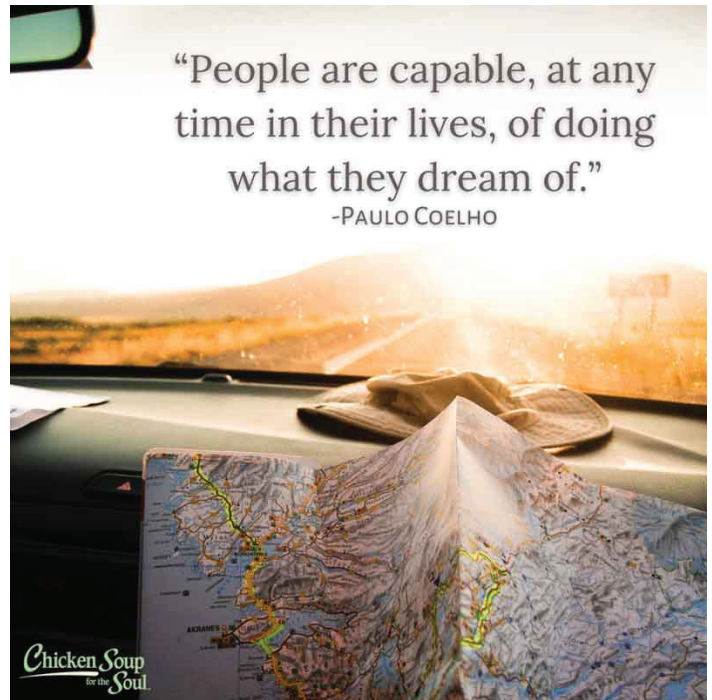


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## **OPEN:** Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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## Coming up on GDILIVE.COM



**JH Boys**

8th at 4:00, 7th at 5:00  
Monday, Jan. 25, 2021  
Northwestern at Groton

7th grade sponsored by Beauty Brew Coffee & Boutique  
8th Grade sponsored by Jamie Simon Photography



**Boys**


C Game at 5:00,  
followed by JV and Varsity  
Monday, Jan. 25, 2021  
Northwestern Area at Groton Area



**7th Boys**

7th Grade at 5:30 p.m.  
Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021  
Warner at Groton Area

7th grade sponsored by Beauty Brew Coffee & Boutique



**8th Boys**

8th Grade at 6:30 p.m.  
Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021  
Warner at Groton Area

8th grade sponsored by Bob & Vicki Walter



**Girls**

JV at 6 p.m.  
followed by varsity  
Thursday, Jan. 28, 2021  
Northwestern at Groton Area

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## Upcoming Schedule

### Monday, Jan. 25

Boys Basketball hosts Northwestern. Junior high games in the GHS Gym (8th at 4 p.m., 7th at 5 p.m.) Rest of the games in the Arena: C game at 5 p.m. followed by JV and then varsity.

### Tuesday, Jan. 26

Junior High Games: Warner at Groton Area Arena. 7th at 5:30 p.m. and 8th at 6:30 p.m.

### Thursday, Jan. 28

Girls Basketball hosts Northwestern (JV at 6 p.m. followed by varsity game).  
Northeast Conference Wrestling at Redfield, 4 p.m.

### Saturday, Jan. 30

Groton Area Wrestling Tournament, 10 a.m.  
Boys Basketball at DAK12-NEC Clash in Madison

### Monday, Feb. 1

Junior High Basketball at Redfield (7th at 5 p.m., 8th at 6 p.m.)

### Tuesday, Feb. 2

Boys Basketball at Langford (7th at 4 p.m., 8th at 5 p.m., JV at 6 p.m. followed by varsity game)  
Girls Basketball hosting Aberdeen Roncalli with JV at 6 p.m. followed by varsity.

### Thursday, Feb. 4

Doubleheader Basketball hosting Faulkton. Girls JV at 4 p.m., Boys JV at 5 p.m., Girls Varsity at 6:30 p.m. followed by Boys Varsity.

### Friday, Feb. 5

Wrestling at Lyman High School, 5 p.m.

### Saturday, Feb. 6

Girls Basketball at DAK12-NEC Clash in Madison.  
Boys Basketball at Tiospa Zina (C game at 1 p.m., JV at 2:30 p.m. followed by varsity.

### Monday, Feb. 8

Junior High Basketball hosts Webster. 5:30 p.m.  
School Board Meeting, 7 p.m.

### Tuesday, Feb. 9

Girls Basketball hosts Tiospa Zina. JV game at 6 p.m. followed by varsity.

### Wednesday, Feb. 10

LifeTouch Pictures in GHS Gym, 8:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.

### Thursday, Feb. 11

Parent-Teacher Conference, 1:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.  
Basketball Doubleheader with Milbank in Groton. JV girls at 4 p.m. followed by JV boys, Varsity Girls and Varsity Boys.

### Saturday, Feb. 12

Basketball Doubleheader at Mobridge. JV girls at 1 p.m., JV boys at 2 p.m., Varsity Girls at 3 p.m. followed by Varsity Boys.

### Monday, Feb. 15

Junior High Basketball at Aberdeen Roncalli Elementary School (7th at 4 p.m., 8th at 5 p.m.)  
Boys Basketball at Aberdeen Roncalli (C game at 5 p.m., JV at 6:15 and Varsity at 7:30).

### Thursday, Feb. 18

Junior High Basketball hosts Mobridge-Pollock in the Arena. 7th at 6 p.m., 8th at 7 p.m.

### Friday, Feb. 19

Basketball Doubleheader with Deuel in Groton. JV girls at 4 p.m., JV boys at 5 p.m. followed by Varsity Girls and Varsity Boys.

### Saturday, Feb. 20

Regional Wrestling Tournament in Groton, 10 a.m.

### Tuesday, Feb. 23: GBB Region

### Thursday, Feb. 25: GBB Region

### Friday, Feb. 26

Boys Basketball hosts Aberdeen Christian. JV at 6 p.m. followed by Varsity.

### Tuesday, March 2: BBB Region

### Thursday, March 4: GBB SoDAK 16

### Friday, March 5: BBB Region

### Tuesday, March 9: BBB SoDAK 16

March 11-13: State Girls Basketball Tournament in Watertown

March 18-20: State Boys Basketball Tournament in Sioux Falls



## Groton Area January Students of the Month

Groton Area School works to ensure that all levels of academic instruction also include the necessary life skills teaching, practicing, and modeling that encourages essential personal life habits that are universally understood to facilitate helping our students become good human beings and citizens.

It is learning with our heads, hearts, and hands to be caring and civil, to make healthy decisions, to effectively problem solve, to be respectful and responsible, to be good citizens, and to be empathetic and ethical individuals.

Students are selected based on individual student growth in the areas of: positive behavior, citizenship, good attendance, a thirst for knowledge, and high academic standards.



**Grace Wiedrick**  
Senior



**Alyssa Thaler**  
Junior



**Sierra Ehresmann**  
Sophomore



**Cadence Feist**  
Freshman



**Kellen Antonsen**  
8th Grade



**Rylee Dunker**  
7th Grade



**Kira Clocksene**  
6th Grade

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## Groton Area School 2nd Quarter Honor Roll

### Seniors

**4.0 GPA:** Sage Mortenson, Isaac Smith, Trey Gengerke, Samantha Pappas, Alexis Hanten, Alexa Herr, Tanae Lipp, Hailey Monson, Erin Unzen, Tessa Erdmann, Jasmine Gengerke, Brooklyn Gilbert, Regan Leicht

**3.99-3.50:** Grace Wambach, Alex Morris, Alyssa Fordham, Grace Wiedrick, Dragr Monson, Eh Tha You Say, Braden Freeman, Chandler Larson, Chloe Daly, Kale Pharis, Lee Iverson, Dylan Krueger, Steven Paulson

**3.49-3.00:** Connor Lehman, Jaimen Farrell, Trevor Harry, Kenzie McInerney, Tristan Traphagen, Paxton Bonn, Tucker Carda, Kannon Coats, Tiara DeHoet

### Juniors

**4.0 GPA:** Madeline Fliehs, Allyssa Locke, Trista Keith, Travis Townsend, Seth Johnson

**3.99-3.50:** Jordan Bjerke, Pierce Kettering, Kansas Kroll, Stella Meier, Madisen Bjerke, Alyssa Thaler, Hannah Gustafson, Kennedy Anderson, Megan Fliehs, Julianna Kosel, Lane Krueger, Jackson Cogley

**3.49-3.00:** Jace Kroll, Brayden Hansen, Torrence Wiseman

### Sophomores

**4.0 GPA:** Ethan Clark, Jackson Dinger, Jacob Lewandowski, Shaylee Peterson, Elliana Weismantel

**3.99-3.50:** Kaleb Antonsen, Andrew Marzahn, Cadance Tullis, Brooke Gengerke, Aspen Johnson, Gracie Traphagen, Caleb Hanten, Cole Simon, Cole Bisbee, Carter Barse, Sierra Ehresmann, Cade Larson, Brenna Carda, Jackson Bahr

**3.49-3.00:** Tate Larson, Jacelynne Gleason, KayLynn Overacker, Shallyn Foertsch, Ethan Gengerke

### Freshmen

**4.0 GPA:** Dillon Abeln, Emily Clark, Claire Heinrich, Hannah Monson

**3.99-3.50:** Holden Sippel, Camryn Kurtz, Ashlyn Sperry, Lexi Osterman, Jaycie Lier, Anna Fjeldheim, Lydia Meier, Sara Menzia, Bradin Althoff, Shea Jandel, Kyleigh Englund, Sydney Leicht, Abigail Jensen, Ava Wienk, Emma Schinkel, Colby Dunker, Anna Bisbee, Lane Tietz

**3.49-3.00:** Cadence Feist, Jacob Zak, Faith Fliehs, Jackson Garstecki, Logan Ringgenberg, Bryson Wambach, Karsyn Jangula

### Eighth Graders

**4.0 GPA:** Gretchen Dinger, Axel Warrington

**3.99-3.50:** Payton Mitchell, Elizabeth Fliehs, Fairth Traphagen, Corbin Weismantel, Jeslyn Kosel, Ashlyn Feser, Karrah-Jo Johnson

**3.49-3.00:** Blake Pauli, Emma Kutter, Laila Roberts, Blake Dennert, Kaden Kampa, Brooklyn Hansen, Easten Ekern, Kennedy Hansen, Korbin Kucker, Aiden Heathcote, Carter Simon, Turner Thompson, Kellen Antonsen, Brevin Fliehs

### Seventh Graders

**4.0 GPA:** Jaedyn Penning

**3.99-3.50:** Nathan Unzen, Carly Gilbert, Jerica Locke, Natalia Warrington, Talli Wright, Lucas Carda, De Eh Tha Say, Benjamin Hoeft, Cali Tollifson, Keegen Tracy, Logan Warrington

**3.49-3.00:** Ryder Johnson, Gage Sippel, London Bahr, Rylee Dunker, Olivia Stiegelmeier, Mia Crank, Lincoln Krause, Raelee Lily, Paisley Mitchell, Karsten Fliehs, Jayden Schwan, Noah Theisen

### Sixth Graders

**4.0 GPA:** None

**3.99-3.50:** Teagan Hanten, Carlee Johnson, Ashlynn Warrington, Colt Williamson, Kira Clocksene, Brody Lord, Liby Althoff, Aiden Strom, Halee Harder, Blake Lord

**3.49-3.00:** Addison Hoffman Wipf, Emerlee Jones, McKenna Tietz, Claire Schuelke, Kella Tracy, Taryn Traphagen, Walker Zoellner, Avery Crank, Estella Sanchez-Gonzalez

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The NFL Conference Championship games have been played, and we finally know the two teams who will be battling for the Lombardi Trophy on February 7. Before we look at how they got there, however, let's check in on the Vikings.

## Vikings News and Notes

Last week, Pro Football Writers of America came out with its annual awards list. Dalvin Cook was the only Viking named to the 2020 PFWA All-NFL team, while Justin Jefferson and Cameron Dantzler were named to the All-Rookie Team.

In a move that many had seen coming, Vikings' offensive coordinator Gary Kubiak has officially retired. His absence will be felt, as not only did he implement an offense that was fourth in the NFL this season, he was also someone who Mike Zimmer could lean on when times got tough. The Vikings will now need to replace two coordinators (offensive and special teams).

## Conference Championship Recaps

Tampa Bay 31, Green Bay 26

The first game on Sunday featured the Tampa Bay Buccaneers setting sail for the frozen tundra to face off against the Green Bay Packers. The storyline coming into this game was Tom Brady versus Aaron Rodgers, but it was defense that decided this game. Tampa Bay's defense sacked Rodgers five times on Sunday, while on the flip side, Green Bay's defense failed to get a stop when they needed one the most.

Tom Brady will be heading to his tenth Super Bowl, extending his record for most championship game appearances. Against the Packers, he finished the game with 280 yards, three touchdowns, and three interceptions. Amazingly, Brady has only been in the NFC for one season, but he already has as many conference championships as Aaron Rodgers and Drew Brees.

The Buccaneers were not able to get anything going on the ground, with Leonard Fournette and Ronald Jones combining for only 71 yards on 22 carries. Chris Godwin led the team's receivers, catching five passes for 110 yards. On defense, Devin White had 15 tackles, which was more than double the next defender. Jason Pierre-Paul was another standout, finishing with two sacks, two tackles for a loss, and two QB hits. However, the player of the game was Shaquil Barret, who had three sacks, two tackles for a loss, and four QB hits.

Kansas City Chiefs 38, Buffalo Bills 24

The AFC Championship game was a one-score game that came down to the final minutes. The AFC Championship Game was over in the first half. Even with Buffalo jumping out to a 9-0 lead in the first nine minutes of the game, Kansas City went into halftime with a two-score lead that they never relinquished. The Bills had a great season but just couldn't compete with Patrick Mahomes and the Chiefs.

A week after leaving the game with a concussion, Patrick Mahomes returned and was lights out against a stout Buffalo defense, completing 29 of 38 passes for 325 yards and three touchdowns. Mahomes was basically the Chiefs' only offense, as Kansas City's running backs could only churn out 59 yards on 19 carries on Sunday. The Chief's leading receiver was Tyreek Hill, who finished with nine catches for 172 yards. Frank Clark led the defense with two sacks, two tackles for a loss, and two QB hits.

The player of the game for Kansas City was Travis Kelce, who caught 13 passes for 118 yards and two touchdowns. Kelce is the best tight end in the NFL, and it isn't even close after this performance.

Don't miss next week's article, where we will break down this Super Bowl matchup. Skol!



By Jordan Wright



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**#336 in a series**

## **Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller**

I like the look of things this week. The New Year's surge should be close to over, and the trends are, accordingly, down. We're getting the tapering effect we talked about last week. We are at 25,166,500 cases reported in the US so far in the pandemic. There were 124,000 new cases reported today for a 0.5% increase in total cases. We've been over 90,000 cases for a solid twelve weeks and over 70,000 for thirteen weeks. Hospitalizations have been declining for two weeks and are almost 10,000 below the record. There are 113,609 people hospitalized with this virus today. We haven't been below 100,000 hospitalized for eight weeks.

We're down to 45 states and territories in the red zone, seven in orange, and two in yellow. One-week increase in total cases was 1,528,100 last week and is down to 1,190,100 this week. Two-week increase was 3,314,700 last week and is down to 2,718,200 this week. We've added over five million cases in January, which means we're still on track to add over six and a half million by the end of the month; I am hoping that, as new cases decline, this number will fall. I have us at a one-week daily average new-case number of 170,014.3, about 48,000 less than last week; it's looking as though things are slowing down. I hope this continues.

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 down to just one. The only state above this rate of growth in cases over 14 days is Connecticut at 38.00%. We have 21 states and territories with growth rates above the US growth rate. Looks like most of the trouble is on the East Coast and in the Southwest, but almost everything seems to be getting better.

There were 1775 deaths reported today, a 0.4% increase to 419,077. Average daily deaths have dropped for the first time in weeks, falling to the lowest point in three weeks at 3073.0 this week. This is the tenth consecutive week since spring we've reported over 10,000 deaths. States with the most per capita deaths over the past week are Arizona, Alabama, Pennsylvania, New Mexico, and Mississippi. Kansas was on this list last week; New Mexico is new to it this week. Most states are down modestly per capita in deaths.

I read a fairly thoroughgoing analysis of just where we stand now that any holiday surge in new cases should be past. As we've noted over the past week or so, we seem to be off those 300,000+ new-case days and well below the 130,000+ hospitalizations we saw at peak, and those trends appear to be holding. Numbers appear to be coming down in states that had huge caseloads, but rising in those that had lower caseloads. Maybe people serious up about precautions where the hospitals are dangerously full and relax once it seems the crisis is past; or maybe there are fewer people who haven't already been infected in those high-case areas—not herd immunity, but the percentage of the careless who remain uninfected may be reduced.

Los Angeles County, in particular, is pulling back from the brink, although hospitals are still very stressed and have few beds available. Death rates in hospitalized patients have doubled, likely because only the very sickest have been admitted, others being managed at home. Arizona has been seeing another surge, but seems to be leveling off a bit too; hospitals are managing by putting more than one patient in a room and using repurposed spaces for patient care—same story we've seen in many other places. Staffing has been a huge issue. One area where we don't seem to be seeing any leveling off is south Texas; that will bear watching. But the overall picture is that we may be emerging from the worst days we've seen so far.

So what's next? Good question. We've had three waves so far in this pandemic: a spring one that encompassed primarily the Northeast, a summer one that hit the South and the Southwest hardest, and a fall/winter one that swept the country, not missing much, but really punishing the Great Plains and Midwest. Our problem is that, after each wave, the baseline rate of infections has been higher than before; we never fall all the way back to previous levels after a peak, but instead just establish a new normal. And over time, we get sort of numb to the numbers.

I remember when we sort of breathlessly reported 30,000 and then 35,000 new cases per day back in April and May. It was awful. Remember that? How quaint.

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So coming off that peak, we had sort of a baseline in early summer around 20,000 to 25,000 new cases per day—a higher starting place for what was coming. Midsummer, we were looking at as many as 75,000 new cases on some days. I remember how horrifying that was. When that was over, we were having around 40,000 new cases per day as our new normal going into the fall/winter wave. Do you see what happened? What would have been shocking in April was a pretty good day in September. And now? At this point, we would all breathe a collective sigh of relief if we could get new cases “down” to what was horrifying in July; after all, compared to 300,000 or even the numbers between 190,000 and 200,000 that we’ve been having lately, 75,000 looks great, and we haven’t been even below 80,000 since Halloween. We’re mostly pretty darned pleased at anything below 200,000 these days—haven’t been below 100,000 since right after the election. Meanwhile, well over 400,000 of us have died—people’s grandparents, parents, siblings, children, friends, neighbors, coworkers, that nice lady at the grocery store, and the friendly crossing guard by your kids’ school. Famous people and little-known. Old and vulnerable, young and fit. People with years yet to contribute and to live. And all of this is before we count the economic cost and the strains on mental health and life satisfaction and happiness.

Anyone want to guess what happens if we settle in at the latest version of the new normal and then one of these scary variants sweeps the country? I didn’t think so.

Those vaccinations can’t go out fast enough. Let’s send out all of our best thoughts, prayers, entreaties to the cosmic forces, mystical whatever that you believe in that we get this vaccination program up and running more smoothly—soon. And it’s time to serious up, folks. We simply must stop transmissions until we have a boatload of people protected. Let’s make the next “new normal” astonishingly low and falling.

Also on that note, while I’m as eager as anyone to see the US population (especially me) vaccinated and achieving herd immunity without further horrifying mortality reports, I am seeing plenty of evidence that gathering all of the goodies for ourselves and rolling full-steam-ahead without regard for the rest of the world, specifically very poor countries, is bad policy. There is a study coming out Monday that concludes that, if wealthy countries are fully vaccinated by the middle of this year while poor countries are pretty much shut out, the global economy will take a \$9 trillion hit, almost half of which will be felt by said wealthy countries. I have not seen this study in preprint, so I am working from summaries, but it doesn’t look good. If those developing countries manage to vaccinate half of their populations, we’re still looking at an impact from \$2 trillion to \$4 trillion with, again, half or more felt by folks like us. I don’t like to get into policy matters here because that veers close to the political territory I’ve pretty much declared off-limits in these Updates, but I don’t think there’s a selfish way out of this. I think we’re going to have to pay now or pay later—and as with most pay-later schemes, you end up paying a lot more that way.

Here’s a bit of maybe hopeful news: a better rapid test for coronavirus infections, the smell test. This isn’t about those Covid-19-sniffing dogs, which is another story on its own, but rather a test for the loss of the sense of smell. Turns out the loss of the sense of smell is one of the best indicators of coronavirus infection, even for people who otherwise feel just fine. This isn’t going to identify everyone who’s infected, but it seems 50 to 90 percent of infected people, those with and those without symptoms, have some measurable impairment of their sense of smell as the virus damages cells in the airway. The work remains largely theoretical, but there is growing evidence that this is a way to spot asymptomatic infected individuals who are a danger to others, especially those capable of shedding virus since virus in the nasal passages is a primary means of spread. It may be far more reliable than the temperature checks some entities are employing, given that only a minority of infected folks spike a temperature and fevers are generally fleeting.

One trick is to prevent cheating. After all, if I’m infected, but determined to go into the store to buy eggs, I might be incentivized to lie about the answer to, “Do you smell onions here?” Someone thought of that, and one possibility is a small scratch-and-sniff paper card. Because different cards contain different combinations of scents, there’s no way to memorize the sequence and then cheat. So you scratch and sniff your way through a card, shooting to correctly identify at least three of the five odors in the various spots on the card, taking less than a minute in all, and your sense of smell can be fairly accurately evaluated. The cost is looking like maybe 50 cents per card. It is estimated a single printer could produce upwards of 50 million of the cards per day.



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So how much use could this be? A team of scientists consisting of Dr. Daniel Larremore, epidemiologist at the University of Colorado, Boulder; Dr. Derek Toomre, cell biologist at Yale University; and Dr. Roy Parker, biochemist at the University of Colorado, Boulder; have modeled how a tool with at least 50 percent sensitivity in finding new infections, applied at point of entry, could quash outbreaks nearly as well as a more accurate, but slower, laboratory test done weekly. Using such a test on college campuses or offices and the entrances to stores, not to mention in the home, could be a game changer. Ear, nose, and throat specialist at the University of California, San Diego, Dr. Carol Yan, told the New York Times, "I think this is pot on. Testing people repeatedly is going to be a valuable portion of this.

There are limitations: people with colds whose sense of smell is disrupted by a stuffy nose, people with allergies who are also temporarily unable to smell well, and folks with anosmia, an inability to smell at all. We also lose our ability to distinguish odors as we age; about 80 percent of people over 75 years lose some of their sense of smell. Another problem is that the loss of the sense of smell can linger well after a person is no longer infectious, so recovered Covid-19 patients might experience difficulty with such a test well after they're safe to go out and about. The test would also have to be designed to some degree around the culture in which it finds itself: Odors linked to foods which are popular in some places, but not others, might give the subject trouble if they're not familiar enough to identify. Still, this method has some promise, and our current quick screening procedures have not worked at all. Seems like this is worth pursuing.

Jose Andres is an immigrant. He arrived in New York City in 1990 at age 21 with \$50 in his pocket—very much like many of our ancestors did. He had restaurant training in his native Spain, so he went to work in a Spanish restaurant in the city. Creative and talented, hard-working, he moved swiftly up in the restaurant world and now, some 30 years later, is the co-owner of a restaurant empire that claims 19 restaurants or food trucks from New York City to Washington, DC, to Florida, Cleveland, Las Vegas, and Los Angeles, some of them very high-end with Michelin stars and others a little less exalted, but all with top-notch reputations.

While he was doing all of that, he also began, as early as 1993, to volunteer with organizations that train unemployed people to work in restaurants and serve food to at-risk people. He told Bloomberg Businessweek that he found it humbling to work next to homeless people and ex-convicts. He said, "I began growing up as a young man, but more importantly, I began growing up as an American." It seemed kind of natural then, in 2010 when an earthquake ripped through Haiti, to go there to prepare meals for hungry people. He didn't just go to cook, though: He observed. He noted what kinds of "help" actually help and what kinds don't, and the World Central Kitchen (WCK) was born, Andres' nonprofit organization that has been responding to disasters and the hungry people left in their wake ever since.

Since that beginning, WCK has been in Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria, in various parts of California as they battles wildfires, to Hawaii when Kilauea erupted, to the Bahamas after Hurricane Dorian, and also to the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Zambia, Peru, Cuba, Uganda, and Cambodia. Everywhere they go, they feed people; that's their gig. Their trademark is speed and agility. They don't go in anywhere with plans; they go in with hands, helping hands. They survey the situation and go to work, finding food, finding places to cook it, and finding people to help. And they raise boatloads of money to fund these endeavors. There aren't many employees; the money goes for food. And they have been wildly successful in getting food onto plates in diverse places under terrible circumstances when others fail. Time magazine recently called Andres "the face of global disaster relief."

His sidekick and WCK's CEO, Nathan Mook, recalled to The Washingtonian about their work in Puerto Rico, "Folks at FEMA, the Red Cross, the Salvation Army—these organizations, they were laughing Jose and me out of the room. Like, 'What do you guys know about feeding people in disasters?'" Dumb question. Because they didn't know much, but they just went to work and did it anyway. They distributed 3.7 million meals there—a feat no other aid group remotely approached. And they weren't handing out military rations either; they were serving up freshly-made, nutritious meals day after day. Before it was over, the Salvation Army actually got some of the meals they handed out from WCK and FEMA subsidized some of their work. Why? Because they get things done.

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And then (going to say it again—sigh!) came the pandemic. WCK went to Japan and then to California to prepare meals for passengers stranded offshore in cruise liners, and they figured out how to deliver those meals, hot and ready, to folks no one wanted to touch.

After that, suddenly the hunger was at home, first in New York City and then all across the country. As jobs evaporated, so did people’s food budgets. Food pantries were unable to meet demand. Meanwhile, restaurants were closed; their workers were some of those unemployed and hungry people. And WCK, ever nimble, took a look at the situation and figured out how to do the most good with the dollars they had available to them. They set up a traveling farmers market to get food into people’s kitchens.

Another tactic was to pay those closed restaurants to prepare meals to be handed out at missions and churches in a city. This didn’t just feed people: It also helped restaurant suppliers to get rid of inventory before it spoiled; it gave the workers an income which they then turned around and spent, the money passing from pocket to pocket and lifting the entire community; and it helped restaurants make ends meet, paying the rent and saving these small businesses. Each meal prepared this way costs more than one prepared on an industrial scale in a huge commercial kitchen, but the community benefits of that additional spending rippled throughout the population, multiplying the benefits. Uber Eats drivers were hired to deliver the meals to distribution centers, providing income for this hard-hit group of workers too.

Sometimes, the approach had to get even more creative. One place where food was prepared in bulk was Nationals Stadium in DC. They used kitchens at various restaurants throughout the stadium, brought in restaurant workers who needed income to work alongside of volunteers, and pumped out hundreds of thousands of meals. On the other hand, in Indian Country in New Mexico, they discovered there weren’t enough restaurants to prepare meals in this sparsely-populated, rural area, so they put together food boxes of fresh food and delivered those to homes so residents could prepare their own meals.

