if I did not like the outcome of an election.” -- Mark Hanson of Des Moines, Iowa, in a letter to the editor published online Jan. 7 by the Des Moines Register.

When Mark Hanson walked in the door from work Wednesday night, he found his wife, Thalya, fixated on the television in their family room. “Are you aware of what’s going on?” she asked, the concern clear in her voice.

Then the couple, together since high school, sat for hours on the sofa, puzzling over the state of a nation they’d long proudly called their own, even as it has grown harder to recognize.

Ever since 1964, when a 16-year-old Hanson was invited by a local party official to serve as a junior delegate to the state convention, he had thought of himself as a staunch Republican. But the riot was the most painful reminder yet that the party that once stood for his conservative, American values was long gone.

“That Republican party has left us behind and it’s been taken over by some people who ... criticize others as being Republicans in name only,” Hanson said. “I’d say they are the ones who are Republicans in name only and they’re taking the country down a road I would regard as seditious, as treasonous.”

His entire life, Hanson said, has been framed by oaths -- the one taken as an Eagle Scout, another as a young Army lieutenant, still another as an attorney admitted to the state bar. With each, he’d promised to respect truth and to fulfill a duty to his country and all its citizens, regardless of their politics. The rioters had trashed that ethic.

Still, Hanson hopes, maybe the riot will be the nation’s turning point.

This week’s events, he said, reminded him of the fall of Joseph McCarthy, the Wisconsin senator who pursued a virulent campaign in the 1950s to expose Americans he insisted were Communists, destroying careers and lives with often baseless charges. It ended only when other leaders, at last so appalled by the extremism of his actions, rejected the persecution as fundamentally un-American.

“I’m hoping that this is a defining moment,” Hanson said, pointing to the wide criticism of both Trump and the rioters. “If it is that moment then, for all the turmoil, that would be something good that would come out of it. Of course, it’s too early to tell.”

“As a teacher I am beyond exhausted. Having kids see on their news that there’s a shooting at the U.S. capitol & violent riots, while they’re also here trying to learn in a damned pandemic, doesn’t really do wonders for their mental health or educational health. And all the while I have to remain positive. To not let them see an adult crumble under fear and anxiety. This is my future but look at our students’ future. We have GOT TO DO BETTER.” — Emily Kreuger of Madison, Mississippi, posting on Twitter, Jan. 6.

On the September morning terrorists flew jets into the World Trade Center, Emily Kreuger had just started fourth grade. But she clearly remembers how shaken she felt, walking out into the hallway of her school near Jackson, Mississippi, to find teachers crying.

Kreuger, now 28, thought back to that moment on Wednesday when her phone and those belonging to the middle school students she now teaches began buzzing with alert after alert: An angry mob was breaching the Capitol.

“I didn’t want to cry in front of these students, but I wanted to be transparent,” she said. “These kids, they want to know ... and some of them are very passionate about what they think because, at that age, you’re becoming who you are.”

Don’t worry, everything’s going to be OK, Krueger said she told her students. Later, though, she realized

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her words were intended as much for self-comfort as to reassure the teens in her care.

Her devotion to middle schoolers was inspired in part by the loss of her brother to suicide when he was just 13. Now, teaching students of the same age, she is mindful both of their potential and their impressionability. One day, they will be the leaders of this country. But what are they learning now, watching the violent scenes in Washington?

"You have got to remember that they are watching everything you do, that they are learning that this is how I function in society," she said.

"I hope this is not who we want to be as Americans," Krueger said. "But I think we have a long way to go."

"All I can think right now is that if someone brought a bomb to the Capitol today, I could die today. I drove home from the pediatrician today and saw men in American flag shirts attacking someone's car. I can see the chaos in DC from my window. I have a child. I am frightened. For her. For me. For our country." -- Sarah Robinson, Arlington, Va., posted to Facebook, Jan. 6, 4:42 p.m.

On Wednesday afternoon, Sarah Robinson was sitting in a doctor's office, just across the Potomac River from Washington, D.C., when her phone began buzzing with unsettling messages from friends. They were asking: Was she safe?

Puzzled, she checked her phone. The headlines left the mental health counselor stunned.

