

# Groton Daily Independent

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**NOW HIRING**

MJ's Sinclair of Groton is looking for someone to work weekends and nights. Stop out and see Jeff for an application.



**OPEN:** Recycling Trailer in Groton  
The recycling trailer is located west of the city shop. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.

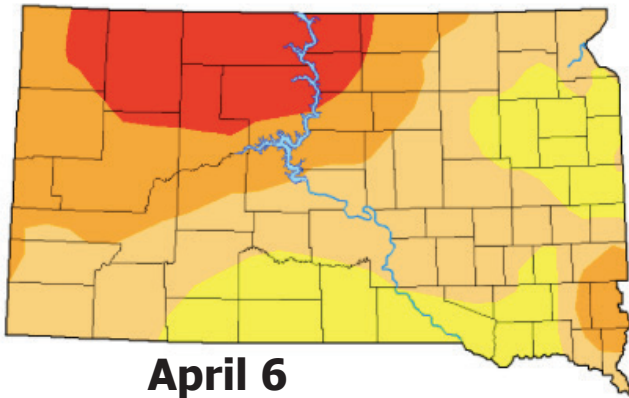
**FREE DATE CHANGES ON 2021 TOURS\***

 <p>FROM \$1,449* \$1,199*</p>	 <p>FROM \$2,599* \$2,349*</p>
<b>ALASKA NORTHERN LIGHTS</b> 7 days, departs Feb - Mar 2022 <b>Anchorage • Talkeetna • Healy (Denali) • Fairbanks</b> — Travel deep into the rugged Alaskan wilderness in pursuit of nature's most spectacular nighttime display. Chase after the vibrant lights of the aurora borealis while you enjoy Alaska's culture, nature, and wildlife.	<b>BEST OF HAWAII FOUR-ISLAND TOUR</b> 12 days, departs year-round <b>Oahu • Hawaii Island • Kauai • Maui</b> — Enjoy a fully guided 4-island Hawaiian vacation with centrally located lodging in Waikiki on Oahu, and beachfront lodging on the "Big Island" of Hawaii, Kauai, and Maui. Guided throughout by our friendly Tour Directors—your local experts. Includes 3 inter-island flights.

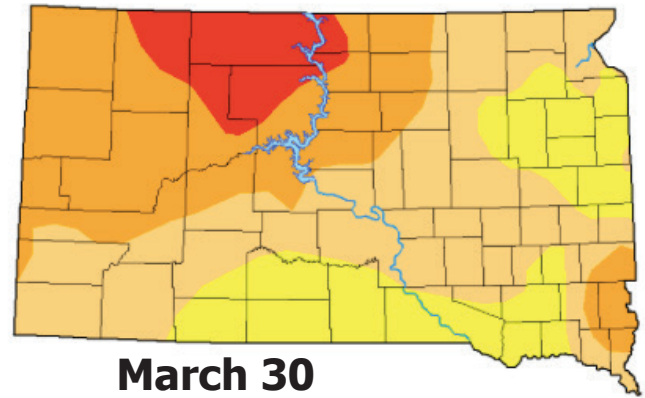
**VMT vacations** promo code **N7017** **CALL 1-844-962-4142**

\* Free date changes anytime up to 45 days prior to departure for land tours, up to 95 days prior to departure for cruise tours. Deposits and final payments remain non-refundable. Prices are per person based on double occupancy plus \$29 in taxes & fees. Single supplement and seasonal surcharges may apply. Add-on airfare available. Offers apply to new bookings only, made by 6/30/21. Other terms & conditions may apply. Ask your Travel Consultant for details.

## Drought Monitor



**April 6**



**March 30**

### High Plains

High temperatures in Nebraska and the Dakotas reached the upper 70s to mid-80s last week. With values of about 20 to 30 degrees above normal, many locations set daily records. These warm temperatures combined with low relative humidity and gusty winds to increase fire danger across the region. North and South Dakota declared fire emergencies due to ongoing drought conditions and increased wildfire activity. Severe (D2) and extreme (D3) drought expanded in both states as precipitation deficits continued to grow and increased evaporative demand dried out soils and stressed vegetation. USDA reports that, as of April 4, 92% of North Dakota's topsoil and 68% of South Dakota's topsoil was rated short to very short, indicating that soil moisture supplies are significantly less than what is required for normal crop growth development. In North Dakota, county Extension agents report that producers are starting to de-stock livestock herds by culling cows and grain farmers are very concerned about the lack of moisture. Photos show soil drift due to the dry conditions and high winds.



*Dale Kurth is turning 80!*

**April 11th is the day...so let's  
get some cards sent his way!!**

**Please send cards too:**

**Dale Kurth**

**41122 119th Street**

**Claremont, SD 57432**



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## The Friendship between Arthur C. Mellette and Samuel Elrod

South Dakota might have had a different fifth governor if not for its first governor.

In 1882, Samuel Elrod of Indiana was looking for a place to start his law practice after earning his law degree from Asbury College in Greencastle, Ind., now known as DePauw University.

He wrote Arthur C. Mellette, a member of the same college fraternity and also a native of Indiana, about the opportunities for a young attorney in Dakota Territory. Mellette, his wife Maggie and their four sons had arrived in Springfield, Dakota Territory, in 1878, seeking a better climate for Maggie's health. Mellette served as registrar of the United States Land Office until it was moved to Watertown in 1880. The Mellette family also moved to Watertown, where Arthur soon became a prosperous attorney and leading citizen.

Mellette encouraged Elrod to come to Dakota Territory and invited him to come to Watertown and stay with the Mellettes.

Elrod arrived in Watertown on July 2, 1882, according to John Timm of Sioux Falls, who has written about the Mellettes and portrayed Mellette in living history re-enactments.

Mellette met Elrod at the train depot, and they spent the afternoon getting acquainted.

Two days later, the nearby town of Clark celebrated the arrival of the first passenger train to that community as well as the first Independence Day of the town's existence. One of the speakers at the festivities was Elrod, who was substituting for Mellette.

Elrod decided to establish a law practice in Clark.

According to a manuscript written by Maggie Mellette, the Mellettes received a letter from Elrod saying he was not well.

"As it was his first winter in Dakota, we thought him homesick, so we sent for him to come over to spend a few days with us. Each day he grew worse and the doctor pronounced it typhoid fever. A nurse was not to be had and there was not a house in town to which he could be sent. Duty was plain, the sick man must be cared for," Maggie wrote.

To safeguard her own health, Maggie took a train back to Indiana for a visit.

"Mr. Mellette was installed as nurse. In a week a telegram brought Mr. Elrod's father and together they brought the sick man back to life," Maggie wrote.

Elrod's father took him back to Indiana, where he made a complete recovery, according to Timm. There, several law firms in Indianapolis invited Elrod to join them, but he declined them all in favor of returning to Clark. Before leaving Indiana, Elrod proposed marriage to Mary Ellen Masten and she accepted. Elrod then left for Dakota Territory, but returned to Indiana in the fall of 1884 and married Mary Ellen on Nov. 11, 1884. They returned to Clark to begin their married life. They had two children: a daughter, Barbara, and a son, Arthur Mellette Elrod.

"Elrod always credited Mellette with saving his life. He named his son after Mellette," Timm said.

SOUTH DAKOTA  
  
HISTORY & HERITAGE



**Arthur C. Mellette (right photo) saved Samuel Elrod's (left photo) life. A slightly different account of Arthur becoming ill and Mellette nursing him back to health is contained in "Over a Century of Leadership" by Lynwood E. Oyos. That version was told by one of the Mellettes' sons. However, John Timm, who has told the story in re-enactments of Mellette, draws on version written by Maggie Mellette. This document is used as the basis of the story about Elrod's bout with typhoid.**

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Mellette went on to be appointed the last governor of Dakota Territory and was elected the first governor of South Dakota, in office from 1889 to 1893. He died on May 25, 1896.

Elrod was elected South Dakota's fifth governor, serving from 1905-1907. During his term as governor, Elrod initiated construction of the Capitol building in Pierre and acquired land in Huron to serve as the permanent fairgrounds for the South Dakota State Fair. He adopted more aggressive railroad regulations, enacted reforms at the state penitentiary and limited state expenditures.

Elrod and members of the Mellette family maintained contact with each other after Arthur's death.

The South Dakota State Historical Society – State Archives contains correspondence Elrod wrote to members of the Mellette family. In a letter dated Oct. 24, 1926, Elrod updated Maggie Mellette about his family. Daughter Barbara was married and living in Vermillion. Son Arthur saw service in France during World War I and was diagnosed with tuberculosis of the spine after returning home. Arthur joined his father in practicing law in Clark. Elrod's wife, Mary Ellen, was not in good health.

"She often talks about you and your kindnesses to us," Elrod wrote.

Other letters tell of meeting the Mellettes' son, Charley, and Charley's daughter, at the 1928 Republican National Convention in Kansas City, Mo., and expressed sorrow at the death of the youngest Mellette son, Joshua Theodore Richard, nicknamed Dick, in 1929.

"I have never forgotten you and yours," Elrod stated in one letter to Maggie.

Elrod died on July 13, 1935.

This moment in South Dakota history is provided by the South Dakota Historical Society Foundation, the nonprofit fundraising partner of the South Dakota State Historical Society at the Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre. Find us on the web at [www.sdhsf.org](http://www.sdhsf.org). Contact us at [info@sdhsf.org](mailto:info@sdhsf.org) to submit a story idea.



**Weber  
Landscaping  
Greenhouse  
opening this  
Spring!**



**We will have a full greenhouse of beautiful  
annuals and vegetables.**

**Opening First Week of May!**

**Located behind 204 N State St, Groton  
(Look for the flags)**

**LET US HELP YOU BRIGHTEN  
UP YOUR YARD!**

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**#411 in a series**

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

Yes, we're officially in the soup. This is not looking good at all. Having passed 31 million yesterday, we're now up to 31,093,900 total cases in the US, which is 0.3% more than yesterday. Our rate of increase is up, as well as our raw numbers. There were 83,100 new case reports today. We haven't had a new-case number this high since February 13, which was 55 days ago. Hospitalizations are up too and now sit at 43,904. There were 977 deaths reported today, so at least this is sitting below 1000 pretty reliably from day to day. Total deaths are now up to 560,427, which is 0.2% more than yesterday.

April 9, 2020, one year ago today, was the 100th day since the WHO had been informed about the first cases in this disease outbreak. We in the US had 463,394 cases and 16,688 deaths. Overall rates of increase in new cases continued below 10 percent. Schools were closed to the end of the year in 14 states with three more states recommending closure. We had our first talk here about protein structure and mutation on this day. If you missed that and you're curious, have a look at my Update #46 at <https://www.facebook.com/marie.schwabmiller/posts/3496698997013148>.

We were so heart-breakingly hopeful at this point: The projections for total deaths from the pandemic had dropped from talk of 100,000 to 200,000 all the way down to 60,000. I saw a headline speculating whether we would be able to take summer vacations—in 2020, not 2021. Now, a year on, we're wondering whether we'll be able to take vacations this summer. There were signs all was not well, but we were missing those: increasing case rates in prisons, terrible inequities in disease burden in our population, desperate shortages of contact tracers and money to pay them, New York modifying its regulations to permit funeral directors from other states to practice in the state, serious shortages of PPE for health care workers, still not enough testing, New Jersey with nearly twice as many deaths on this day as the entire country did today—a year later. And for the first time in history we were about to have all 50 states under federal disaster declarations simultaneously. That is simply breath-taking.

Worldwide, we had 1,512,439 cases and 88,145 deaths. After the US, countries with the most cases were Spain with 147,000, Italy with 139,000, France with 114,000, and Germany with 110,000, with China where it all started bumped all the way down to sixth place at 83,000. On the other hand, New Zealand had reported 1239 cases and a single death. They were also tightening up restrictions while so many places with thousands and thousands of deaths were relaxing them even as case counts rose. I know it's undoubtedly easier when you're an island, but still in retrospect, it's easy to see who had that right. We were getting the word from scientists doing genomic studies on the virus that it was not introduced to the country at one time in one place—generally believed to be late January and Seattle—but at several times and in several places, also that it came from Europe to the East Coast while it came from Asia to the West Coast.

It wasn't even two weeks ago that we heard Pfizer/BioNTech were announcing excellent results from their pediatric vaccine trial for ages 12 to 15—it's already authorized down to the age of 16. Well, they were quick: They submitted their request for amendment to their emergency use authorization (EUA) to expand use down to the age of 12. They indicated today they will be making similar requests to other regulatory agencies in other countries. They said in their announcement the vaccine "demonstrated 100 percent efficacy and robust antibody response after vaccination." That's amazing! I'm not sure how the process for an amendment differs from the process for the initial EUA. If I had to guess, I'd say this will travel pretty much the same path: first to FDA scientists for data analysis, then to the Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee of the FDA, then to the acting commissioner. If she issues the amendment to the EUA, then I'd guess this will pass to the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices for labeling and such. And then we could start vaccinating younger children, which would be a very good thing. I'm not sure when the FDA's advisory committee is scheduled to meet next; if I recall correctly, advance public notice is required. In December when we had two vaccines coming close, they simply scheduled in advance so that they'd be ready whenever an application was ready for their consideration. I don't know whether that's still happening. I would think it won't be too long before this matter

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is in their hands. We'll keep watching for news.

Last night, Inovio's first clinical trials which started just a year ago came up, and I started wondering what had happened to their candidate because I've heard little about it since those early months. As a result, I went hunting today for news, and here's what I have. For starters, this is a DNA vaccine like the Janssen/Johnson & Johnson and the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccines, but it has a very different method for getting that DNA into our cells so that those cells make spike protein to elicit an immune response. Those vaccines use a nonreplicating form of a harmless adenovirus, essentially a cold virus neutered so it can't give you a cold. These viruses make their way into your cells, as viruses do, and then put their DNA into your cell's nucleus so that, when your cell starts the protein production process, that DNA will get read right along with your cell's DNA. Your cell makes viral protein, you have an immune response to that viral protein, and you know the rest of the story. This Inovio candidate has the same goal—getting its viral DNA payload into your cell so it is transcribed for protein production, but the vector for getting it in there is this thing called a plasmid.

Plasmids are interesting little things—small, ring-shaped, independently replicating pieces of DNA sort of free-floating through a cell. Normally, loose pieces of DNA floating loose get degraded pretty rapidly inside a cell, but plasmids do not: they're durable—and they replicate independently too, which is very handy when you're crafting a vaccine. We mostly see plasmids in bacterial cells, but occasionally the cells of more complex organisms have them too and they operate in the same way in those organisms. In nature, plasmids usually carry genes that benefit the owner, so nature favors these genes getting expressed. Because plasmids are transcribed for protein synthesis, they can induce their host cells to pump out large quantities of the protein they code. Which is, when you think about it, perfect for a vaccine.

Inovio is engineering optimized DNA that codes for spike protein into plasmids. One of the challenges with nucleic acid (RNA or DNA) vaccines is getting the patient's cells to accept the genetic material in the vaccines. The twist here is that, instead of delivering the vaccine with a needle, they have a proprietary device called CELLECTRA, which provides a few short pulses of electrical energy to reversibly open small pores in the dermal cell membranes to deliver the vaccine directly into those cells in a process called electrocorporation. (For the record, it appears this is not a painless process; nine out of 10 subjects experienced mild to moderate pain, tenderness, and swelling at the injection site. In fact, the inflammatory response that accompanies electrocorporation seems, according to researchers at Inovio and the University of Pennsylvania division of Infectious Disease, to stimulate "inflammatory chemokines and cytokines and recruitment of monocytes, lymphocytes and antigen-presenting cells," which augment both cell-mediated and humoral immune responses. Bottom line: Your arm hurts.) Plasmid DNA (pDNA) is cheap, stable, and safe, so we don't have the storage issues we've seen with the mRNA vaccines. From there, we know what those cells will do.