In July, WCK was feeding 250,000 people in 34 states every single day; that work involved more than 2400 restaurants, caterers, and food trucks. At that point, they’d fed 15 million people and counting. I haven’t seen updated numbers in the ensuing six months, but just before Christmas, they’d burned through some \$150 million raised from individuals, corporate sponsors, and some government funding. There is a way for FEMA money to funnel through the organization, but there is talk in Congress of making that easier for states and municipalities to manage with their stricken budgets.

Local and state governments across the country are borrowing a page from Andres’ book and mounting similar initiatives on their own, saving businesses and their residents all at once. Andres sees this as a good thing. He’s not about being the guy; he’s about getting people fed. His World Central Kitchen has provided the blueprint—showed how it’s done; now he welcomes copycat programs, the more the merrier. He also thinks it’s time we addressed food insecurity on a larger scale, not just while there’s a pandemic, but on into the future. He told Bloomberg, “This should be a moment of no compromises.” I can’t think of a reason for children to go to bed hungry either.

Take care. We’ll talk again.

Groton Area School District															
Active COVID-19 Cases															
Updated January 22, 2021; 8:28 AM															
JK	KG	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Staff	Total
0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	3

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## Jan. 24th COVID-19 UPDATE

### Groton Daily Independent from State Health Lab Reports

South Dakota: Community Spread for week of Jan. 18:

None: Harding downgraded from minimal to none.

Minimal: Corson, Faulk, Haakon downgraded from moderate to minimal.

Moderate: Hand, Mellette upgraded from minimal to moderate; Tripp downgraded from substantial to moderate.

Substantial: Aurora, Brule, Lyman, McPherson, Miner, Potter, Ziebach upgraded from moderate to substantial, .

No Spread: Harding (Lost Buffalo)

Positive: +185 (107,153 total) Positivity Rate: 12.2%

Total Tests: 1516 (857,465 total)

Total Persons Tested: 819 (397,239 total)

Hospitalized: +16 (6193 total) 162 currently hospitalized (-10)

Avera St. Luke's: 7 (-0) COVID-19 Occupied beds, 0 (-0) COVID-19 ICU Beds, 0 (-0) COVID-19 ventilators.

Sanford Aberdeen: 4 (+0) COVID-19 Occupied beds, 1 (+0) COVID-19 ICU Beds, 0 (-0) COVID-19 ventilators.

Deaths: +9 (1705 total)

Female: 5, Male: 4

Age Groups: 40s=1, 50s=1, 60s=2, 70s=2, 80+=3

Counties: Aurora-1, Brookings-1, Charles Mix-1, Lincoln-1, Minnehaha-2, Oglala Lakota-1, Todd-1, Ziebach-1.

Recovered: +192 (101,438 total)

Active Cases: -16 (4005)

Percent Recovered: 94.7%

Vaccinations: +2440 (75683)

Vaccinations Completed: +889 (17145)

Brown County Vaccinations: +132 (3604) 704 (+81) completed

Beadle (39) +4 positive, +7 recovered (61 active cases)

Brookings (33) +3 positive, +9 recovered (206 active cases)

Brown (75): +12 positive, +3 recovered (183 active cases)

Clark (4): +1 positive, +1 recovered (7 active cases)

Clay (14): +1 positive, +1 recovered (61 active cases)

Codington (73): +1 positive, +10 recovered (139 active cases)

Davison (55): +4 positive, +10 recovered (98) active cases)

Day (25): +4 positive, +1 recovered (27 active cases)

Edmunds (8): +0 positive, +4 recovered (29 active cases)

Faulk (13): +1 positive, +0 recovered (10 active cases)

Grant (36): +8 positive, +4 recovered (56 active cases)

Hanson (4): +0 positive, +2 recovered (8 active cases)

Hughes (31): +3 positive, +4 recovered (105 active cases)

Lawrence (35): +0 positive, +4 recovered (50 active cases)

Lincoln (72): +10 positive, +12 recovered (271 active cases)

Marshall (5): +1 positive, +1 recovered (12 active cases)

McCook (22): +1 positive, +1 recovered (18 active cases)

McPherson (4): +0 positive, +2 recovery (28 active case)

Minnehaha (300): +39 positive, +50 recovered (942 active cases)

Pennington (166): +35 positive, +26 recovered (429 active cases)

Potter (3): +1 positive, +3 recovered (18 active cases)

Roberts (34): +2 positive, +7 recovered (42 active cases)

Spink (25): +2 positive, +1 recovered (31 active cases)

Walworth (14): +6 positive, +6 recovered (43 active cases)

### NORTH DAKOTA

COVID-19 Daily Report, Jan. 24:

- 3.4% rolling 14-day positivity
- 99 new positives
- 2673 susceptible test encounters
- 49 currently hospitalized (-1)
- 1,097 active cases (-64)
- 1,411 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	444	410	809	12	Substantial	8.82%
Beadle	2596	2480	5458	39	Substantial	11.98%
Bennett	376	358	1112	9	Moderate	3.08%
Bon Homme	1502	1459	1962	23	Substantial	6.15%
Brookings	3366	3127	10745	33	Substantial	9.31%
Brown	4844	4586	11728	75	Substantial	9.03%
Brule	677	643	1757	8	Substantial	15.38%
Buffalo	416	403	857	12	Minimal	0.00%
Butte	947	903	2994	20	Substantial	8.79%
Campbell	120	112	233	4	Minimal	0.00%
Charles Mix	1208	1125	3695	15	Substantial	9.09%
Clark	332	319	900	4	Moderate	9.52%
Clay	1742	1667	4847	14	Substantial	8.08%
Codington	3711	3499	9039	73	Substantial	11.36%
Corson	459	442	960	11	Minimal	10.81%
Custer	721	689	2532	10	Substantial	14.85%
Davison	2879	2724	6038	56	Substantial	5.18%
Day	594	542	1614	25	Substantial	9.76%
Deuel	453	425	1046	7	Substantial	11.43%
Dewey	1384	1334	3626	18	Substantial	6.56%
Douglas	410	384	851	9	Substantial	13.16%
Edmunds	452	408	937	8	Substantial	4.94%
Fall River	498	469	2421	14	Substantial	14.13%
Faulk	330	307	636	13	Minimal	7.14%
Grant	902	810	2053	36	Substantial	20.93%
Gregory	497	459	1153	27	Moderate	2.44%
Haakon	240	228	499	9	Minimal	9.09%
Hamlin	662	597	1621	38	Substantial	12.05%
Hand	321	305	736	4	Moderate	10.00%
Hanson	329	317	653	4	Moderate	8.57%
Harding	90	89	164	1	None	0.00%
Hughes	2180	2046	6018	31	Substantial	3.96%
Hutchinson	748	693	2154	23	Substantial	17.86%

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Hyde	134	129	384	1	Minimal	0.00%
Jackson	269	252	880	13	Minimal	8.33%
Jerauld	265	246	527	16	Minimal	0.00%
Jones	79	72	188	0	Minimal	16.67%
Kingsbury	600	552	1498	13	Substantial	21.05%
Lake	1130	1053	2971	16	Substantial	15.63%
Lawrence	2730	2635	7969	35	Substantial	10.32%
Lincoln	7366	7023	18571	72	Substantial	11.45%
Lyman	587	541	1794	10	Substantial	13.92%
Marshall	283	263	1073	5	Moderate	18.75%
McCook	713	676	1487	22	Substantial	4.55%
McPherson	232	200	526	4	Substantial	6.43%
Meade	2445	2330	7102	28	Substantial	14.89%
Mellette	237	229	689	2	Moderate	23.08%
Miner	261	229	526	7	Substantial	26.09%
Minnehaha	26760	25518	71874	300	Substantial	9.83%
Moody	597	543	1637	15	Substantial	18.82%
Oglala Lakota	2024	1919	6371	41	Substantial	13.39%
Pennington	12241	11628	36374	166	Substantial	12.38%
Perkins	328	290	724	11	Substantial	19.12%
Potter	343	322	767	3	Substantial	7.84%
Roberts	1095	1019	3875	34	Substantial	12.33%
Sanborn	323	307	633	3	Moderate	9.52%
Spink	754	698	1963	25	Substantial	10.53%
Stanley	311	294	846	2	Substantial	5.26%
Sully	134	115	270	3	Moderate	16.67%
Todd	1203	1162	3978	23	Substantial	5.26%
Tripp	650	624	1400	15	Moderate	5.71%
Turner	1035	951	2493	49	Substantial	6.90%
Union	1838	1689	5754	36	Substantial	17.33%
Walworth	699	640	1719	14	Substantial	17.00%
Yankton	2719	2617	8598	27	Substantial	23.35%
Ziebach	333	313	825	9	Substantial	23.08%
Unassigned	0	0	1957	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	4124	0
10-19 years	11907	0
20-29 years	19347	4
30-39 years	17631	14
40-49 years	15277	34
50-59 years	15097	91
60-69 years	12244	220
70-79 years	6539	385
80+ years	4982	957

### SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths Among Cases
Female	55947	815
Male	51201	890



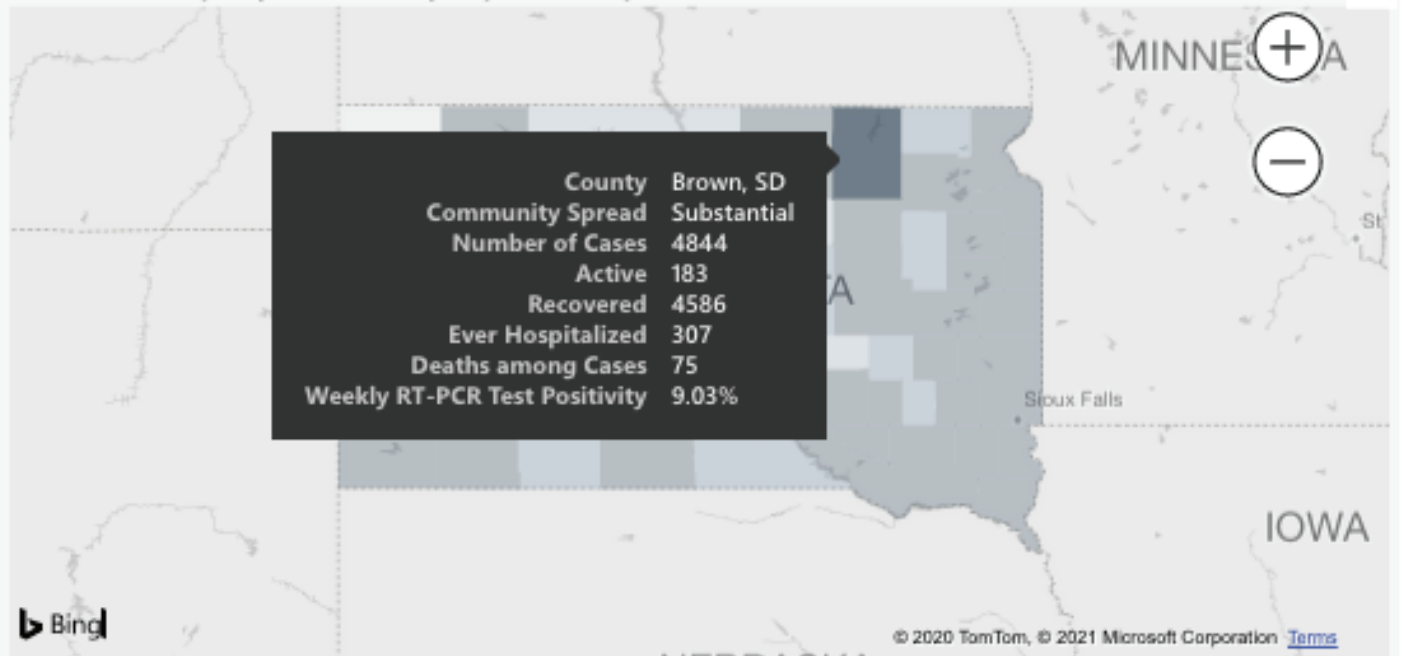
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## Brown County



### Community Spread Map by County of Residence



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



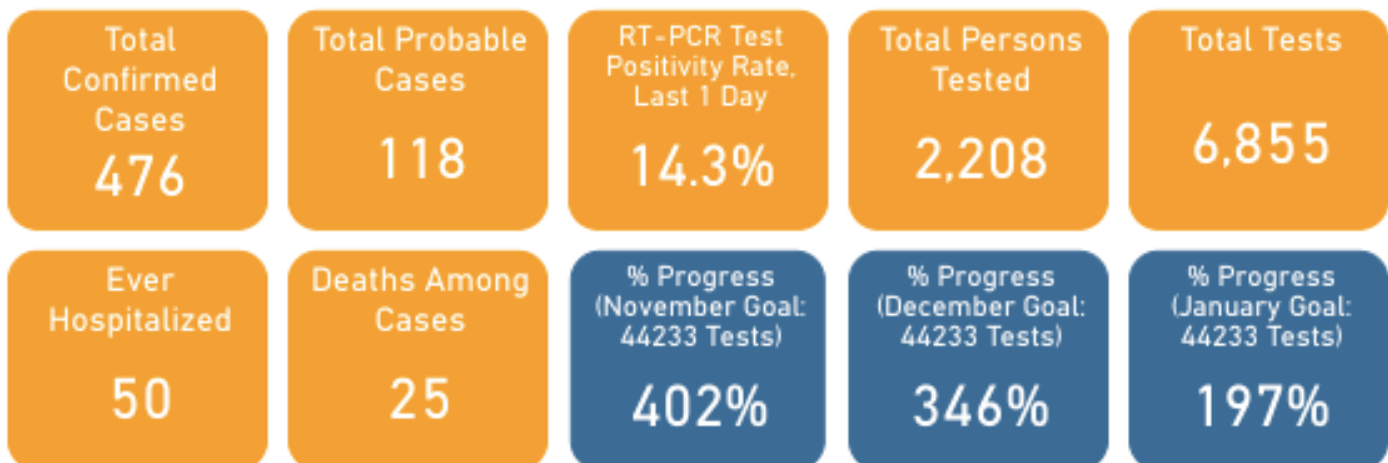
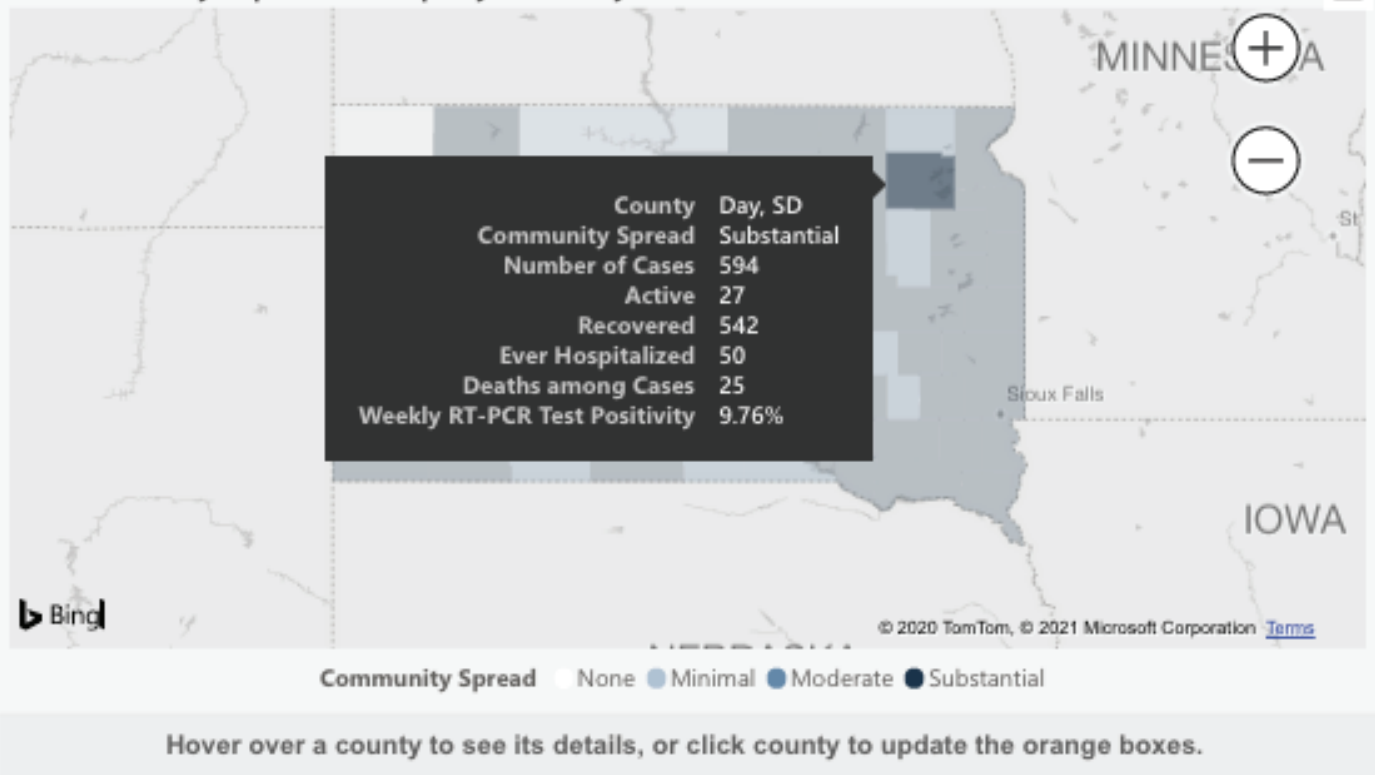
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## Day County



### Community Spread Map by County of Residence



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## Vaccinations

Total Doses Administered

75,683

Total Persons Administered a Vaccine

58,538

Manufacturer	Number of Doses
Moderna	38,589
Pfizer	37,094

Doses	Number of Recipients
Moderna - 1 dose	29,073
Moderna - Series Complete	4,758

County	# Doses	# Persons (1 dose)	# Persons (2 doses)	Total # Persons
Aurora	128	78	25	103
Beadle	1376	590	393	983
Bennett*	160	124	18	142
Bon Homme*	607	311	148	459
Brookings	2009	1,279	365	1,644
Brown	3604	2,196	704	2,900
Brule*	398	316	41	357
Buffalo*	13	11	1	12
Butte	297	269	14	283
Campbell	287	167	60	227
Charles Mix*	456	362	47	409
Clark	263	245	9	254
Clay	1134	756	189	945
Codington*	2398	1,562	418	1,980
Corson*	50	44	3	47
Custer*	524	400	62	462
Davison	1815	1,223	296	1,519
Day*	568	380	94	474
Deuel	316	214	51	265
Dewey*	121	115	3	118
Douglas*	271	217	27	244
Edmunds	267	193	37	230
Fall River*	597	455	71	526
Faulk	194	178	8	186
Grant*	452	418	17	435
Gregory*	362	288	37	325
Haakon*	167	81	43	124



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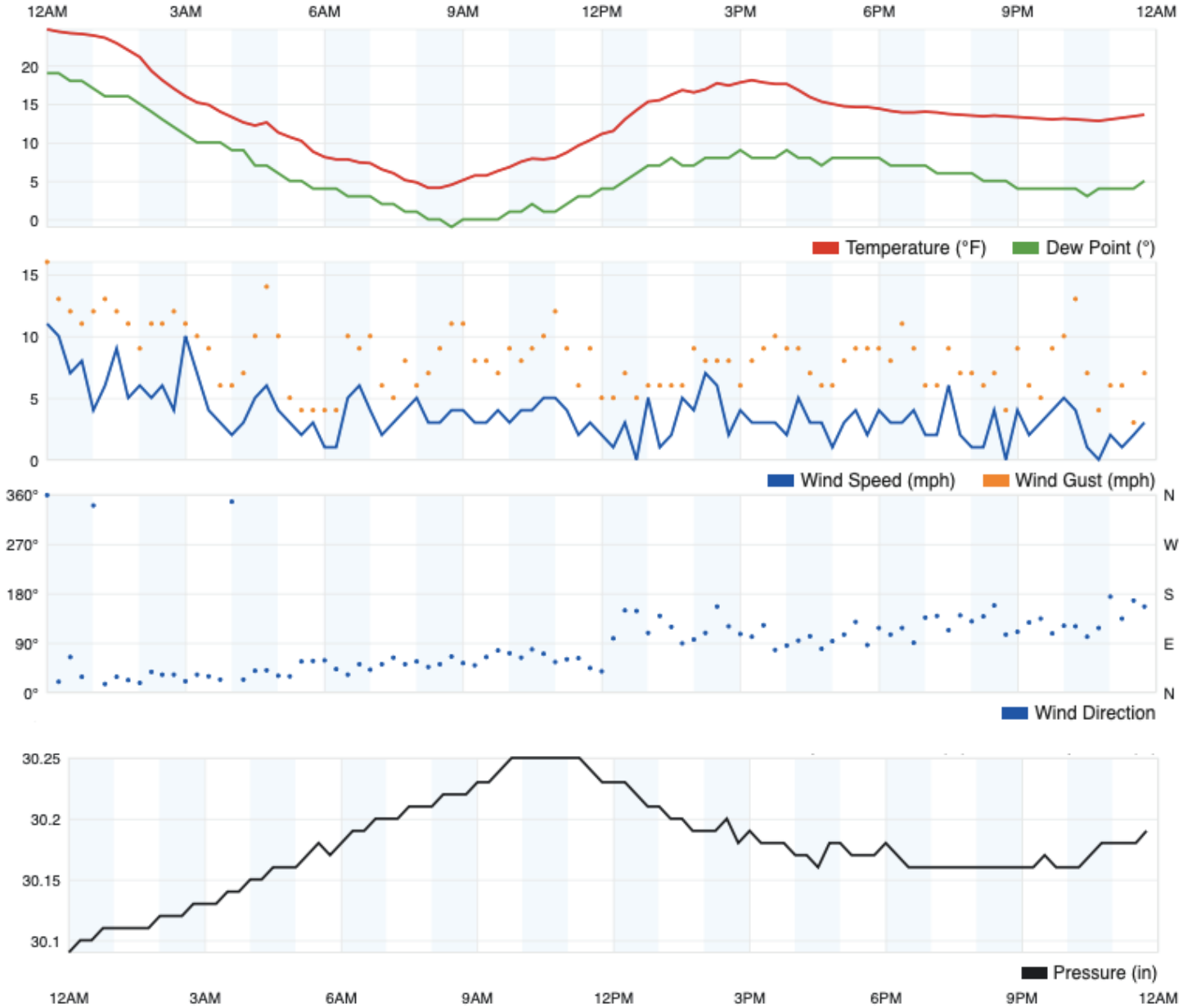
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Hamlin	418	230	94	324
Hand	300	136	82	218
Hanson	96	50	23	73
Harding	3	3	0	3
Hughes*	1854	982	436	1,418
Hutchinson*	781	581	100	681
Hyde*	112	94	9	103
Jackson*	88	74	7	81
Jerauld	128	60	34	94
Jones*	126	94	16	110
Kingsbury	452	276	88	364
Lake	987	337	325	662
Lawrence	1290	1,154	68	1,222
Lincoln	8218	2,904	2,657	5,561
Lyman*	136	98	19	117
Marshall*	252	232	10	242
McCook	457	285	86	371
McPherson	43	21	11	32
Meade*	1059	833	113	946
Mellette*	11	9	1	10
Miner	177	131	23	154
Minnehaha	21958	8,726	6,616	15,342
Moody*	353	219	67	286
Oglala Lakota*	34	24	5	29
Pennington*	8114	5,682	1,216	6,898
Perkins*	84	56	14	70
Potter	148	122	13	135
Roberts*	785	723	31	754
Sanborn	214	152	31	183
Spink	644	578	33	611
Stanley*	273	121	76	197
Sully	63	31	16	47
Todd*	36	28	4	32
Tripp*	502	396	53	449
Turner	986	552	217	769
Union	454	264	95	359
Walworth*	570	354	108	462
Yankton	2503	1,275	614	1,889
Ziebach*	17	17	0	17
Other	2123	1,017	553	1,570

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



Decreasing  
Clouds

High: 14 °F

Tonight



Mostly Cloudy

Low: 0 °F

Tuesday



Partly Sunny

High: 16 °F

Tuesday  
Night



Mostly Cloudy

Low: 0 °F

Wednesday



Partly Sunny

High: 20 °F

National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

**Today**  
Highs 14-24°F

**Dry**

**Tuesday**  
Highs 10-22°F

**Dry**

Mostly dry conditions are expected through the work week. Below average temperatures continue for the next couple days before we start to warm up the latter half of the week.

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## Today in Weather History

January 25, 2010: A large upper level low pressure area combined with a cold surface high-pressure area building in from the north brought light snow and very strong winds creating widespread blizzard conditions across north central and northeast South Dakota. Snowfall amounts of 1 to 4 inches combined with north winds of 25 to 40 mph gusting up to 55 mph created frequent whiteout conditions across the area. Travel was significantly affected or halted, and several schools were closed. Interstate-29 was closed from the North Dakota border and south on the 25th until the morning of the 26th. The blizzard hampered efforts to restore power to the thousands of customers from the previous winter storm. The snowfall began in the morning hours from 6 to 10 am and ended around the time the blizzard conditions subsided.

1821: The Hudson River was frozen solid in the midst of the coldest winter in forty-one years. Thousands of persons crossed the ice from New York City to New Jersey, and refreshment taverns were set up in the middle of the river to warm pedestrians.

1937: Las Vegas, Nevada dropped to 8 degrees above zero, setting an all-time record low for the city.

1949: Las Vegas, Nevada recorded 4.7 inches of snow. This brought the monthly snowfall total to 16.7 inches which still ranks as their snowiest month on record.