Robinson moved to Washington for college in 2007 and stayed on after graduation when she "fell in love" with the capital region. This past summer, she and her husband joined a Black Lives Matter march to the White House. In recent weeks, Robinson had taken to wheeling her 8-month-old daughter in her stroller for walks around the National Mall.

But the crowds attacking the Capitol upended her perceptions of Washington.

As she drove home with her daughter in the back seat, her fears intensified. The people attacking the Capitol were so delusional, she felt, that they did not realize their actions amounted to treason.

Since the attack, she's met with clients who were affected, people who are expected to "report to work, answer emails, keep the country running."

"But they talk about feeling frozen, unable to take a pause and process what just happened. They talk about this attitude of 'it's done, move on' and so many of them just aren't ready yet," she said.

Her fear gave way to anger and dismay at the state of the nation.

"The Capitol is a symbol of our country, but it's made up of human beings. Attacking a building is never just climbing a wall, it's creating work, pain, and agony for innocent staffers and employees who are then expected to bury their feelings and keep going. Empathy is missing in our government, and especially in our leadership, and that has trickled down to half the country."

"While I won't ever forget this day, I am still quite hopeful of tomorrow. I believe there is so much work to be done. Yesterday had to happen so that we could truly see how deep racism truly is interwoven into our country. Some painful moments make sense later." -- DeVante Hill of Memphis, posted on Twitter, Jan. 7.

On the outskirts of downtown Memphis, a small square -- known as "I am a Man" Plaza -- memorializes the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s 1968 visit in support of striking sanitation workers, most of them poor and black.

On Wednesday, DeVante Hill, a local pastor and activist for racial justice, was getting ready to do a television interview at the site. When four or five pickup trucks with Trump flags began driving back and forth in front of the plaza, the drivers honking their horns in celebration, he knew something was wrong.

Hill said he took the first reports of the riots in stride. But his emotions swelled as he watched footage of two Trump supporters atop the steps of a Washington church, mimicking the May arrest and death of George Floyd under the knee of a Minneapolis police officer.

"I was upset that we were literally watching white supremacy before our eyes," Hill said.

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He'd marched in Washington protests in largely Black crowds, well aware of determined efforts by police to keep control. If rioters, nearly all white, had been Black, there was every chance police officers would have shot them, he said. The thought of it left him feeling sick.

Then, Hill said, he thought about how civil rights leader and former Georgia Rep. John Lewis, who died this year, would have assessed the events at the Capitol. Perhaps the destruction, by exposing harsh realities, meant they could no longer be ignored.

"That's when my mind was able to escape to the reality of our newfound future," said Hill, 28.

With Democrats soon to take control of the White House and the Senate, there will be new chances to reshape the country, to reimagine policing and the policies that shape life in cities like his, he said.

"I know I cannot exhaust much energy into what happened the other day, because our future is much more promising than our past has been these last four years," Hill said. "For me it's about restoring common decency back to our country."

Anti-abortion faith leaders support use of COVID-19 vaccines

By DAVID CRARY AP National Writer

In a growing consensus, religious leaders at the forefront of the anti-abortion movement in the United States are telling their followers that the leading vaccines available to combat COVID-19 are acceptable to take, given their remote and indirect connection to lines of cells derived from aborted fetuses.

One outspoken foe of abortion based in Dallas, Southern Baptist megachurch pastor Robert Jeffress, has called the vaccines a "present from God."

"To ask God for help but then refuse the vaccine makes no more sense than calling 911 when your house is on fire, but refusing to allow the firemen in," Jeffress said via email. "There is no legitimate faith-based reason for refusing to take the vaccine."

The Rev. Al Mohler, president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, also has celebrated their development.

"I will take it not only for what I hope will be the good of my own health, but for others as well," he said on his website.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, which says fighting abortion is its "preeminent" priority, said last month that getting vaccinated against the coronavirus "ought to be understood as an act of charity toward the other members of our community," according to a statement by the chairmen of its Committee on Doctrine and Committee on Pro-Life Activities.

The bishops said it is morally acceptable for Catholics to use either of the two vaccines approved for use in the U.S. — made by Pfizer and Moderna — despite a "remote connection to morally compromised cell lines." This entailed the use of fetal cell lines for lab tests seeking to confirm the vaccines' effectiveness.