Early-stage trials, the ones that commenced a year ago, showed that the candidate induced neutralizing antibodies that blocked S-protein binding to ACE2 receptors. That's what we need to see because this blocks infection. Then in September, the FDA put a hold on the trial due to "additional questions" regarding the delivery device, that CELLECTRA unit that delivers the electrical pulses. I'm not sure what that represents, and I can't find much on this, but whatever it was, the FDA has given the go-ahead for phase 2, and that is underway. It should be finished up this month, and phase 3 trials are expected to commence with FDA approval, if all goes well, in the second quarter of this year. Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) probably won't happen until late in the year. Even though the US is quite likely to have enough doses by then, there is plenty of room for more vaccines and they're pressing forward with trials.

Additionally, Inovio is working on the next-generation vaccine, one tailored to the new variants. They are using artificial intelligence to predict new variants as well as incorporate the current ones; according to Kat Broderick, who leads vaccine development for the company, "combining bits of genetic code from multiple variants and using predictive AI, the company hopes to create what it's calling a 'pan-variant vaccine.'" Bottom line: They are hoping to head off any newly-developing variants at the pass using technology to identify them before they show up. If this works, their second-generation vaccine would hold off emerging variants well into the future.



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We should probably note that there have been many vaccines in the pipeline: 165 having been developed and 28 that have been at some stage in clinical trials. They're not all going to pan out, but this is an extraordinary effort in service of dealing with this virus. It's still difficult to grasp how extraordinarily lucky we were to have so many of the first-out-of-the-gate turn out to be highly effective. As scary as things are at the moment, I hate to think where we'd be if we were looking at a vaccine which is 50 percent effective or doesn't work in old people or only one vaccine so that supplies are maybe half the current levels.

Ryan Riley was just 20 when his mom died of lung cancer. He had been her caregiver at the end of her life, and he told the Washington Post, "[I]t was a very traumatic and awful time. Through that period, I saw it wasn't just the treatment that was impacting her quality of life; it was also that she wasn't enjoying food and lost her appetite." Apparently one side effect of many chemotherapy drugs is that you lose your sense of taste, and to a guy who "grew up" to be a chef, that must have been very difficult to watch in a beloved parent—so much so that he became determined to help other people with the problem.

That's why in 2019 with partner, childhood friend, and fellow chef, Kimberley Duke, he opened Life Kitchen, a free cooking school for cancer patients. Since Duke had lost a parent in a similar way, she was as committed to the cause as Riley. They raised money to support their effort, and they focused on teaching recipes that would return some pleasure to eating for these folks. Their website says, "Using our five principles of taste and flavour—umami, smell, stimulating the trigeminal nerve (responsible for sensation in the face), texture, and layering flavour—we've taught over 1,000 people with cancer to enjoy food again." There's a link to read more about the science as well. So they're running a free cooking school just to help people with cancer enjoy the pleasures of the table again.

That left them well-positioned, when the fairly common (about two-thirds of patients) Covid-19 symptoms turned up involving loss of the senses of taste and smell, to offer something to a wider audience. Working with Barry Smith, co-director of the Center for the Study of the Senses at the University of London, who has been focusing on study of the sensory changes seen in Covid-19 patients, they learned more. There are three kinds of problems that might turn up. One is parosmia, where foods smell like something else, often something offensive; another is anosmia, where you can't smell anything or your sense of smell is dulled; and then there is phantosmia, where you smell things that aren't actually there. Since around 80 percent of taste is actually derived from the sense of smell, your sense of taste is almost as affected as your sense of smell by these problems. Parosmia is a particular problem because foods you love can smell disgusting—like sewer or rotting meat or such. Smith told the Post foods commonly affected are coffee, chocolate, browning meats, garlic and onions, and eggs, also toothpaste for some. Sweets often smell just fine, so it would be pretty easy to default to a really terrible diet. Smith has found people with sensory loss often can pick up a bit of some flavors like salt, lemon, and sugar. Some foods rich in what scientists call umami—a rich, meaty flavor—like soy sauce and aged cheeses—might not be tasted themselves, but they can boost other flavors and also activate saliva which helps with overall tasting. Some of this science is explained on the Life Kitchen website.

These chefs took all of this sort of information in and looked at their recipes specifically to find those which call forth whatever lingering nerve fibers might convey sensory information to the brain. They steered away from ingredients most likely to give trouble like onions and garlic or roasted meats, and they focus on umami and texture, bright colors, and acidic flavors. The colors are important because visuals actually stimulate appetite—which you know from seeing beautiful foods in advertisements or on their way to another table in a restaurant. The textures are to lean on a kind of interest to the eating experience that is still there—unaffected by Covid-19. The umami boosts other flavors, perhaps to the point where the patient can detect them. And the acid and spice stimulate the trigeminal nerve, which collaborates with the olfactory nerve to send sensory information to the brain.

But they didn't limit their impact to the small city in England where they grew up and now have Life Kitchen; they decided to aim for a little broader effect. Starting with some 300 recipes, they narrowed their list based on the principles they've relied on in their teaching and what they've learned about Covid-19 patients. Then they enlisted the help of those patients, giving them recipes to test and money to buy the

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ingredients. The testers provided feedback they used to pare their dishes down to the best of the best. The result is a very short cookbook, "Taste and Flavour," with 17 recipes intended to help reawaken the lost senses and give some pleasure from texture and appearance even before anything reawakens at all. Patients reported getting hints of this and that, more and more as time went on. They also report the recipes are simple, not complex or fancy cooking, and quick to prepare.

If you were struggling to regain these senses, you would probably be pleased to find this cookbook, and you likely wouldn't mind paying a little extra for it, considering these folks run a free cooking school for cancer patients. Which means you'd be quite surprised to go to their website ([lifekitchen.co.uk](http://lifekitchen.co.uk)) and discover the cost for the cookbook is £0.00. In case you're not up on international currency conversions, that would be, in US dollars, \$0.00. Yep, it's free as a digital download and comes as a pdf file. There is an option to make a donation; but it's unobtrusive, and it's clear the cookbook is available without cost.

You had to know I was going to have a look, right? I downloaded a copy. This is a beautiful cookbook: gorgeous photos, lots of information, plenty of suggestions for substitutions if this or that ingredient doesn't work for you. A lovely forward by Dr. Smith. And the recipes look good; in fact they look really good. Lots of spicy, sharp, bright, rich, tangy, salty flavors, but no burn-your-tonsils spice, more the kind of thing that would spark your taste buds. Plenty of textural contrast. Striking colors and appearance. My sense of smell is just fine, and I'm pretty sure I would like to try several of these: maybe the pineapple tacos, for example. Or these really appealing "Preserved lemon, feta and za'atar twists," a breadstick sort of thing with some great flavors. Maybe the nachos too.

If you know someone struggling with this problem, point them in these folks' direction, won't you? Word on the street is that these recipes help. Knowing there are people doing this kind of work not to get rich and famous, but just to do good in the world—well, that helps too.

Take care. We'll talk again.

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County	Total Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Persons	Deceased Among Cases	Community Spread	% PCR Test Positivity Rate (Weekly)
Aurora	461	440	908	15	Minimal	9.5%
Beadle	2888	2809	6229	40	Substantial	8.5%
Bennett	387	378	1217	9	Minimal	11.8%
Bon Homme	1516	1481	2193	27	Moderate	3.1%
Brookings	3958	3759	12907	37	Substantial	8.3%
Brown	5376	5192	13449	91	Substantial	9.4%
Brule	700	688	1955	9	Minimal	2.0%
Buffalo	423	408	914	13	Minimal	0.0%
Butte	1016	988	3397	20	Minimal	6.6%
Campbell	130	126	270	4	None	0.0%
Charles Mix	1356	1304	4175	21	Substantial	5.8%
Clark	432	403	993	5	Substantial	19.2%
Clay	1879	1845	5749	15	Substantial	3.9%
Codington	4274	4113	10201	80	Substantial	8.8%
Corson	476	464	1036	12	Minimal	6.7%
Custer	803	768	2840	12	Moderate	14.8%
Davison	3150	3016	6978	66	Substantial	13.2%
Day	682	646	1896	29	Minimal	5.4%
Deuel	498	484	1208	8	Moderate	19.4%
Dewey	1443	1411	3964	26	Minimal	5.0%
Douglas	450	433	969	9	Moderate	11.8%
Edmunds	497	476	1110	13	Minimal	5.6%
Fall River	573	546	2782	15	Moderate	3.5%
Faulk	365	351	722	13	Minimal	0.0%
Grant	1016	960	2397	42	Moderate	5.7%
Gregory	574	537	1360	30	Moderate	6.9%
Haakon	261	250	567	10	None	0.0%
Hamlin	765	703	1899	39	Moderate	16.7%
Hand	355	348	871	6	None	0.0%
Hanson	381	373	780	4	Minimal	10.5%
Harding	94	93	196	1	None	0.0%
Hughes	2404	2324	6936	37	Substantial	5.1%
Hutchinson	863	795	2527	26	Substantial	13.8%



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Hyde	140	138	440	1	Minimal	7.1%
Jackson	285	270	944	14	Minimal	0.0%
Jerauld	273	257	587	16	None	0.0%
Jones	93	92	244	0	Minimal	0.0%
Kingsbury	776	705	1779	14	Substantial	25.8%
Lake	1329	1265	3629	18	Substantial	3.7%
Lawrence	2915	2839	8895	45	Moderate	5.9%
Lincoln	8388	8085	21500	77	Substantial	10.1%
Lyman	628	611	1963	11	Moderate	3.8%
Marshall	364	358	1277	6	Minimal	0.0%
McCook	797	761	1760	24	Substantial	17.5%
McPherson	243	236	595	4	Minimal	0.0%
Meade	2714	2651	8079	31	Moderate	7.0%
Mellette	255	252	780	2	Minimal	3.3%
Miner	295	280	612	9	Moderate	18.8%
Minnehaha	30370	29106	83287	348	Substantial	12.2%
Moody	629	607	1841	17	Minimal	1.3%
Oglala Lakota	2092	2034	6877	49	Moderate	3.6%
Pennington	13357	13019	41193	191	Moderate	6.1%
Perkins	353	337	849	14	Minimal	0.0%
Potter	387	382	878	4	Minimal	3.3%
Roberts	1329	1267	4388	38	Substantial	8.4%
Sanborn	340	333	726	3	Minimal	9.5%
Spink	829	795	2224	26	Minimal	4.5%
Stanley	339	337	993	2	Minimal	0.0%
Sully	138	133	333	3	Minimal	20.0%
Todd	1219	1189	4292	29	Minimal	0.7%
Tripp	747	715	1553	17	Moderate	23.8%
Turner	1142	1072	2870	55	Substantial	12.2%
Union	2182	2082	6706	41	Substantial	14.3%
Walworth	757	730	1894	16	Moderate	9.1%
Yankton	2975	2875	9833	28	Substantial	7.0%
Ziebach	341	331	893	9	Minimal	3.2%
Unassigned	0	0	1905	0		

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New  
Confirmed  
Cases

194

New  
Probable  
Cases

76

Active Cases

2,465

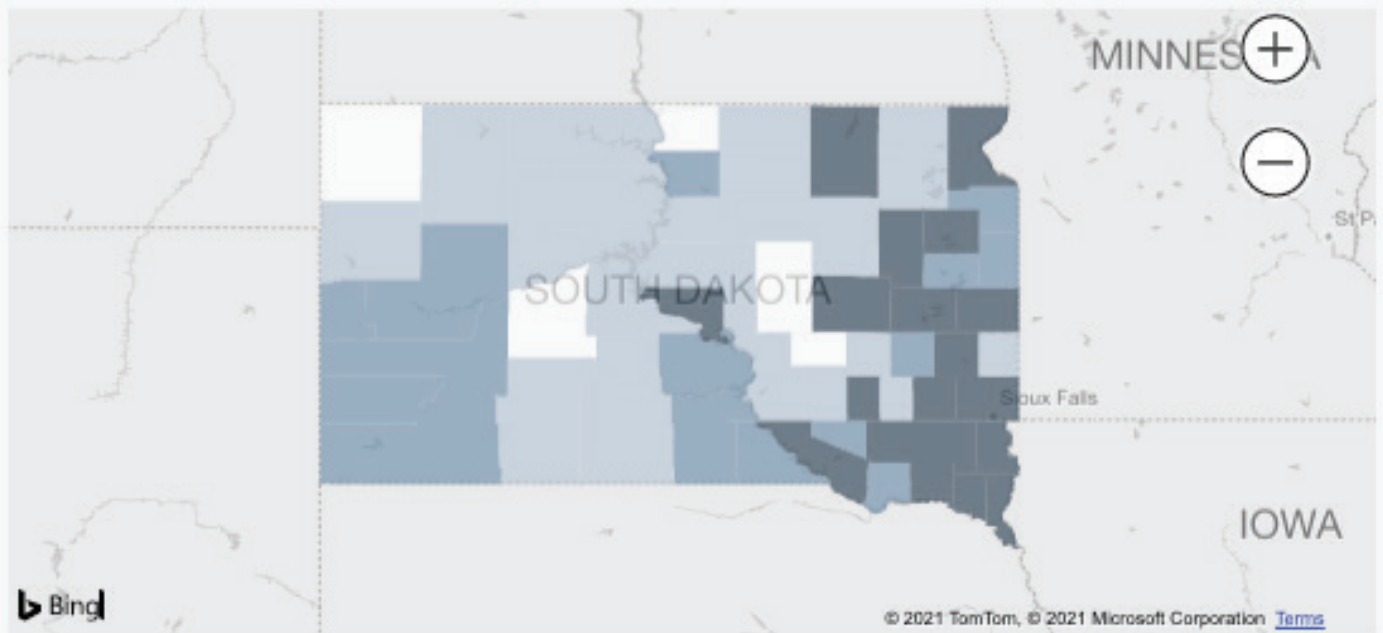
Recovered  
Cases

115,056

Currently  
Hospitalized

97

## Community Spread Map by County of Residence



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

Total  
Confirmed  
Cases

105,221

Total  
Probable  
Cases

14,246

PCR Test  
Positivity  
Rate, Last 1 D...