1916 - The temperature at Browning MT plunged 100 degrees in just 24 hours, from 44 degrees above zero to 56 degrees below zero. It was a record 24 hour temperature drop for the U.S. (Weather Channel) (National Severe Storms Forecast Center)

1935 - Snowstorms hit the northeastern U.S. and the Pacific Northwest producing record 24 hour snowfall totals of 23 inches at Portland ME and 52 inches at Winthrop MA. (David Ludlum)

1956 - Thirty-eight inches of rain deluged the Kilauea Sugar Plantation of Hawaii in 24 hours, including twelve inches in just one hour. (David Ludlum)

1963 - A great arctic outbreak reached the southern U.S. The cold wave broke many records for duration of cold weather along the Gulf Coast. A reading of 15 degrees below zero at Nashville TN was an all-time record low for that location. (David Ludlum)

1982 - Chinook winds plagued the foothills of southeastern Wyoming and northern and central Colorado for the second straight Sunday. The winds gusted to 140 mph at Wondervu CO, located northeast of Denver. Chinook winds a week earlier produced wind gusts to 137 mph. (Storm Data)

1987 - Temperatures in Minnesota plunged far below the zero mark. International Falls MN reported a morning low of 35 degrees below zero, and Warroad MN was the cold spot in the nation with a low of 45 below zero. A storm developing in northeastern Texas produced severe thunderstorms with large hail in Texas, Louisiana and Arkansas. Camden AR reported golf ball size hail. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - A blizzard rapidly developed in the north central U.S. In just one hour weather conditions in eastern North Dakota switched from sunny skies, light winds and temperature readings in the 20s, to rapidly falling temperatures and near zero visibility in snow and blowing snow. High winds in Wyoming, gusting to 72 mph at Gillette, produced snow drifts sixteen feet high. Northwestern Iowa experienced its second blizzard in just 24 hours. High winds in Iowa produced wind chill readings as cold as 65 degrees below zero. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Heavy snow blanketed the Rockies and the Northern High Plains Region. Hettinger ND received 12 inches of snow. Wolf Creek Pass CO was blanketed with 16 inches of snow in just 24 hours. Severe cold prevailed across Alaska. Between the 24th and the 29th of January, a total of thirty stations in the state report all-time record low temperatures. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - A deep low pressure system brought high winds and heavy snow to the western Aleutian Islands of Alaska. Winds gusting to 82 mph at Shemya reduced the visibility to near zero in blowing snow. Rain and gale force winds lashed the northern Pacific coast. Thunderstorms produced locally heavy rains over the central Gulf coast states. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)



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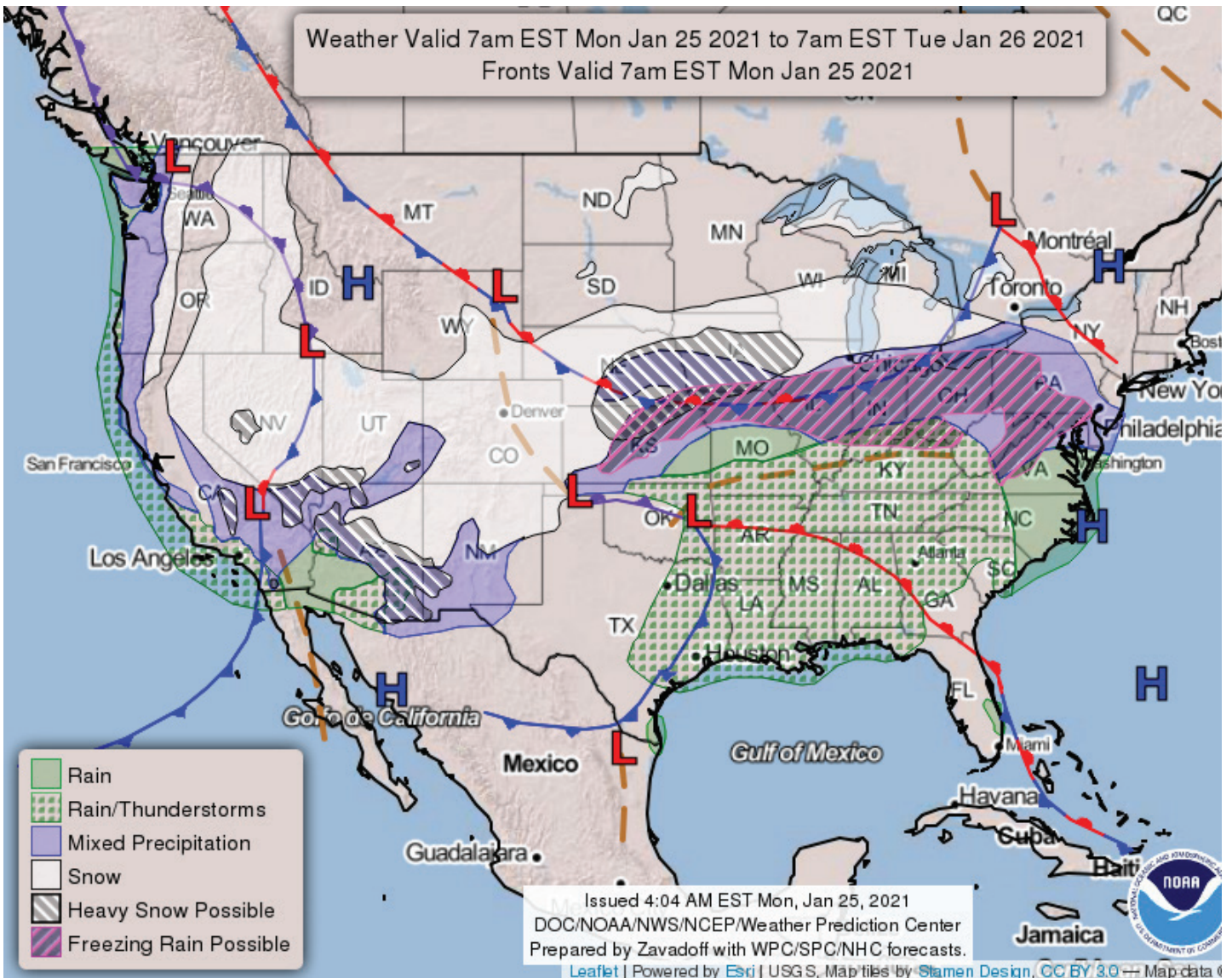
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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 25 °F at 12:00 AM**  
**Low Temp: 4 °F at 8:17 AM**  
**Wind: 15 mph at 1:34 AM**  
**Precip:**

## Today's Info

**Record High: 54° in 1942**  
**Record Low: -33° in 1904**  
**Average High: 23°F**  
**Average Low: 2°F**  
**Average Precip in Jan.: 0.38**  
**Precip to date in Jan.: 0.14**  
**Average Precip to date: 0.38**  
**Precip Year to Date: 0.14**  
**Sunset Tonight: 5:31 p.m.**  
**Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:01 a.m.**



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## THERE IS AN ANSWER

"I do not know why God ever made me," he cried in deep despair. "God has not made you yet," said his friend. "He is making you right now and you do not like what is going on." That story neatly summarizes the tenth Psalm.

Whoever wrote this psalm was asking the same question. "O Lord, why do you stand so far away? Why do you hide from me when I need you the most?" But is this a question or an accusation? If God is distant or hiding, could there be a reason? What is going on here? Is it God's doing or the Psalmist's sarcasm? Who is responsible for the feelings of isolation or separation? Is it doubt or is it distrust? Or is it neither?

This psalm does not end where it begins. It concludes with a bold proclamation, "The Lord is King forever and ever!" And a short time later we read, "Lord You know the hopes of the helpless. Surely You will hear their cries and help them."

Is God ever absent from the lives of those who look to Him for salvation? At times, it surely seems so. When the ones who claim they do not need God seem to prosper and we who worship and trust Him are forced to go without, where is He?

The author does not speculate about what God is doing nor why He does not respond to our cries immediately. He simply reminds us of the grace of God and that in His time and in His way He will hear us and comfort us. Our faith only grows through adversity.

Prayer: Give us courage, Father, to be patient and trust in Your wisdom while You work around us, with us and within us to shape us into Your likeness. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: You hear, O Lord, the desire of the afflicted; You encourage them and You listen to their cry. Psalm 10:17

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News from the  Associated Press

## Black Hills attracting new residents from other states

By TANYA MANUS Rapid City Journal

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota's reputation as the land of the free is grabbing national attention. United Van Lines' 2020 National Migration Study ranks South Dakota as the fourth most popular location nationwide where its customers are moving.

Black Hills area realtors and builders say there's an influx of people who are relocating permanently or buying land in the region — and the trend isn't expected to slow anytime soon.

Newcomers from California, Washington, New York, New Jersey, Washington, D.C., Texas, Michigan, Colorado and Virginia along with Minnesota, North Dakota and Wyoming are leading the trend of relocating to South Dakota, local realtors say. Lori Barnett, owner and broker at VIP Properties' Rapid City office, said her staff's out-of-state clients are typically leaving large metropolitan areas, including San Diego, Austin, Minneapolis, Boulder and Breckenridge.

"A large base of our buyers are retirement age and moving here full time, as opposed to the snowbird scenario where they leave for the winter, which pre-COVID-19 was fairly typical," Barnett said. "We are also seeing a huge influx of investment buyers, especially in the Northern Hills where there is year-round recreation. The builders that I am aware of in the Northern Hills are seeing 80% of their business from investment buyers.

"We had a strong market to start the 2020 year. However, after COVID-19 hit and cities and states across the country began to implement massive shutdowns, people in those areas started looking to less restrictive states," Barnett said. "Gov. Kristi Noem has certainly taken the laissez faire approach in dealing with COVID-19, which has definitely drawn attention to our state and our area in particular. People tend to be searching for a place to have more autonomy, be less populated, great outdoor recreation, and not having a state income tax is definitely a plus."

South Dakota Department of Tourism's website touts that relaxed approach on its "Moving to South Dakota" page: "We mean business in South Dakota, celebrating freedom like no other state in the nation. Here, we trust our people and allow our citizens to innovate and succeed with less government interference. ... Freedom isn't just a buzzword in South Dakota — it's a way of life."

The state's tourism website promoting South Dakota as "free of red tape and full of possibility" is striking a nerve. Hot Springs' newest residents include the Calhoun family of Santa Barbara, California, the Rapid City Journal reported.

Tony and Mickey Calhoun and their sons, Connor, 30, and Ian, 31, own two 24-hour gyms in Santa Barbara. The family plans to continue running the gyms and may consider opening a business in Hot Springs. Connor bought a house and nearly three acres of land a mile down the road from where his parents bought 10 acres and a house. All the property is near Angostura Reservoir.

Connor and Ian are fifth-generation Californians. Frustrated by that state's increasing laws and restrictions and the high cost of living, Connor said he and his brother have been considering a move for some time. Connor and his wife, Maricela, have three sons and are expecting their fourth child in May. Ian and his wife, Yocolyn, have a baby girl.

"It's so expensive in Santa Barbara I'd be living in an apartment the rest of my life. I'd rather have a house and land to run free on. I want my boys to run free," Connor said. "The weather is nice, but I'm willing to sacrifice that for my children's freedom. Everything is changing so much in California, it made me think I want a different future for my children."

He and his family will move gradually over the next few months. Ian and his family arrived this week. Tony and Mickey will relocate later.

The Calhoun brothers visited Hot Springs a couple of times last year before deciding to move. "I really liked it. It's so mellow and low-key and super cool. I love the lake. It's a cool little town," Connor said.



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Ryan Kelly, owner of Dean Kelly Construction in Rapid City and a realtor with VIP Properties, describes what the Black Hills are experiencing as a "frenzy." He noticed the influx starting about two years ago, and he anticipates the trend could continue for a few years.

Kelly's real estate sales numbers are up 50% and the requests he receives to build houses are up about 500%. He builds custom homes primarily in Rapid City.

"This is a flat out influx. I've been in real estate my entire adult life. This almost feels panicky," Kelly said. "It's a massive migration to freedom ... to exercise their civil liberties. I don't have a single client that's not coming here because they're sick of the stuff in their state."

Lori Paulsen Sauser, associate broker at Exit Realty in Rapid City, said what she's heard from clients several times are comments like "South Dakota is one of the last free states." But that's one of many factors attracting people to the region.

"Rapid City and the Black Hills sit in a better weather area. Many (clients) vacation here or are here for the motorcycle rally and they like the Hills," Sauser said. "We know interest rates are driving the market. Mixing it with the situations of politics and COVID-19, the Black Hills is a pretty good place to live."

People of all ages and stages of life are choosing South Dakota and its less restrictive environment. Tammy Ackerman, owner and broker at New Heights Properties in Rapid City, said her clients often move to the Black Hills because they have a connection to the area.

"It started in July here. At first when people were coming it was mostly political. I would hear how great our governor was constantly. That changed over time. One of the major reasons I see now is a lot of people ... planned to retire here and because of COVID-19 they're retiring early," she said.

A "huge percentage" of clients who are moving here are millennials and young families. Because of COVID-19, more people of all ages are working from home and can live where they want instead of having to be near a brick-and-mortar office, Ackerman said.

Longtime Virginia residents Laurie and Tom Hawes moved to Rapid City in October. They're having a house built in a Rapid Valley subdivision and hope to move in soon. Tom is a retired government contractor. Laurie owns her own event and meeting planning company. The couple also had a farm near Washington, D.C., before moving to the Black Hills.

Laurie has happy memories of a family vacation to the Black Hills when she was a child. Business trips to the area in adulthood further fueled her fondness for the region.

"I convinced my husband in 2019 to come out here for a vacation. He loves the mountains. He loves outdoors stuff, and we had been talking about where we want to live when we retire. We came out here for a week," Laurie said. "We really enjoyed our time out here and we said we could definitely make a life out here."

When COVID-19 hit and Laurie's client meetings were cancelled, "it seemed like a perfect time to pull up stakes," Laurie said.

Since Laurie works from home and will be traveling to clients more when the pandemic eases, they opted for a new house minutes from Rapid City Regional Airport.

"We think we're really going to like it here," Laurie said. "We come from a place where people are pretty intense and everyone is in their own little world. Everyone makes eye contact and everyone says hello here, and it's a very friendly feeling and we really enjoy that."

In her State of the State address, Noem vowed to build on the momentum and interest South Dakota is attracting. The South Dakota Department of Tourism will work on a new strategic plan in 2021 "to guide its overall efforts for the next several years to take advantage of the huge amount of interest we've received," Noem said.

## Native American woman rose from poverty to become a doctor

By FRANK VAISVILAS Green Bay Press-Gazette

BARABOO, Wis. (AP) — Born to teenage parents who divorced when she was 10 and watching her mom struggle to overcome poverty and alcoholism, Dr. Amy DeLong had long battled self-doubt to find a place



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in this world.

She is a member of the Ho-Chunk Nation and had felt, at first, that the only reason why she was able to attend the University of Michigan for her undergraduate studies was because of that institution's efforts to draw more ethnic minorities.

"I didn't know if I was smart enough," said DeLong, 51. "In the beginning, I felt like I didn't belong. ... I felt like, 'I'm only here because I'm American Indian.'"

The University of Michigan is a land-grant university made possible by the government taking land from Native American tribes. DeLong, as a Michigan resident at the time, attended U of M with tuition waivers and financial aid, yet, she had did very well in high school having been a member of the National Honors Society.

Growing up, she remembers her family using food stamps and facing challenges finding enough food for the table, the Green Bay Press-Gazette reported.

Although DeLong said she felt loved growing up, her family was poor and many of her classmates in college had come from much more affluent backgrounds.

After becoming friends with other students in her dormitory who had goals of becoming doctors and lawyers, DeLong started to feel their influence and decided she did like math, biology and chemistry and wanted to do well.

"I was feeling like I wanted to challenge myself a bit," she said. "I started to feel like, 'I could do this.' Part of that had to do with my identity as a Ho-Chunk person and becoming more self-aware."

In DeLong's second semester, she joined the Native American Student Association participating in diversity events and was the female lead dancer for their pow-wow.

That association and her experience at U of M helped her embrace and be proud of her heritage, giving her the confidence and belief in herself to eventually go to medical school.

"Then, I felt like I belonged," DeLong said. "I felt like, 'I do have something to offer.'"

She has practiced medicine for more than 17 years and is a family physician for the Ho-Chunk Nation Health Department in Wisconsin.

DeLong is one of the very few American Indians to become a doctor in the United States.

American Indians and Alaska Natives make up about 1.7% of the U.S. population, according to the Census Bureau. But there are only about 3,400 Indigenous physicians, about 0.4% of the workforce, according to the American Medical Association.

Dr. Donald Warne, an associate dean at the University of North Dakota and member of the Oglala Lakota Tribe in South Dakota, told the AMA that recruiting American Indians into medical school remains difficult as students face challenges of poverty, substandard housing, substance abuse and high rates of suicide among themselves, in their families and communities.

"As a kid, I never had an American Indian doctor," DeLong said. "In fact, I never saw an American Indian teacher, a coach, none of that. ... There aren't enough role models out there for American Indian kids."

A study for the Department of Health and Human Services found that Native American communities have among the highest levels of mistrust of medical professionals. The study recommended that more Native American community members be recruited and trained to serve as a liaison to the health care system to address health inequities.

Native Americans in Wisconsin also have some of the highest rates of disease, such as diabetes and cancer, according to the Wisconsin Department of Health Services.

Louis Taylor, Chairman for the Lac Courtes Oreilles Ojibwe Nation, recently received the COVID-19 vaccine.

Recently, tribal health officials have been concerned that tribal members would not be inclined to receive the COVID-19 vaccine due to mistrust because of historical injustices by the non-Native government. So, DeLong and other health professionals released videos of themselves publicly receiving the vaccine to demonstrate its safety.

DeLong believes it is imperative for more American Indians to be recruited into medical schools.

"In order to really address the health inequities, we need Native physicians that are of the Native popu-

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lation," she said.

Patients who are Indigenous American receiving care from an Indigenous American physician would say to themselves, "I know this person. I trust this person. We're like-minded," DeLong said.

She was recently selected to join Gov. Tony Evers' Health Equity Council, which aims to develop a plan to reduce and eliminate health inequities throughout the state by 2030.

DeLong is the only tribal doctor on the 34-member council, but it does include other tribal health administrators and advocates.

She hopes the council can create a plan to address health inequities, which will include recruiting more American Indians into medical school and other health professions.

## Annual count of state's homeless called off due to COVID-19

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Organizers of South Dakota's annual point-in-time count for the state's unsheltered homeless population have cancelled the effort this year due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Sara Hornick, Rapid City-area coordinator of homeless services for Volunteers of America, said the count was called off mainly because of a shortage of volunteers, lack of personal protective equipment and concerns about the spread of COVID-19. She said the vulnerable homeless population is quite large, but the Department of Housing and Urban Development decided against the count, the Rapid City Journal reported.

Hornick said she's not sure how the cancellation will affect federal funding because of all the allowances in place this year because of the virus.

The January 2020 count showed Rapid City had 353 total homeless with 192 unsheltered and 161 sheltered.

The state Department of Health on Sunday reported 185 new COVID-19 cases in the last day, increasing the total to 107,148 positive tests. The update listed nine new deaths, lifting the total number of fatalities to 217 in January and 1,705 since the start of the pandemic.

There were about 460 new cases per 100,000 people in South Dakota over the past two weeks, which ranks 41st in the country for new cases per capita, Johns Hopkins University researchers reported. One in every 524 people in South Dakota tested positive in the past week.

## EU pressures AstraZeneca to deliver vaccines as promised

By RAF CASERT Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — The European Union is pressuring the pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca to deliver more coronavirus vaccine doses to its 27 nations and to stick to its initial promises once the jab gets EU approval, especially since the bloc has already invested in enhancing production capacity.

EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen held urgent talks Monday with company chief Pascal Soriot, and EU nations are also meeting with AstraZeneca to encourage the British-Swedish company to ramp up its vaccine production and meet its contractual targets.

The EU, with the economic and political clout of the biggest trading bloc in the world, is lagging badly behind countries like Israel and Britain in the rollout of vaccines for its most vulnerable population and health care workers. The bloc's leaders have faced strong criticism for moving so slowly.

The European Medicines Agency is scheduled to review the Oxford-AstraZeneca coronavirus vaccine on Friday and its approval is hotly anticipated. The AstraZeneca vaccine is already being used in Britain and has been approved for emergency use by half a dozen countries, including India, Pakistan, Argentina and Mexico.

AstraZeneca's announcement that it will deliver fewer vaccines to the EU early on has only increased pressure on the 27-nation bloc, especially since Pfizer-BioNTech, the first vaccine to get EU approval, failed last week to keep up its promised deliveries to the EU. Pfizer has temporarily reduced vaccine deliveries to the EU and Canada as it revamps its plant in Belgium to increase overall production. Italy has threatened to sue Pfizer for the delays.

The political pressure spurred the EU's executive Commission into action Monday, with von der Leyen's

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phone call to the AstraZeneca chief.

"She made it clear that she expects AstraZeneca to deliver on the contractual arrangements foreseen in the advance purchasing agreement," said her spokesman Eric Mamer.

"She reminded Mr. Soriot that the EU has invested significant amounts in the company up front precisely to ensure that production is ramped up even before the conditional market authorization is delivered by the European Medicines Agency."

Of course, production issues can appear with the complex vaccine, but we expect the company to find solutions and to exploit all possible flexibilities to deliver swiftly."

The delays will be make it harder to meet early targets in EU's goal of vaccinating 70% of its adult population by late summer.

EU Council President Charles Michel said the EU already "pounded our fist on the table" with Pfizer last week to ensure that the delays end by the end of this week.

The EU has signed six vaccine contracts for more than 2 billion doses, but only the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines have been approved for use so far.

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

## China pushes conspiracy theories on COVID origin, vaccines

By HUIZHONG WU Associated Press

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP) — Chinese state media have stoked concerns about Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine, despite rigorous trials that showed it was safe. A government spokesperson has raised the unfounded theory that the coronavirus could have emerged from a U.S. military lab, giving it more credence in China.

As the ruling Communist Party faces growing questioning about China's vaccines and renewed criticism of its early COVID-19 response, it is hitting back by encouraging conspiracy theories that some experts say could cause harm.

State media and officials are sowing doubts about Western vaccines and the origin of the coronavirus in an apparent bid to deflect the attacks. Both issues are in the spotlight because of the rollout of vaccines globally and the recent arrival of a World Health Organization team in Wuhan, China, to investigate the origins of the virus.

Some of these conspiracy theories find a receptive audience at home. The social media hashtag "American's Ft. Detrick," started by the Communist Youth League, was viewed at least 1.4 billion times last week after a Foreign Ministry spokesperson called for a WHO investigation of the biological weapons lab in Maryland.

"It's purpose is to shift the blame from mishandling by (the) Chinese government in the pandemic's early days to conspiracy by the U.S.," said Fang Shimin, a now-U.S.-based writer known for exposing faked degrees and other fraud in Chinese science. "The tactic is quite successful because of widespread anti-American sentiment in China."

Yuan Zeng, an expert on Chinese media at the University of Leeds in Great Britain, said the government's stories spread so widely that even well-educated Chinese friends have asked her whether they might be true.

Inflaming doubts and spreading conspiracy theories might add to public health risks as governments try to dispel unease about vaccines, she said, saying, "That is super, super dangerous."

In the latest volley, state media called for an investigation into the deaths of 23 elderly people in Norway after they received the Pfizer vaccine. An anchor at CGTN, the English-language station of state broadcaster CCTV, and the Global Times newspaper accused Western media of ignoring the news.

Health experts say deaths unrelated to the vaccine are possible during mass vaccination campaigns, and a WHO panel has concluded that the vaccine did not play a "contributory role" in the Norway deaths.

The state media coverage followed a report by researchers in Brazil who found the effectiveness of a

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Chinese vaccine lower than previously announced. Researchers initially said Sinovac's vaccine is 78% effective, but the scientists revised that to 50.4% after including mildly symptomatic cases.

After the Brazil news, researchers at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, a government-supported think tank, reported seeing an increase in Chinese media disinformation about vaccines.

Dozens of online articles on popular health and science blogs and elsewhere have explored questions about the effectiveness of the Pfizer vaccine at length, drawing on an op-ed published this month in the British Medical Journal that raised questions about its clinical trial data.

"It's very embarrassing" for the government, Fang said in an email. As a result, China is trying to raise doubts about the Pfizer vaccine to save face and promote its vaccines, he said.

Senior Chinese government officials have not been shy in voicing concerns about the mRNA vaccines developed by Western drug companies. They use a newer technology than the more traditional approach of the Chinese vaccines currently in use.

In December, the director of the Chinese Centers for Disease Control, Gao Fu, said he can't rule out negative side effects from the mRNA vaccines. Noting this is the first time they are being given to healthy people, he said, "there are safety concerns."

The arrival of the WHO mission has brought back persistent criticism that China allowed the virus to spread globally by reacting too slowly in the beginning, even reprimanding doctors who tried to warn the public. The visiting researchers will begin field work this week after being released from a 14-day quarantine.

The Communist Party sees the WHO investigation as a political risk because it focuses attention on China's response, said Jacob Wallis, a senior analyst at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute.

The party wants to "distract domestic and international audiences by pre-emptively distorting the narrative on where responsibility lies for the emergence of COVID-19," Wallis said.

Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying got the ball rolling last week by calling for the WHO investigation of the U.S. military lab. The site had been mentioned previously by CGTN and other state-controlled outlets.

"If America respects the truth, then please open up Ft. Detrick and make public more information about the 200 or more bio-labs outside of the U.S., and please allow the WHO expert group to go to the U.S. to investigate the origins," Hua said.

Her comments, publicized by state media, became one of the most popular topics on Sina Weibo.

China isn't the only government to point fingers. Former President Donald Trump, trying to deflect blame for his government's handling of the pandemic, said last year he had seen evidence the virus came from a Wuhan laboratory. While that theory has not been definitively ruled out, many experts think it is unlikely.

## 9 workers found dead in China gold mine explosions

BEIJING (AP) — Chinese rescuers have found the bodies of nine workers killed in explosions at a gold mine, raising the death toll to 10, officials said Monday.

Eleven others were rescued a day earlier after being trapped underground for two weeks at the mine in Shandong province. One person was still missing.

The cause of the accident at the mine, which was under construction, is under investigation. The explosions on Jan. 10 released 70 tons of debris that blocked a shaft, disabling elevators and trapping workers underground.

Rescuers drilled parallel shafts to send down food and nutrients and eventually bring up the survivors on Sunday.

Chen Yumin, director of the rescue group, told reporters that the nine workers recovered Monday died more than 400 meters (1,320 feet) below ground. He said there had been two explosions about an hour and a half apart, with the second explosion causing more damage.

Search efforts will continue for the remaining miner until he is found, said Chen Fei, the mayor of Yantai city, where the mine is located.

"Until this worker is found, we will not give up," he said at a news conference.



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Chen and other officials involved in the rescue effort held a moment of silence for the victims, bowing their heads.

"Our hearts are deeply grieved. We express our profound condolences, and we express deep sympathies to the families of the victim," he said.

Authorities have detained mine managers for delaying reporting the accident.

Such protracted and expensive rescue efforts are relatively new in China's mining industry, which used to average 5,000 deaths per year.

Increased supervision has improved safety, although demand for coal and precious metals continues to prompt corner-cutting. A new crackdown was ordered after two accidents in mountainous southwestern Chongqing last year killed 39 miners.

## Budweiser joins Coke, Pepsi brands in sitting out Super Bowl

By MAE ANDERSON and DEE-ANN DURBIN AP Business Writers

NEW YORK (AP) — For the first time since 1983, when Anheuser-Busch used all of its ad time to introduce a beer called Bud Light, the beer giant isn't advertising its iconic Budweiser brand during the Super Bowl. Instead, it's donating the money it would have spent on the ad to coronavirus vaccination awareness efforts.

Anheuser-Busch still has four minutes of advertising during the game for its other brands including Bud Light, Bud Light Seltzer Lemonade, Michelob Ultra and Michelob Ultra Organic Seltzer. Those are some of its hottest sellers, particularly among younger viewers.

But the decision to not do an anthemic Budweiser ad — which over nearly four decades has made American icons of frogs chirping "Budweiser," guys screaming "Whassup!," and of course the Budweiser Clydesdales — showcases the caution with which some advertisers are approaching the first COVID-era Super Bowl.

"We have a pandemic that is casting a pall over just about everything," said Paul Argenti, Dartmouth College professor of corporate communication. "It's hard to feel the exuberance and excitement people normally would."