Another leading vaccine, made by AstraZeneca and approved for use in Britain and some other countries, is "more morally compromised," and should be avoided if there are alternatives available, the bishops said.

Coinciding with the USCCB, four bishops in Colorado issued their own statement taking a somewhat more negative stance on AstraZeneca, describing it as "not a morally valid option."

AstraZeneca used a cell line known as HEK293 to develop its vaccine. According to the Oxford University team that developed it, the original HEK293 cells were taken from the kidney of an aborted fetus in 1973, but the cells used now are clones of the original cells and are not the original fetal tissue.

As the first vaccines neared approval last year, some Catholic bishops warned they might be morally unacceptable. Among them was Bishop Joseph Brennan of Fresno, California, who urged Catholics not to jump on the "vaccine bandwagon."

He later modified his stance, saying that due to health risks for individuals and communities, "Catholics may ethically decide for serious reasons to utilize such vaccines."

Also questioning the vaccines was Bishop Joseph Strickland of Tyler, Texas, who has depicted any use of aborted fetuses in vaccine development as evil and says he won't take any of the currently available vaccines.

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"The Church has said that under some circumstances receiving the vaccine is permissible and I do not dispute that," he said via email. "The Church has also said we should vigorously call for morally produced vaccines, and I urge those who take the vaccine to join that mission and demand change."

Strickland is encouraging donations to the John Paul II Medical Research Institute, which supports research aimed at developing what it calls "ethical" cell lines — using adults' stem cells — that would be used in the manufacturing of vaccines and other medical therapies.

Some other outspokenly anti-abortion bishops have embraced the vaccines.

"As a Christian engages the world, it's impossible, in many settings, to completely avoid cooperating with moral evil," tweeted Bishop Thomas Tobin of Providence, Rhode Island. "The Church, on multiple levels, has said that it's morally acceptable to receive the vaccines that are currently available. I agree."

Bishop Richard Stika of Knoxville, Tennessee, said he had no qualms about getting vaccinated.

"I just hope they don't implant a microchip in my arm to ascertain when I cheat on my diet," he joked on Twitter.

Among Protestant evangelical leaders, who generally have strong anti-abortion views, there's been relatively little anti-vaccine rhetoric, according to the Rev. Russell Moore, who heads the public policy arm of the Southern Baptist Convention.

"I wouldn't be able to think of one evangelical pastor who's saying, 'Don't be vaccinated,'" he said.

A more notable challenge for pastors, Moore said, is countering baseless anti-vaccine conspiracy theories embraced by some members of their congregations or communities — for example that the vaccines would alter a recipient's DNA or covertly implant a microchip.

On a global level, the Vatican has issued guidelines largely similar to those from the U.S. bishops, declaring it morally acceptable for Catholics to receive COVID-19 vaccines based on research that used cells derived from aborted fetuses.

One difference: It didn't name or give details about specific vaccines. The Vatican plans to use the Pfizer vaccine starting this week for employees and their families, and Pope Francis — in an interview with an Italian broadcaster being aired this weekend — said he has an appointment to be vaccinated.

The Vatican has suggested it is wrong to refuse a vaccine based solely on the abortion objection, since refusal "may also result in a risk to others."

Nicanor Austriaco, a molecular biologist and Catholic priest who teaches at universities in the U.S. and the Philippines, said the Vatican has appropriately addressed faith-based concerns about vaccines indirectly connected to research that used aborted fetal cells.

"The moral evil being contemplated here" took place in the 1970s when the original cell line was created, Austriaco said, "and it is remote."

G. Kevin Donovan, a pediatrics professor at Georgetown University who directs its Pellegrino Center for Clinical Bioethics, said leaders of his Catholic faith couldn't have been "more clear-cut."

"The advantage Catholics have is ... the highest levels of authority have made it very clear this is a morally acceptable thing to do," said Donovan.

In Indonesia, home to the world's largest Muslim population, a Muslim clerical council has been included in that nation's vaccine procurement process to ensure that a product is halal, or acceptable for use under Islamic law. In the past, the council has ruled that some vaccines for other diseases were unacceptable because they used pork-derived gelatin.

But on Friday the council gave its approval to China's Sinovac COVID-19 vaccine, paving the way for its distribution in Indonesia.