8.0%

Total  
Persons  
Tested

451,681

Total Tests

1,098,408

Ever  
Hospitalized

7,106

Deaths  
Among  
Cases

1,946

% Progress  
(February Goal:  
44233 Tests)

215%

% Progress  
(March Goal:  
44233 Tests)

226%

% Progress  
(April Goal:  
44233 Tests)

58%

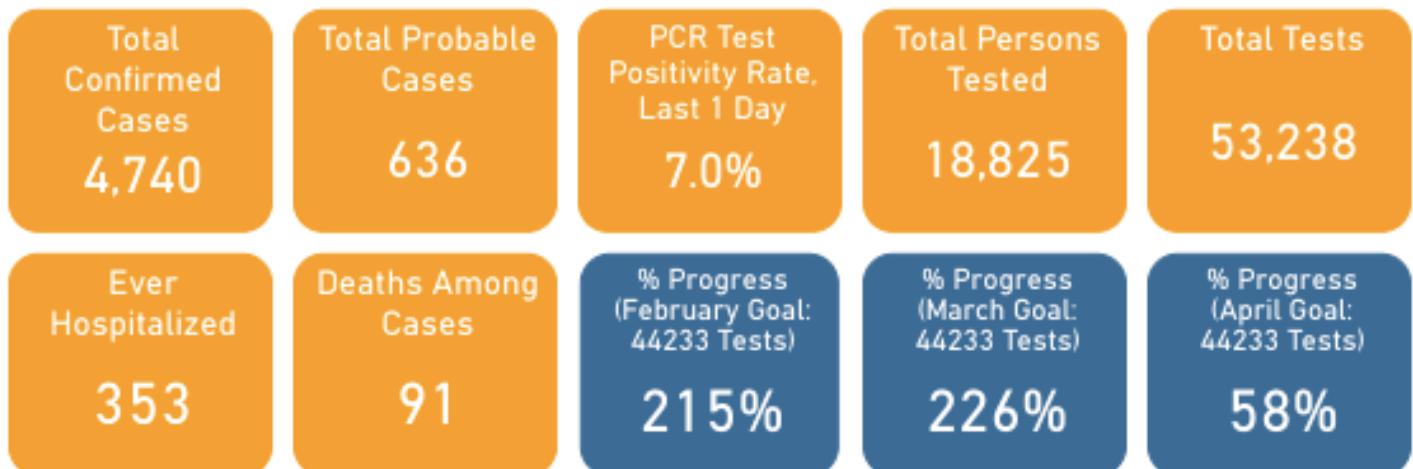
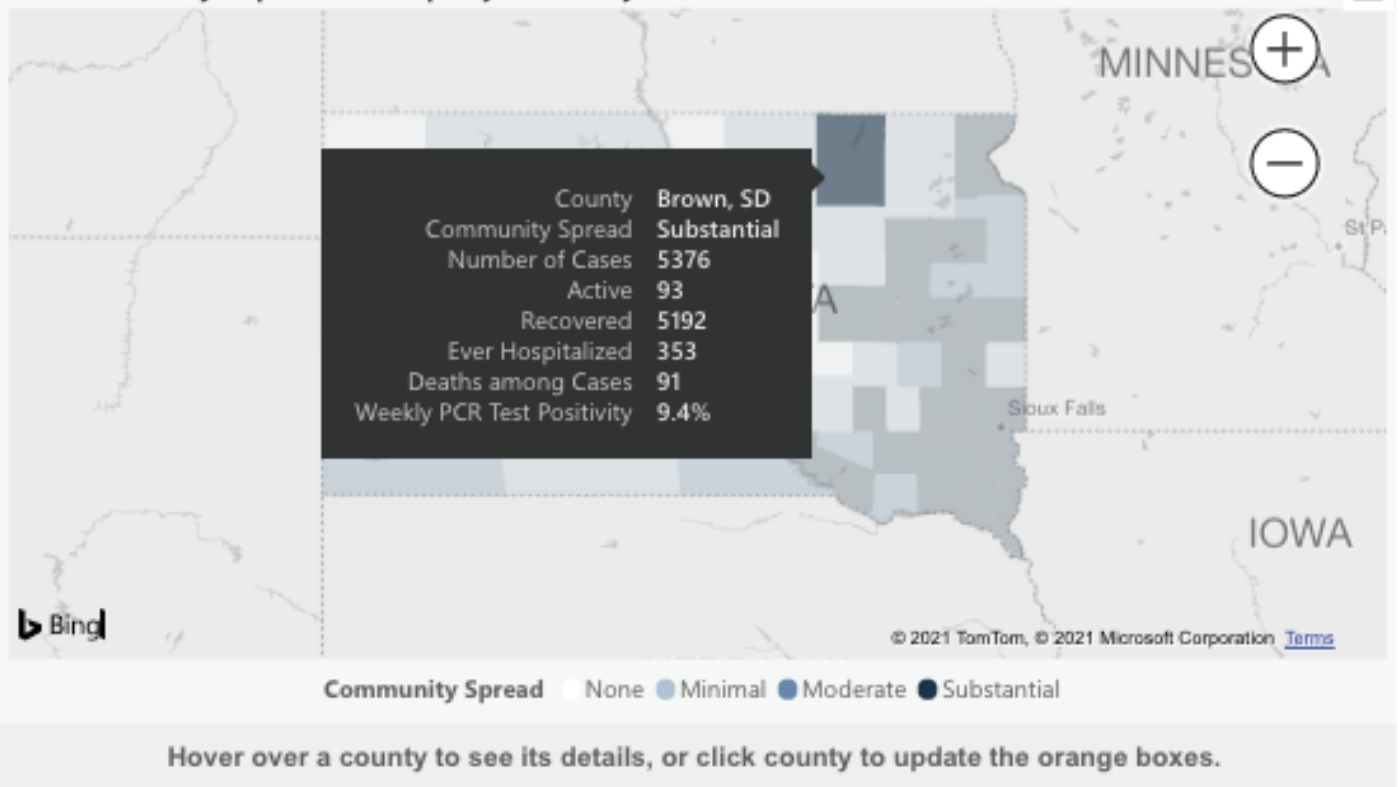
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## Brown County



### Community Spread Map by County of Residence





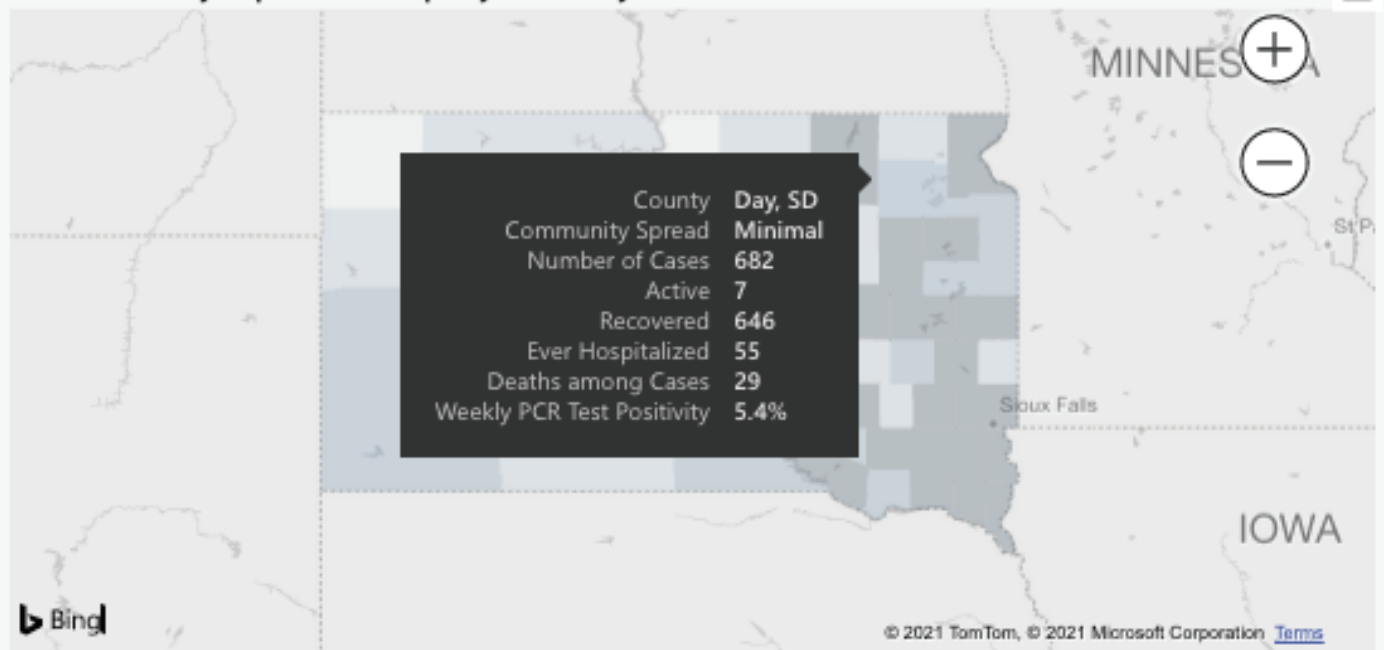
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## Day County

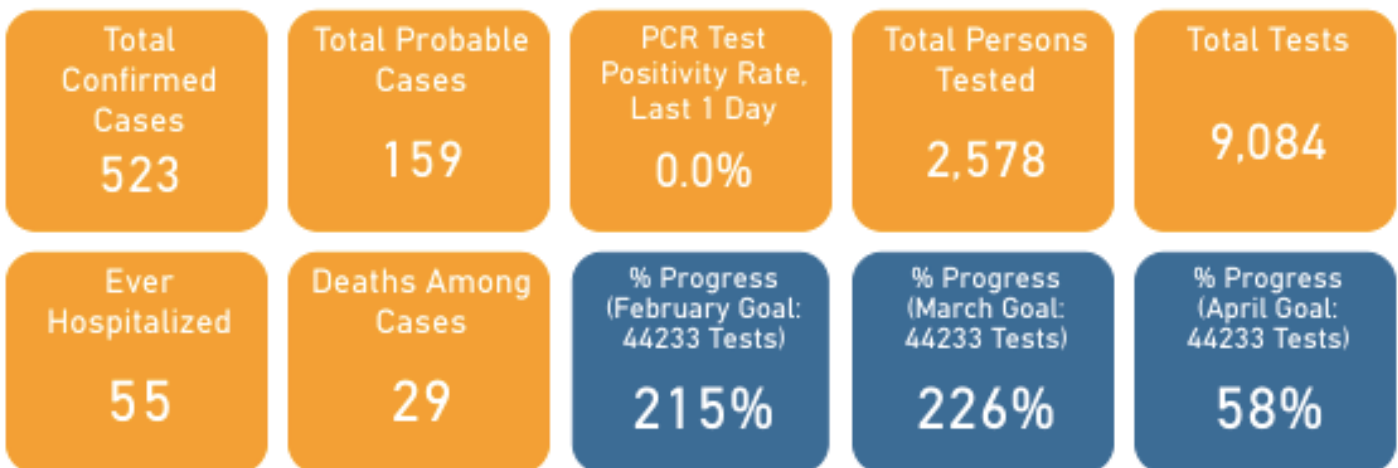


### Community Spread Map by County of Residence



Community Spread: None (white), Minimal (light blue), Moderate (medium blue), Substantial (dark blue)

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



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County	# Doses	# Persons (1 dose)	# Persons (2 doses)	Total # Persons
Aurora	1,483	437	523	960
Beadle	10,222	2,409	3,906	6,315
Bennett <sup>*</sup>	653	123	265	388
Bon Homme <sup>*</sup>	4,904	632	2,136	2,768
Brookings	16,796	5,536	5,630	11,166
Brown	23,370	5,254	9,058	14,312
Brule <sup>*</sup>	2,485	445	1,020	1,465
Buffalo <sup>*</sup>	162	82	40	122
Butte	3,480	838	1,321	2,159
Campbell	1,377	165	606	771
Charles Mix <sup>*</sup>	4,437	989	1,724	2,713
Clark	1,921	573	674	1,247
Clay	8,400	2,210	3,095	5,305
Codington <sup>*</sup>	15,134	4,152	5,491	9,643
Corson <sup>*</sup>	414	38	188	226
Custer <sup>*</sup>	4,240	742	1,749	2,491
Davison	12,230	3,236	4,497	7,733
Day <sup>*</sup>	3,740	790	1,475	2,265
Deuel	2,282	540	871	1,411
Dewey <sup>*</sup>	473	65	204	269
Douglas <sup>*</sup>	1,763	355	704	1,059
Edmunds	2,154	384	885	1,269
Fall River <sup>*</sup>	3,557	477	1,540	2,017
Faulk	1,577	319	629	948
Grant <sup>*</sup>	4,490	784	1,853	2,637
Gregory <sup>*</sup>	2,474	384	1,045	1,429
Haakon <sup>*</sup>	731	97	317	414
Hamlin	2,674	742	966	1,708
Hand	2,168	428	870	1,298
Hanson	851	257	297	554
Harding	196	50	73	123
Hughes <sup>*</sup>	12,003	2,433	4,785	7,218
Hutchinson <sup>*</sup>	5,201	1,052	2,074	3,126

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Hyde*	750	118	316	434
Jackson*	549	95	227	322
Jerauld	1,344	230	557	787
Jones*	886	126	380	506
Kingsbury	3,800	976	1,412	2,388
Lake	6,750	1,788	2,481	4,269
Lawrence	13,046	3,108	4,969	8,077
Lincoln	38,537	7,772	15,382	23,154
Lyman*	1,165	249	458	707
Marshall*	2,763	861	951	1,812
McCook	3,333	841	1,246	2,087
McPherson	391	85	153	238
Meade*	9,497	1,797	3,850	5,647
Mellette*	67	7	30	37
Miner	1,330	286	522	808
Minnehaha*	124,770	26,999	48,883	75,882
Moody*	2,796	564	1,116	1,680
Oglala Lakota*	240	48	96	144
Pennington*	53,923	9,159	22,382	31,541
Perkins*	1,039	103	468	571
Potter	1,452	334	559	893
Roberts*	5,880	880	2,500	3,380
Sanborn	1,552	384	584	968
Spink	4,361	777	1,792	2,569
Stanley*	1,787	323	732	1,055
Sully	594	130	232	362
Todd*	231	49	91	140
Tripp*	2,801	429	1,186	1,615
Turner	5,069	917	2,076	2,993
Union	5,358	1,560	1,899	3,459
Walworth*	2,620	314	1,153	1,467
Yankton	14,784	2,788	5,998	8,786
Ziebach*	78	16	31	47
Other	9,516	2,898	3,309	6,207



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Total Doses Administered\*

481,101

Total Persons Administered a Vaccine\*

292,561

Percent of State Population with at least 1 Dose\*\*

49%

Manufacturer	# of Doses
Janssen	12,556
Moderna	220,723
Pfizer	247,822

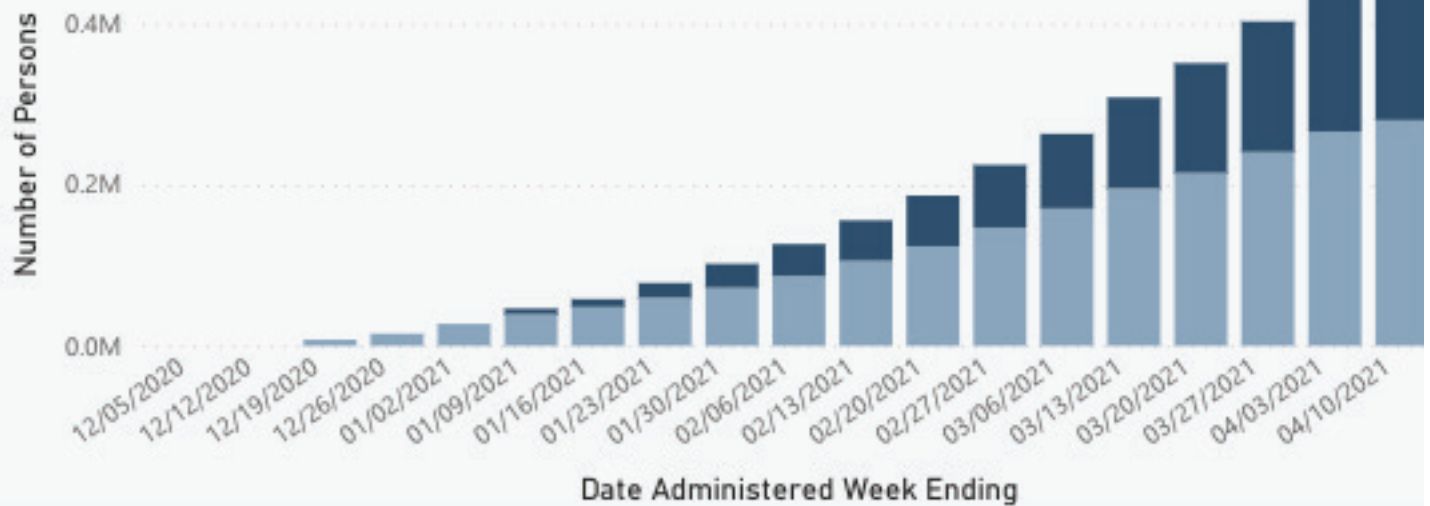
Doses	# of Recipients
Janssen - Series Complete	12,556
Moderna - 1 dose	42,073
Moderna - Series Complete	89,325
Pfizer - 1 dose	49,408
Pfizer - Series Complete	99,207

Doses	% of Pop.
1 dose	48.84%
Series Complete	33.84%

Based on 2019 Census Estimate for those aged 16+ years.