The Anheuser-Busch move follows a similar announcement from PepsiCo., which won't be advertising its biggest brand, Pepsi, in order to focus on its sponsorship of the the halftime show. (It will be advertising Mountain Dew and Frito-Lay products). Other veteran Super Bowl advertisers like Coke, Audi and Avocados from Mexico are sitting out the game altogether.

These big-brand absences are just one more way Super Bowl LV will look very different from previous years. Attendance at the game will be limited to 22,000 people, about a third of the more than 65,890 capacity of Raymond James Stadium in Tampa, Florida. And Super Bowl parties will be more likely to be smaller affairs with pods or families.

"I think the advertisers are correctly picking up on this being a riskier year for the Super Bowl," said Charles Taylor, marketing professor at Villanova University. "With COVID and economic uncertainty, people aren't necessarily in the best mood to begin with. There's a risk associated with messages that are potentially too light. ... At the same time, there's risk associated with doing anything too somber."

The pandemic has cut sharply into sales for many Super Bowl advertisers. With pricey ads costing an estimated \$5.5 million for 30 seconds during the Feb. 7 broadcast on CBS, some may have decided it's not worth it this year. Coca-Cola, for example, has been hard hit since half of its sales come from stadiums, movie theaters and other usually crowded places that have been closed during the pandemic. It announced layoffs in December, and said it said it wouldn't advertise this year to ensure it's "investing in the right resources during these unprecedented times."

To fill the void, newcomers like the TikTok rival Triller, online freelance marketplace Fiverr and online car seller Vroom are rushing in to take their place. Returning brands include M&M's, Pringles, Toyota and others.

Companies that are running ads this year face a number of challenges. Super Bowl ads are usually developed months in advance and shot in the fall, meaning that ads airing in two weeks were shot under costly pandemic conditions and without any idea how the presidential election would turn out. That further

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complicates the already delicate process of striking a tone that acknowledges what's happening with the world, managing to either entertain or tug at viewer heartstrings, and finding a way to tie it all back to their brand.

"It's a tough year to do an ad," Argenti said. "It will be a good year for creative companies who figure out how to thread that needle."

Monica Rustgi, Budweiser's vice president of marketing, said the brand is still calculating how much it will spend on vaccine awareness. But she said it will be a "multi-million dollar" commitment that includes donating airtime throughout this year for the nonprofit the Ad Council and COVID Collaborative's COVID-19 Vaccine Education Initiative.

Budweiser will still have a marketing presence around the big game. Starting Monday, the brand will air an ad that celebrates resilience during the pandemic, including a socially distanced birthday parade and athletes in Black Lives Matter jerseys. The ad, narrated by actress and director Rashida Jones, ends with health care workers getting vaccinated and talks about Budweiser's donation.

In the era of social media and digital advertising, brands aren't limited to running ads during one event, since consumers can see them online, everywhere from Facebook and Twitter to YouTube, Budweiser's Rustgi said. Budweiser's Super Bowl step-back also won't be long-term, she said.

"The Super Bowl is the most popular sports event, aside from the World Cup, that anybody is going to see," added Dartmouth's Argenti. "An event that draws that many people to the advertising is never going to go away."

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Durbin reported from Detroit.

## Israel extradites woman wanted for sex crimes to Australia

By ILAN BEN ZION Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israeli authorities on Monday extradited a former teacher accused of sexually abusing her former students in Australia, capping a six-year legal battle that had strained relations between the two governments and antagonized Australia's Jewish community.

Malka Leifer, who is wanted on 74 charges of child sex abuse in Australia, was placed on a flight early in the day, several hours before Israel was to close its international airport to nearly all air traffic due to a raging coronavirus outbreak. Israeli media photographed Leifer boarding a plane at Ben Gurion Airport, her ankles and wrists shackled. Her lawyer, Nick Kaufman, confirmed the extradition.

Leifer, a former teacher accused of sexually abusing several former students at a Jewish school in Melbourne, had been fighting extradition since 2014. Leifer maintains her innocence and the protracted court case and repeated delays over her extradition had drawn criticism from Australian officials as well as the country's Jewish leaders.

The Hebrew-language news site Ynet reported that Leifer boarded a flight to Frankfurt, where she was to transfer to another flight bound for Australia.

Three sisters — Dassi Erlich, Nicole Meyer and Elly Sapper — have accused Leifer of abusing them while they were students at a Melbourne ultra-Orthodox school. There are said to be other victims. The Associated Press does not usually identify alleged victims of sexual abuse, but the sisters have spoken publicly about their allegations against Leifer.

Manny Waks, head of Voice against Child Sex Abuse, an organization representing Leifer's victims, told The Associated Press that it was "a momentous day for justice and incredible for her alleged victims in particular, as well as sending an incredible message to other survivors that justice will ultimately prevail."

"From our perspective, it has taken way too long for this process to unfold. We've seen over 70 hearings to date.," Waks said.

Erlich simply wrote on her Facebook page: "Leifer is on the plane to Australia."

In Australia, the news of Leifer's extradition was welcomed by lawmakers and Jewish community leaders.

Dave Sharma, a member of parliament and former Australian ambassador to Israel, wrote on Twitter

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that it was “welcome news for all who care about justice in this case.”

Jeremy Leibler, president of the Zionist Federation of Australia, said “this protracted saga” has come to a close. “For too many survivors of child sex abuse, justice is denied. But now, 12 long years after she fled Australia, Leifer is on her way back to face her accusers in court,” he said in a statement.

As accusations against her began surfacing in 2008, Israeli-born Leifer left the school and returned to Israel, where she has lived since. Critics, including Leifer’s alleged victims, had accused Israeli authorities of dragging out the case for far too long, while Leifer claimed she was mentally unfit to stand trial.

Israeli police also have recommended charges of fraud and breach of trust against former Health Minister Yaakov Litzman for suspicions he pressured ministry employees to skew Leifer’s psychiatric evaluations in her favor. Litzman, a powerful ultra-Orthodox politician, denies wrongdoing.

Last year, an Israeli psychiatric panel determined Leifer was lying about her mental condition, setting in motion the extradition. In December, the Supreme Court rejected a final appeal against her extradition, and Israel’s justice minister signed the order to send her to Australia.

Details of Leifer’s connecting flight to Australia were not immediately available.

Late Sunday, the Israeli Cabinet approved a tight closure on nearly all incoming and outgoing air traffic starting at midnight Monday through Jan. 31. The government said it would make exceptions for a small number of humanitarian cases — such as funerals and medical patients — and cargo flights. Israel’s health ministry has recorded over 600,000 cases of the coronavirus and 4,419 deaths since the start of the pandemic last year.

Kaufman, Leifer’s attorney, said that upon arrival in Australia, his client “will be quarantined and will appear by video conference before a judge who will formally confirm her identity and read her the charges.” He said he hoped Australian authorities will respect her Orthodox Jewish lifestyle and allow her regular contact with her lawyers and family.

Avi Nissenkorn, Israel’s former justice minister who had signed the extradition order, wrote on Twitter: “I promised that I would not hinder the extradition order, and that’s what I have done. Malka Leifer’s victims will finally earn an act of justice.”

## House sending Trump impeachment to Senate, GOP opposes trial

By MARY CLARE JALONICK and LISA MASCARO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — As the House prepares to bring the impeachment charge against Donald Trump to the Senate for trial, a growing number of Republican senators say they are opposed to the proceeding, dimming the chances that former president will be convicted on the charge that he incited a siege of the U.S. Capitol.

House Democrats will carry the sole impeachment charge of “incitement of insurrection” across the Capitol late Monday evening, a rare and ceremonial walk to the Senate by the prosecutors who will argue their case. They are hoping that strong Republican denunciations of Trump after the Jan. 6 riot will translate into a conviction and a separate vote to bar Trump from holding office again.

But instead, GOP passions appear to have cooled since the insurrection. Now that Trump’s presidency is over, Republican senators who will serve as jurors in the trial are rallying to his legal defense, as they did during his first impeachment trial last year.

“I think the trial is stupid, I think it’s counterproductive,” said Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla.. He said that “the first chance I get to vote to end this trial, I’ll do it” because he believes it would be bad for the country and further inflame partisan divisions.

Trump is the first former president to face impeachment trial, and it will test his grip on the Republican Party as well as the legacy of his tenure, which came to a close as a mob of loyal supporters heeded his rally cry by storming the Capitol and trying to overturn Joe Biden’s election. The proceedings will also force Democrats, who have a full sweep of party control of the White House and Congress, to balance their promise to hold the former president accountable while also rushing to deliver on Biden’s priorities.

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Arguments in the Senate trial will begin the week of Feb. 8. Leaders in both parties agreed to the short delay to give Trump's team and House prosecutors time to prepare and the Senate the chance to confirm some of Biden's Cabinet nominees. Democrats say the extra days will allow for more evidence to come out about the rioting by Trump supporters, while Republicans hope to craft a unified defense for Trump.

Sen. Chris Coons, D-Del., said in an interview with The Associated Press on Sunday that he hopes that evolving clarity on the details of what happened Jan. 6 "will make it clearer to my colleagues and the American people that we need some accountability."

Coons questioned how his colleagues who were in the Capitol that day could see the insurrection as anything other than a "stunning violation" of tradition of peaceful transfers of power.

"It is a critical moment in American history and we have to look at it and look at it hard," Coons said.

An early vote to dismiss the trial probably would not succeed, given that Democrats now control the Senate. Still, the mounting Republican opposition indicates that many GOP senators would eventually vote to acquit Trump. Democrats would need the support of 17 Republicans — a high bar — to convict him.

When the House impeached Trump on Jan. 13, exactly one week after the siege, Sen. Tom Cotton, R-Ark., said he didn't believe the Senate had the constitutional authority to convict Trump after he had left office. On Sunday, Cotton said "the more I talk to other Republican senators, the more they're beginning to line up" behind that argument.

"I think a lot of Americans are going to think it's strange that the Senate is spending its time trying to convict and remove from office a man who left office a week ago," Cotton said.

Democrats reject that argument, pointing to a 1876 impeachment of a secretary of war who had already resigned and to opinions by many legal scholars. Democrats also say that a reckoning of the first invasion of the Capitol since the War of 1812, perpetrated by rioters egged on by a president who told them to "fight like hell" against election results that were being counted at the time, is necessary so the country can move forward and ensure such a siege never happens again.

A few GOP senators have agreed with Democrats, though not close to the number that will be needed to convict Trump.

Sen. Mitt Romney, R-Utah, said he believes there is a "preponderance of opinion" that an impeachment trial is appropriate after someone leaves office.

"I believe that what is being alleged and what we saw, which is incitement to insurrection, is an impeachable offense," Romney said. "If not, what is?"

But Romney, the lone Republican to vote to convict Trump when the Senate acquitted the then-president in last year's trial, appears to be an outlier.

Sen. Mike Rounds, R-South Dakota, said he believes a trial is a "moot point" after a president's term is over, "and I think it's one that they would have a very difficult time in trying to get done within the Senate."

On Friday, GOP Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, a close Trump ally who has been helping him build a legal team, urged the Senate to reject the idea of a post-presidency trial — potentially with a vote to dismiss the charge — and suggested Republicans will scrutinize whether Trump's words on Jan. 6 were legally "incitement."

Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell, who said last week that Trump "provoked" his supporters before the riot, has not said how he will vote or argued any legal strategies. The Kentucky senator has told his GOP colleagues that it will be a vote of conscience.

One of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's nine impeachment managers said Trump's encouragement of his loyalists before the riot was "an extraordinarily heinous presidential crime."

Rep. Madeleine Dean, D-Pennsylvania., said "I mean, think back. It was just two-and-a-half weeks ago that the president assembled a mob on the Ellipse of the White House. He incited them with his words. And then he lit the match."

Trump's supporters invaded the Capitol and interrupted the electoral count as he falsely claimed there was massive fraud in the election and that it was stolen by Biden. Trump's claims were roundly rejected in the courts, including by judges appointed by Trump, and by state election officials.

Rubio and Romney were on "Fox News Sunday," Cotton appeared on Fox News Channel's "Sunday Morn-



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ing Futures” and Romney also was on CNN’s “State of the Union,” as was Dean. Rounds was interviewed on NBC’s “Meet the Press.”

Associated Press writer Hope Yen contributed to this report.

## **Biden plans to sign order for govt to buy more US goods**

By JOSH BOAK Associated Press

BALTIMORE (AP) — President Joe Biden plans to sign on Monday an executive order that aims to boost government purchases from U.S. manufacturers, according to administration officials.

The United States has shed roughly 540,000 factory jobs since last February as the coronavirus pandemic hurled the world’s largest economy into recession. The goal of the order would be to use the \$600 billion the federal government spends on procurement to boost domestic factories and hiring, said officials who insisted on anonymity to discuss the forthcoming announcement.

Biden’s order would modify the rules for the Buy American program, making it harder for contractors to qualify for a waiver and sell foreign-made goods to federal agencies. It also changes rules so that more of a manufactured good’s components must originate from U.S. factories. American-made goods would also be protected by an increase in the government’s threshold and price preferences, the difference in price over which the government can buy a foreign product.

The order also has elements that apply to the separate Buy America program, which applies separately to highways and bridges. It seeks to open up government procurement contracts to new companies by scouting potential contractors. The order would create a public website for companies that received waivers to sell foreign goods to the government, so that U.S. manufacturers can have more information and be in a more competitive position.

To help enforce these goals, the order establishes a job at the White House Office of Management and Budget to monitor the initiative and focus on ensuring the government buys more domestically made goods. It also requires federal agencies to report on their progress in purchasing American goods, as well as emphasizing Biden’s support for the Jones Act, which mandates that only U.S.-flag vessels carry cargo between U.S. ports.

Past presidents have promised to revitalize manufacturing as a source of job growth and achieved mixed results. The government helped save the automotive sector after the 2008 financial crisis, but the number of factory jobs has been steadily shrinking over the course of four decades.

The number of U.S. manufacturing jobs peaked in 1979 at 19.5 million and now totals 12.3 million, according to the Labor Department. Biden’s predecessor, Donald Trump, famously promised a factory renaissance, yet manufacturing employment never returned to its pre-Great Recession levels before the coronavirus struck.

## **In ambulances, an unseen, unwelcome passenger: COVID-19**

By STEFANIE DAZIO Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — It’s crowded in the back of the ambulance.

Two emergency medical technicians, the patient, the gurney — and an unseen and unwelcome passenger lurking in the air.

For EMTs Thomas Hoang and Joshua Hammond, the coronavirus is constantly close. COVID-19 has become their biggest fear during 24-hour shifts in California’s Orange County, riding with them from 911 call to 911 call, from patient to patient.

They and other EMTs, paramedics and 911 dispatchers in Southern California have been thrust into the front lines of the national epicenter of the pandemic. They are scrambling to help those in need as hospitals burst with a surge of patients after the holidays, ambulances are stuck waiting outside hospitals for hours until beds become available, oxygen tanks are in alarmingly short supply and the vaccine rollout

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has been slow.

EMTs and paramedics have always dealt with life and death — they make split-second decisions about patient care, which hospital to race to, the best and fastest way to save someone — and now they're just a breath away from becoming the patient themselves.

They gown up, mask up and glove up, "but you can only be so safe," Hammond said. "We don't have the luxury of being 6 feet apart from the patient."

Statistics on COVID-19 cases and deaths among EMTs and paramedics — especially ones employed by private companies — are hard to find. They are considered essential health care workers but rarely receive the pay and protections given to doctors and nurses.

Hammond and Hoang work for Emergency Ambulance Service Inc., a private ambulance company in Southern California. They, like so many others, have long fostered goals of becoming first responders to serve their communities.

Hoang is attending nursing school. Hammond is one test away from becoming a paramedic. Both were called to a life in the medical field after traumatic experiences: Hammond had to call 911 after his mother had an allergic reaction, and Hoang witnessed a young bicyclist get hit by a car.

Yet as COVID-19 infections surge and the risks increase, they wonder: Is it worth risking your life — and the lives of your loved ones at home — for a small paycheck and a dream?

"It's really hard to justify it beyond 'I really want to help people,'" said Hammond, 25. "Is that worth the risk?"

For now, yes.

"I do want to do my part in helping people get better, in a sense," said Hoang, 29.

And so their day starts at 7 a.m.

Wearing masks, Hoang and Hammond clean their ambulance and equipment, wiping down every surface even if the previous crew scrubbed it already. They take no chances during their daylong shift covering the Orange County city of Placentia.

The 911 calls come in with limited information: a broken bone, chest pain, difficulty breathing, stomach-ache, fever. Every patient is a potential carrier of the coronavirus, whether they know it or not.

Sometimes, people know they're infected and tell 911 dispatchers before the EMTs arrive. Other times, the symptoms themselves — fever, shortness of breath — signal a possible case. But Hammond remembers one woman, suffering from hip pain, who didn't tell him or his partner about her coronavirus diagnosis.

He only found out afterward, saying it reinforced the importance of treating every patient as if they have tested positive.

"That was definitely a call where we learned a lot," Hammond said.

Unlike doctors and nurses, first responders must go inside homes. They walk into hot zones where everyone in a household is sick, where the virus is in the air. They lift immobile patients onto gurneys, their masked faces just inches apart.

They race to hospitals already overwhelmed with sick people, sometimes only to wait hours outside before their patient can be admitted. And then they do it all again when the next 911 call comes in.

"We don't know the end result," Hoang said. "We only know the beginning to the hospital."

Then there are those who direct the EMTs where to go. In Los Angeles County, 20 miles (32 kilometers) northwest from Hoang and Hammond, three young women stood before six screens apiece recently, talking into headsets with clear, clipped voices, marshaling other ambulance crews around a territory stretching from the mountains to the sea.

Ashley Cortez, Adreanna Moreno and Jaime Hopper work 12-hour shifts as dispatchers for Care Ambulance Service Inc. If the EMTs are the front lines, these women are the scouts.

They play chess with ambulances all day. When one gets stuck at a hospital for eight, 10 or 12 hours, the dispatchers must reposition the others to cover its area. When an EMT reports a positive COVID-19 test, the dispatchers must find a way to cover the ambulance's calls if the whole crew must quarantine. When one household has multiple coronavirus patients requiring two ambulances, the dispatchers have

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to plug the hole.

Their greatest fear is what's called a "level zero" — when there are no ambulances left to send to an emergency. In Los Angeles County, one of the nation's hardest-hit counties during the pandemic, the fear becomes a regular reality.

For Moreno, 28, the anxiety begins the night before her shift.

"I lay there and know I'm going to come in, and I know I'm going to have no units to run these calls," she said.

On Christmas weekend, Cortez watched as call after call piled up on her screen — with no ambulances available. Typically, it takes 30 seconds to send one out. That weekend, it took up to 15 minutes. And this was even before ambulances started languishing outside hospitals for hours.

"I was just in disbelief," said Cortez, 26.

There's not much more the dispatchers can do. They watch those screens. They listen to radio chatter. They rearrange the crews to cover the most territory possible. And they wonder what fresh horror awaits in a virus-ravaged world where the dangers are too many and the ambulances are too few.

"What if something happens to my daughter," Cortez said, "and there was nobody to send for her?"

## Witnesses: Eritrean soldiers loot, kill in Ethiopia's Tigray

By CARA ANNA Associated Press

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — The Eritrean soldiers' pockets clinked with stolen jewelry. Warily, Zenebu watched them try on dresses and other clothing looted from homes in a town in Ethiopia's embattled Tigray region.

"They were focused on trying to take everything of value," even diapers, said Zenebu, who arrived home in Colorado this month after weeks trapped in Tigray, where she had gone to visit her mother. On the road, she said, trucks were full of boxes addressed to places in Eritrea for the looted goods to be delivered.

Heartbreakingly worse, she said, Eritrean soldiers went house-to-house seeking out and killing Tigrayan men and boys, some as young as 7, then didn't allow their burials. "They would kill you for trying, or even crying," Zenebu told The Associated Press, using only her first name because relatives remain in Tigray.

Huge unknowns persist in the deadly conflict, but details of the involvement of neighboring Eritrea, one of the world's most secretive countries, are emerging with witness accounts by survivors and others. Estimated in the thousands, the Eritrean soldiers have fought on the side of Ethiopian forces. They are accused of targeting thousands of vulnerable refugees from their own country, raping and intimidating locals — and now, some worry, refusing to go home.

Eritrea and Ethiopia recently made peace under Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2019 for his efforts. But Eritrea remains an enemy of the Tigray leaders who dominated Ethiopia's government for nearly 30 years and are now fugitives since fighting began between Ethiopian and Tigray forces in November, the result of growing tensions over power.

Ethiopia's government denies the Eritreans are in Tigray, a stance contradicted by an Ethiopian military commander who confirmed their presence last month. The U.S. has called Eritrea's involvement a "grave development," citing credible reports. Eritrean officials don't respond to questions.

Despite the denials, the Eritrean soldiers aren't hiding. They have even attended meetings in which humanitarian workers negotiated access with Ethiopian authorities.

Now millions of Tigray residents, still largely cut off from the world, live in fear of the soldiers, who inspire memories of the countries' two-decade border war. The recent peace revived cultural and family ties with Tigray, but Eritrea soon closed border crossings.

"If Eritrea refuses to leave, the U.N. should give us protection before we perish as a people," a former Ethiopian defense minister, Seye Abraha, said in comments posted Sunday by a Tigray media outlet.

A spokeswoman for Ethiopia's prime minister, Billene Seyoum, did not respond to a request to discuss the Eritrean forces.

With almost all journalists blocked from Tigray and humanitarian access and communications links limited, witness accounts give the clearest picture yet of the Eritreans' presence.

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They were first reported in northwestern Tigray, which saw some of the earliest fighting. The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission cites residents of the border town of Humera as saying the Eritreans participated in widespread looting that "emptied food and grain storages." That has contributed to growing hunger among survivors.

The account by Zenebu, a 48-year-old health care worker, is one of the most detailed to emerge — and it came from central Tigray, an area little heard from so far.

She first saw the Eritrean soldiers in mid-December. She had fled with others into the mountains as fighting approached, leaving her mother, too frail for the journey, behind. Twelve days later she returned to the town of Hawzen, needing to know whether her mother had survived.

In the darkness, she said, she stumbled over bodies, including around 70 she later realized she knew as they were identified. The ground was strewn with beer bottles, cigarettes and other trash, and "I couldn't tell the difference between human and animal bodies." The stench of death was strong.

A neighborhood boy, just 12, had been recruited by soldiers to do errands and then killed.

"I saw his body," Zenebu said. "They just, like, threw him away."

Her mother had survived, her home stripped of possessions.

People had been killed for having photos of Tigray leaders, even long-ago ones, Zenebu said, and the photos were set on fire. While she said some atrocities were carried out by Ethiopian forces and allied fighters from the neighboring Amhara region, she recognized the Eritreans by markings on their cheeks and their dialect of the Tigrinya language.

"I was more heartbroken and surprised to see the Eritreans doing that because I felt a connection, speaking the same language," Zenebu said. "I felt we shared more of the same struggle," while others "don't know us like the Eritreans do."

Residents tried to survive as food supplies dwindled. Electricity for grinding grains was gone, and medical supplies ran out. "People are starving to death," Zenebu said.

It was worse, she said, than in the 1980s, when famine and conflict swept through Tigray and images of starving people in Ethiopia brought global alarm and she fled to Sudan.

Then, "there wasn't house-to-house looting of civilians, weaponizing hunger, the merciless killing," she said. "It's worse than before."

Zenebu eventually managed to leave Hawzen and reach the Tigray capital, Mekele, after pretending she was a resident and blending in with others traveling there. She called her family in the U.S., crying hysterically.

"I just wanted to say I was alive," she said. Now she is unable to reach her mother.

Her account, like many, cannot be verified until communication links with Tigray are fully restored — and even then, people in Ethiopia worry that phone calls are monitored.

But another person who escaped Hawzen and arrived in the U.S. this month told the AP that Eritrean soldiers were "everywhere" and confirmed their killing and looting. He also identified them by their dialect.

"Same blood, same language," he said, noting the close ties with Tigrayans. "I don't know why they killed." He spoke on condition of anonymity out of fear for his relatives.

"We are investigating credible reports of a whole range of abuses by the Eritrean forces in central Tigray, including extrajudicial executions of civilians, widespread looting and damage of public and private property, including hospitals," Human Rights Watch researcher Laetitia Bader said, urging "immediate international scrutiny" and a U.N.-led investigation.

Other accounts come from the nearly 60,000 refugees who fled to Sudan.

"My five brothers and mother are in Axum" near the Eritrean border, a doctor among the refugees, Tewodros Tefera, told the AP. "People from Axum said Eritrean forces killed many young men."

"I don't know if my brothers are alive," he said of his brothers, who are 25 to 35. His phone calls don't go through.

A woman now in the U.S. after managing to leave Axum, who gave only her first name, Woinshet, wept as she told the AP she believes she survived because she showed Eritrean soldiers her U.S. passport instead of a local ID.



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"There's no (military) camp in Axum, just monasteries," she said, recalling bodies left in the streets. "Why are they there?"

Other survivors have fled the Eritrean soldiers to remote areas in Tigray and called to say they have been living for weeks on leaves and dried fruit.

"I don't know how people are staying alive," Tewodros said.

## North Carolina field hospital helps fight coronavirus surge

By SARAH BLAKE MORGAN Associated Press

LENOIR, N.C. (AP) — Chris Rutledge peels an N-95 mask off her tired face, revealing the silhouette it leaves behind. Her name and a tiny heart are drawn on the face covering in black marker so her patients know who she is.

"I look terrible when it comes off," she jokes as she takes a break during her ninth straight day of 12-hour shifts inside a temporary field hospital in Lenoir, North Carolina.

Rutledge, a 60-year-old retired nurse from Lisbon, Iowa, is one of dozens of health care workers who have been treating coronavirus patients inside 11 massive white medical tents set up in the parking lot of Caldwell Memorial Hospital.

The tents became necessary in late December when the virus began surging through this rural community in the Carolina foothills, overwhelming the hospital's capacity. The tents were set up earlier this month.

"We doubled the number of COVID patients in a matter of days," said Caldwell CEO Laura Easton, who added that the hospital thought it had seen its cases peak over the summer. "And we doubled our hospital census."

The tents and care givers have been provided by Samaritan's Purse, an international Christian relief charity led by evangelist the Rev. Franklin Graham that is based in Boone, North Carolina. The 30-bed field hospital comprises four medical wards and a pharmacy for patients who have been discharged from the hospital's intensive care unit and do not need ventilators. Four other hospitals besides Caldwell are sending patients here so they can use hospital beds for more serious cases.

"The tent is a scary place for a person that's never been in it," Rutledge said, referring to the patients as she washed her hands for the fifth time in just a few minutes. "Some of them are very tearful and some of them are actually sobbing."

But Rutledge calls her work a blessing. Three years ago, she left her full-time nursing job to join short-term medical missions with Samaritan's Purse. When the organization mobilizes its Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART), Rutledge can be on a plane within hours.

This is not the first time Samaritan's Purse has provided aid during the pandemic. The organization, which has partnerships in more than 100 countries, opened its first COVID-19 field hospital on March 16, 2020, in Cremona, Italy, when the virus first began to surge in the U.S. and around the world. Two weeks later, Samaritan's Purse tents were pitched in New York City's Central Park, where Rutledge and others on its medical team treated hundreds of patients in partnership with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the state of New York. The charity also recently erected a field hospital in Lancaster, California.