Associated Press writers Elana Schor in Washington, Nicole Winfield in Rome and Victoria Milko in Jakarta, Indonesia, contributed to this report.

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Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Monday, Jan. 11, the 11th day of 2021. There are 354 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Jan. 11, 2020, health authorities in the central Chinese city of Wuhan reported the first death from what had been identified as a new type of coronavirus; the patient was a 61-year-old man who'd been a frequent customer at a food market linked to the majority of cases there.

On this date:

In 1815, Sir John A. Macdonald, the first prime minister of Canada, was born in Glasgow, Scotland.

In 1861, Alabama became the fourth state to withdraw from the Union.

In 1908, President Theodore Roosevelt proclaimed the Grand Canyon National Monument (it became a national park in 1919).

In 1913, the first enclosed sedan-type automobile, a Hudson, went on display at the 13th National Automobile Show in New York.

In 1927, the creation of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences was proposed during a dinner of Hollywood luminaries at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles.

In 1935, aviator Amelia Earhart began an 18-hour trip from Honolulu to Oakland, California, that made her the first person to fly solo across any part of the Pacific Ocean.

In 1943, the United States and Britain signed treaties relinquishing extraterritorial rights in China.

In 1964, U.S. Surgeon General Luther Terry issued "Smoking and Health," a report that concluded that "cigarette smoking contributes substantially to mortality from certain specific diseases and to the overall death rate."

In 1978, two Soviet cosmonauts aboard the Soyuz 27 capsule linked up with the Salyut 6 orbiting space station, where the Soyuz 26 capsule was already docked.

In 1989, nine days before leaving the White House, President Ronald Reagan bade the nation farewell in a prime-time address, saying of his eight years in office: "We meant to change a nation and instead we changed a world."

In 2001, the Army acknowledged that U.S. soldiers killed an "unknown number" of South Korean refugees early in the Korean War at No Gun Ri, but said there was no evidence they were ordered to do so.

In 2010, Miep Gies (meep khees), the Dutch office secretary who defied Nazi occupiers to hide Anne Frank and her family for two years and saved the teenager's diary, died at age 100.

Ten years ago: During a public Mass at St. Odilia Catholic Church in Tucson, Arizona, several hundred mourners remembered the victims of the shooting rampage that killed six people and wounded Rep. Gabrielle Giffords. David Nelson, 74, who co-starred on his parents' popular TV show "The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet," died in Los Angeles.

Five years ago: Gunmen stormed into a Baghdad mall, killing 18 people; the Islamic State group claimed responsibility. Northern Ireland lawmakers appointed Arlene Foster as the first female leader of their unity government. No. 2 Alabama outlasted No. 1 Clemson in a 45-40 victory in the College Football Playoff championship game. Baseball Hall of Famer Monte Irvin, 96, died in Houston. William A. "Bill" Del Monte, the last survivor of the devastating San Francisco earthquake and fire of 1906, died at a retirement home in nearby Marin County at 109 years old.

One year ago: Iran admitted that its military had "unintentionally" shot down a Ukrainian jetliner three days earlier, killing all 176 people aboard; the statement blamed "human error" for the shootdown, which took place just hours after Iran launched a barrage of missiles at U.S. forces.

Today's Birthdays: Former Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chrétien (zhahn kray-tee-EHN') is 87. Actor Mitchell Ryan is 87. Actor Felix Silla is 84. Movie director Joel Zwick is 79. Country singer Naomi Judd is 75. World Golf Hall of Famer Ben Crenshaw is 69. Singer Robert Earl Keen is 65. Actor Phyllis Logan is 65. Musician Vicki Peterson (The Bangles) is 63. Actor Kim Coles is 59. Actor Jason Connery is 58. Former

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child actor Dawn Lyn (TV: "My Three Sons") is 58. Rock musician Tom Dumont (No Doubt) is 53. Movie director Malcolm D. Lee is 51. Singer Mary J. Blige is 50. Musician Tom Rowlands (The Chemical Brothers) is 50. Actor Marc Blucas is 49. Actor Amanda Peet is 49. Actor Rockmond Dunbar is 48. Actor Aja Naomi King is 36. Actor Kristolyn Lloyd is 36. Reality TV star Jason Wahler is 34. Pop singer Cody Simpson is 24.