Cumulative Number of Persons Vaccinated by Week

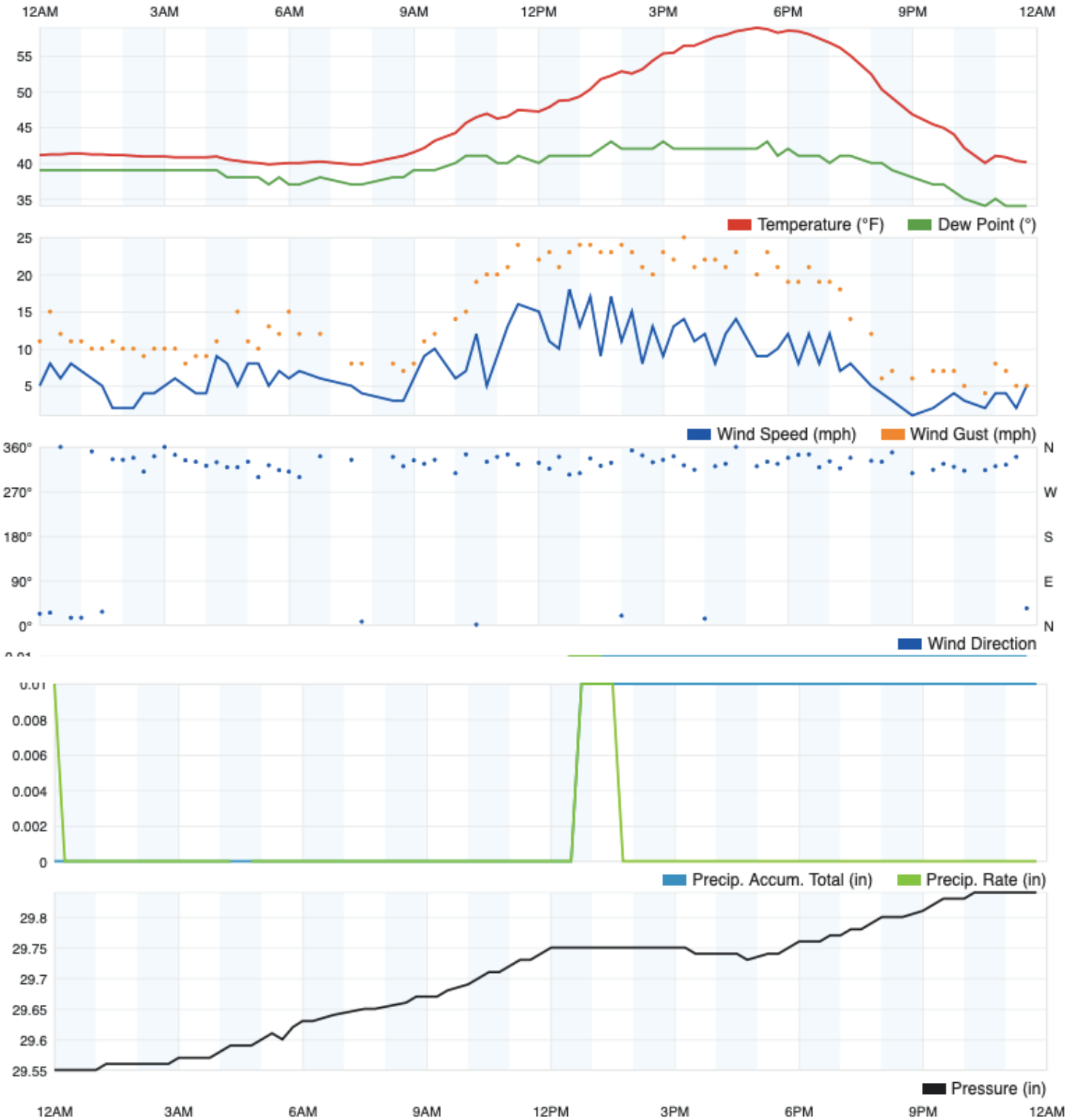
Dose ● 1 dose ● Series Complete



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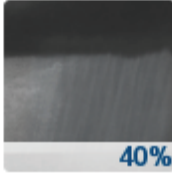

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

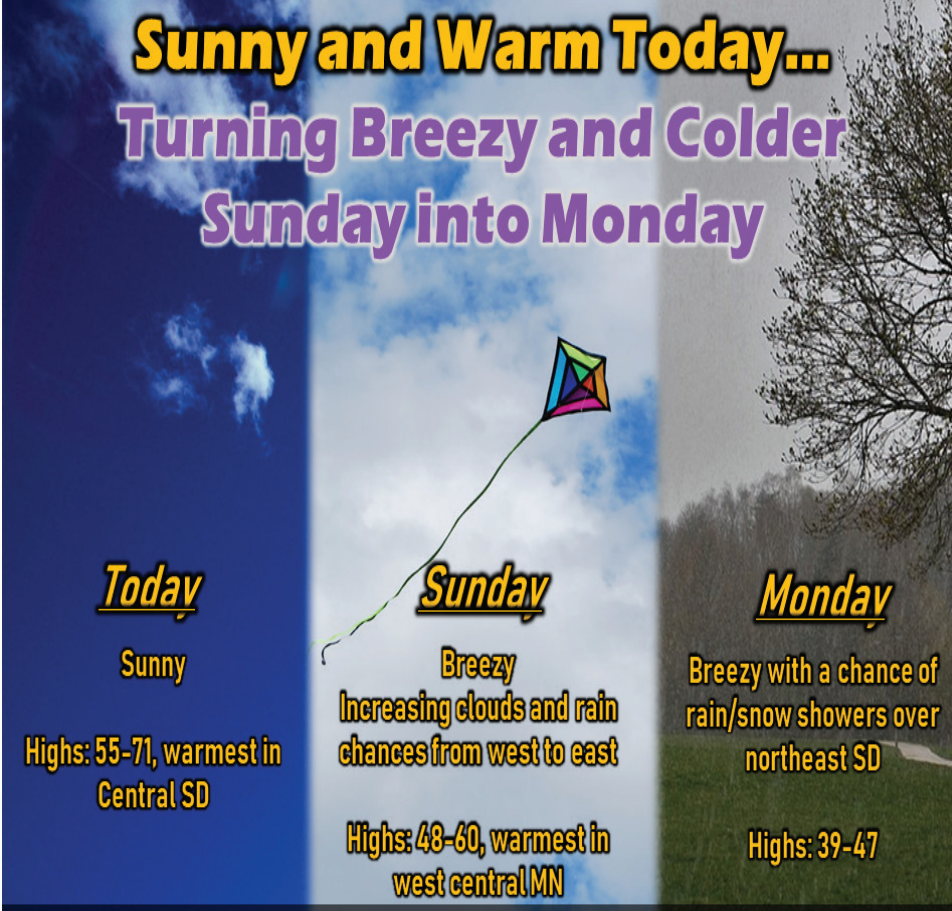


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Today	Tonight	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday
				
Sunny	Clear	Sunny then Slight Chance Showers and Breezy	Chance Showers	Breezy. Chance Rain/Snow then Chance Showers
High: 63 °F	Low: 32 °F	High: 57 °F	Low: 33 °F	High: 42 °F

**Sunny and Warm Today...  
Turning Breezy and Colder  
Sunday into Monday**



<u><b>Today</b></u> Sunny Highs: 55-71, warmest in Central SD	<u><b>Sunday</b></u> Breezy Increasing clouds and rain chances from west to east Highs: 48-60, warmest in west central MN	<u><b>Monday</b></u> Breezy with a chance of rain/snow showers over northeast SD Highs: 39-47
---	--	---

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE  
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION    [www.weather.gov/abr](http://www.weather.gov/abr)    Updated: 4/10/2021 4:44 AM Central

If you're wanting to spend time outdoors this weekend, today will be the best day to be outside. On Sunday, it will turn breezy with increasing clouds and rain chances, as temperatures fall from west to east during the afternoon. Temperatures will be well below normal to start the next work week, with some snow possible in northeast South Dakota.

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## Today in Weather History

April 10, 1965: Severe Thunderstorms in the afternoon and early evening resulted in severe hail reports throughout much of Clark County. Hail up to 2.00 inches in diameter was recorded 30 miles northeast of Huron around 2:40 PM. About 6:30 PM, hail 0.75 inches in diameter fell near Garden City on a flock of wild geese in flight, killing 25 of them.

April 10, 1969: The Elm River in Westport was the highest of all time at 22.11 feet, which is 8.11 feet above flood stage.

April 10, 2005: Thunderstorm winds caused widespread damage in Menno, in Hutchinson County. Numerous trees including several large trees were uprooted. Numerous homes were damaged, some directly by the wind and others by trees and other debris. Garages were especially hard hit, including at least one garage which was destroyed. A grain elevator was damaged, with a catwalk and conveyor being blown over. A historical post office addition to a log building was destroyed, doors and part of the roof of a flour mill were blown down, and doors were blown off several other buildings. Many homes and other buildings had windows broken and siding damaged. A few small storage buildings were destroyed, and others were damaged or blown over. Several farms were heavily damaged, with machine sheds, at least, one hog barn, and several other small structures destroyed. Several vehicles were damaged, including one pickup which was pushed partly onto the porch of a house. Power lines and poles were blown down, resulting in a power outage in Menno.

April 10, 2013: A large slow-moving upper-level low-pressure area moving across the region brought several rounds of heavy snow to much of central and northeast South Dakota. Snowfall amounts from 6 to as much as 22 inches occurred over the several day periods. Travel became difficult if not impossible with some roads closed for a time. Interstate-90 closed on the evening of the 9th. Many schools were also closed across the region. Additionally, a 66-year-old suffered a heart attack and passed away while shoveling the snow in front of his house in Aberdeen.

1935: Severe dust storms across Iowa and Kansas closed schools and highways. Dodge City, Kansas experienced its worst dust storm of record, with dense dust reported from the morning of the 9th until after sunset on the 11th. The sky was almost as dark as night at times during the daylight hours. The thick dust suspended traffic on highways and railroads and also suspended most business in town.

1979: This day was known as "Terrible Tuesday" to the residents of Wichita Falls, Texas as a tornado rated F4 on the Fujita scale ripped through the city. A massive F4 tornado smashed into Wichita Falls killing 43 persons and causing 300 million dollars in damage. Another tornado struck Vernon, Texas killing eleven persons.

1894 - A heavy late season snow blanketed parts of the northeastern U.S. Heavier snowfall totals included 31.5 inches at Salem Corners PA, 30 inches at LeRoy NY, 26 inches at York PA, 14 inches at Waterbury CT, and 9 inches at Providence RI. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Blustery northwest winds prevailed across the Northern Plains Region. Winds in Wyoming gusted to 65 mph. Temperatures in North Dakota were only in the 20s and 30s, following afternoon highs in the 70s the previous day. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Unseasonably warm weather prevailed in the western U.S. Eleven cities reported new record high temperatures for the date, including Bakersfield CA with a reading of 95 degrees, their warmest for so early in the season. Pocatello ID warmed from a record low of 19 above to an afternoon high of 63 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Strong northerly winds, gusting to 53 mph at Albuquerque, NM, ushered cold arctic air into the south central U.S. The temperature at Albuquerque plunged from 82 degrees to 29 degrees overnight. Thirty-three cities in the central U.S. reported record low temperatures for the date, including Goodland KS with a reading of 4 degrees above zero. (The National Weather Summary)

1990 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather from the Central Gulf Coast Region to western sections of the Carolinas during the afternoon and evening. Evening thunderstorms over western South Carolina produced wind gusts to 98 mph which injured four persons at Holly Springs, and wind gusts to 100 mph which injured one person and caused half a million dollars damage north of Dacusville. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)



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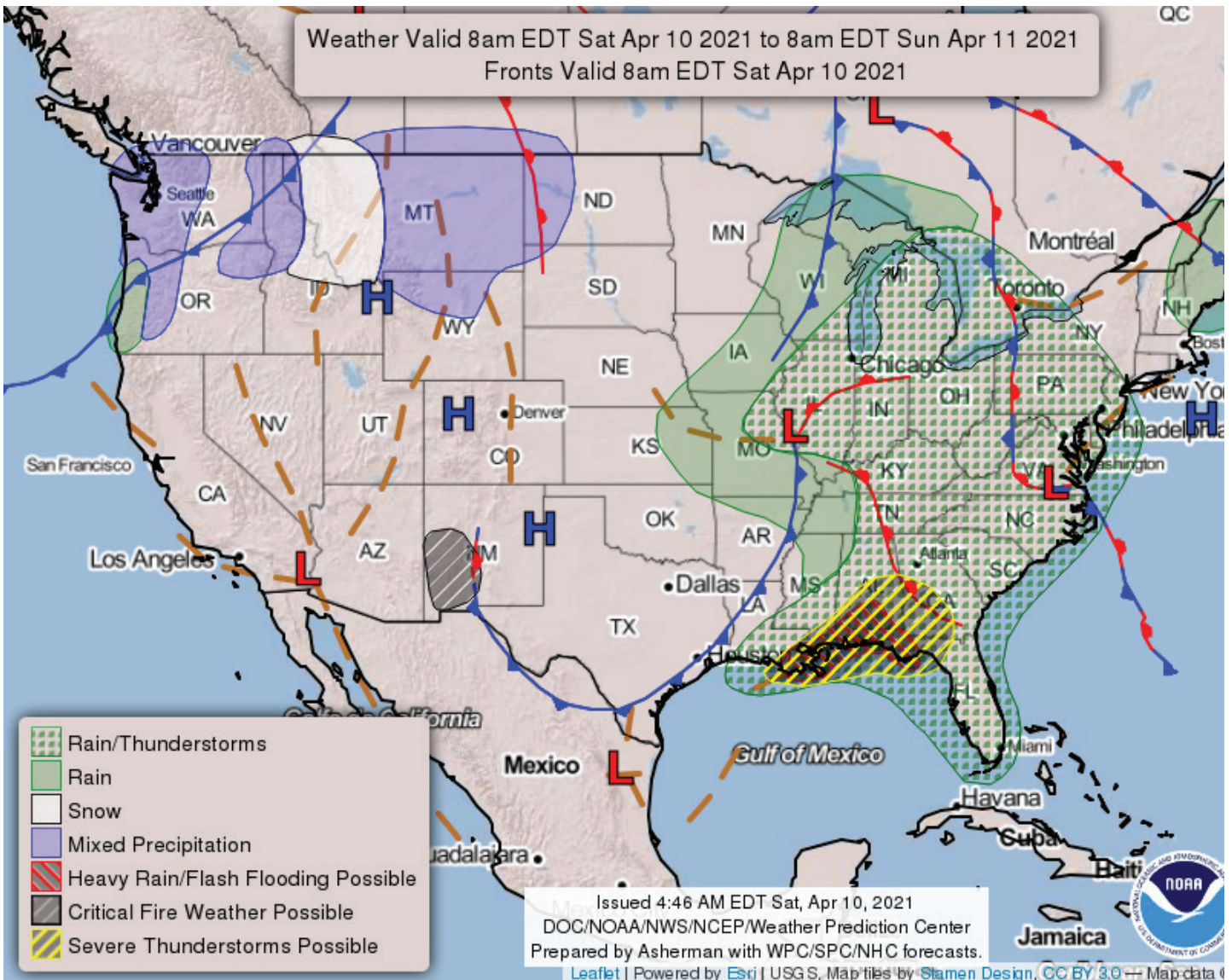
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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 59 °F at 5:12 PM**  
**Low Temp: 40 °F at 5:36 AM**  
**Wind: 25 mph at 12:31 PM**  
**Precip: 0.01 (Total: 1.75)**

## Today's Info

**Record High: 88° in 1977**  
**Record Low: 16° in 1997**  
**Average High: 54°F**  
**Average Low: 30°F**  
**Average Precip in Apr.: 0.42**  
**Precip to date in Apr.: 2.11**  
**Average Precip to date: 2.60**  
**Precip Year to Date: 2.29**  
**Sunset Tonight: 8:14 p.m.**  
**Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:55 a.m.**



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## THE REWARD FOR BEING MEEK

Who are the "meek" people who will "inherit the earth?" Are they the ones we would classify as weak? Would they fall into a special category labeled "non-assertive?" Is the "meek" person one who has no expectations or goals in life? Have you ever seen an ad in the classified section of a newspaper where an insurance or retail company is searching for sale persons that says, "Only the meek should apply?"