While the work is physically and emotionally grueling, Rutledge said she has no regrets.

"People asked me if I would do it again after the New York experience and I said I would do it in a heartbeat," she said.

Rutledge is grateful for a supportive husband who cheers her on from their home in Iowa. She said her religious faith sustains her during most of the long days — along with moments of hope that seem to present themselves when she needs them most.

She smiles recalling the elderly couple who celebrated their 49th wedding anniversary while battling the coronavirus together, and how she walked the husband to his wife's ward to visit. Rutledge said she cried the first time she saw the couple reunited. She wept again when they were cleared to go home, virus-free.

"It was wonderful," she said.

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## **Biden attends Mass at DC church where he worshipped as VP**

By AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden attended Mass for the first time since taking office, worshipping Sunday at the church he frequented when he was vice president.

Biden, the nation's second Catholic president, picked Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Washington's Georgetown neighborhood, a few miles from the White House. It's where the nation's only other Catholic president, John F. Kennedy, often went to Mass.

Biden entered through the front entrance, where a Black Lives Matter banner was hanging on one side and a banner with a quote from Pope Francis was on the other: "We cannot tolerate or turn a blind eye to racism and exclusion in any form and yet claim to defend the sacredness of every human life."

The president, in a brief exchange with reporters, said the service was "lovely." Biden was accompanied to church by his son, Hunter, and two of his grandchildren, Finnegan and Maisy.

His motorcade made a brief stop on the way back to the White House for carryout from Call Your Mother, a popular deli near the church. The president remained in his armored vehicle, while his son picked up the order.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki told reporters on Friday that Biden had not yet settled on a home church in the nation's capital, but said that she expected Biden will continue to regularly attend services during his presidency.

At home in Delaware, Biden and his wife, Jill, were regulars at St. Joseph on the Brandywine in Greenville. They alternated between the Saturday and Sunday services depending on their travel schedules throughout the 2020 campaign. Catholic faithful have an obligation to attend Sunday services, but church teaching allows for the commitment to be fulfilled by attending a service on the evening of the preceding day.

The newly-sworn in Democrat certainly has plenty of parish choices in Washington: Four Catholic churches sit within 2 miles (3.2 kilometers) of the White House; Holy Trinity is a bit farther.

On the morning of his inauguration Wednesday, Biden and his family, along with Democratic and Republican leaders of Congress, attended a service at one of those churches, the Cathedral of St. Matthew the Apostle. The church hosted Kennedy's funeral service in 1963.

With the coronavirus still surging in the capital city, Biden is bound to see small crowds wherever he goes. For the time being, rules in the District of Columbia limit gatherings at houses of worship to 25% of capacity or 250 people, whichever is less.

Previous presidents have made a wide variety of worship choices — or none. Not far from the White House is New York Avenue Presbyterian, which maintains the pew where Abraham Lincoln once worshipped. Even closer is St. John's Episcopal Church, walkable across Lafayette Square from the White House for the presidents who have made a historic practice of worshipping there at least once.

St. John's was thrust into the headlines this summer when police forcibly dispersed protesters so President Donald Trump could pose with a Bible outside its butter-yellow front doors. But its status as the "Church of Presidents" dates to James Madison, and it's accustomed to the special scrutiny that comes with hosting commanders in chief. Trump, who frequently spent Sundays at his namesake golf club in northern Virginia, was not a regular churchgoer.

President Bill Clinton and his wife, Hillary, became members of Foundry United Methodist Church, a short drive from the White House that also counted the 19th president, Rutherford B. Hayes, as a member.

President Jimmy Carter, who in post presidency life taught Sunday school, worshipped dozens of times at Washington's First Baptist Church during his time in the White House.

Associated Press writers Will Weissert and Elana Schor contributed to this report.

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## **AP source: Lawmakers threatened ahead of impeachment trial**

By MICHAEL BALSAMO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Federal law enforcement officials are examining a number of threats aimed at members of Congress as the second trial of former President Donald Trump nears, including ominous chatter about killing legislators or attacking them outside of the U.S. Capitol, a U.S. official told The Associated Press.

The threats, and concerns that armed protesters could return to sack the Capitol anew, have prompted the U.S. Capitol Police and other federal law enforcement to insist thousands of National Guard troops remain in Washington as the Senate moves forward with plans for Trump's trial, the official said Sunday.

The shocking insurrection at the Capitol by a pro-Trump mob prompted federal officials to rethink security in and around its landmarks, resulting in an unprecedented lockdown for Biden's inauguration. Though the event went off without any problems and armed protests around the country did not materialize, the threats to lawmakers ahead of Trump's trial exemplified the continued potential for danger.

Similar to those intercepted by investigators ahead of Biden's inauguration, the threats that law enforcement agents are tracking vary in specificity and credibility, said the official, who had been briefed on the matter. Mainly posted online and in chat groups, the messages have included plots to attack members of Congress during travel to and from the Capitol complex during the trial, according to the official.

The official was not authorized to not discuss an ongoing investigation publicly and spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity.

Law enforcement officials are already starting to plan for the possibility of armed protesters returning to the nation's capital when Trump's Senate trial on a charge of inciting a violent insurrection begins the week of Feb. 8. It would be the first impeachment trial of a former U.S. president.

Thousands of Trump's supporters descended on the Capitol on Jan. 6 as Congress met to certify Biden as the winner of the 2020 presidential race. More than 800 are believed to have made their way into the Capitol during the violent siege, pushing past overwhelmed police officers. The Capitol police said they planned for a free speech protest, not a riot, and were caught off guard despite intelligence suggesting the rally would descend into a riot. Five people died in the melee, including a Capitol police officer who was struck in the head with a fire extinguisher.

Though much of the security apparatus around Washington set up after the riot and ahead of Biden's inauguration — it included scores of military checkpoints and hundreds of additional law enforcement personnel — is no longer in place, about 7,000 members of the National Guard will remain to assist federal law enforcement, officials said.

The Guard Bureau said that the number of Guard members in D.C. is less than 20,000 as of Sunday. All but about 7,000 of those will go home in the coming days. The Guard Bureau said that the number of troops in D.C. would then continue to decline in the coming weeks to about 5,000. They are expected to stay in D.C. until mid-March.

At least five people facing federal charges have suggested they believed they were taking orders from Trump when they marched on Capitol Hill on Jan. 6 to challenge the certification of Biden's election victory. But now those comments, captured in interviews with reporters and federal agents, are likely to take center stage as Democrats lay out their case.

More than 130 people have been charged by federal prosecutors for their roles in the riot. In recent weeks, others have been arrested after posting threats against members of Congress.

They include a Proud Boys supporter who authorities said threatened to deploy "three cars full of armed patriots" to Washington, threatened harm against Sen. Raphael Warnock, D-Ga., and who is accused of stockpiling military-style combat knives and more than 1,000 rifle rounds in his New York home. A Texas man was arrested this week for taking part in the riot at the Capitol and for posting violent threats, including a call to assassinate Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y.

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Associated Press writer Lolita C. Baldor contributed to this report.

## White House begins talks with lawmakers on COVID-19 relief

By AAMER MADHANI and LISA MASCARO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Top aides to President Joe Biden have begun talks with a group of moderate Senate Republicans and Democrats on a \$1.9 trillion coronavirus relief package as Biden faces increasing headwinds in his effort to win bipartisan backing for the initial legislative effort of his presidency.

Lawmakers on the right question the wisdom of racking up bigger deficits while those on the left are urging Biden not to spend too much time on bipartisanship when the pandemic is killing thousands of Americans each day and costing more jobs amid tightening restrictions in many communities.

At least a dozen senators met for an hour and 15 minutes in a virtual call with White House National Economic Council director Brian Deese and other senior White House officials Sunday. Many hope to approve a relief package before former President Donald Trump's trial, which is set to begin in two weeks, overtakes Washington's attention.

Sen. Angus King, an independent from Maine, called the opening talks a "serious effort."

"There was not a hint of cynicism or lack of commitment to at least trying to work something out," King said. "If they were just trying to jam this through, I don't think it would have interrupted the Packers game."

King told reporters that there was "absolute consensus" among the group that the No. 1 priority was to speed up the distribution of vaccinations and expanding COVID-19 testing and tracing.

The White House did not seem to budge on breaking up the package or reducing the overall price tag, even as it pushes for bipartisan support. There was also no discussion of pushing it through on a procedural move that could be done without Republicans, King said.

One key Republican, Sen. Susan Collins of Maine, said afterward, "It seems premature to be considering a package of this size and scope."

Collins said instead she would pull the bipartisan group together "and see if we could come up with a more targeted package." She said in a statement that a bill with additional funding for vaccine distribution "would be useful."

Senators from both parties raised questions about the economic aid provisions, particularly making direct \$1,400 payments to Americans more tailored to recipients based on need.

Senators also wanted more data on how the White House reached the \$1.9 trillion figure.

Many of the senators are from a bipartisan group that struck the contours of the last COVID-19 deal approved late last year. They were joined on the call by the two leaders of the House's Problem Solvers Caucus, Reps. Josh Gottheimer, D-N.J., and Tom Reed, R-N.Y., who were also part of earlier discussions.

Sen. Jeanne Shaheen, D-N.H., told The Associated Press that no red lines were drawn. But she added there was consensus among the call's participants "that the more targeted the aid is the more effective it can be."

Overall, "it was a conversation and it was not about drawing lines in the sand," Shaheen said. "It was about how can we work together to help the people of this country."

White House coronavirus response coordinator Jeff Zients and White House legislative affairs director Louisa Terrell also joined the call.

Out of the gate, Biden has made clear that quickly passing another round of coronavirus relief is a top priority as he seeks to get the surging pandemic and the related economic crisis under control, while demonstrating he can break the gridlock that has ailed Congress for much of the last two presidencies.

Biden and his aides in their public comments have stressed that his plan is a starting point and that finding common ground on relief should be attainable considering the devastating impact the pandemic is exacting on Democratic and Republican states alike. With more than 412,000 dead and the economy again losing jobs, Biden has argued there is no time to lose.

"We're going to continue to push because we can't wait," said White House principal deputy press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre. "Just because Washington has been gridlocked before doesn't mean it needs to continue to be gridlocked"



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Central to Biden's campaign pitch, beyond healing the wounds created by Trump's presidency, was that he was a proven bipartisan dealmaker, one who would draw upon his decades in the Senate and deep relationships with Republicans to bridge partisan divides.

Some Biden advisers watched with worry as the Senate, just days into the president's term, was already in gridlock as to a power-sharing agreement, with Republican leader Mitch McConnell refusing to budge on a demand to keep the filibuster intact. If the Senate twists itself in knots over its very basics, some Democrats wondered, how could it reach a big deal?

Additionally, some of Biden's preferred methods to lobby and schmooze have been curtailed by the pandemic. Though his address book remains one of the best in Washington, it stands to be far more difficult for Biden — at least for the foreseeable future — to engage in the face-to-face politicking that he prefers.

Sen. Mitt Romney, R-Utah, ahead of the meeting, raised concerns again about the wisdom of the government engaging in massive deficit spending.

"If we get beyond COVID, I believe that the economy is going to come roaring back," Romney told "Fox News Sunday." "And spending and borrowing trillions of dollars from the Chinese, among others, is not necessarily the best thing we can do to get our economy to be strong long-term."

Sen. Bernie Sanders, the Vermont independent who caucuses with Democrats, said he didn't have high hopes for negotiations leading to Republican support and suggested Democrats may need to use budget reconciliation to pass it with a simple majority. The procedural tool would allow Democrats to push the package to approval without the 60-vote threshold typically needed to advance legislation past a filibuster. Republicans used the same tool to pass tax cuts during the Trump administration.

"What we cannot do is wait weeks and weeks and months and months to go forward," Sanders said. "We have got to act now. That is what the American people want."

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Associated Press writer Jonathan Lemire contributed to this report.

## **AP source: Biden to drop Trump's military transgender ban**

By LOLITA C. BALDOR and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden is set to issue an executive order to reverse a Pentagon policy that largely bars transgender individuals from joining the military, dumping a ban ordered by President Donald Trump in a tweet during his first year in office, a person briefed on the decision tells The Associated Press.

Biden has been widely expected to overturn the Trump policy in his early days in office. The White House could announce the move as early as Monday, according to the person briefed on the decision who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the order.

The move to reverse the policy has the support of Biden's newly confirmed defense secretary, retired Army Gen. Lloyd Austin, who spoke of the need to overturn it during his Senate confirmation hearing last week.

"I support the president's plan or plan to overturn the ban," Austin said. "If you're fit and you're qualified to serve and you can maintain the standards, you should be allowed to serve."

The decision comes as Biden plans to turn his attention to equity issues that he believes continue to shadow nearly all aspects of American life. Ahead of his inauguration, Biden's transition team circulated a memo from Ron Klain, now the White House chief of staff, that sketched out Biden's plan to use his first full week as president "to advance equity and support communities of color and other underserved communities."

The move to overturn the transgender ban is also the latest example of Biden using executive authority in his first days as president to dismantle Trump's legacy. His early actions include orders to overturn a Trump administration ban on travelers from several predominantly Muslim countries, stop construction of the wall at the U.S.-Mexico border, and launch an initiative to advance racial equity.

Biden is also scheduled to hold a ceremonial swearing-in ceremony on Monday at the White House for Austin, who became the nation's first Black defense secretary.

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It was unclear how quickly the Pentagon can put a new policy in effect, and whether it will take some time to work out details.

Until a few years ago service members could be discharged from the military for being transgender, but that changed during the Obama administration. In 2016, Defense Secretary Ash Carter announced that transgender people already serving in the military would be allowed to serve openly. And the military set July 1, 2017, as the date when transgender individuals would be allowed to enlist.

After Trump took office, however, his administration delayed the enlistment date and called for additional study to determine if allowing transgender individuals to serve would affect military readiness or effectiveness.

A few weeks later, Trump caught military leaders by surprise, tweeting that the government wouldn't accept or allow transgender individuals to serve "in any capacity" in the military. "Our military must be focused on decisive and overwhelming victory and cannot be burdened with the tremendous medical costs and disruption that transgender in the military would entail," he wrote.

It took nearly two years, but after a lengthy and complicated legal battle and additional reviews, the Defense Department in April 2019 approved the new policy that fell short of an all-out ban but barred transgender troops and military recruits from transitioning to another sex and required most individuals to serve in their birth gender.

Under that policy, currently serving transgender troops and anyone who had signed an enlistment contract before the effective date could continue with plans for hormone treatments and gender transition if they had been diagnosed with gender dysphoria.

But after that date, no one with gender dysphoria who was taking hormones or has transitioned to another gender was allowed to enlist. Troops that were already serving and were diagnosed with gender dysphoria were required to serve in their birth gender and were barred from taking hormones or getting transition surgery.

Under the Trump policy, a service member can be discharged based on a diagnosis of gender dysphoria if he or she is "unable or unwilling to adhere to all applicable standards, including the standards associated with his or her biological sex, or seeks transition to another gender." And it said troops must be formally counseled and given a chance to change their decision before the discharge is finalized.

As of 2019, an estimated 14,700 troops on active duty and in the Reserves identify as transgender, but not all seek treatment. Since July 2016, more than 1,500 service members were diagnosed with gender dysphoria; as of Feb. 1, 2019, there were 1,071 currently serving. According to the Pentagon, the department spent about \$8 million on transgender care between 2016 and 2019. The military's annual health care budget tops \$50 billion.

All four service chiefs told Congress in 2018 that they had seen no discipline, morale or unit readiness problems with transgender troops serving openly in the military. But they also acknowledged that some commanders were spending a lot of time with transgender individuals who were working through medical requirements and other transition issues.

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Associated Press writer Aamer Madhani contributed to this report.

## Russian hack of US agencies exposed supply chain weaknesses

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The elite Russian hackers who gained access to computer systems of federal agencies last year didn't bother trying to break one by one into the networks of each department.

Instead, they got inside by sneaking malicious code into a software update pushed out to thousands of government agencies and private companies.

It wasn't surprising that hackers were able to exploit vulnerabilities in what's known as the supply chain to launch a massive intelligence gathering operation. U.S. officials and cybersecurity experts have sounded the alarm for years about a problem that has caused havoc, including billions of dollars in financial losses,

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but has defied easy solutions from the government and private sector.

"We're going to have to wrap our arms around the supply-chain threat and find the solution, not only for us here in America as the leading economy in the world, but for the planet," William Evanina, who resigned last week as the U.S. government's chief counterintelligence official, said in an interview. "We're going to have to find a way to make sure that we in the future can have a zero-risk posture, and trust our suppliers."

In general terms, a supply chain refers to the network of people and companies involved in the development of a particular product, not dissimilar to a home construction project that relies on a contractor and a web of subcontractors. The sheer number of steps in that process, from design to manufacture to distribution, and the different entities involved give a hacker looking to infiltrate businesses, agencies and infrastructure numerous points of entry.

This can mean no single company or executive bears sole responsibility for protecting an entire industry supply chain. And even if most vendors in the chain are secure, a single point of vulnerability can be all that foreign government hackers need. In practical terms, homeowners who construct a fortress-like mansion can nonetheless find themselves victimized by an alarm system that was compromised before it was installed.

The most recent case targeting federal agencies involved Russian government hackers who are believed to have sneaked malicious code into popular software that monitors computer networks of businesses and governments. That product is made by a Texas-based company called SolarWinds that has thousands of customers in the federal government and private sector.

That malware gave hackers remote access to the networks of multiple agencies. Among those known to have been affected are the departments of Commerce, Treasury and Justice.

For hackers, the business model of directly targeting a supply chain is sensible.

"If you want to breach 30 companies on Wall Street, why breach 30 companies on Wall Street (individually) when you can go to the server — the warehouse, the cloud — where all those companies hold their data? It's just smarter, more effective, more efficient to do that," Evanina said.

Though President Donald Trump showed little personal interest in cybersecurity, even firing the head of the Department of Homeland Security's cybersecurity agency just weeks before the Russian hack was revealed, President Joe Biden has said he will make it a priority and will impose costs on adversaries who carry out attacks.

Supply chain protection will presumably be a key part of those efforts, and there is clearly work to be done. A Government Accountability Office report from December said a review of 23 agencies' protocols for assessing and managing supply chain risks found that only a few had implemented each of seven "foundational practices" and 14 had implemented none.

U.S. officials say the responsibility can't fall to the government alone and must involve coordination with private industry.

But the government has tried to take steps, including through executive orders and rules. A provision of the National Defense Authorization Act barred federal agencies from contracting with companies that use goods or services from five Chinese companies, including Huawei. The government's formal counterintelligence strategy made reducing threats to the supply chain one of five core pillars.

Perhaps the best-known supply chain intrusion before SolarWinds is the NotPetya attack in which malicious code found to have been planted by Russian military hackers was unleashed through an automatic update of Ukrainian tax-preparation software, called MeDoc. That malware infected its customers, and the attack overall caused more than \$10 billion in damage globally.

The Justice Department in September charged five Chinese hackers who it said had compromised software providers and then modified source code to allow for further hacks of the providers' customers. In 2018, the department announced a similar case against two Chinese hackers accused of breaking into cloud service providers and injecting malicious software.

"Anyone surprised by SolarWinds hasn't been paying attention," said Rep. Jim Langevin, a Rhode Island Democrat and member of the Cyberspace Solarium Commission, a bipartisan group that issued a white

paper calling for the protection of the supply chain through better intelligence and information sharing.

Part of the appeal of a supply chain attack is that it's "low-hanging fruit," said Brandon Valeriano, a cybersecurity expert at the Marine Corps University. A senior adviser to the solarium commission, he says it's not really known just how dispersed the networks are and that flaws in the supply chain are not uncommon.

"The problem is we basically don't know what we're eating," Valeriano said. "And sometimes it comes up later that we choke on something -- and often we choke on things."

Follow Eric Tucker on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/etuckerAP>

## **Mexican president tests positive for COVID-19, symptoms mild**

By CHRISTOPHER SHERMAN Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador said he has tested positive for COVID-19, an announcement that comes as his country registers the highest levels of infections and deaths to date.

López Obrador, who has been criticized for his handling of Mexico's pandemic and for not setting an example of prevention in public, said Sunday on his official Twitter account that his symptoms are mild and he is under medical treatment.

"I regret to inform you that I am infected with COVID-19," he tweeted. "The symptoms are mild but I am already under medical treatment. As always, I am optimistic. We will all move forward."

José Luis Alomía Zegarra, Mexico's director of epidemiology, said the 67-year-old López Obrador had a "light" case of COVID-19 and was "isolating at home."

Mexico's president wrote that while he recovered Interior Secretary Olga Sánchez Cordero would be taking over for him in his daily news conferences, at which he usually speaks for two hours without breaks each weekday.

Despite his age and high blood pressure, López Obrador has not received a vaccine shot even though Mexico has already received a batch of Pfizer-BioNTech doses. He has said that health workers would be the first ones to get them. Under the government plan, people over 60 will start being vaccinated in February.

López Obrador has rarely been seen wearing a mask and continued to keep up a busy travel schedule taking commercial flights.

He has also resisted locking down the economy, noting the devastating effect it would have on so many Mexicans who live day to day, despite that the country has registered nearly 150,000 COVID-19 deaths and more than 1.7 million infections. A new wave of infections has pushed the health system of the country's capital city close to saturation.

Early in the pandemic, asked how he was protecting Mexico, López Obrador removed two religious amulets from his wallet and proudly showed them off.

"The protective shield is the 'Get thee behind me, Satan,'" López Obrador said, reading off the inscription on the amulet, "Stop, enemy, for the Heart of Jesus is with me.

In November, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, head of the World Health Organization, urged Mexico's leaders be serious about the coronavirus and set examples for its citizens, saying that "Mexico is in bad shape" with the pandemic.

He didn't name López Obrador, but said: "We would like to ask Mexico to be very serious."

"We have said it in general, wearing a mask is important, hygiene is important and physical distancing is important and we expect leaders to be examples," he added.

At the start of the pandemic López Obrador was criticized for still leaning into crowds and giving hugs. The eternal campaigner, López Obrador's style of politics has always been very hands on and personal. As the pandemic grew he began limiting attendance to his events and maintaining his distance from supporters.

But on Friday, López Obrador posted a photo of him, Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard, a translator and former chief of staff Alfonso Romo, all gathered around a table for a phone call with U.S. President Joe Biden. None were wearing masks; the foreign relations department has not answered questions about



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whether Ebrard has been tested.

López Obrador's announcement came shortly after news emerged that he would speak with Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday about obtaining doses of the Sputnik V COVID-19 vaccine.

Mexico Foreign Affairs Secretary Marcelo Ebrard said via Twitter the two leaders would speak about the bilateral relationship and supplying doses of the vaccine.

The vaccine has not been approved for use in Mexico, but the government is desperate to fill supply gaps for the Pfizer vaccine.

Besides López Obrador, other Latin American leaders who have tested positive for the coronavirus are Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro, Guatemala's Alejandro Giammattei, Honduras' Juan Orlando Hernández and Bolivia's then-interim President Jeanine Anéz. All have recovered.

## Old (Brady), young (Mahomes), different Super Bowl 55 awaits

By EDDIE PELLIS AP National Writer

For Tom Brady, another trip to the Super Bowl — but this time, in a Tampa Bay uniform.

And for his new team, the Buccaneers, a first-of-its-kind home game, but without the usual home-field advantage.

To put a bow on this make-it-up-as-we-go NFL season — a campaign upended but never fully undone by the coronavirus pandemic — it comes as no surprise that there is no such thing as a straightforward storyline.

Because of restrictions in place due to COVID-19, Tampa Bay's home stadium will only be about a quarter full when the Buccaneers host the Kansas City Chiefs on Feb. 7 in the Super Bowl. The Chiefs opened as a 3.5-point favorite.

The 43-year-old Brady will expand on his record by playing in his 10th Super Bowl, hoping to expand on another record by winning a seventh title, but the first one in his new home of Tampa Bay.

And 25-year-old Patrick Mahomes of the Chiefs will be trying for back-to-back titles, something no quarterback has done since — who else? — Brady, back in his 2003-04 heyday with the New England Patriots.

The showdown will take place at Raymond James Stadium in Tampa, Florida, where Brady's Bucs will be the first team in the 55-year history of the Super Bowl to play on home turf.

"Whoever would've thought a home Super Bowl for us? But we did it," said Brady, who led the wild-card Buccaneers to a 31-26 win over Green Bay on Sunday to make it three straight road playoff wins on the way back home for the Super Bowl.

But home-field advantage won't mean as much as it normally might. This will be the first Super Bowl not played in front of a capacity crowd since the first one — Kansas City vs. Green Bay at the LA Coliseum — in 1967.

In a nod to how the pandemic has changed everything, the crowd for America's No. 1 sports spectacle will be limited to 22,000 in the 75,000-seat stadium, with vaccinated health-care workers getting 7,500 of those precious tickets.

And even the visiting team — the Chiefs — won't be staying in a hotel all week, the way both conference champions usually do for the Super Bowl. ESPN reported that Kansas City doesn't plan to arrive in Tampa until the day before the game.

Most interview availabilities, as they have all season, will take place on Zoom from the teams' hometown practice facilities. The farce that has become the Super Bowl's "Opening Night" media session will be a virtual affair, as well. In short, teams will basically treat this like a regular road game (or, in the case of the Bucs, a regular home game), and the Super Bowl city will not much resemble the overflowing party hub it usually does as the big game approaches.

Despite all that, this has the makings of a good matchup, featuring the league's top (Chiefs) and seventh-rated (Bucs) offenses, each with multiple ways to strike: Receiver Tyreek Hill and tight end Travis Kelce are standouts for KC and former Patriots tight end Rob Gronkowski is on Brady's long list of options for Tampa.

It is a rematch of Kansas City's 27-24 win on Thanksgiving weekend in Tampa. In that one, Mahomes

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threw for 462 yards — 269 of them to Hill — to help the Chiefs build an early 17-point lead.

This will be the second high-stakes postseason matchup between Brady and Mahomes. Brady was surgeon-like, leading New England to 524 yards in offense in a 37-31 overtime win over the Chiefs in the AFC title game in January 2019.

It gave New England its third straight trip to the Super Bowl, and Brady's last of nine as a member of the Patriots.

In the two seasons since, Kansas City has represented the AFC.

The Chiefs have done it largely on the arm of Mahomes, though it's his head and his foot that have been making more news of late. He threw for 325 yards and led the Chiefs to a 38-24 victory over Buffalo on Sunday. He did it despite a bout with turf toe that flared up at the end of a week he spent in the NFL's concussion protocol following a hard hit in KC's previous playoff win over Cleveland. (Also a concern now: Pro Bowl left tackle Eric Fisher left Sunday's game with an Achilles injury.)

Mahomes could join Bart Starr, Bob Griese, Terry Bradshaw, Joe Montana, Troy Aikman, John Elway and, of course, Brady on the list of QBs to win two in a row.