David said, "The meek will inherit the land." And Jesus said, "Blessed are the meek for they will inherit the earth." Who are these "meek" people anyway? Is there any way we can recognize them?

Yes, there is, according to Scripture. The "meek" are the ones who are the opposites of the "know it all" or those who possess a "false-pride." They are those who many consider being "high-achievers" and that worldly might and power is a reason for living. They present themselves as the ultimate resource of all knowledge, wisdom, insight, and understanding. They consider themselves to be highly sophisticated and "above the ordinary person." It is those who think they are the "light of the world" – not Jesus.

In God's Word, however, a truly "meek" person is one whose goal is to know Christ and be dependent on Him. We become meek when we are willing to have Him alter every detail of our self-centered lives by surrendering our wills and our ways to the teachings of God's Word and ways and having a sincere desire to honor Him in all we do or say.

When it comes to weakness, our "meekness" will allow us to become "strong" in the hands of God. Then He can shape us into becoming who He designed us to be.

Prayer: Lord, fill our hearts with a meekness that opens our hearts to Your Word, Your will, and Your ways. Then, we will experience lives of greatness! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: But the meek shall inherit the earth, And shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace. Psalm 37:11

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## 2021 Community Events

- Cancelled** Legion Post #39 Spring Fundraiser (Sunday closest to St. Patrick's Day, every other year)
- 03/27/2021 Lions Club Easter Egg Hunt 10am Sharp at the City Park (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- 04/10/2021 Dueling Pianos Baseball Fundraiser at the American Legion Post #39 6-11:30pm
- 04/24/2021 Firemen's Spring Social at the Fire Station 7pm-12:30am (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
- 04/25/2021 Princess Prom (Sunday after GHS Prom)
- 05/01/2021 Lions Club Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales 8am-3pm (1st Saturday in May)
- 05/31/2021 Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services (Memorial Day)
- 6/7-9/2021 St. John's Lutheran Church VBS
- 06/18/2021 SDSU Alumni & Friends Golf Tournament at Olive Grove
- 06/19/2021 Lions Crazy Golf Fest at Olive Grove Golf Course, Noon
- 07/04/2021 Firecracker Golf Tournament at Olive Grove
- 07/11/2021 Lions Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 10am-4pm (Sunday Mid-July)
- 07/22/2021 Pro-Am Golf Tournament at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 07/30/2021-08/03/2021 State "B" American Legion Baseball Tournament in Groton
- 08/06/2021 Wine on Nine at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 09/11/2021 Lions Club Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales 8am-3pm (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
- 09/12/2021 Sunflower Classic Golf Tournament at Olive Grove
- 09/18-19 Groton Fly-In/Drive-In, Groton Municipal Airport
- 10/08/2021 Lake Region Marching Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)
- 10/09/2021 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm (Saturday before Columbus Day)
- 10/29/2021 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm
- 10/31/2021 Groton United Methodist Trunk or Treat (Halloween)
- 11/13/2021 Legion Post #39 Turkey Party (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)
- 11/25/2021 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm (Thanksgiving)
- 12/11/2021 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services 9am-Noon

## News from the Associated Press

### **In GOP strongholds, a big push on 'culture war' legislation**

By ANDREW DeMILLO Associated Press

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (AP) — An ardent abortion foe who once opposed allowing gay couples to be foster parents, Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson is the unlikeliest figure to complain about bills on the “culture wars” reaching his desk.

But by vetoing a ban on gender confirming treatments for transgender youth, the Republican offered a rare rebuke to fellow conservatives who have been in overdrive this legislative session with bills expanding gun rights and restricting LGBTQ and abortion rights.

“I was told this week that the nation is looking at Arkansas because I have on my desk another bill passed by the General Assembly that is a product of the cultural war in America,” Hutchinson said as he announced his decision. “I don’t shy away from the battle when it is necessary and defensible, but the most recent action of the General Assembly, while well-intended, is off-course.”

Even for veterans of the culture wars like Hutchinson, this year has been a jarring one in Republican-controlled statehouses from South Carolina to South Dakota. Fueled by an influx of hard-right lawmakers echoing former President Donald Trump and the backing of outside groups, Republican legislatures are pushing the bounds in already deeply Republican states on issues such as gun rights, access to abortions, and increasingly, protections for transgender people.

The bills reflect the larger mood of the Republican Party, which nationally has struggled to define Democrats in the post-Trump era. Instead, the focus has been on issues that drive the party’s base and that Republicans use to portray Democrats as out of touch with average Americans.

“Republicans’ frustration with an inability to move policy at a federal level trickles down to more action in the states,” Republican strategist Alex Conant said. “I think a lot of these state legislatures are responding to the demands of the conservative base, which sees the culture wars headed in the wrong direction nationally.”

Few are going farther to the right than Arkansas, where Hutchinson over the past several weeks has signed bills restricting rights for transgender people, banning almost all abortions in the state, and easing restrictions on the use of deadly force in self-defense in the so-called Stand Your Ground law.

The bills faced little to no resistance in the Legislature.

“The conservative bent of this legislature is just so overwhelming that there’s not any guardrails,” said Sen. Keith Ingram, the top Democrat in Arkansas’ Senate.

Some of the measures Republicans are pushing in the country expand on longtime party priorities. Encouraged by Trump’s three appointments to the Supreme Court, GOP lawmakers have moved beyond incremental abortion restrictions and are instead trying to enact outright bans like Arkansas has. Thirty-one such bans have been proposed in 15 states this year, according to the Guttmacher Institute, a research group that supports abortion rights.

The number of anti-abortion bills being considered in Oklahoma has nearly doubled over the past three years. South Carolina’s Republican governor signed a measure banning nearly all abortions, a measure that was immediately blocked due to a legal challenge.

Efforts to expand gun rights are also advancing in Republican states that already have few restrictions, with GOP lawmakers citing fears of new gun control measures under President Joe Biden’s administration.

Hutchinson in February signed a Stand Your Ground law loosening restrictions on the use of deadly force in self defense, a proposal that had stalled in past years. Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee last week signed a law allowing most adults 21 and older to carry handguns without a background check or training.

The new fronts include record numbers of voting restrictions fueled by Trump’s unfounded claims of election fraud in 2020. A sweeping new voting law in Georgia prompted pushback from major corporations and even led to Major League Baseball pulling the All-Star Game out of Atlanta.



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The Human Rights Campaign, the nation's largest LGBTQ rights group, said it's been alarmed by the record number of bills imposing restrictions on transgender people. More than 100 such bills have been filed so far this year, the group said. At least 20 states are considering treatment bans similar to Arkansas'.

GOP leaders say the bills in some cases reflect lawmakers catching up on sessions cut short last year due to COVID-19, but also constituents' desires.

"That's the direction that Tennessee is wanting to move, based on the people they elected," said Cameron Sexton, the House speaker in Tennessee, where the flood of advancing bills includes an effort to make the Bible the state's official book.

The agenda for Arkansas' House and Senate on any given day this year looks like a social conservatives' dream. Other bills working their way through the Legislature include one allowing schools to teach creationism and one prohibiting police from enforcing federal gun laws.

The flood of bills is even too much for Hutchinson. A longtime figure in the state's Republican politics, Hutchinson is a former congressman who called for reinstating the state's ban on gay foster parents when he ran unsuccessfully for governor in 2006. Since taking office in 2015, he's signed some of the strictest abortion restrictions in the country.

A day after he vetoed the transgender treatment ban, Republican lawmakers overrode him and enacted it anyway. Hutchinson signed the abortion ban despite his concerns about its constitutionality, and lack of the rape and incest exceptions. He signed the Stand Your Ground legislation despite past reservations about changes to the state's self-defense law.

Conservatives have also dramatically scaled back Hutchinson's goal of passing a hate crimes bill this year. They're advancing instead a "class protection" bill that doesn't refer specifically to categories such as race, sexual orientation or gender identity. The governor has said he supports the measure, though he acknowledges it wasn't his first choice.

Arkansas Republicans say the bills show the shift farther to the right in the state, which Trump easily won in 2016 and last year. Republicans also expanded their majorities in both chambers of the Arkansas Legislature last year.

"After years of being told, this isn't what people want, this will hurt us, we'll lose an election, we're actually seeing the opposite being true," Republican Sen. Trent Garner said.

The tone of the debate over the transgender measures is worrying opponents, especially health care professionals who have warned that the steps are marginalizing people already at high risk of bullying and suicide.

At one point during a debate on one of the transgender measures in Arkansas, a Republican lawmaker cited a Bible verse that called people who wear another gender's clothes an "abomination." Another compared parental acceptance of transgender youth to allowing a child to decide to become a cow.

"I grew up in a state that I didn't feel like was legislating hate against me," said Rep. Tippi McCullough, the top Democrat in the Arkansas House and the only openly gay member of the state Legislature.

Hutchinson's stance against the treatment ban earned him the ire of Trump, who called the governor a "lightweight RINO," meaning Republican in name only.

South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem, a potential 2024 presidential hopeful who's tried to align herself with Trump, faced similar conservative backlash after reversing course on a transgender sports ban. Noem initially said she planned to sign the measure, then partially vetoed it and later issued an order that pushed schools to issue bans.

Noem has promised to call a special legislative session this year to have lawmakers take up the issue again.

Hutchinson said he doesn't regret the other transgender restrictions he's signed and isn't backing off his support for restricting abortion. But he said he hoped his veto would cause fellow Republicans to consider restraint on some social issues.

"Sometimes you've got to pull back and say, is this really the role of the state?" Hutchinson told reporters. "Is this really reflecting confidence in parents and doctors to make good decisions?"

## COVID-19 pandemic cuts into car dealer's showroom inventory

By MARY GALES ASKREN The Madison Daily Leader

MADISON, S.D. (AP) — Prostrollo's All-American Auto Mall in Madison has one car on the showroom floor. In the sales lot, vehicles are parallel parked along the perimeter.

Nick Prostrollo, whose family has been selling cars for three generations, just laughs at the way the COVID-19 pandemic has turned the industry upside down. In the past, car manufacturers were pushing dealers to increase their inventory. Now, dealers can't get what they need to fill their lots.

"We're down probably 175 vehicles. That's a lot of inventory," Prostrollo said.

What they can get is a bit of a hodge-podge -- small SUVs, but not large SUVs; Jeeps, but not pickups. He has customers ordering pickups now to ensure they will get the vehicle they need to meet their needs -- and then they have to wait.

"On average, when we order a vehicle, we're telling people it will take six months. Sometimes it's nine months; sometimes it's three months," Prostrollo indicated.

In the past, customers ordered because they wanted specific features and didn't want to pay for others they didn't want. The special-order vehicles were just a portion of the new vehicles rolling onto the lot. That's no longer true.

"The bulk of our business now is order-outs," Prostrollo said.

Watching the pandemic affect his business has been a bit like watching a winter blizzard move into the region. It was going to happen, and they could do nothing but ride out the storm, the Madison Daily Leader reported.

"What else are you going to do? You play the cards you're dealt and push forward," Prostrollo said.

One advantage to being part of a family business which has been around for three generations is having weathered storms in the past. Prostrollo said his dad Pat started selling vehicles in the 1980s when interest rates were 18% and sales was a tough job. The auto industry was hit hard again in '08, when two of the three manufacturers with which they deal needed bailouts.

"There have been a lot of obstacles, a lot of issues to overcome," he noted. The pandemic has been just one more obstacle for them to surmount.

In the early days of the pandemic, when urban areas were hit hardest, auto manufacturers shut down for three months. That made the first dent in Prostrollo's inventory.

"They're not making cars, but we're still selling cars," Prostrollo recalled.

When production began, the pace at which cars were produced was limited not only by the scaled-back schedule manufacturers implemented but also by the shortage of parts. Plant closures overseas affected what was available in the states.

"If they can't get the parts, they can't build the cars," Prostrollo explained.

Even school closures affected the auto industry. Students learning remotely needed electronic devices like laptops and Chromebooks to participate in classes and complete their assignments. This was a boon for those manufacturers.

"The electronics industry bought up all the semiconductors," Prostrollo said. "Now they don't have the semiconductors to produce the vehicles."

A single vehicle may have between 150 and 200 semiconductors, he said, making that shortage significant to the automotive industry. Making matters worse, a fire at the Renesas semiconductor chip plant in Japan earlier this month could increase the global shortage.

"That's what's now driving the lack of inventory," Prostrollo explained. "There's a high demand for new vehicles and there's no supply."

The service division has also seen a slowdown because fewer people are bringing in vehicles for routine maintenance because they aren't commuting, but the greatest impact has been felt on the sales side. Having weathered other storms, Prostrollo's has responded by being flexible and by continuing to make customer service their priority.

People are now ordering vehicles online, and Prostrollo's is delivering those vehicles to buyers. This is

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true of both new and used cars.

"We're sending lots of pictures, lots of videos," Prostrollo said. "We're being honest about the condition of the vehicle."

By doing this, they have accommodated buyers who were hesitant about visiting the dealership, touching vehicles others might have touched or being people around people. Prostrollo's has worked to keep both staff and customers safe by sanitizing vehicles, whether on the lot or brought in for service, but has also been willing to go the extra mile.

As a result, their sales area has expanded. With people doing more online buying, they have sold and delivered vehicles to buyers as far away as St. Louis, Missouri, and New Mexico. In the case of the New Mexico buyer, Prostrollo's had not only the desired model but also the color the buyer's wife wanted.

"With the low inventory, people are doing what they need to do to get the vehicle they want," Prostrollo said.

Vehicle prices have been affected by the shortage, but not significantly. Deals are less likely to be cut simply because there is always a buyer willing to pay the asking price, according to Prostrollo. Too, late model used vehicles are holding their value because of the shortage of new cars.