As for Brady? He's leading the Buccaneers to only their second Super Bowl; the Bucs won on their first trip, back in 2002. Brad Johnson was the quarterback then. But nobody would mistake Johnson for Brady, who could join Peyton Manning as the only other quarterback to win a Super Bowl with two franchises.

It could happen the day after Manning gets the call from the Hall of Fame; Manning is newly eligible this year and is a shoo-in to get in the night before the game.

Soon enough, Brady will be there, as well.

Clearly, though, he still feels his home is on the football field.

"The belief he gave everybody in this organization, that this could be done," said Bucs coach Bruce Arians, when asked to explain what Brady's arrival meant to the franchise. "It only took one man."

More AP NFL: <https://apnews.com/NFL> and [https://twitter.com/AP\\_NFL](https://twitter.com/AP_NFL)

## White House begins talks with lawmakers on COVID-19 relief

By AAMER MADHANI and LISA MASCARO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Top aides to President Joe Biden on Sunday began talks with a group of moderate Senate Republicans and Democrats on a \$1.9 trillion coronavirus relief package as Biden faces increasing headwinds in his effort to win bipartisan backing for the initial legislative effort of his presidency.

Lawmakers on the right question the wisdom of racking up bigger deficits while those on the left are urging Biden not to spend too much time on bipartisanship when the pandemic is killing thousands of Americans each day and costing more jobs amid tightening restrictions in many communities.

At least a dozen senators met for an hour and 15 minutes in a virtual call with White House National Economic Council director Brian Deese and other senior White House officials. Many hope to approve a relief package before former President Donald Trump's trial, which is set to begin in two weeks, overtakes Washington's attention.

Sen. Angus King, an independent from Maine, called the opening talks a "serious effort."

"There was not a hint of cynicism or lack of commitment to at least trying to work something out," King said. "If they were just trying to jam this through, I don't think it would have interrupted the Packers game."

King told reporters that there was "absolute consensus" among the group that the No. 1 priority was to speed up the distribution of vaccinations and expanding COVID-19 testing and tracing.

The White House did not seem to budge on breaking up the package or reducing the overall price tag, even as it pushes for bipartisan support. There was also no discussion of pushing it through on a procedural move that could be done without Republicans, King said.

One key Republican, Sen. Susan Collins of Maine, said afterward, "It seems premature to be considering a package of this size and scope."

Collins said instead she would pull the bipartisan group together "and see if we could come up with a more targeted package." She said in a statement that a bill with additional funding for vaccine distribution

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"would be useful."

Senators from both parties raised questions about the economic aid provisions, particularly making direct \$1,400 payments to Americans more tailored to recipients based on need.

Senators also wanted more data on how the White House reached the \$1.9 trillion figure.

Many of the senators are from a bipartisan group that struck the contours of the last COVID-19 deal approved late last year. They were joined on the call by the two leaders of the House's Problem Solvers Caucus, Reps. Josh Gottheimer, D-N.J., and Tom Reed, R-N.Y., who were also part of earlier discussions.

Sen. Jeanne Shaheen, D-N.H., told The Associated Press that no red lines were drawn. But she added there was consensus among the call's participants "that the more targeted the aid is the more effective it can be."

Overall, "it was a conversation and it was not about drawing lines in the sand," Shaheen said. "It was about how can we work together to help the people of this country."

White House coronavirus response coordinator Jeff Zients and White House legislative affairs director Louisa Terrell also joined the call.

Out of the gate, Biden has made clear that quickly passing another round of coronavirus relief is a top priority as he seeks to get the surging pandemic and the related economic crisis under control, while demonstrating he can break the gridlock that has ailed Congress for much of the last two presidencies.

Biden and his aides in their public comments have stressed that his plan is a starting point and that finding common ground on relief should be attainable considering the devastating impact the pandemic is exacting on Democratic and Republican states alike. With more than 412,000 dead and the economy again losing jobs, Biden has argued there is no time to lose.

"We're going to continue to push because we can't wait," said White House principal deputy press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre. "Just because Washington has been gridlocked before doesn't mean it needs to continue to be gridlocked"

Central to Biden's campaign pitch, beyond healing the wounds created by Trump's presidency, was that he was a proven bipartisan dealmaker, one who would draw upon his decades in the Senate and deep relationships with Republicans to bridge partisan divides.

Some Biden advisers watched with worry as the Senate, just days into the president's term, was already in gridlock as to a power-sharing agreement, with Republican leader Mitch McConnell refusing to budge on a demand to keep the filibuster intact. If the Senate twists itself in knots over its very basics, some Democrats wondered, how could it reach a big deal?

Additionally, some of Biden's preferred methods to lobby and schmooze have been curtailed by the pandemic. Though his address book remains one of the best in Washington, it stands to be far more difficult for Biden — at least for the foreseeable future — to engage in the face-to-face politicking that he prefers.

Sen. Mitt Romney, R-Utah, ahead of the meeting, raised concerns again about the wisdom of the government engaging in massive deficit spending.

"If we get beyond COVID, I believe that the economy is going to come roaring back," Romney told "Fox News Sunday." "And spending and borrowing trillions of dollars from the Chinese, among others, is not necessarily the best thing we can do to get our economy to be strong long-term."

Sen. Bernie Sanders, the Vermont independent who caucuses with Democrats, said he didn't have high hopes for negotiations leading to Republican support and suggested Democrats may need to use budget reconciliation to pass it with a simple majority. The procedural tool would allow Democrats to push the package to approval without the 60-vote threshold typically needed to advance legislation past a filibuster. Republicans used the same tool to pass tax cuts during the Trump administration.

"What we cannot do is wait weeks and weeks and months and months to go forward," Sanders said. "We have got to act now. That is what the American people want."

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Associated Press writer Jonathan Lemire contributed to this report.

**AP source: Lawmakers threatened ahead of impeachment trial**

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By MICHAEL BALSAMO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Federal law enforcement officials are examining a number of threats aimed at members of Congress as the second trial of former President Donald Trump nears, including ominous chatter about killing legislators or attacking them outside of the U.S. Capitol, a U.S. official told The Associated Press.

The threats, and concerns that armed protesters could return to sack the Capitol anew, have prompted the U.S. Capitol Police and other federal law enforcement to insist thousands of National Guard troops remain in Washington as the Senate moves forward with plans for Trump's trial, the official said.

The shocking insurrection at the Capitol by a pro-Trump mob prompted federal officials to rethink security in and around its landmarks, resulting in an unprecedented lockdown for Biden's inauguration. Though the event went off without any problems and armed protests around the country did not materialize, the threats to lawmakers ahead of Trump's trial exemplified the continued potential for danger.

Similar to those intercepted by investigators ahead of Biden's inauguration, the threats that law enforcement agents are tracking vary in specificity and credibility, said the official, who had been briefed on the matter. Mainly posted online and in chat groups, the messages have included plots to attack members of Congress during travel to and from the Capitol complex during the trial, according to the official.

The official was not authorized to not discuss an ongoing investigation publicly and spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity.

Law enforcement officials are already starting to plan for the possibility of armed protesters returning to the nation's capital when Trump's Senate trial on a charge of inciting a violent insurrection begins the week of Feb. 8. It would be the first impeachment trial of a former U.S. president.

Thousands of Trump's supporters descended on the Capitol on Jan. 6 as Congress met to certify Biden as the winner of the 2020 presidential race. More than 800 are believed to have made their way into the Capitol during the violent siege, pushing past overwhelmed police officers. The Capitol police said they planned for a free speech protest, not a riot, and were caught off-guard despite intelligence the rally would descend into a riot. Five people died in the melee, including a Capitol police officer who was struck in the head with a fire extinguisher.

Though much of the security apparatus around Washington set up after the riot and ahead of Biden's inauguration — it included scores of military checkpoints and hundreds of additional law enforcement personnel — is no longer in place, about 7,000 members of the National Guard will remain to assist federal law enforcement, officials said.

The Guard Bureau said that the number of Guard members in D.C. is less than 20,000 as of Sunday. All but about 7,000 of those will go home in the coming days. The Guard Bureau said that the number of troops in D.C. would then continue to decline in the coming weeks to about 5,000. They are expected to stay in D.C. until mid-March.

At least five people facing federal charges have suggested they believed they were taking orders from Trump when they marched on Capitol Hill on Jan. 6 to challenge the certification of Biden's election victory. But now those comments, captured in interviews with reporters and federal agents, are likely to take center stage as Democrats lay out their case.

More than 130 people have been charged by federal prosecutors for their roles in the riot. In recent weeks, others have been arrested after posting threats against members of Congress.

They include a Proud Boys supporter who authorities said threatened to deploy "three cars full of armed patriots" to Washington, threatened harm against Sen. Raphael Warnock, D-Ga., and who is accused of stockpiling military-style combat knives and more than 1,000 rifle rounds in his New York home. A Texas man was arrested this week for taking part in the riot at the Capitol and for posting violent threats, including a call to assassinate Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y.

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Associated Press writer Lolita C. Baldor contributed to this report.



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## Center-right incumbent wins Portugal's presidential election

By BARRY HATTON Associated Press

LISBON, Portugal (AP) — Portugal's president was returned to office for a second term with a resounding victory Sunday in an election held amid a devastating COVID-19 surge that has made the European country the worst in the world for cases and deaths.

Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, who had been widely expected to win, captured 61% of the vote.

Rebelo de Sousa, a center-right moderate and former leader of Portugal's Social Democratic Party, will serve a 5-year term that will be his last due to term limits.

He devoted most of his victory speech to the COVID-19 pandemic, saying his first thoughts went to its victims and promising to work for an economic recovery once it was over.

Portugal has the world's highest rates of new daily infections and deaths per 100,000 population, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University, and its public health system is being engulfed.

"Everything starts with the battle against the pandemic," Rebelo de Sousa said.

Socialist candidate Ana Gomes came second with 13% but close behind in third was André Ventura, a newly arrived right-wing populist whose 12% was a stunning development. Such a showing for Ventura would have been unthinkable until recently and will send a shudder through Portuguese politics.

Four other candidates ran for head of state.

One of the reelected president's first tasks will be to decide next month whether to approve a new law allowing euthanasia. Parliament has passed the bill, but the head of state could try to block it or send it to the Constitutional Court for vetting.

The turnout was just shy of 40% — significantly lower than in recent elections and apparently confirming concerns that some people would stay away for fear of becoming infected with COVID-19. Political leaders said that when the pandemic began to worsen there was no longer enough time to change the Portuguese Constitution to allow the election's postponement.

Rebelo de Sousa, 72, was long viewed as the front-runner. He is an affable law professor and former television personality who as president has consistently had an approval rating of 60% or more. He collected more votes Sunday than in his 2016 victory.

Rebelo de Sousa has worked closely with the center-left minority Socialist government, supporting its pandemic efforts.

He also has endeared himself to the Portuguese with his easygoing style. Photographs taken by passers-by of him in public places, such as one last year of him standing in line at a supermarket wearing sneakers and shorts, routinely go viral.

With the country in lockdown, the election campaign featured none of the usual flag-waving rallies but restrictions on movement were lifted for polling day.

Authorities increased the number of polling stations and allowed for early voting to reduce crowding on election day. In other precautions, voters were asked to bring their own pens and disinfectant to polling stations. Everyone voting wore a mask and kept a safe distance from each other.

Prime Minister António Costa, in a tweet, urged people to turn out for the ballot, saying that "unprecedented planning" had gone into ensuring that the vote could take place safely.

Portugal has 10.8 million registered voters, around 1.5 million of them living abroad.

Every Portuguese president since 1976, when universal suffrage was introduced following the departure of a dictatorship, has been returned for a second term. No woman or member of an ethnic minority has ever held the post.

## Biden to reinstate COVID travel rules, add South Africa

By AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden on Monday will formally reinstate COVID-19 travel restrictions on non-U.S. travelers from Brazil, Ireland, the United Kingdom and 26 other European countries that allow travel across open borders, according to two White House officials.

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The officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the order, also confirmed Sunday that South Africa would be added to the restricted list because of concerns about a variant of the virus that has spread beyond that nation.

Biden is reversing an order from President Donald Trump in his final days in office that called for the relaxation of the travel restrictions as of Tuesday.

The decision to reverse the order is not surprising, but the addition of South Africa to the restricted travel list highlights the new administration's concern about mutations in the virus.

The South Africa variant has not been discovered in the United States, but another variant — originating in the United Kingdom — has been detected in several states.

Reuters was first to report Biden's decision to add South Africa to the list.

Biden last week issued an executive order directing federal agencies to require international air travelers to quarantine upon U.S. arrival. The order also requires that all U.S.-bound passengers ages 2 and above get negative COVID-19 test results within three days before traveling.

## After failed Trump romance, France seeks reset under Biden

PARIS (AP) — After increasingly strained U.S.-France relations under Donald Trump, President Joe Biden and French President Emmanuel Macron agreed Sunday to work closely together to fight the coronavirus pandemic and climate change.

Their first conversation since Biden's inauguration aimed at mending frayed ties between the historic allies. Biden "stressed his commitment to bolstering the transatlantic relationship" via NATO and the EU. Macron pledged his "determination to work at the side of the U.S."

After four years of "America First" under Trump, the new U.S. president and French leader see eye-to-eye on the importance of international cooperation to fight climate change and COVID-19 and in negotiating with Iran.

But Macron's office said the two men wouldn't shy away from thorny issues. France is notably pushing for globally consistent taxes on U.S. tech powerhouses such as Google or Amazon, which led to an ongoing trade dispute with Washington under Trump. And the U.S. and EU are imposing tit-for-tat tariffs over subsidies to plane makers Boeing and France-based Airbus.

Macron stressed the importance of working jointly within the World Health Organization — which Trump abandoned — to help ensure vaccine distribution to poor countries.

According to a White House statement, Biden agreed to work with France on China, the Middle East, Russia and the Sahel region of Africa, where France is leading an international military operation against Islamic extremists.

Despite starkly different political views, Macron and Trump developed a surprisingly chummy relationship early on — including a fawning White House reception for the French leader and intimate Eiffel Tower dinner for the two first couples — that later soured amid Trump's increasingly mercurial and protectionist policies.

## Some Black Southern Baptists feel shut out by white leaders

By DAVID CRARY AP National Writer

As a student in college and seminary, then as a pastor in Texas, Dwight McKissic has been affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention for more than 45 years. Now he's pondering whether he and his congregation should break away.

"It would feel like a divorce," McKissic said. "That's something I've never had, but that's what it would feel like."

If he does, he would be following in the footsteps of several other Black pastors who have recently exited in dismay over what they see as racial insensitivity from some leaders of the predominantly white SBC. Tensions are high after an election year in which racism was a central issue, and after a provocative declaration by SBC seminary presidents in late 2020 that a fundamental concept in the struggle against racial injustice contravenes church doctrine.

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A crucial moment for McKissic and other Black pastors could come in June at the SBC's national meeting in Nashville, Tennessee, if delegates rebuff their views on systemic racism in the U.S., and if Rev. Albert Mohler, a high-profile conservative who heads the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, is elected SBC president.

Last year, even while announcing new scholarship funds for Black students, the seminary's leadership declined to change the names of buildings at his seminary named after slaveholders. More recently Mohler played a key role in the seminary presidents' repudiation of critical race theory — a broad term used in academic and activist circles to describe critiques of systemic racism.

The presidents later apologized for not consulting Black pastors before issuing that repudiation, but Mohler told The Associated Press the presidents would likely have reached the same decision in any case.

The seminary leaders' stance on critical race theory, as well as Mohler's public support for Donald Trump in the 2020 election, "should disqualify him from being SBC president," said McKissic, who has become one of the SBC's most prominent Black pastors since founding the Cornerstone Baptist Church in Arlington, Texas, in 1983.

Some of the pastors who cut ties with the SBC in recent months also share negative views of Mohler. The Rev. Ralph West, whose Church Without Walls in Houston claims a weekly attendance of 9,000, called him "a polarizing figure" who would worsen divisions within the SBC.

Mohler suggested his critics do not reflect the opinions of most Southern Baptists, white or Black.

"I believe I represent the vast mainstream of conservative Southern Baptists on these issues," he said. "I think I am polarizing only at the extremes."

Regarding Trump, who had overwhelming backing from white evangelicals, Mohler said he consistently pointed out the former president's flaws, but opted to endorse him based on his stances opposing abortion and defending religious liberties.

The SBC, the largest Protestant denomination in the United States, was founded in an 1845 split with northern Baptists over slavery and became the church of Southern slaveholders. Its membership of about 14.5 million remains overwhelming white — its predominantly Black churches claim a combined membership of about 400,000.

While the SBC formally apologized in 1995 for its pro-slavery past, and later condemned white supremacy, some tensions flared again after the Nov. 30 statement from six seminary presidents, all of them white. They declared that critical race theory was "incompatible with" central tenets of the SBC's Scripture-based theology.

The statement swiftly created friction far beyond the realm of SBC academia, particularly due to the lack of Black involvement in its drafting.

Virginia pastor Marshal Ausberry, president of the organization that represents the SBC's Black pastors, wrote to the presidents saying concepts such as critical race theory "help us to see and discover otherwise undetected, systemic racism in institutions and in ourselves."

"The optics of six Anglo brothers meeting to discuss racism and other related issues without having ethnic representation in the room in 2020 — at worst it looks like paternalism, at best insensitivity," Ausberry, first vice president of the SBC, elaborated in an interview with Baptist Press, the SBC's official news agency.

The presidents apologized for not consulting Black pastors and met with some of them Jan. 6, but have not wavered in their rejection of critical race theory.

McKissic, who was in the Jan. 6 meeting, said the conversation was polite "but the outcome was not respectful to who Black people are in our history."

He's likely to remain in the SBC until the June meeting but is prepared to exit then if the delegates ratify the presidents' stance on critical race theory as official policy.

"if they adopt that statement in June, it would be the feeling to me that people you trusted hit you in the face with a baseball bat," McKissic said.

Another possible trigger for him would be if delegates rescind a 2019 resolution that included a positive reference to critical race theory, suggesting it could be useful as an "analytical tool" as long as it was

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subordinate to Scripture.

The Rev. Charlie Dates of the Progressive Baptist Church in Chicago, one of the pastors who have already severed ties, said the November statement was “the last straw.”

“When did the theological architects of American slavery develop the moral character to tell the church how it should discuss and discern racism?” Dates wrote in an op-ed for Religion News Service. “The hard reality of the seminary presidents’ statement is that Black people will never gain full equality in the Southern Baptist Convention.”

Other Black pastors who have cut ties include the Rev. Seth Martin, whose multiracial Brook Community Church in Minneapolis had been receiving financial support from the Southern Baptist association in Minnesota, and the Rev. Joel Bowman, who abandoned plans to move his Temple of Faith Baptist Church in Louisville, Kentucky, into the SBC fold.

“I genuinely believe the SBC is headed in the wrong direction,” Bowman said. “White evangelicals have gotten in bed with the Republican Party.”

Some white SBC pastors are also troubled, such as the Rev. Ed Litton of Mobile, Alabama, who is one of Mohler’s rivals for the SBC presidency. McKissic has endorsed Litton’s candidacy.

Litton was a co-signer of a statement by a multiethnic group of Southern Baptists last month which asserted that “some recent events have left many brothers and sisters of color feeling betrayed and wondering if the SBC is committed to racial reconciliation.”

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Associated Press religion coverage receives support from the Lilly Endowment through The Conversation U.S. The AP is solely responsible for this content.

## **VIRUS TODAY: More hospital ICUs edge nearer a breaking point**

By The Associated Press undefined

Here’s what’s happening Sunday with the coronavirus pandemic in the U.S.:

### THREE THINGS TO KNOW TODAY

— Straining to handle record numbers of COVID-19 patients, hundreds of the nation’s intensive care units are running out of space, supplies and staff. An Associated Press analysis of federal hospital data shows that since November, the share of U.S. hospitals nearing the breaking point has doubled. More than 40% of Americans now live in areas running out of ICU space — many of the facilities clustered in the South and West.

— The Chicago Teachers Union said its members voted to defy an order to return to the classroom over concerns about COVID-19, setting up a showdown with district officials. Chicago Public Schools, the nation’s third-largest district, wanted roughly 10,000 kindergarten-through-eighth-grade teachers and other staffers to return to school Monday to get ready to welcome back roughly 70,000 students.

— A Sunday basketball game between the University of Michigan’s 11th-ranked women’s team and Purdue was one of several athletic events abruptly canceled after positive tests for the new COVID-19 variant among individuals linked to Michigan’s athletic department. The state’s Department of Health and Human Services issued a mandate on Saturday pausing all athletics at the school. The entire department could be in quarantine for two weeks.

**THE NUMBERS:** The U.S. is averaging more than 176,000 new cases and about 3,100 deaths each day. The nation’s death toll since the start of the pandemic stands at about 418,000.

**QUOTABLE:** “Someone out there or someone inside was creating a parallel set of data and graphics that were shown to the president.” — Dr. Deborah Birx, coordinator of President Donald Trump’s coronavirus task force, on grappling with COVID-19 deniers in the White House.

**ICYMI:** Louisiana has released a voluntary contact tracing application for mobile phones that can let people know if they’ve been around someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. Gov. John Bel Edwards announced the launch of the COVID Defense mobile application Friday and encouraged its use.

**ON THE HORIZON:** The Miami Heat will use coronavirus-sniffing dogs to screen fans who want to attend



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games. They've been working on the plan for months, and the highly trained dogs have been in place for some games this season where the team has allowed a handful of guests — mostly friends and family of players and staff. Starting this week, a limited number of ticket holders will be in the seats as well, provided they get past the dogs.

Find AP's full coverage of the coronavirus pandemic at <https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-pandemic>

## Dutch police clash with anti-lockdown protesters in 2 cities

By MIKE CORDER and PETER DEJONG Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — Rioters set fires in the center of the southern Dutch city of Eindhoven and pelted police with rocks Sunday at a banned demonstration against coronavirus lockdown measures, while officers responded with tear gas and water cannons, arresting at least 55 people.

Police in the capital of Amsterdam also used a water cannon to disperse an outlawed anti-lockdown demonstration on a major square ringed by museums. Video showed police spraying people grouped against a wall of the Van Gogh Museum.

It was the worst violence to hit the Netherlands since the pandemic began and the second straight Sunday that police clashed with protesters in Amsterdam. The country has been in a tough lockdown since mid-December that is due to continue at least until Feb. 9. The government beefed up the lockdown with a 9 p.m. to 4:30 a.m. curfew that went into force on Saturday.

Justice Minister Ferd Grapperhaus condemned the violence.

"This has nothing to do with demonstrating against corona measures," Grapperhaus said in a statement. "This is simply criminal behavior; people who deliberately target police, riot police, journalists and other aid workers."

In Eindhoven, 125 kilometers (78 miles) south of Amsterdam, a central square near the main railway station was littered with rocks, bicycles and shattered glass. The crowd of hundreds of demonstrators also was believed to include supporters of the anti-immigrant group PEGIDA, which had sought to demonstrate in the city.

Eindhoven police said they made at least 55 arrests and warned people to stay away from the city center amid the clashes. Trains to and from the station were halted and local media reported plundering at the station.

A woman not involved in the protests was hospitalized after being injured by a police horse, police said.

Police said more than 100 people were arrested in Amsterdam.

Dutch media reported unrest in other Dutch towns Sunday night caused by people protesting against the curfew.

The violence came a day after anti-curfew rioters torched a coronavirus testing facility in the Dutch fishing village of Urk.

Video from Urk, 80 kilometers (50 miles) northeast of Amsterdam, showed youths breaking into the coronavirus testing facility near the village's harbor before it was set ablaze Saturday night.

The lockdown was imposed by the Dutch government to rein in the spread of the more transmissible variant of the coronavirus.

Police said they fined more than 3,600 people nationwide for breaching the curfew that ran from 9 p.m. Saturday until 4:30 a.m. Sunday and arrested 25 people for breaching the curfew or for violence.

The police and municipal officials issued a statement Sunday expressing their anger at rioting, "from throwing fireworks and stones to destroying police cars and with the torching of the test location as a deep point."

"This is not only unacceptable, but also a slap in the face, especially for the local health authority staff who do all they can at the test center to help people from Urk," the local authorities said, adding that the curfew would be strictly enforced for the rest of the week.

On Sunday, all that remained of the portable testing building was a burned-out shell.

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Peter Dejong reported from Urk.

Follow all of AP's pandemic coverage at:

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

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

<https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

## New leaders named at US-funded international broadcasters

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Biden administration on Sunday installed new heads of three federally funded international broadcasters after abruptly firing Donald Trump appointees at the U.S. Agency for Global Media.

Kelu Chao, the acting CEO of the agency, made the announcement after dismissing the previous directors of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Radio Free Asia and the Middle East Broadcasting Networks late Friday, just a month after they had been named to the posts.

Daisy Sindelar will be acting head of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, replacing Ted Lipien until a permanent president is named. Bay Fang will return to her post as Radio Free Asia president, replacing Stephen Yates. Kelley Sullivan will become acting Middle East Broadcasting Networks president, replacing Victoria Coates.

"I have great faith in these leaders in ensuring the highest standards of independent, objective, and professional journalism," Chao said.

The moves follow the forced resignation of Trump's hand-picked agency head, Michael Pack, only two hours after Joe Biden took office as president on Wednesday. The director of the Voice of America and his deputy were soon removed and the chief of the Office of Cuba Broadcasting stepped down.

Pack had been accused by Democrats and others of trying to turn VOA and the other networks into pro-Trump propaganda machines.

Chao on Sunday also announced new corporate board directors for the three broadcasters, replacing the board directors named by Pack just days before his departure. The new directors are Karen Kornbluh, ambassador to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development under President Barack Obama, who will serve as chair; Ryan Crocker, who was an ambassador to Iraq, Syria and other countries; and PR executive Michael Kempner.

"Now more than ever, U.S. international media must serve as an accurate, reliable source of news and information in places where illuminating truth is needed the most," Kornbluh said.

## US police weigh officer discipline after rally, Capitol riot

By MARTHA BELLISLE and JAKE BLEIBERG Associated Press

For two Virginia police officers who posed for a photo during the deadly U.S. Capitol insurrection, the reckoning has been swift and public: They were identified, charged with crimes and arrested.

But for five Seattle officers the outcome is less clear. Their identities still secret, two are on leave and three continue to work while a police watchdog investigates whether their actions in the nation's capital on Jan. 6 crossed the line from protected political speech to lawbreaking.

The contrasting cases highlight the dilemma faced by police departments nationwide as they review the behavior of dozens of officers who were in Washington the day of the riot by supporters of President Donald Trump. Officials and experts agree that officers who were involved in the melee should be fired and charged for their role.

But what about those officers who attended only the Trump rally before the riot? How does a department balance an officer's free speech rights with the blow to public trust that comes from the attendance of law enforcement at an event with far-right militants and white nationalists who went on to assault the seat of American democracy?

An Associated Press survey of law enforcement agencies nationwide found that at least 31 officers in

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12 states are being scrutinized by their supervisors for their behavior in the District of Columbia or face criminal charges for participating in the riot. Officials are looking into whether the officers violated any laws or policies or participated in the violence while in Washington. 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 was shot to death by Capitol Police and three other people died after medical emergencies during the chaos.

Most of the officers have not been publicly identified; only a few have been charged. Some were identified by online sleuths. Others were reported by their colleagues or turned themselves in.

They come from some of the country's largest cities — three Los Angeles officers and a sheriff's deputy, for instance — as well as state agencies and a Pennsylvania police department with nine officers. Among them are an Oklahoma sheriff and New Hampshire police chief who have acknowledged being at the rally, but denied entering the Capitol or breaking the law.

"If they were off-duty, it's totally free speech," said Will Aitchison, a lawyer in Portland, Oregon, who represents law enforcement officers. "People have the right to express their political views regardless of who's standing next to them. You just don't get guilt by association."

But Ayesha Bell Hardaway, a professor at Case Western Reserve University law school, said an officer's presence at the rally creates a credibility issue as law enforcement agencies work to repair community trust, especially after last summer's protests against police brutality sparked by the police killings of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor.

Communities will question the integrity of officers who attended the rally along with "individuals who proudly profess racist and divisive viewpoints," she said. "It calls into question whether those officers are interested in engaging in policing in a way that builds trust and legitimacy in all communities, including communities of color."

In Rocky Mount, a Virginia town of about 1,000, Sgt. Thomas Robertson and Officer Jacob Fracker face criminal charges after posting a photo of themselves inside the Capitol during the riot. According to court records, Robertson wrote on social media that the "Left are just mad because we actually attacked the government who is the problem ... The right IN ONE DAY took the f(asterisk)(asterisk)(asterisk)(asterisk) U.S. Capitol. Keep poking us." Robertson said Rocky Mount is firing the officers, the Roanoke Times reported Sunday. The officers had been suspended without pay as of Friday.

Attempts to contact the officers were unsuccessful and court records do not list lawyers. Leaders in Rocky Mount declined to be interviewed. In a statement, they said the events at the Capitol were tragic.

"We stand with and add our support to those who have denounced the violence and illegal activity that took place that day," said Police Chief Ken Criner, Capt. Mark Lovern and Town Manager James Ervin. "Our town and our police department absolutely does not condone illegal or unethical behavior by anyone, including our officers and staff."

On the other side of the country, five Seattle officers are under investigation by the city's Office of Police Accountability. Two officers posted photos of themselves on social media while in the district and officials are investigating to determine where they were and what they were doing. Three others told supervisors that they went to Washington for the events and are being investigated for what they did while there.

Seattle Police Chief Adrian Diaz said his department supports officers' freedom of speech and that those who were in the nation's capital will be fired if they "were directly involved in the insurrection at the U.S. Capitol."

But police leaders need to evaluate more than just clear criminal behavior, according to Chuck Wexler, executive director of the Police Executive Research Forum, a policing research and policy group. They must also consider how their actions affect a department's credibility, he said.

Officers' First Amendment rights "don't extend to expressing words that may be violent or maybe express some prejudice," Wexler said, "because that's going to reflect on what they do when they're working, when they're testifying in court."

Through the summer and fall, Seattle police — along with officers elsewhere — came under criticism

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for their handling of mass protests against police brutality following the death of George Floyd. The city received more than 19,000 complaints against officers, most for excessive use of force and improper use of pepper spray.

Andrew Myerberg, director of the Seattle Office of Police Accountability, said none of the officers now under investigation were involved in those cases.

But Sakara Remmu, cofounder of Black Lives Matter Seattle/King County, said the officers should be fired regardless. Their public declarations of solidarity with Trump fosters not just community distrust, but terror of the entire department, she said.

"It absolutely does matter when the decorum of racial peace cracks and racial hatred comes through, because we already have a documented history and legacy of what that means in this country," Remmu said.

In Houston, the police chief decried an officer who resigned and was later charged in the riot. A lawyer for Officer Tam Pham said the 18-year veteran of the force "very much regrets" being at the rally and was "deeply remorseful."

But many chiefs have said their officers committed no crimes.

"The Arkansas State Police respects the rights and freedom of an employee to use their leave time as the employee may choose," department spokesman Bill Sadler said of two officers who attended the Trump rally.

Malik Aziz, the former chair and executive director of the National Black Police Association, compared condemning all officers who were in Washington to tarring all the protesters who took to streets after the killing of George Floyd with the violent and destructive acts of some.

A major with the Dallas Police Department, Aziz said police acting privately have the same rights as other Americans, but that knowingly going to a bigoted event should be disqualifying for an officer.

"There's no place in law enforcement for that individual," Aziz said.

## Growing number of GOP senators oppose impeachment trial

By MARY CLARE JALONICK and LISA MASCARO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A growing number of Republican senators say they oppose holding an impeachment trial, a sign of the dimming chances that former President Donald Trump will be convicted on the charge that he incited a siege of the U.S. Capitol.

House Democrats, who will walk the impeachment charge of "incitement of insurrection" to the Senate on Monday evening, are hoping that strong Republican denunciations of Trump after the Jan. 6 riot will translate into a conviction and a separate vote to bar Trump from holding office again. But GOP passions appear to have cooled since the insurrection, and now that Trump's presidency is over, Republican senators who will serve as jurors in the trial are rallying to his legal defense, as they did during his first impeachment trial last year.

"I think the trial is stupid, I think it's counterproductive," said Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla.. He said that "the first chance I get to vote to end this trial, I'll do it" because he believes it would be bad for the country and further inflame partisan divisions.

Arguments in the Senate trial will begin the week of Feb. 8. Leaders in both parties agreed to the short delay to give Trump's team and House prosecutors time to prepare and the Senate the chance to confirm some of President Joe Biden's Cabinet nominees. Democrats say the extra days will allow for more evidence to come out about the rioting by Trump supporters who interrupted the congressional electoral count of Biden's election victory, while Republicans hope to craft a unified defense for Trump.

An early vote to dismiss the trial probably would not succeed, given that Democrats now control the Senate. Still, the Republican opposition indicates that many GOP senators would eventually vote to acquit Trump. Democrats would need the support of 17 Republicans — a high bar — to convict him.

When the House impeached Trump on Jan. 13, exactly one week after the siege, Sen. Tom Cotton, R-Ark., said he didn't believe the Senate had the constitutional authority to convict Trump after he had left



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office. On Sunday, Cotton said "the more I talk to other Republican senators, the more they're beginning to line up" behind that argument.

"I think a lot of Americans are going to think it's strange that the Senate is spending its time trying to convict and remove from office a man who left office a week ago," Cotton said.

Democrats reject that argument, pointing to a 1876 impeachment of a secretary of war who had already resigned and to opinions by many legal scholars. Democrats also say that a reckoning of the first invasion of the Capitol since the War of 1812, perpetrated by rioters egged on by a president who told them to "fight like hell" against election results that were being counted at the time, is necessary so the country can move forward and ensure such a siege never happens again.

A few GOP senators have agreed with Democrats, though not close to the number that will be needed to convict Trump.

Sen. Mitt Romney, R-Utah, said he believes there is a "preponderance of opinion" that an impeachment trial is appropriate after someone leaves office.

"I believe that what is being alleged and what we saw, which is incitement to insurrection, is an impeachable offense," Romney said. "If not, what is?"

But Romney, the lone Republican to vote to convict Trump when the Senate acquitted the then-president in last year's trial, appears to be an outlier.

Sen. Mike Rounds, R-S.D., said he believes a trial is a "moot point" after a president's term is over, "and I think it's one that they would have a very difficult time in trying to get done within the Senate."

And Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, had tweeted on Saturday: "If it is a good idea to impeach and try former Presidents, what about former Democratic Presidents when Republicans get the majority in 2022? Think about it and let's do what is best for the country."

On Friday, GOP Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, a close Trump ally who has been helping him build a legal team, urged the Senate to reject the idea of a post-presidency trial — potentially with a vote to dismiss the charge — and suggested Republicans will scrutinize whether Trump's words on Jan. 6 were legally "incitement."

Sen. John Barrasso, R-Wyo., said Democrats were sending a message that "hatred and vitriol of Donald Trump is so strong" that they will hold a trial that stops Biden's policy priorities from moving. Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Wis., suggested Democrats are choosing "vindictiveness" over national security as the new president tries to set up his administration.

Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell, who said last week that Trump "provoked" his supporters before the riot, has not said how he will vote or argued any legal strategies. The Kentucky senator has told his GOP colleagues that it will be a vote of conscience.

One of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's nine impeachment managers said Trump's encouragement of his loyalists before the riot was "an extraordinarily heinous presidential crime."

"I think you will see that we will put together a case that is so compelling because the facts and the law reveal what this president did," said Rep. Madeleine Dean, D-Pa. "I mean, think back. It was just two-and-a-half weeks ago that the president assembled a mob on the Ellipse of the White House. He incited them with his words. And then he lit the match."

Trump's supporters invaded the Capitol and interrupted the electoral count as he falsely claimed there was massive fraud in the election and that it was stolen by Biden. Trump's claims were roundly rejected in the courts, including by judges appointed by Trump, and by state election officials.

Sen. Chris Coons, D-Del., said in an interview with The Associated Press on Sunday that he hopes that evolving clarity on the details of what happened Jan. 6 "will make it clearer to my colleagues and the American people that we need some accountability."

Coons questioned how his colleagues who were in the Capitol that day could see the insurrection as anything other than a "stunning violation" of the centuries-old tradition of peaceful transfers of power.

"It is a critical moment in American history and we have to look at it and look at it hard," Coons said.

Rubio and Romney were on "Fox News Sunday," Cotton appeared on Fox News Channel's "Sunday Morn-

ing Futures” and Romney also was on CNN’s “State of the Union,” as was Dean. Rounds was interviewed on NBC’s “Meet the Press.”

Associated Press writer Hope Yen contributed to this report.

## Chicago teachers vote to teach from home, defying district

By SOPHIA TAREEN Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — The Chicago Teachers Union said Sunday that its members voted to defy an order to return to the classroom over concerns about COVID-19, setting up a showdown with district officials who have said that refusing to return when ordered would amount to an illegal strike.

Chicago Public Schools, which is the nation’s third-largest district, wanted roughly 10,000 kindergarten through eighth grade teachers and other staffers to return to school Monday to get ready to welcome back roughly 70,000 students for part-time in-school classes starting Feb. 1. No return date has been set for high school students.

The teachers union, though, opposes the plan over concern for the health of its members and called on them to continue teaching from home in defiance of the district’s plan. The union said the district’s safety plan falls short and that before teachers can return safely to schools, vaccinations would have to be more widespread and different metrics to measure infections would need to be in place.

“There’s no doubt we all want to return to in-person instruction. The issue is CPS’ current unpreparedness for a return to in-person instruction, and the clear and present danger that poses to the health of our families and school communities,” the union said in a statement.

The two sides have been negotiating for months and talks continued after the result of the vote was announced in the hopes of reaching a deal.

CPS officials said Sunday that they had agreed to delay the teachers’ return for two days to give the sides more time to negotiate. But they said K-8 teachers would still be expected to resume in-person instruction on Feb. 1.

“We now agree on far more than we disagree, but our discussions remain ongoing, and additional time is needed to reach a resolution,” the district’s CEO, Janice Jackson, said in a statement.

School officials have argued that remote learning isn’t working for all students, including many low income and Black and Latino students who make up the majority of the district. The district’s safety plan includes thousands of air purifiers, more cleaning and a voluntary testing program

The roughly 355,000-student district, which turned to full-time online instruction last March because of the pandemic, has gradually welcomed students back. Thousands of pre-kindergarten and special education resumed in-person learning earlier this month and teachers who didn’t return to their classrooms were punished.

The union has also argued that schools don’t need to be fully staffed with lower-than-expected attendance.

CPS data showed that about 19% of students who were eligible for pre-K and special education in-person learning earlier this month attended. That figure was even lower than a December survey that showed roughly 6,500 of nearly 17,000 eligible preschool and special education students were interested.

The union’s collective bargaining agreement, which was approved after a 2019 strike, prohibits its roughly 25,000 members from striking and bars district officials from locking them out. District officials have said a union vote to disobey the order to return to schools on Monday would violate the contract.

Union officials, though, say returning to in-person instruction before its members are vaccinated and without other safeguards in place would put them at greater risk of contracting the virus. They argue that if the district tries to punish teachers for staying home Monday, then the district would be responsible for a work stoppage.

Illinois on Monday is scheduled start the next phase of its vaccination plan, which expands eligibility to teachers and people ages 65 and older. The district on Friday said it would begin vaccinating teachers and staff starting in mid-February and that the process would take months.

The Chicago vote comes at a time of great uncertainty in the U.S. about how and when schools should resume in-person instruction.

President Joe Biden has pledged to have a majority of schools reopened within his first 100 days in office. He is promising new federal guidelines on school opening decisions, and a "large-scale" Education Department effort to identify and share the best ways to teach during a pandemic.

Follow Sophia Tareen on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/sophiatareen>

## 2 injured after police car drives through crowd at race

TACOMA, Wash. (AP) — At least two people were injured when a police officer responding to a report of a street race plowed his car through a crowd of pedestrians that had gathered around him and were pounding on the car's windows in downtown Tacoma on Saturday night, officials said.

The incident happened just before 7 p.m. as about 100 people were blocking an intersection and watching several cars spinning in circles, police told The News Tribune of Tacoma.

A police car arrived, then drove through the crowd after people tried to block the vehicle, a witness said.

Video posted on social media shows the police car hitting several people and running over at least one person.

"He had tire marks all over his body," witness Cory Le told KTBS-TV. "Belly out. His shoes were off. Honestly, it was like something out of a movie."

Tacoma police spokesperson Wendy Haddow told the newspaper that police were notified shortly after 6 p.m. of the street racers.

Haddow said a responding officer used his car's bullhorn to address the crowd. The crowd then began pounding on his windows, she said.

"The officer, fearing for his safety, tried to back up, but was unable to do so because of the crowd," Tacoma Police said in a statement. That prompted him to speed out of the scene for his own safety, police said.

One person sustained cuts in the collision and was taken to a hospital, Haddow said.

Puyallup Police Capt. Dan Pashon told KCPQ-TV that a second person was treated at the hospital and released.

City Manager Elizabeth Pauli said the officer involved will be placed on leave. The Pierce County Force Investigation Team will handle the case, Pauli said.

Interim Police Chief Mike Ake released a statement saying he was concerned about another "use of deadly force incident," and promised his department's full cooperation in the investigation.

## Grizzly, 34, confirmed as Yellowstone region's known oldest

JACKSON, Wyo. (AP) — A 34-year-old grizzly bear captured in southwestern Wyoming has been confirmed as the oldest on record in the Yellowstone region, Wyoming wildlife officials said.

Grizzly bear 168 was captured last summer after it preyed on calves in the Upper Green River Basin area.

The male had just a few teeth left and weighed 170 pounds (77 kilograms), just a fraction of the 450 pounds (204 kilograms) the bear weighed as a 5-year-old when he was captured in the Shoshone National Forest in August 1991.

Biologists learned of the bear's longevity after euthanizing the bruin, which had preyed on cattle and then finally, calves. Biologists could tell grizzly 168 was responsible after examining the calves.

"You'll skin them and there's like terrible bruising, but there's no real punctures," Dan Thompson, a biologist with Wyoming Game and Fish told the Jackson Hole News & Guide. "They have so much strength in their jaws they can kill an animal by basically gumming it."

When 168 was captured, it was down to three nubs for canines and no other teeth, making it likely the bear would continue to seek easy prey, such as calves, Thompson said.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service made the call to euthanize the bear last July.

Relocating the animal, even though he had avoided known conflict for decades, "wouldn't have been the right thing to do," Thompson said.

"It was sad that we had to put him down," Thompson said, "but ethically there was nothing else that could be done."

The bear had first been captured as a 3-year-old in 1989 when the inside of its lip was tattooed with the number 168. The bear also was captured north of Dubois in May 1996 and dropped its radio collar the next year.

While the bear's whereabouts in the following years is not known, DNA testing indicates grizzly 168 sired a three-cub litter in 2005 or 2006, Thompson said. There's a "good potential" that he sired another litter in 2009, when he would have been 23.

"It's not 100%, but based on the genetic evidence we have, there's a likelihood that he bred as a 31-year-old male," Thompson said.

Grizzly 168 has outlived all females documented within the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem by four years, and female grizzly bears tend to live longer, officials said.

## Argentina's abortion law enters force under watchful eyes

By ALMUDENA CALATRAVA Associated Press

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (AP) — Argentina's groundbreaking abortion law went into force Sunday under the watchful eyes of women's groups and government officials, who hope to ensure its full implementation despite opposition from some conservative and church groups.

Argentina became the largest nation in Latin America to legalize elective abortion after its Senate on Dec. 30 passed a law guaranteeing the procedure up to the 14th week of pregnancy and beyond that in cases of rape or when a woman's health is at risk.

The vote was hailed as a triumph for the South American country's feminist movement that could pave the way for similar actions across the socially conservative, heavily Roman Catholic region.

But Pope Francis had issued a last-minute appeal before the vote and church leaders have criticized the decision. Supporters of the law say they expect lawsuits from anti-abortion groups in Argentina's conservative provinces and some private health clinics might refuse to carry out the procedure.

"Another huge task lies ahead of us," said Argentina's minister of women, gender and diversity, Elizabeth Gómez Alcorta, who has acknowledged there will be obstacles to the law's full implementation across the country.

Gómez Alcorta said a telephone line will be set up "for those who cannot access abortion to communicate."

The Argentine Catholic Church has repudiated the law and conservative doctors' and lawyers' groups have urged resistance. Doctors and health professionals can claim conscientious objection to performing abortions, but cannot invoke the right if a pregnant woman's life or health is in danger.

A statement signed by the Consortium of Catholic Doctors, the Catholic Lawyers Corporation and other groups called on doctors and lawyers to "resist with nobility, firmness and courage the norm that legalizes the abominable crime of abortion."

The anti-abortion group Unidad Provida also urged doctors, nurses and technicians to fight for their "freedom of conscience" and promised to "accompany them in all the trials that are necessary."

Under the law, private health centers that do not have doctors willing to carry out abortions must refer women seeking abortions to clinics that will. Any public official or health authority who unjustifiably delays an abortion will be punished with imprisonment from three months to one year.

The National Campaign for the Right to Legal, Safe and Free Abortion, an umbrella group for organizations that for years fought for legal abortion, often wearing green scarves at protests, vowed to "continue monitoring compliance with the law."

"We trust the feminist networks that we have built over decades," said Laura Salomé, one of the movement's members.

A previous abortion bill was voted down by Argentine lawmakers in 2018 by a narrow margin. But in the December vote it was backed by the center-left government, boosted by the so-called "piba" revolution, from the Argentine slang for "girls," and opinion polls showing opposition had softened.



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The law's supporters expect backlash in Argentina's conservative provinces. In the northern province of Salta, a federal judge this week rejected a measure filed by a former legislator calling for the law to be suspended because the legislative branch had exceeded its powers. Opponents of abortion cite international treaties signed by Argentina pledging to protect life from conception.

Gómez Alcorta said criminal charges currently pending against more than 1,500 women and doctors who performed abortions should be lifted. She said the number of women and doctors detained "was not that many," but didn't provide a number.

"The Ministry of Women is going to carry out its leadership" to end these cases, she said.

Tamara Grinberg, 32, who had a clandestine abortion in 2012, celebrated that from now on "a girl can go to a hospital to say 'I want to have an abortion.'"

She said when she had her abortion, very few people helped her. "Today there are many more support networks ... and the decision is respected. When I did it, no one respected my decision."

While abortion is already allowed in some other parts of Latin America — such as in Uruguay, Cuba and Mexico City — its legalization in Argentina is expected to reverberate across the region, where dangerous clandestine procedures remain the norm a half century after a woman's right to choose was guaranteed in the U.S.

AP journalists Víctor Caivano and Yésica Brumec contributed to this report.

## Estonia to get first female PM as government deal clinched

By JARI TANNER Associated Press

TALLINN, Estonia (AP) — Estonia's two biggest political parties clinched a deal on Sunday to form a new government to be led by a female prime minister for the first time in the Baltic country's history, replacing the previous Cabinet that collapsed into a corruption scandal earlier this month.

The party councils of the the opposition, center-right Reform Party and the ruling, left-leaning Center Party voted in favor of joining a Cabinet headed by Reform's prime minister-designate and chairwoman Kaja Kallas.

Both parties are set to have seven ministerial portfolios in addition to Kallas' prime minister post in the 15-member government, which would muster a majority at the 101-seat Riigikogu Parliament.

A joint statement said the Reform Party and the Center Party "will form a government that will continue to effectively resolve the COVID-19 crisis, keep Estonia forward-looking and develop all areas and regions of our country."

Earlier this month, President Kersti Kaljulaid, who is expected to appoint Kallas' Cabinet in the next few days, said tackling Estonia's worsening coronavirus situation and the economic turmoil caused by the pandemic should be an immediate priority for the new government.

Kaljulaid, Estonia's first female head of state since 2016, tasked Kallas to form the government as her pro-business and pro-entrepreneurship Reform Party emerged as the winner of Estonia's March 2019 general election.

Pending approval from lawmakers, Kallas, 43, will become the first female head of government in the history of the small Baltic nation of 1.3 million which regained its independence amid the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991.

A lawyer and former European Parliament lawmaker, she is the daughter of Siim Kallas, one of the Reform Party's creators, a former prime minister and a former European Union commissioner.

Kaja Kallas took the reins at the Reform Party in 2018 as its first female chair. Her first Cabinet will see women in other key positions too as Reform's Keit Pentus-Rosimannus takes over the finance minister post and diplomat Eva-Maria Liimets becomes the foreign minister.

The government formation marks the second such attempt for Kallas in less than two years as she failed to bring about a Reform Party-led government after the 2019 election. That paved the way for the archrival Center Party and its leader, Juri Ratas, to form a three-party coalition without the Reform Party.

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Ratas and his Cabinet resigned on Jan. 13 over a scandal involving a key official at his Center Party suspected of accepting a private donation for the party in exchange for a political favor on a real estate development at the harbor district of the capital, Tallinn.

Ratas' government, which took office in April 2019, was shaky from the start as the coalition included the populist EKRE, the nation's third-largest party which runs on a nationalist, anti-immigration and anti-EU agenda.

The strong rhetoric of the EKRE leaders, Mart Helme and his son Martin Helme, created several embarrassing situations for Ratas' government with public statements that were seen as insulting to Estonia's international allies and tarnishing the country's image, and which brought the government to the brink of collapse at least twice.

Kallas ruled out straight away of including EKRE in her Cabinet, citing considerable differences in values. Reform Party defines itself on its website as "the leader of the liberal worldview in Estonia."

The perceived damage caused by the right-wing EKRE to Estonia's image is seen as so severe that Kallas acknowledged earlier to Estonian media that her Cabinet would embark on a diplomatic mission to regain trust among the country's allies and assure them of Estonia's new political course.

Estonia's prime minister since November 2016, Ratas won't be part of the new Cabinet. Local media reported earlier that he could become the parliamentary speaker in March.

Estonia has been a member of the European Union and NATO since 2004.

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This story has been corrected to show that there are 15 Cabinet members, not 14.

## Why Biden's immigration plan may be risky for Democrats

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden is confronting the political risk that comes with grand ambition.

As one of his first acts, Biden offered a sweeping immigration overhaul last week that would provide a path to U.S. citizenship for the estimated 11 million people who are in the United States illegally. It would also codify provisions wiping out some of President Donald Trump's signature hard-line policies, including trying to end existing, protected legal status for many immigrants brought to the U.S. as children and crackdowns on asylum rules.

It's precisely the type of measure that many Latino activists have longed for, particularly after the tough approach of the Trump era. But it must compete with Biden's other marquee legislative goals, including a \$1.9 trillion plan to combat the coronavirus, an infrastructure package that promotes green energy initiatives and a "public option" to expand health insurance.

In the best of circumstances, enacting such a broad range of legislation would be difficult. But in a narrowly divided Congress, it could be impossible. And that has Latinos, the nation's fastest growing voting bloc, worried that Biden and congressional leaders could cut deals that weaken the finished product too much — or fail to pass anything at all.

"This cannot be a situation where simply a visionary bill — a message bill — gets sent to Congress and nothing happens with it," said Marielena Hincapié, executive director of the National Immigration Law Center, which advocates for low-income immigrants. "There's an expectation that they will deliver and that there is a mandate now for Biden to be unapologetically pro-immigrant and have a political imperative to do so, and the Democrats do as well."

If Latinos ultimately feel betrayed, the political consequences for Democrats could be long-lasting. The 2020 election provided several warning signs that, despite Democratic efforts to build a multiracial coalition, Latino support could be at risk.

Biden already was viewed skeptically by some Latino activists for his association with former President Barack Obama, who was called the "deporter in chief" for the record number of immigrants who were removed from the country during his administration. Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont defeated Biden in last year's Nevada caucuses and California primary, which served as early barometers of the Latino vote.

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In his race against Trump, Biden won the support of 63% of Latino voters compared with Trump's 35%, according to AP VoteCast, a survey of more than 110,000 voters nationwide. But Trump narrowed the margin somewhat in some swing states such as Nevada and also got a bump from Latino men, 39% of whom backed him compared with 33% of Latino women.

Biden became the first Democratic presidential candidate since 1996 to carry Arizona, in part because of strong grassroots backing from Mexican American groups opposed to strict GOP immigration policies going back decades. But he lost Florida by underperforming in its largest Hispanic county, Miami-Dade, where the Trump campaign's anti-socialism message resonated with Cuban- and some Venezuelan Americans.

Biden also fell short in Texas even though running mate Kamala Harris devoted valuable, late campaign time there. The ticket lost some sparsely populated but heavily Mexican American counties along the Mexican border, where law enforcement agencies are major employers and the GOP's zero-tolerance immigration policy resonated.

There were more warning signs for House Democrats, who lost four California seats and two in South Florida while failing to pick up any in Texas. Booming Hispanic populations reflected in new U.S. census figures may see Texas and Florida gain congressional districts before 2022's midterm elections, which could make correcting the problem all the more pressing for Democrats.

The urgency isn't lost on Biden. He privately spent months telling immigration advocates that major overhauls would be at the top of his to-do list. As vice president, he watched while the Obama administration used larger congressional majorities to speed passage of a financial crisis stimulus bill and its signature health care law while letting an immigration overhaul languish.

"It means so much to us to have a new president propose bold, visionary immigration reform on Day 1. Not Day 2. Not Day 3. Not a year later," said New Jersey Democratic Sen. Bob Menendez, his chamber's lead sponsor of the Biden package.

Menendez was part of a bipartisan immigration plan championed by the "Gang of Eight" senators that collapsed in 2013. Obama then resorted to executive action to offer legal status to millions of young immigrants. President George W. Bush also pushed an immigration package — with an eye toward boosting Latino support for Republicans before the 2008 election — only to see it fail in Congress.

Menendez acknowledged that the latest bill will have to find at least 10 Republican senators' support to clear the 60-vote hurdle to reach the floor, and that he's "under no illusions" how difficult that will be.

Former Rep. Carlos Curbelo, a moderate Republican from Florida, said Biden may find some GOP support but probably will have to settle for far less than what's in his original proposal.

"Many Republicans are worried about primary challenges," Curbelo said, adding that Trump and his supporters' championing of immigration crackdowns means there's "political peril there for Republicans."