In general, though, he feels Prostrollo's is weathering the storm because of customer loyalty. The family-owned business has not had to lay off any employees, despite the shortage in inventory and the slowdown in the service department.

"Customer loyalty -- that's what keeps a company in business; customer loyalty and good employees," Prostrollo said. He attributes the loyalty to his company's approach to doing business.

"It's not about making a buck; it's about building a relationship," he stated.

## SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) \_ These South Dakota lotteries were drawn Friday:

Mega Millions

22-26-27-58-66, Mega Ball: 12, Megaplier: 2

(twenty-two, twenty-six, twenty-seven, fifty-eight, sixty-six; Mega Ball: twelve; Megaplier: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$201 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$55 million

## Judge orders delay amid debate over Dakota Access pipeline

By JAMES MacPHERSON and DAVE KOLPACK Associated Press

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — A judge on Friday delayed a decision on whether the Dakota Access Oil pipeline should be shut down while the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers conducts an environmental review on the project, after lawyers for the pipeline asked for more time to outline the effects of recent changes in the economy.

U.S. District Judge James Boasberg granted the 10-day continuance after the Biden administration declined to intervene in the case, which an attorney for the Standing Rock Indian Reservation said is "deeply" disappointing to the tribes.

"The decision here today is to keep operating, which is the same decision as the previous administration," Earthjustice attorney Jan Hasselman said during the hearing. "The company gets to keep the benefits of operating the pipeline that was never properly authorized while the community has to bear the risks and the consequences."

Boasberg ordered the hearing mainly for the Corps to explain how it could proceed without a federal permit granting easement for the \$3.8 billion pipeline to cross beneath Lake Oahe, a reservoir along the Missouri River that is maintained by the Corps. Corps attorney Ben Schifman told the judge that the agency might act on the permit issue at some time, which Boasberg described as a possibility of "sooner, later

or not at all.”

The hearing in Washington, D.C., was originally scheduled for February. But the Corps filed a motion to postpone the hearing in order to allow officials from Biden’s administration more time to familiarize themselves with the case, including the 2016 lawsuit filed by the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in an attempt to stop construction.

“I too am a little surprised that this is where things stand 60 days later,” Boasberg said. “I would have thought there would be a decision one way or another at this point.”

Hasselmann said he expected the Corps to make a decision Friday and objected to the delay.

“We strongly disagree with the idea that you need another round of declarations and expert reports,” he said. “We agreed to 60-day extension as courtesy and don’t think it should be used against us. Let’s not go through another round of competing expert reports. You’ve seen them many times.”

Hasselmann told reporters that the hearing Friday was a chance for the Biden administration to prove its commitment to improving tribal relations and the environment.

“Today was the day to see whether this rhetoric was going to be matched with action and they fell short,” Hasselmann said.

Pipeline attorney David Debold said “a lot has happened with our economy and overall markets” in the last five months and the continuance is warranted.

Boasberg in April 2020 ordered further environmental study after determining the Corps had not adequately considered how an oil spill under the Missouri River might affect Standing Rock’s fishing and hunting rights, or whether it might disproportionately affect the tribal community.

Texas-based Energy Transfer estimated it would cost \$24 million to empty the oil and take steps to preserve the pipe. It said it would have to spend another \$67.5 million each year to maintain the line while it’s inoperable. The company did not immediately return messages for comment left Friday.

The \$3.8 billion, 1,172-mile (1,886-kilometer) pipeline crosses beneath the Missouri River, just north of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation that straddles the North Dakota-South Dakota border. The tribe, which draws its water from the river, says it fears pollution.

The pipeline was the subject of months of sometimes-violent protests in 2016 and 2017 during its construction. The tribe took legal action against the pipeline even after it began carrying oil from North Dakota across South Dakota and Iowa to a shipping point in Illinois in June 2017.

Former President Barack Obama’s administration originally rejected permits for the project, and the Corps prepared to conduct a full environmental review. In February 2017, after Donald Trump took office, the agency scrapped the review and granted permits, concluding that running the pipeline under the Missouri River posed no significant environmental issues.

## **Attorney general charged in fatal crash announces promotion**

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota’s attorney general who is awaiting his next court hearing involving a fatal crash has announced his promotion in the Army Reserves.

Jason Ravnsborg posted on Facebook that he is now a full Colonel in the Army Reserves. He’s been in the military for 24 years and through three deployments, his post said.

Jason Ravnsborg is facing three misdemeanor charges and calls for his resignation after he struck and killed Joe Boever who was walking on the side of a rural highway last year.

Charges include distracted driving and driving on the shoulder of the road.

His next hearing is scheduled for May 12, exactly eight months after the crash, KELO-TV reported.

## **Doctor: U.K. variant will be dominant strain in SD**

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The U.K. variant is expected to become the dominant strain of the coronavirus in the South Dakota, according to the state’s epidemiologist.

South Dakota has 20 cases of COVID-19 variants, a number that hasn’t changed in two weeks. Neighbor-



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ing Minnesota is among a handful of states with some of the highest growth of more contagious variants. Epidemiologist Joshua Clayton says more young people are being infected and they need to be aware that the U.K. variant spreads easier and can be more severe in some cases.

"Such as the 20- to 29-year-old population, perhaps due to just the increased rate of transmission of the B-117 variant, but just in general individuals in that age group do need to pay attention to some of the prevention and precautions in order to avoid the transmission of COVID-19 the original virus as well as the new variant virus," said Clayton.

South Dakota's State Health Lab, the CDC and private labs are all doing the genetic sequence testing to track down variants in South Dakota, KELO-TV reported. Clayton could not say how many cases they've found, but all evidence points to high numbers of the variants in the coming weeks.

"At this time we are looking to add some information to our website that further defines what we are seeing in those variants in terms of affected populations," said Clayton.

## St. Vincent awaits new volcanic explosions as help arrives

By KRISTIN DEANE and DÁNICA COTO Associated Press

KINGSTOWN, St. Vincent (AP) — Extremely heavy ashfall rained down across the eastern Caribbean island of St. Vincent on Saturday and a strong sulfur smell enveloped communities a day after a powerful explosion at La Soufriere volcano uprooted the lives of thousands of people who evacuated their homes under government orders.

Lush green Caribbean villages were transformed into a sort of gloomy, gray version of Alpine villages under a blanket of fine soot, which also hung in the air, obscuring the sun.

Nearby nations including Antigua and Guyana have offered help by either shipping emergency supplies or temporarily opening their borders to the roughly 16,000 evacuees fleeing ash-covered communities with as many personal belongings as they could stuff into suitcases and backpacks.

The volcano, which last had a sizable eruption in 1979, kept rumbling and experts warned that explosions could continue for days or weeks. A previous eruption in 1902 killed some 1,600 people.

"The first bang is not necessarily the biggest bang this volcano will give," Richard Robertson, a geologist with the University of the West Indies' Seismic Research Center, said during a news conference.

Conditions for many worsened overnight as heavy ash covered homes, cars and streets and even the runway of the airport at the opposite end of the roughly 20-mile (30-kilometer) long island from the volcano's crater. People left footprints in the ash as they trudged away from their homes.

Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves told NBC Radio, a local station, that officials were trying to figure out how to remove the ash.

"It's difficult to breath," Gonsalves said, adding that while the volcano's venting has diminished, a big plume of ash and smoke remained. "What goes up, must come down."

He asked people to remain calm, have patience and keep protecting themselves from the coronavirus as he celebrated that no deaths or injuries were reported after the eruption in the northern tip of St. Vincent, part of an island chain that includes the Grenadines and is home to more than 100,000 people.

"Agriculture will be badly affected, and we may have some loss of animals, and we will have to do repairs to houses, but if we have life, and we have strength, we will build it back better, stronger, together," he said.

Gonsalves has said that depending on the damage caused by the explosion, it could take up to four months for life to return to normal. Some 3,200 people were staying in 78 government shelters while four empty cruise ships floated nearby, waiting to take other evacuees to nearby islands. Those staying in shelters were tested for COVID-19, and anyone testing positive would be taken to an isolation center.

The first explosion occurred Friday morning, a day after the government ordered mandatory evacuations based on warnings from scientists who noted a type of seismic activity before dawn on Thursday that meant magma was on the move close to the surface.

An ash column burst more than 33,000 feet (7 kilometers) into the sky, with lightning crackling through the still-towering cloud late Friday.

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The ash forced the cancellation of several flights and poor visibility limited evacuations in some areas. Officials warned that Barbados, St. Lucia and Grenada could see light ashfall as the 4,003-foot (1,220-meter) volcano continued to rumble. The majority of ash was expected to head northeast into the Atlantic Ocean.

La Soufriere previously had an effusive eruption in December, prompting experts from around the region to fly in and analyze the formation of a new volcanic dome and changes to its crater lake, among other things.

The eastern Caribbean has 19 live volcanoes, including two underwater near the island of Grenada. One of those, Kick 'Em Jenny, has been active in recent years. But the most active volcano of all is Soufriere Hills in Montserrat. It has erupted continuously since 1995, razing the capital of Plymouth and killing at least 19 people in 1997.

## 'Clear the Capitol,' Pence pleaded, timeline of riot shows

By LISA MASCARO, BEN FOX and LOLITA C. BALDOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — From a secure room in the Capitol on Jan. 6, as rioters pummeled police and vandalized the building, Vice President Mike Pence tried to assert control. In an urgent phone call to the acting defense secretary, he issued a startling demand.

"Clear the Capitol," Pence said.

Elsewhere in the building, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi were making a similarly dire appeal to military leaders, asking the Army to deploy the National Guard.

"We need help," Schumer, D-N.Y., said in desperation, more than an hour after the Senate chamber had been breached.

At the Pentagon, officials were discussing media reports that the mayhem was not confined to Washington and that other state capitals were facing similar violence in what had the makings of a national insurrection.

"We must establish order," said Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in a call with Pentagon leaders.

But order would not be restored for hours.

These new details about the deadly riot are contained in a previously undisclosed document prepared by the Pentagon for internal use that was obtained by The Associated Press and vetted by current and former government officials.

The timeline adds another layer of understanding about the state of fear and panic while the insurrection played out, and lays bare the inaction by then-President Donald Trump and how that void contributed to a slowed response by the military and law enforcement. It shows that the intelligence missteps, tactical errors and bureaucratic delays were eclipsed by the government's failure to comprehend the scale and intensity of a violent uprising by its own citizens.

With Trump not engaged, it fell to Pentagon officials, a handful of senior White House aides, the leaders of Congress and the vice president holed up in a secure bunker to manage the chaos.

While the timeline helps to crystalize the frantic character of the crisis, the document, along with hours of sworn testimony, provides only an incomplete picture about how the insurrection could have advanced with such swift and lethal force, interrupting the congressional certification of Joe Biden as president and delaying the peaceful transfer of power, the hallmark of American democracy.

Lawmakers, protected to this day by National Guard troops, will hear from the inspector general of the Capitol Police this coming week.

"Any minute that we lost, I need to know why," Sen. Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn., chair of the Senate Rules and Administration Committee, which is investigating the siege, said last month.

The timeline fills in some of those gaps.

At 4:08 p.m. on Jan. 6, as the rioters roamed the Capitol and after they had menacingly called out for Pelosi, D-Calif., and yelled for Pence to be hanged, the vice president was in a secure location, phoning Christopher Miller, the acting defense secretary, and demanding answers.

There had been a highly public rift between Trump and Pence, with Trump furious that his vice president

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refused to halt the Electoral College certification. Interfering with that process was an act that Pence considered unconstitutional. The Constitution makes clear that the vice president's role in this joint session of Congress is largely ceremonial.

Pence's call to Miller lasted only a minute. Pence said the Capitol was not secure and he asked military leaders for a deadline for securing the building, according to the document.

By this point it had already been two hours since the mob overwhelmed Capitol Police unprepared for an insurrection. Rioters broke into the building, seized the Senate and paraded to the House. In their path, they left destruction and debris. Dozens of officers were wounded, some gravely.

Just three days earlier, government leaders had talked about the use of the National Guard. On the afternoon of Jan. 3, as lawmakers were sworn in for the new session of Congress, Miller and Milley gathered with Cabinet members to discuss the upcoming election certification. They also met with Trump.

In that meeting at the White House, Trump approved the activation of the D.C. National Guard and also told the acting defense secretary to take whatever action needed as events unfolded, according to the information obtained by the AP.

The next day, Jan. 4, the defense officials spoke by phone with Cabinet members, including the acting attorney general, and finalized details of the Guard deployment.

The Guard's role was limited to traffic intersections and checkpoints around the city, based in part on strict restrictions mandated by district officials. Miller also authorized Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy to deploy, if needed, the D.C. Guard's emergency reaction force stationed at Joint Base Andrews.

The Trump administration and the Pentagon were wary of a heavy military presence, in part because of criticism officials faced for the seemingly heavy-handed National Guard and law enforcement efforts to counter civil unrest in the aftermath of the police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis.

In particular, the D.C. Guard's use of helicopters to hover over crowds in downtown Washington during those demonstrations drew widespread criticism. That unauthorized move prompted the Pentagon to more closely control the D.C. Guard.

"There was a lot of things that happened in the spring that the department was criticized for," Robert Salesses, who is serving as the assistant defense secretary for homeland defense and global security, said at a congressional hearing last month.

On the eve of Trump's rally Jan. 6 near the White House, the first 255 National Guard troops arrived in the district, and Mayor Muriel Bowser confirmed in a letter to the administration that no other military support was needed.

By the morning of Jan. 6, crowds started gathering at the Ellipse before Trump's speech. According to the Pentagon's plans, the acting defense secretary would only be notified if the crowd swelled beyond 20,000.

Before long it was clear that the crowd was far more in control of events than the troops and law enforcement there to maintain order.

Trump, just before noon, was giving his speech and he told supporters to march to the Capitol. The crowd at the rally was at least 10,000. By 1:15 p.m., the procession was well on its way there.

As protesters reached the Capitol grounds, some immediately became violent, busting through weak police barriers in front of the building and beating up officers who stood in their way.

At 1:49 p.m., as the violence escalated, then-Capitol Police Chief Steven Sund called Maj. Gen. William Walker, commanding general of the D.C. National Guard, to request assistance.

Sund's voice was "cracking with emotion," Walker later told a Senate committee. Walker immediately called Army leaders to inform them of the request.

Twenty minutes later, around 2:10 p.m., the first rioters were beginning to break through the doors and windows of the Senate. They then started a march through the marbled halls in search of the lawmakers who were counting the electoral votes. Alarms inside the building announced a lockdown.

Sund frantically called Walker again and asked for at least 200 guard members "and to send more if they are available."

But even with the advance Cabinet-level preparation, no help was immediately on the way.

Over the next 20 minutes, as senators ran to safety and the rioters broke into the chamber and rifled

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through their desks, Army Secretary McCarthy spoke with the mayor and Pentagon leaders about Sund's request.

On the Pentagon's third floor E Ring, senior Army leaders were huddled around the phone for what they described as a "panicked" call from the D.C. Guard. As the gravity of the situation became clear, McCarthy bolted from the meeting, sprinting down the hall to Miller's office and breaking into a meeting.

As minutes ticked by, rioters breached additional entrances in the Capitol and made their way to the House. They broke glass in doors that led to the chamber and tried to gain entry as a group of lawmakers was still trapped inside.

At 2:25 p.m., McCarthy told his staff to prepare to move the emergency reaction force to the Capitol. The force could be ready to move in 20 minutes.