But he also said Democrats could alienate some of their own base by appearing to prioritize the needs of people in the country illegally over those of struggling U.S. citizens and thus "appearing to overreach from the perspective of swing and independent voters."

Indeed, Democrats haven't always universally lined up behind an immigration overhaul, arguing that it could lead to an influx of cheap labor that hurts U.S. workers. Some of the party's senators joined Republicans in sinking Bush's bill.

Still, Latinos haven't forgotten past immigration failures and have often blamed Democrats more than Republicans.

Chuck Roca, head of Nuestro PAC, which spent \$4 million on ads boosting Biden in Arizona, said that while Hispanics have traditionally tended to support Democrats, he has begun to see trends in the past decade where more are registering as independent or without party affiliation. Those voters can still be won back, he said, but only if Latinos see real change on major issues such as immigration "even if it's piecemeal."

"They have to get something done if they want to start to turn around the loss of Latino voters," said Rocha, who headed Latino voter outreach for Sanders' presidential campaign. "They have to do everything in their power now to get Latinos back."

Associated Press writer Alan Fram contributed to this report.

## 2 in 5 Americans live where COVID-19 strains hospital ICUs

By CARLA K. JOHNSON and NICKY FORSTER Associated Press

Straining to handle record numbers of COVID-19 patients, hundreds of the nation's intensive care units are running out of space and supplies and competing to hire temporary traveling nurses at soaring rates. Many of the facilities are clustered in the South and West.

An Associated Press analysis of federal hospital data shows that since November, the share of U.S. hospitals nearing the breaking point has doubled. More than 40% of Americans now live in areas running out of ICU space, with only 15% of beds still available.

Intensive care units are the final defense for the sickest of the sick, patients who are nearly suffocating or facing organ failure. Nurses who work in the most stressed ICUs, changing IV bags and monitoring patients on breathing machines, are exhausted.

"You can't push great people forever. Right? I mean, it just isn't possible," said Houston Methodist CEO Dr. Marc Boom, who is among many hospital leaders hoping that the numbers of critically ill COVID-19 patients have begun to plateau. Worryingly, there's an average of 20,000 new cases a day in Texas, which has the third-highest death count in the country and more than 13,000 people hospitalized with COVID-19-related symptoms.

According to data through Thursday from the COVID Tracking Project, hospitalizations are still high in the West and the South, with over 80,000 current COVID-19 hospital patients in those regions. The number of cases reported in the U.S. since the pandemic's start surpassed 25 million on Sunday, according to Johns Hopkins University.

Encouragingly, hospitalizations appear to have either plateaued or are trending downward across all regions. It's unclear whether the easing will continue with more contagious versions of the virus arising and snags in the rollout of vaccines.

In New Mexico, one surging hospital system brought in 300 temporary nurses from outside the state, at a cost of millions of dollars, to deal with overflowing ICU patients, who were treated in converted procedure rooms and surgery suites.

"It's been horrid," said Dr. Jason Mitchell, chief medical officer for Presbyterian Healthcare Services in Albuquerque. He's comforted that the hospital never activated its plan for rationing lifesaving care, which would have required a triage team to rank patients with numerical scores based on who was least likely to survive.

"It's a relief that we never had to actually do it," Mitchell said. "It sounds scary because it is scary."

In Los Angeles, Cedars-Sinai Medical Center ran into shortages of take-home oxygen tanks, which meant some patients who could otherwise go home were kept longer, taking up needed beds. But the biggest problem is competing with other hospitals for traveling nurses.

"Initially, when the COVID surges were hitting one part of the country at a time, traveling nurses were able to go to areas more severely affected. Now with almost the entire country surging at the same time," hospitals are paying twice and three times what they would normally pay for temporary, traveling nurses, said Dr. Jeff Smith, the hospital's chief operating officer.

Houston Methodist Hospital recently paid \$8,000 retention bonuses to keep staff nurses from signing up with agencies that would send them to other hot spots. Pay for traveling nurses can reach \$6,000 per week, an enticement that can benefit a nurse but can seem like poaching to the hospital executives who watch nurses leave.

"There's a lot of these agencies that are out there charging absolutely ridiculous sums of money to get ICU nurses in," Boom said. "They go to California, which is in the midst of a surge, but they poach some ICU nurses there, send them to Texas, where they charge inordinate amounts to fill in gaps in Texas, many of which are created because nurses in Texas went to Florida or back to California."

Space is another problem. Augusta University Medical Center in Augusta, Georgia, is treating adult ICU



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patients, under age 30, in the children's hospital. Recovery rooms now have ICU patients, and, if things get worse, other areas — operating rooms and endoscopy centers — will be the next areas converted for critical care.

To prevent rural hospitals from sending more patients to Augusta, the hospital is using telemedicine to help manage those patients for as long as possible in their local hospitals.

"It is a model I believe will not only survive the pandemic but will flourish post pandemic," said Dr. Phillip Coule, the Augusta hospital's chief medical officer.

Hospitals are pleading with their communities to wear masks and limit gatherings.

"There just hasn't been a lot of respect for the illness, which is disappointing," said Dr. William Smith, chief medical officer for Cullman Regional Medical Center in Cullman, Alabama. He sees that changing now with more people personally knowing someone who has died.

"It has taken a lot of people," he said of the virus, adding that the death toll — 144 people in six months in a county of 84,000 — "has opened their eyes to the randomness of this."

The Alabama hospital's ICU has been overflowing for six weeks, with 16 virus patients on ventilators in a hospital that a year ago had only 10 of the breathing machines. "You can see the stress in people's faces and in their body language. It's just a lot for people to carry around," Smith said.

"Just the fatigue of our staff can affect quality of care. I've been encouraged we've been able to keep the quality of care high," Smith said. "You feel like you are in a very precarious situation where errors could occur, but thankfully we've managed to stay on top of things."

Hospitals say they are upholding high standards for patient care, but experts say surges compromise many normal medical practices. Overwhelmed hospitals might be forced to mobilize makeshift ICUs and staff them with personnel without any experience in critical care. They might run out of sedatives, antibiotics, IVs or other supplies they rely on to keep patients calm and comfortable while on ventilators.

"It's really daunting and mentally taxing. You're doing what you believe to be best practice," said Kiersten Henry, a nurse at MedStar Montgomery Medical Center in Olney, Maryland, and a board director for the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses.

In Oklahoma City, OU Medicine Chief Medical Officer Dr. Cameron Mantor said while the vaccines hold promise, hope still seems dim as ICU cases keep mounting. The number of COVID-19 hospitalizations at OU Medicine has declined from more than 100 daily in recent weeks to 98 on Wednesday, Mantor said.

"What is stressing everybody out," Mantor said, "is looking at week after week after week, the spigot is not being turned off, not knowing there is a break, not seeing the proverbial light at the end of the tunnel."

Associated Press writers Marion Renault in Rochester, Minnesota, Nomaan Merchant in Houston and Ken Miller in Oklahoma City contributed.

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## UK vaccination drive expands as virus toll nears 100,000

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Britain is expanding a coronavirus vaccination program that has seen more than 6 million people get the first of two doses — even as the country's death toll in the pandemic approaches 100,000.

Health Secretary Matt Hancock said Sunday that three-quarters of the U.K.'s over-80s have received a vaccine shot. He said three-quarters of nursing home residents have also had their first jab.

Health authorities said 6.35 million doses of vaccine have been administered since injections began last month, including almost 500,000 doses on Saturday, the highest one-day total so far. Health officials aim to give 15 million people, including everyone over 70, a first vaccine shot by Feb. 15, and cover the entire adult population by September.

Britain is inoculating people with two vaccines — one made by U.S. pharma firm Pfizer and German

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company BioNTech, the other by U.K.-Swedish drugmaker AstraZeneca and Oxford University. It has also authorized a third, developed by Moderna.

It is giving the shots at doctors' offices, hospitals, pharmacies and vaccination centers set up in conference halls, sports stadiums and other large venues like Salisbury Cathedral. Thirty more locations are opening this week, including a former IKEA store and a museum of industrial history that was used as a set for the TV show "Peaky Blinders."

Britain's vaccination campaign is a rare success in a country with Europe's worst confirmed coronavirus outbreak. The U.K. has recorded 97,939 deaths among people who tested positive, including 610 new deaths reported Sunday.

The U.K. is set within days to become the fifth country in the world to record 100,000 COVID-19 deaths, after the United States, Brazil, India and Mexico — all of which have much larger populations than Britain's 67 million people.

Some health experts have questioned the Conservative government's decision to give the two vaccine doses up to 12 weeks apart, rather than the recommended three weeks, in order to offer as many people as possible their first dose quickly.

AstraZeneca has said it believes a first dose of its vaccine offers protection after 12 weeks but Pfizer says it has not tested the efficacy of its jab after such a long gap.

The British Medical Association says the government should "urgently review" the policy.

But Anthony Harnden, deputy head of the government-advising Joint Committee on Immunization and Vaccination, defended the policy, saying the U.K. is in a "dire situation."

"Every dose of vaccine we give as a second dose, we'll be denying somebody their first dose at the moment and denying them very good protection," Harnden told Sky News. He said the policy of prioritizing first doses would "save thousands and thousands of lives."

Britain's latest surge is being fueled in part by a new virus variant first identified in southeast England, which scientists believe is more transmissible than the original strain. They also say it may be more lethal, though that evidence is weaker.

The British government has said it may tighten quarantine requirements for people arriving from abroad in an attempt to keep out other new variants discovered in South Africa and Brazil. Already travelers to Britain must self-isolate for 10 days, but enforcement is patchy. Authorities are considering requiring arrivals to stay in quarantine hotels like those set up in Australia and some other countries.

The U.K. is several weeks into a lockdown to try to slow the spread of the virus. Pubs, restaurants, gyms, entertainment venues and many shops are closed, and people are required to stay largely at home.

The lockdown rules will be reviewed on Feb. 15, but the government says it is too soon to think about easing the restrictions.

"There is early evidence that the lockdown is starting to bring cases down, but we are a long, long, long way from being low enough," Hancock said.

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

## States eye allowing concealed carry of guns without a permit

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — Republican lawmakers in several more states want to loosen gun restrictions by allowing people to carry concealed firearms without having to get a permit, continuing a trend that gun control advocates call dangerous.

Fifteen states already allow concealed carry without a permit, and lawmakers in nine others have proposed allowing or expanding the practice. GOP governors are backing the changes in Utah and Tennessee. Another bill expanding permitless carry in Montana has passed the state House.

Most states require people to do things like get weapons training and undergo a background check to

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get a permit to carry a gun hidden by a jacket or inside a purse. Groups like the National Rifle Association and state lawmakers who support gun rights argue those requirements are ineffective and undermine Second Amendment protections.

The proposed changes come after gun sales hit historic levels last summer — reflected in FBI background checks — amid uncertainty and safety concerns about the coronavirus pandemic, the struggling economy and protests over racial injustice. Since then, a violent mob stormed the U.S. Capitol.

Against that backdrop, the efforts to loosen concealed carry requirements are a frightening trend for Shannon Watts, founder of the gun control group Moms Demand Action.

“It is dangerous to allow people to carry hidden, loaded handguns possibly without a background check or any training,” she said, adding that the annual rate of aggravated assaults with a firearm has increased 71% in Alaska since the state became the first to allow concealed carry without a permit in 2003.

The proposal in Utah would allow any U.S. citizen 21 and older to carry a concealed weapon without the now-required background check or weapons course. The bill does allow gun owners who want to carry a concealed weapon out of state to get a permit to do so after a background check and safety course.

Newly elected GOP Gov. Spencer Cox has said he supports the idea, in contrast to his predecessor and fellow Republican Gary Herbert, who vetoed a similar bill in 2013.

Supporters of the change argue that other state laws against such things as felons having guns and anyone carrying a firearm while intoxicated are enough to ensure guns are used safely.

“I have that right to protect myself, the Constitution says we have the right. Why are we putting a barrier for law-abiding citizens?” said Rep. Walt Brooks, the Republican lawmaker sponsoring the bill that got an early nod of approval from a House committee Friday. The software company president has represented rural southern Utah for about four years.

He pointed to a multistate study published in 2018 by the Journal of the American College of Surgeons that found loosening concealed carry permit laws didn’t lead to more homicides or violent crime. Utah does not require a permit for guns carried openly.

In Tennessee, Republican lawmakers are expected to push again to allow most adults 21 and older to carry firearms — concealed or openly — without a license that now requires a background check and training.

GOP Gov. Bill Lee backed the idea last year, though the proposal and others were put on hold amid the pandemic.

The push in Tennessee came after the GOP-dominant General Assembly relaxed the state’s handgun law in 2020 by allowing people to obtain a concealed-carry-only handgun permit that didn’t require them to demonstrate the ability to fire a weapon.

In Montana, the House recently passed a bill to allow people to carry concealed firearms without a permit in most places.

Similar bills that would allow or expand concealed carry without a permit have been introduced in Texas, South Carolina, Florida, Indiana, Alabama and Georgia.

In Texas, where the NRA plans to incorporate soon and where some lawmakers bring concealed handguns to work at the state Capitol, the GOP has listed the issue as one of just eight legislative priorities. The idea has failed to gain traction for years, though, and with the pandemic promising to be the predominant force in the upcoming session, its prospects are once again uncertain.

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Associated Press writers Jonathan Mattise in Nashville, Tennessee, and Paul J. Weber in Austin, Texas, contributed to this report.

## Kremlin: US comments on protests support law-breaking

MOSCOW (AP) — The spokesman for Russian President Vladimir Putin says the U.S. Embassy’s statements about the nationwide protests, in which more than 3,500 people reportedly were arrested, interfere in the country’s domestic affairs and encourage Russians to break the law.

Dmitry Peskov made the criticism on Sunday, a day after protests took place across the country demanding the release of jailed opposition leader Alexei Navalny, an anti-corruption activist who is Putin’s

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most well-known critic.

During the protests, embassy spokeswoman Rebecca Ross said on Twitter that "the U.S. supports the right of all people to peaceful protest, freedom of expression. Steps being taken by Russian authorities are suppressing those rights." The embassy also tweeted a State Department statement calling for Navalny's release.

Peskov said the statements "indirectly constitute absolute interference in our internal affairs" and are "direct support for the violation of the law of the Russian Federation, support for unauthorized actions."

The protests attracted thousands of people in Russia's major cities, including an estimated 15,000 in Moscow, and demonstrations occurred in scores of other cities. Peskov, however, dismissed the turnout as insignificant.

"Now many will say that many people came out for the illegal actions. No, few people came out; many people vote for Putin," he said.

The 44-year-old Navalny, Putin's most prominent and persistent foe, was arrested Jan. 17 when he returned to Russia from Germany, where had been recovering from severe nerve-agent poisoning that he blames on the Kremlin and that Russian authorities deny.

Authorities said his five-month stay in Germany violated terms of a suspended sentence that was imposed in a 2014 fraud and money-laundering conviction, which he says is fraudulent and politically motivated.

He is to appear in court on Feb. 2 for a hearing on whether the suspended sentence will be converted to 3 1/2 years in prison.

## **Fourth Zimbabwean Cabinet member dies of COVID-19 in surge**

By FARAI MUTSAKA Associated Press

HARARE, Zimbabwe (AP) — Four Zimbabwean Cabinet ministers have died of COVID-19, three within the past two weeks, highlighting a resurgence of the disease that is sweeping through this southern African country.

President Emmerson Mnangagwa said the coronavirus is reaping a "grim harvest" in the country.

"The pandemic has been indiscriminate. There are no spectators, adjudicators, no holier than thou. No supermen or superwomen. We are all exposed," Mnangagwa said on a nationally televised address.

Mnangagwa presided at the burial of one Cabinet minister last week, shortly after the death of the foreign minister was announced. Then came the death of the transport minister. Several other high-profile politicians and prominent Zimbabweans have also died recently.

The opposition accuses the government of using COVID-19 as a weapon by detaining its members of parliament, officials and other critics in overcrowded jails where the disease is easily transmitted. Critics also accuse the government of neglecting the public hospitals, where many ill with COVID-19 cannot get oxygen needed to survive. Many of the country's elites are treated at expensive private facilities or fly out of the country for health care.

The government says it is doing its best, and that despite the wide political and economic differences, fighting the virus is everyone's war.

Zimbabwe, like many other African countries, initially recorded low numbers of COVID-19 but has recently experienced a spike in cases. There are fears that a new, more infectious variant of the virus came to the country when scores of thousands of Zimbabweans living in South Africa returned home for the holiday season.

The country of 15 million recorded a total of 31,007 cases, including 974 deaths, on Jan. 23, up from the slightly more than 10,000 cases and 277 deaths at the beginning of December, according to government figures.

Zimbabwe's rate of deaths by COVID-19 has doubled recently, with the 7-day rolling average of daily deaths rising over the past two weeks from 0.10 deaths per 100,000 people on Jan. 9 to 0.28 deaths per 100,000 people on Jan. 23, according to Johns Hopkins University.

In poor areas such as Chitungwiza, the sprawling residential area about 30 kilometers (18 miles) south-



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east of Harare, gravediggers are overwhelmed.

"Coronavirus, this is something I used to read about in the news, (but) it is here on our doorsteps now. People are dying," said Coleta Moyana, a Chitungwiza resident. Officials are seeking more burial space to accommodate rising numbers of deaths.

Many people are not being tested, nor are they going to hospitals for help, said a doctors' association, noting that on some days, nearly half of COVID-19 deaths happen outside hospitals.

"Those undiagnosed cases are super-spreading," said the Zimbabwe Senior Hospital Doctors Association earlier this month.

"COVID-19 is affecting everyone, but it is not affecting everyone equally. It has entrenched and exacerbated the extreme inequalities and injustices that existed before the pandemic," Itai Rusike, director of the Harare-based organization, Community Working Group on Health, told The Associated Press on Sunday.

"The majority of poor Zimbabweans without medical insurance end up dying at home," he said.

Zimbabwe has not yet received any vaccines. Mnangagwa on Saturday said the government health officials are still deciding which vaccine to acquire.

"Our experts are very close to finalizing the course to recommend ... and it will be quite soon," he said.

## Spain's virus surge hits mental health of front-line workers

By RENATA BRITO Associated Press

BARCELONA, Spain (AP) — The unrelenting increase in COVID-19 infections in Spain following the holiday season is again straining hospitals, threatening the mental health of doctors and nurses who have been at the forefront of the pandemic for nearly a year.

In Barcelona's Hospital del Mar, the critical care capacity has more than doubled and is nearly full, with 80% of ICU beds occupied by coronavirus patients.

"There are young people of 20-something-years-old and older people of 80-years-old, all the age groups," said Dr. Joan Ramon Masclans, who heads the ICU. "This is very difficult, and it is one patient after another."

Even though authorities allowed gatherings of up to 10 people for Christmas and New Year celebrations, Masclans chose not to join his family and spent the holidays at home with his partner.

"We did it to preserve our health and the health of others. And when you see that this isn't being done (by others) it causes significant anger, added to the fatigue," he said.

A study released this month by Hospital del Mar looking at the impact of the spring's COVID-19 surge on more than 9,000 health workers across Spain found that at least 28% suffered major depression. That is six times higher than the rate in the general population before the pandemic, said Dr. Jordi Alonso, one of the chief researchers.

In addition, the study found that nearly half of participants had a high risk of anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, panic attacks or substance- and alcohol-abuse problems.

Spanish health care workers are far from the only ones to have suffered psychologically from the pandemic. In China, the levels of mental disorders among doctors and nurses were even higher, with 50% reporting depression, 45% reporting anxiety and 34% reporting insomnia, according to the World Health Organization.

In the U.K., a survey released last week by the Royal College of Physicians found that 64% of doctors reported feeling tired or exhausted. One in four sought out mental health support.

"It is pretty awful at the moment in the world of medicine," Dr. Andrew Goddard, president of the Royal College of Physicians, said in a statement accompanying the study. "Hospital admissions are at the highest-ever level, staff are exhausted, and although there is light at the end of the tunnel, that light seems a long way away."

Dr. Aleix Carmona, a third-year anesthesiology resident in Spain's northeastern region of Catalonia, didn't have much ICU experience before the pandemic hit. But as surgeries were cancelled, Carmona was summoned to the ICU at the Moisès Broggi hospital outside Barcelona to fight a virus the world knew very little about.

"In the beginning, we had a lot of adrenaline. We were very frightened but we had a lot of energy," Car-

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mona recalled. He plowed through the first weeks of the pandemic without having much time to process the unprecedented battle that was unfolding.

It wasn't until after the second month that he began feeling the toll of seeing first-hand how people were slowly dying as they ran out of breath. He pondered what to tell patients before intubating them. His initial reaction had always been to reassure them, tell them it would be alright. But in some cases he knew that wasn't true.

"I started having difficulty sleeping and a feeling of anxiety before each shift," Carmona said, adding that he would return home after 12 hours feeling like he had been beaten up.

For a while he could only sleep with the help of medication. Some colleagues started taking anti-depressants and anti-anxiety drugs. What really helped Carmona, though, was a support group at his hospital, where his co-workers unloaded the experiences they had bottled up inside.

But not everyone joined the group. For many, asking for help would make them seem unfit for the job.

"In our profession, we can handle a lot," said David Oliver, a spokesman for the Catalonia chapter of the SATSE union of nurses. "We don't want to take time off because we know we will add to the workload of our colleagues."

The most affected group of health care workers, according to the study, were nurse's aides and nurses, who are overwhelmingly women and often immigrants. They spent more time with dying COVID-19 patients, faced poor working conditions and salaries and feared infecting family members.

Desirée Ruiz is the nurse supervisor at Hospital del Mar's critical care unit. Some nurses on her team have asked to take time off work, unable to cope with the constant stress and all the deaths.

To prevent infections, patients are rarely allowed family visits, adding to their dependency on nurses. Delivering a patient's last wishes or words to relatives on the phone is especially challenging, Ruiz said.

"This is very hard for ... people who are holding the hand of these patients, even though they know they will end up dying," she said.

Ruiz, who organizes the nurses' shifts and makes sure the ICU is always staffed adequately, is finding it harder and harder to do so.

Unlike in the summer, when the number of cases fell and health workers were encouraged to take holidays, doctors and nurses have been working incessantly since the fall, when virus cases picked up again.

The latest resurgence has nearly doubled the number of daily cases seen in November, and Spain now has the third-highest COVID-19 infection rate in Europe and the fourth-highest death toll, with more than 55,400 confirmed fatalities.

But unlike many European countries, including neighboring Portugal, the Spanish health minister has for now ruled out the possibility of a new lockdown, relying instead on less drastic restrictions that aren't as damaging to the economy but take longer to decrease the rate of infections.

Alonso fears the latest surge of virus patients could be as detrimental to the mental health of medical staff as the shock of the pandemic's first months.

"If we want to be cared for adequately, we also need to take care of the health care workers, who have suffered and are still suffering," he said.

Follow AP coverage of the coronavirus pandemic at:

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

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## Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Monday, Jan. 25, the 25th day of 2021. There are 340 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

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On Jan. 25, 1981, the 52 Americans held hostage by Iran for 444 days arrived in the United States.

On this date:

In 1533, England's King Henry VIII secretly married his second wife, Anne Boleyn, who later gave birth to Elizabeth I.

In 1759, Scottish poet Robert Burns was born in Alloway.

In 1915, America's first official transcontinental telephone call took place as Alexander Graham Bell, who was in New York, spoke to his former assistant, Thomas Watson, who was in San Francisco, over a line set up by American Telephone & Telegraph.

In 1924, the first Winter Olympic Games opened in Chamonix (shah-moh-NEE'), France.

In 1945, the World War II Battle of the Bulge ended as German forces were pushed back to their original positions. Grand Rapids, Michigan, became the first community to add fluoride to its public water supply.

In 1947, gangster Al Capone died in Miami Beach, Florida, at age 48.

In 1949, the first Emmy Awards, honoring local Los Angeles TV programs and talent, were presented at the Hollywood Athletic Club.

In 1959, American Airlines began Boeing 707 jet flights between New York and Los Angeles.

In 1971, Idi Amin seized power in Uganda by ousting President Milton Obote (oh-BOH'-tay) in a military coup.

In 2004, NASA's Opportunity rover zipped its first pictures of Mars to Earth, showing a surface smooth and dark red in some places, and strewn with fragmented slabs of light bedrock in others.

In 2017, President Donald Trump moved aggressively to tighten the nation's immigration controls, signing executive actions to jumpstart construction of his promised U.S.-Mexico border wall and cut federal grants for immigrant-protecting "sanctuary cities." Death claimed actor Mary Tyler Moore at age 80 and actor John Hurt at age 77.

In 2019, President Donald Trump's confidant Roger Stone was arrested by the FBI in a pre-dawn raid at his Florida home and charged with lying about his pursuit of Russian-hacked emails damaging to Hillary Clinton's 2016 election bid. (Stone was convicted in November 2019 on charges including lying to Congress and witness tampering; Trump commuted his 40-month prison sentence just days before Stone was due to report to prison in July 2020 and issued Stone a pardon in December of that year.)

Ten years ago: Pleading for unity in a newly divided government, President Barack Obama used his State of the Union address to implore Democrats and Republicans to rally behind his vision of economic revival, declaring: "We will move forward together or not at all." In Egypt, thousands of anti-government protesters clashed with police during a Tunisia-inspired demonstration to demand the end of President Hosni Mubarak's rule. A federal judge in New York sentenced Ahmed Ghailani (guh-LAHN'-ee), the first Guantanamo detainee to have a U.S. civilian trial, to life in prison for conspiring in the bombing of two U.S. embassies in Africa in 1998.

Five years ago: President Barack Obama said he would ban the use of solitary confinement for juvenile and low-level offenders in federal prisons, citing the potential for "devastating, lasting psychological consequences" from the use of the isolation as punishment. A Houston grand jury investigating undercover footage of Planned Parenthood found no wrongdoing by the abortion provider, and instead indicted anti-abortion activists for using fake driver's licenses when making the videos that targeted the handling of fetal tissue in clinics. (The charges were later dropped.)

One year ago: President Donald Trump's defense team opened its arguments at his Senate impeachment trial, casting the effort to remove him from office as a politically-motivated attempt to subvert the 2016 election and the upcoming 2020 contest. Canada, Australia and Malaysia each reported their first cases of the new coronavirus. The virus caused Lunar New Year festivities to be canceled across mainland China. LeBron James of the Los Angeles Lakers moved past former Laker Kobe Bryant for third place on the NBA's career scoring list.

Today's Birthdays: Country singer Claude Gray is 89. Actor Leigh Taylor-Young is 77. Actor Jenifer Lewis is 64. Country musician Mike Burch (River Road) is 55. R&B singer Kina is 52. Actor China Kantner is 50. Actor Ana Ortiz is 50. Drummer Joe Sirois (sih-ROYS') (Mighty Mighty Bosstones) is 49. Musician Matt

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Odmark (OHD'-mark) (Jars of Clay) is 47. Actor Mia Kirshner is 46. Actor Christine Lakin is 42. R&B singer Alicia (ah-LEE'-shuh) Keys is 41. Actor Michael Trevino is 36. Pop musician Calum Hood (5 Seconds to Summer) is 25. Actor Olivia Edward is 14.