At 2:44 p.m., Trump supporter Ashli Babbitt was fatally shot by a Capitol Police officer as she tried to climb through a window that led to the House floor.

Shortly after 3 p.m., McCarthy provided "verbal approval" of the activation of 1,100 National Guard troops to support the D.C. police and the development of a plan for the troops' deployment duties, locations and unit sizes.

Minutes later the Guard's emergency reaction force left Joint Base Andrews for the D.C. Armory. There, they would prepare to head to the Capitol once Miller, the acting defense secretary, gave final approval.

Meanwhile, the Joint Staff set up a video teleconference call that stayed open until about 10 p.m. that night, allowing staff to communicate any updates quickly to military leaders.

At 3:19 p.m., Pelosi and Schumer were calling the Pentagon for help and were told the National Guard had been approved.

But military and law enforcement leaders struggled over the next 90 minutes to execute the plan as the Army and Guard called all troops in from their checkpoints, issued them new gear, laid out a new plan for their mission and briefed them on their duties.

The Guard troops had been prepared only for traffic duties. Army leaders argued that sending them into a volatile combat situation required additional instruction to keep both them and the public safe.

By 3:37 p.m., the Pentagon sent its own security forces to guard the homes of defense leaders. No troops had yet reached the Capitol.

By 3:44 p.m., the congressional leaders escalated their pleas.

"Tell POTUS to tweet everyone should leave," Schumer implored the officials, using the acronym for the president of the United States. House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, D-Md., asked about calling up active duty military.

At 3:48 p.m., frustrated that the D.C. Guard hadn't fully developed a plan to link up with police, the Army secretary dashed from the Pentagon to D.C. police headquarters to help coordinate with law enforcement.

Trump broke his silence at 4:17 p.m., tweeting to his followers to "go home and go in peace."

By about 4:30 p.m., the military plan was finalized and Walker had approval to send the Guard to the Capitol. The reports of state capitals breached in other places turned out to be bogus.

At about 4:40 p.m. Pelosi and Schumer were again on the phone with Milley and the Pentagon leadership, asking Miller to secure the perimeter.

But the acrimony was becoming obvious.

The congressional leadership on the call "accuses the National Security apparatus of knowing that protestors planned to conduct an assault on the Capitol," the timeline said.

The call lasts 30 minutes. Pelosi's spokesman acknowledges there was a brief discussion of the obvious intelligence failures that led to the insurrection.

It would be another hour before the first contingent of 155 Guard members were at the Capitol. Dressed in riot gear, they began arriving at 5:20 p.m.

They started moving out the rioters, but there were few, if any, arrests. by police.

At 8 p.m. the Capitol was declared secure.



## Australian portrait photographer June Newton dies at 97

BERLIN (AP) — The Australian photographer and actress June Newton — also known under her pseudonym Alice Springs — has died at 97, the Helmut Newton Foundation said Saturday in Berlin.

Newton, who was also the wife of the late photographer Helmut Newton, died Friday in her home in Monte Carlo. The cause of death was not given.

"We mourn the loss of an outstanding person and internationally recognized photographer," the foundation wrote on its website.

Newton, who was born as June Browne in Melbourne, Australia in 1923, trained as an actor and often performed under her stage name June Brunell, the foundation said.

In 1947, she met Helmut Newton, a German-Jewish photographer who had fled the Nazis and who had just set up a photo studio in Melbourne. They got married a year later and were together until the 83-year-old Helmut Newton died in a car accident in Los Angeles in 2004.

In 1970, after having moved to Paris with her husband, Newton started her own career as a photographer under the pseudonym Alice Springs and soon became a well-regarded artist herself focusing on portraits.

"Alice Springs does more than document the appearance of celebrities and anonymous contemporaries; she captures their charisma, their aura," the foundation said, describing her work. "Her eye for people is mostly concentrated on people's faces."

The couple had several shows around the globe. In 1978, she had her first solo exhibition of portraits in Amsterdam, followed by further international shows.

"The roster of artists, actors and musicians depicted by Alice Springs over the last 40 years reads like a who's who of the international cultural scene on both sides of the Atlantic," the foundation said. "Many portraits were magazine assignments from Paris to Los Angeles; others resulted from private initiative."

In 1981, the couple moved to Monte Carlo. After her husband's death, Newton opened the The Helmut Newton Foundation in Berlin, which her husband had established a few months before his death. Until her death, she was the president of the museum, which has become an important location for contemporary photography shows.

## Indonesia quake kills 7 in Java, jolts Bali; no tsunami risk

By AGUS BASUKI Associated Press

MALANG, Indonesia (AP) — A strong earthquake killed at least seven people, injured 12 others and damaged more than 300 buildings on Indonesia's main island of Java and shook the tourist hotspot of Bali, officials said Saturday. No tsunami warnings were posted.

The U.S. Geological Survey said the magnitude 6.0 quake struck off the island's southern coast at 2:00 p.m. local time (0700 GMT). It was centered 45 kilometers (28 miles) south of Sumberpucung town of Malang District in East Java province, at a depth of 82 kilometers (51 miles).

Rahmat Triyono, the head of Indonesia's earthquake and tsunami center, said in a statement the undersea tremblor did not have the potential to cause a tsunami. Still, he urged people to stay away from slopes of soil or rocks that have the potential for landslides.

This was the second deadly disaster to hit Indonesia this week, after a severe downpour on Sunday triggered by Tropical Cyclone Seroja killed at least 174 people and left 48 still missing while damaging thousands of houses. Some victims were buried in either mudslides or solidified lava from a volcanic eruption in November, while others were swept away by flash flooding.

Saturday's quake caused falling rocks to kill a woman on a motorcycle and badly injured her husband in East Java's Lumajang district, said Raditya Jati, spokesperson for the National Disaster Mitigation Agency.

He said dozens of homes were damaged across the district, and rescuers had retrieved two bodies from under the rubble in Kali Uling village. Two people were also confirmed killed in an area bordering Lumajang and Malang districts, while one person found dead under rubble in Malang.

Television reports showed people running in panic from malls and buildings in several cities in East Java province.

Indonesia's search and rescue agency released videos and photos of damaged houses and buildings, including a ceiling at a hospital in Blitar, a city neighboring Malang. Authorities were still collecting information about the full scale of casualties and damage in the affected areas.

Indonesia, a vast archipelago of 270 million people, is frequently struck by earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and tsunamis because of its location on the "Ring of Fire," an arc of volcanoes and fault lines in the Pacific Basin.

In January, a magnitude 6.2 earthquake killed at least 105 people and injured nearly 6,500, while more than 92,000 displaced, after striking Mamuju and Majene districts in West Sulawesi province.

## Iran says nuke program testing newest advanced centrifuge

By AMIR VAHDAT Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — Iran said Saturday it has begun mechanical tests on its newest advanced nuclear centrifuge, even as the five world powers that remain in a foundering 2015 nuclear deal with Iran attempt to bring the U.S. back into the agreement.

Iran's IR-9 centrifuge, when operational, would have the ability to separate uranium isotopes more quickly than the current centrifuges being used, thereby enriching uranium at a faster pace. The announcement carried on state TV came on Iran's 15th annual "Nuclear Day."

The IR-9's output is 50 times quicker than the first Iranian centrifuge, the IR-1. The country also announced it had launched a chain of 164 IR-6 centrifuges on Saturday, and is also developing IR-8 centrifuges.

Since January, Iran has begun enriching uranium at up to 20% purity, a technical step away from weapons-grade levels, though Iran's leadership insists the country has no desire to develop a nuclear weapon.

Former U.S. President Donald Trump pulled the U.S. out of the nuclear accord in 2018, accusing Iran of failing to live up to the agreement, opting for what he called a maximum-pressure campaign of stepped-up U.S. sanctions and other tough actions.

Iran responded by intensifying its enrichment of uranium and building centrifuges in plain violation of the accord, while insisting that its nuclear development is for civilian not military purposes.

Israel maintains Iran still maintains the ambition of developing nuclear weapons, pointing to Tehran's ballistic missile program and research into other technologies.

Iran denies it is pursuing nuclear weapons, and says its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes.

Iran's stockpile of 20% enriched uranium has reached 55 kilograms (121 pounds), moving its nuclear program closer to weapons-grade enrichment levels. The amount of the material was 17 kilograms in January.

Iran has installed 1,000 IR2 centrifuge machines and one cascade of 164 IR4 machines. Both are in operation and have more speed than the IR1 machines.

Since late February, Iran has ceased abiding by a confidential agreement with the U.N.'s nuclear watchdog reached as part of the landmark 2015 nuclear deal. The International Atomic Energy Agency has additional protocols with several countries it monitors.

Under the protocol with Iran, the IAEA "collects and analyzes hundreds of thousands of images captured daily by its sophisticated surveillance cameras," the agency said in 2017. The agency also said then that it had placed "2,000 tamper-proof seals on nuclear material and equipment."

However, Iran's parliament passed a bill in December requiring the government to limit its cooperation with the IAEA and push its nuclear program beyond the limits of the 2015 nuclear deal. After the bill became law, Iran then began enriching uranium up to 20% purity and spinning advanced centrifuges — both barred by the deal.

Iran argues that the U.S.'s departure from the nuclear deal was the first violation of the deal by either country and therefore the U.S. must make the first move and remove sanctions before Iran returns to compliance.

President Joe Biden came into office saying that getting back into the accord and getting Iran's nuclear program back under international restrictions was a priority. But Iran and the United States have disagreed over Iran's demands that sanctions be lifted first. That deadlock has threatened to become an early foreign

policy setback for the new U.S. president.

Talks in Vienna aimed at bringing the U.S. back into the deal with Iran broke Friday without any immediate signs of progress on issues dividing Washington and Tehran.

However, delegates spoke of a constructive atmosphere and resolved to continue the discussions.

## **For Black journalists, working Chauvin trial drains emotions**

By DAVID BAUDER AP Media Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — At the end of a stressful day, Sara Sidner seeks the friendly wag of a dog's tail. Shaquille Brewster turns to sports on TV, and Julia Jenae talks things out with colleagues.

Each is covering one of the nation's biggest stories, the murder trial of former Minneapolis police Officer Derek Chauvin. Each is also a Black journalist, reporting on an issue of great racial significance and forced — as part of their jobs — to watch video of George Floyd's life ending again and again.

"You really feel the consequences of it," said Brewster, who at age 28 is delivering repeated reports on NBC News and MSNBC programs.

The National Association of Black Journalists has taken note of the assignment's potential difficulties, calling on news organizations to make resources available to help employees cope. Reporters covering the trial may be susceptible to trauma tied to their own experiences or previous stories about encounters between police and Black people, said Dorothy Tucker, NABJ president.

For some of the Black journalists covering the trial, it is important to bear witness.

"I had zero trepidation," said CNN's Sidner. "In fact, I felt it was my absolute duty to do this."

The Los Angeles-based Sidner covered the story soon after it broke last May and wants to see it through — even though it will never really end for the people involved or touched by it.

Whenever Court TV's Jenae travels to Minneapolis from her network's Atlanta headquarters to cover the case, she purposely visits the street corner where Floyd, a Black man, declared dead after the white police officer's knee was pressed to his neck for more than 9 minutes.

She's covered many trials but said the magnitude is different this time.

"I think people want to see a diversity of people covering this story because racial equality is at the heart of it — the heart of the unrest and the heart of what pained people so much," Jenae said.

The journalists not only watch videos of Floyd's death during the trial, they've had to study them. Before the trial, Brewster watched to count how many times Floyd said "I can't breathe," how many times he called "Mama" and how long Chauvin's knee was on Floyd's neck.

For the most part, they go into reporter mode, concentrating on observing and figuring out what the day's story is going to be. Mel Reeves, a reporter for the Minnesota Spokesman-Recorder, dismissed as "superfluous" a question about his feelings while covering the trial.

"I guess I have sort of compartmentalized what is happening," said Brandt Williams, reporter for Minneapolis Public Radio. "It's like when a first responder comes across a scene that is bloody. You can set aside your feelings and do your job."

Still, Sidner confessed on Twitter that "I'm a wreck y'all" on the day witness Charles McMillian cried on the stand when recalling Floyd's death.

Not everyone can watch. CNN commentator Nia-Malika Henderson, who is not covering the trial, wrote that she avoids it in part because it reminds her of when her mother cried about the Rodney King verdict. Henderson confessed she's never seen the Floyd video.

The Poynter Institute, a journalism think tank, noted recently that mental health experts say repeated exposure to such disturbing scenes can be devastating. Journalists need to be reminded this also applies to them, "maybe especially to you," and be able to recognize signs of trouble, Poynter said.

"Regardless of the arguments about how he died, you're still watching someone die," Jenae said. "As humans, that's hard on anyone."

MPR's Williams noted another sort of compartmentalizing that most white journalists on the story can't relate to.

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"I know it's always a possibility that I could be one of those men winding up in a video at the hands of an officer, but it's not at the forefront of my mind," he said.

A few months ago, Jenae said a viewer complimented her on conducting a fair interview with the brother of Thomas Lane, another former Minneapolis police officer who was fired after being on the scene the day of Floyd's death.

The remark would have insulted her when she was younger, she said. Why wouldn't she conduct a fair interview? Because she's Black and Lane and his brother were white? Skin color was going to determine whether or not she could do her job?

Instead, she accepted it as an expression of empathy.

"What I hear most from viewers is they appreciate that it must be difficult to cover it as an unbiased journalist," Jenae said.

If he has any bias, it's to make sure that Black people are portrayed as the complex, multi-faceted people they are, much more than the tropes that often show up in popular media, Williams said.

"I've always focused on letting my work speak for itself," he said.

Reeves, whose newspaper is aimed at a Black audience, describes himself as an activist and doesn't pretend to be unbiased. His dispatch the day of McMillian's testimony read, "If the trial of Derek Chauvin ... was a sporting contest with the score kept at the day's end, the score would be witnesses and Black progressive humanity, one. Chauvin and the system of policing, zero."

He said his audience simply wants to see an end to police abuse.

"I'm writing from that perspective," he said, "the people who are getting brutalized, who are catching hell and who have no confidence that this trial — despite how it looks like now and despite all the points the prosecution is making — they have no confidence that Chauvin will go to jail. That's our reality."

Sidner said her Twitter feed has become a forum for viewers to debate the case. It hasn't been abusive, except for one person who called her an "enemy of the people" because he disagreed with her analysis, she said.

At the end of the day, the journalists want to turn off the news. Brewster wants to laugh with friends, "because I realize I haven't had anything to laugh about that day."

And those dogs that Sidner looks for to pet? It's to remind her that there is such a thing as unconditional love, she said.

## More Black Americans open to vaccines after outreach efforts

By RUSS BYNUM and ANNIE MA Associated Press

Like others in her family, Mattie Pringle had doubts about taking the coronavirus vaccine.

The 57-year-old Black woman from Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, feared that her high blood pressure and diabetes might heighten her chances of a severe reaction to the shot. The speedy development and approval of the vaccines also fed her skepticism.

Then a member of Pringle's church, a local NAACP leader who has led a vaccination campaign targeting Black residents, urged her to reconsider. He shared a news story about Kizzmekia Corbett, a Black government scientist who played a key role in developing the Moderna vaccine.

"That's what made me change my mind," said Pringle, who finally agreed to an appointment to get her first coronavirus shot Thursday. "I had to pray about it. And I felt better after that."

Campaigns aimed at Black communities across the U.S. are making headway in the effort to persuade people that the COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective. With millions of dollars in assistance from President Joe Biden's administration, local groups have urged Black Americans to roll up their sleeves for shots and set aside what for some is a shared historical distrust of science and government.

A poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research in late March found that about 24% of Black American adults said they will probably or definitely not get vaccinated. That's down from 41% in January. The latest number shows Black Americans leaning against getting shots in almost the same proportion as white Americans at 26% and Hispanic Americans at 22%.



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Dr. Georges Benjamin, executive director of the American Public Health Association, said attitudes toward the vaccine among Black Americans have taken “almost a 180-degree turnaround” as outreach campaigns have worked to combat misinformation.

He credited Black physicians, faith leaders and other community organizers for being trusted messengers during the pandemic, which has killed more than 550,000 Americans.

“It’s the messenger and the message,” but the messenger “is probably the most important part of it, and people doing it in a way that wasn’t preachy,” Benjamin said. “They didn’t tell people, ‘You need to get vaccinated because it’s your duty.’ They basically said, ‘Listen, you need to get vaccinated to protect yourself and your family.’”

Some of the most effective outreach has relied on existing community relationships, such as local physicians talking about their own decisions to get vaccinated, to reassure the public, said Dr. Lisa Cooper, director of the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Equity.

Community members in the Baltimore area who knew Cooper from her research on food deserts and nutrition trusted her as a source of information on COVID-19, she said.

Based on that relationship, “people felt comfortable hearing from me,” she said.

Some state health departments have rolled out ads targeting communities of color. NAACP chapters in some cities have booked appointments for people to get shots. Pastors of Black churches have urged their parishioners to take the vaccines.

In Brunswick, Georgia, the Rev. John Perry and another Black pastor put their faces on a billboard promoting the vaccines, and postcards with a similar image were mailed to residents. Both efforts were produced by the Georgia Department of Public Health.

“I think we still have enough people on the fence that are going to budge and get their shots,” said Perry, who initially wanted to wait a year before getting his shots but changed his mind after reading up on how the vaccines were developed. He got his second dose Wednesday.

Jason Pettibone, a Black barber in Perry’s coastal Georgia community, remains hesitant. His parents and sister have all been vaccinated with no ill effects. Yet Pettibone said the stories he hears from customers — including one who swore his father lost all feeling in the right side of his body after getting a shot — have made it hard to overcome his uncertainty.

“I’m thinking in my head not only would it be good for me to get it, because I don’t want to get sick myself, but also to protect other people who come into the shop,” Pettibone said. “But it’s the unknown. Everybody’s really scared of the unknown.”

In Savannah, Georgia, community activist Natavia Sanders said outreach efforts can backfire with some in the Black community who suspect the government is targeting them as test subjects rather than seeking to protect their health. Some of that skepticism can be traced to an infamous study in Tuskegee, Alabama, where the government let hundreds of Black men suffer untreated syphilis for 40 years for research purposes.

Sanders declined to say whether she was getting vaccinated. She said she’s spoken with several people who had to be hospitalized with COVID-19 but still have doubts about the vaccines.

“That’s how skeptical people are,” Sanders said. “They’re like, ‘No, I’ll fight it myself. I fought it already.’”

P.M. Browner got her vaccine Wednesday in Clarksdale, Mississippi. The 88-year-old Black woman said she doesn’t understand why she needs to get vaccinated if she’s not sick or around sick people.

Still, she agreed to get her shot. She said she thinks vaccinations will eventually be required, and she wants to be able to continue to socialize at a local senior center.

“If you ain’t got nothing, why do we need to take it?” Browner said. “But we’ll take it because later on, they’ll say, ‘You’ve got to take it.’ If you don’t, later on, I think we’ll have to.”

## UK’s Prince Philip honored with 41-gun salutes after death

By DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Military teams across the U.K. and on ships at sea fired 41-gun salutes Saturday to

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mark the death of Prince Philip, honoring the former naval officer and husband of Queen Elizabeth II who they considered one of their own.

Batteries in London, Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast — the capitals of the four nations that make up the United Kingdom — as well as other cities around the U.K. and the Mediterranean outpost of Gibraltar fired the volleys at one-minute intervals beginning at mid-day. Ships including HMS Montrose, a frigate patrolling the Persian Gulf, offered their own salutes.

Philip, who was also known as the Duke of Edinburgh, died Friday at Windsor Castle, two months before his 100th birthday.

"The Duke of Edinburgh served among us during the Second World War, and he remained devoted to the Royal Navy and the Armed Forces as a whole," Gen. Nick Carter, chief of the defense staff, said in a statement. "A life well-lived. His Royal Highness leaves us with a legacy of indomitable spirit, steadfastness and an unshakeable sense of duty."

Members of the Commonwealth, a group of 54 countries headed by the monarch, were also invited to honor Philip. The Australian Defense Force began its salute at 5 p.m. local time outside Parliament House in Canberra, and New Zealand planned to offer its own tribute on Sunday.

Philip joined the Royal Navy as a cadet in 1939 and once had a promising military career. In 1941, he was honored for his service during the battle of Cape Matapan off the coast of Greece, when his control of searchlights aboard the HMS Valiant allowed the battleship to pinpoint enemy vessels in the dark. Philip rose to the rank of commander before he retired from active duty.

Two years after the war ended, Philip married Elizabeth at Westminster Abbey when she was 21 and he was 26. Philip's naval career came to an abrupt end when King George VI died in 1952 and his wife became queen.

At the queen's coronation in 1953, Philip swore to be his wife's "liege man of life and limb" and settled into a life supporting the monarch. The couple had four children — Charles, the heir to the throne, Anne, Andrew and Edward.

Before he retired from official duties in 2017, the prince carried out more than 22,000 solo public engagements and supported over 780 organizations, including the Duke of Edinburgh's Award for young people.

Members of the public continued to honor Philip's life of service on Saturday, leaving flowers outside Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle despite appeals from authorities and the royal family to refrain from gathering because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I think everyone would like to pay their respects," Maureen Field, 67, said outside Windsor Castle. "Because of the virus, a lot of people have to stay away. He didn't want a big funeral. He wanted a very private time with his family to say their goodbyes. So, we've all got to respect that."

Mike Williams, 50, traveled from his home in Surrey, southwest of London, to Buckingham Palace to honor the prince.

"He's a massive loss to the country and to the world, I think, so we wanted to come and pay respects," Williams said. "I don't know what it achieves, but it just felt like the right thing to do."

## Famed Egyptian archaeologist reveals details of ancient city

By SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — Egypt's best-known archaeologist on Saturday revealed further details on a Pharaonic city recently found in the southern province of Luxor.

Zahi Hawass said that archaeologists found brick houses, artifacts, and tools from pharaonic times at the site of the 3,000-year-old lost city. It dates back to Amenhotep III of the 18th dynasty, whose reign is considered a golden era for ancient Egypt.

"This is really a large city that was lost... The inscription that found inside here says that this city was called: 'The dazzling Aten,'" Hawass told reporters at the site.

Archeologists started excavating in the area last year, searching for the mortuary temple of boy King Tutankhamun. However, within weeks they found mud brick formations that eventually turned out to be

a well-preserved large city.

City walls and even rooms filled with ovens, storage pottery, and utensils used in daily life are said to be present. Archeologists also found human remains that were visible to reporters and visitors on Saturday.

"We found three major districts, one for administration, one for the workmen to sleep, one for the industry and (an) area for dried meat," said Hawass, who spoke to reporters at the site while wearing his iconic Indiana Jones hat.

He said he believes that the city was "the most important discovery" since the tomb of Tutankhamun was unearthed in the Valley of the Kings in Luxor nearly fully intact in 1922

Paola Cartagena, a graduate student of Egyptology at the University of Manchester, said the discovery was of "great importance."

"Settlement archaeology is extremely valuable for learning true historical facts and broaden our understanding of how the ancient Egyptians lived," she wrote on Twitter.

The newly unearthed city is located between the temple of King Rameses III and the colossi of Amenhotep III on the west bank of the Nile in Luxor. The city continued to be used by Amenhotep III's grandson Tutankhamun, and then his successor King Ay.

Some mud bricks bear the seal of King Amenhotep III's cartouche, or name insignia.

Amenhotep III, who ruled ancient Egypt between 1391 B.C. and 1353 B.C., built the main portions of the Luxor and Karnak temples in the ancient town of Thebes.

Egypt has sought publicity for its archaeological discoveries in the hopes of reviving its tourism sector, which was badly hit by the turmoil following the 2011 uprising, and now the coronavirus pandemic.

The announcement came a few days after Egypt moved 22 of its prized royal mummies in a gala parade to their new resting place — the newly opened National Museum of Egyptian Civilization in Cairo.

## Women fighting fires in Florida: Colleagues' support crucial

By ANILA YOGANATHAN Associated Press

Krystyna Krakowski became a firefighter in Florida at a time when there were very few women to work beside or guide her in the service. Twenty years later, she is not only thriving but also recruiting more females into the profession.

Krakowski is one of five women at Palm Beach Gardens Fire Rescue who made department history last year by working an entire shift with no male colleagues — a feat that went viral on social media. She and her team members say they have been able to succeed thanks to both the support of the men they work with and by pushing through every challenge that comes their way.

The chain saw-and-ax-wielding women note they are held to the same standards as the men, physically and otherwise, and that the public should be aware that men and women of the department work together to help people.

"I've worked super hard to be strong from Day One," said firefighter Julie Dudley. "I still remember being in an academy and the instructor looking at me going, 'If you want to do girly push ups you can,' and I was like, 'Excuse me. No, I'm good. I got this.'"

The firefighters' success is notable in a profession that is so heavily male-dominated and that has seen numerous lawsuits from women alleging discrimination and sexual harassment in fire departments across the country.

The day they worked the all-woman shift, they were encouraged and cheered on by the men of the Palm Beach Gardens Fire Rescue.

"Even our battalion chiefs sent us a message: 'Good luck, ladies, all eyes are on you today. Show 'em what you got,'" Krakowski said. "It was exciting to say that every position was filled by a female. ... We played every role. We're capable. We've made it."

It wasn't always easy, however. Even some of the women on the history-making team had to overcome prior obstacles. In the fire department where she previously worked, Krakowski says she was the target of a hazing. She said fellow firefighters awoke her with an airhorn, held her down and zip-tied her hands

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and legs. When the incident came up on a radio show, Krakowski said she felt compelled to call in because comments from the public were so awful.

"It was heart-wrenching to hear another woman say, 'She doesn't belong in a firehouse. It must be a girl who needs attention,'" Krakowski said. "I'm a hardworking single mom. I've been that way almost my entire life; nothing has ever been given."

Kelsey Krzywada said at her first fire school, instructors were unwilling to help her when she struggled with the training because of her small size. At the second school she tried, however, "They were encouraging, regardless of your size, your gender," Krzywada said. "They loved their career, and they wanted all of us to love it too."

Krzywada said her choice of professions also negatively affected a relationship.

"His girl works with chain saws and fire, and he feels a little less of a man," she remarked of a former partner.

When their all-woman shift went viral, most of the feedback on social media was positive, but there were detractors as well.

"We'd have people going, 'How are you going to carry my 300-pound husband out of a building over your shoulder when it's on fire?'" Julie Dudley said. "Well, we're not. And I can tell you that no man in our department is going to do it either."

The firefighters acknowledge that the physical aspects of the job can be challenging, but they said they have learned how to play to their strengths as women rather than relying on brute force. As smaller women, Krzywada and Krakowski have found alternate but effective ways to do their job, whether it's pulling a hose line or throwing ladders, they said.

And while there are still plenty of "good old boy" fire departments in the U.S., the women see a positive shift away from that as more young people enter. Sandi Ladewski said any male firefighters at the Palm Beach Gardens department who didn't approve of women working in the industry have since left. The ones who remain — both colleagues and superiors — have supported the women and helped them to thrive and grow in numbers, she said.

Krakowski said she hopes to start seeing even more women join the ranks as instructors. Monica Marzullo, who was the second female in history to work in her last department, says the presence of more women brings a sense of camaraderie.

"The guys have always had each other. They have that brotherhood," Marzullo said. "And it's nice, too, when you have good women that are actually interested in helping one another."

Since going viral, Dudley and Krakowski said they've received messages on social media from women wanting to become firefighters. Both said they welcome and advise them on how to enter the field.

"I have ... one little niece (who) wants to be a firefighter," Ladewski said. "She wants to help people like Auntie Sandi."

## After Amazon: Labor tries to regroup in wake of Alabama loss

By PAUL WISEMAN and ANNE D'INNOCENZIO AP Business Writers

WASHINGTON (AP) — Despite the strongest public support and the most sympathetic president in years, the American labor movement just suffered a stinging defeat -- again.

Amazon warehouse workers in Bessemer, Alabama, overwhelmingly voted against joining the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union in much-anticipated election results announced Friday.

Amazon and business groups celebrated the decision, saying warehouse workers got a chance to weigh the pros and cons of union membership -- and voted to reject it.

But labor activists argue that the lopsided vote shows how unfairly the odds are stacked against union organizing efforts and highlights the need for Congress to reform U.S. labor law. The House last month passed such legislation -- the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act -- but it looks likely to die in the Senate.

The Bessemer results "reveal a broken union election system," Celine McNicholas, labor counsel at the



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left-leaning Economic Policy Institute, said in a statement. "It is clear that if policymakers do not reform our nation's labor law system, then they are effectively denying workers a meaningful right to a union and collective bargaining."

The retail union complains that Amazon plastered the Alabama workplace with anti-union posters and forced employees to sit through mandatory sessions in which the company disparaged the union. Labor organizers, by contrast, had to catch employees outside the warehouse gate to make their pitch.

"The law failed the workers," said Benjamin Sachs, a labor law professor at Harvard Law School. "The law gives employers far too much latitude to interfere in workers' ability to make a choice to join a union. That choice should be for the workers to make, not the employers to make."

Amazon supporters note that the company paid an average \$15.30 an hour -- more than double minimum wage in Alabama -- and offered health care and other benefits. "Union representation is a choice for workers," said David French, spokesman for the National Retail Federation. "But many clearly prefer opportunities in a competitive marketplace that provides strong wages and benefits."

Randy Korgan, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters' national director for Amazon, rejected the idea Amazon pays competitive wages at a time when \$15 an hour has become the minimum wage in some states. Korgan said he made more than \$15 an hour himself as a warehouse worker in the early 1990s.

"Using the minimum wage as barometer is a huge mistake," Korgan said. "This is not minimum wage work and for any employer to pat themselves on the back and use this as a guiding post shows they don't understand how difficult this work is."

American unions have been declining for decades. The percentage of workers who belong to unions peaked at 34.8% in 1954, according to the Congressional Research Service. By last year, their share of workers had fallen to 10.8%, the Labor Department reports.

America's unionization rate is one of the lowest in the world; it compares to 90% in Iceland, 67% in Denmark, 28% in Canada and 17% in Germany, according to the International Labor Organization.

Labor activists say companies routinely punish employees who try to organize unions -- and get away with it. Even when workers do agree to unionize, companies often negotiate in bad faith. "The current system is expecting a degree of heroism from people that most of us don't possess," said Thomas Geoghegan, a pro-union labor lawyer and author.

Economists have tied the decline in unions from their 1950s heyday to the growing gap in income between the richest Americans and all the rest. Unions not only raised wages for their own members; they also effectively pressured other employers to offer better pay and benefits.

A 2011 study by economists at Harvard University and the University of Washington found that the collapse of organized labor accounted for at least a fifth of the growth in inequality between 1973 and 2007.

As concerns about inequality have risen, public support for unions has grown. Gallup reported last year that 65% of Americans support unions, the most since 2003 and up from a low of 48% in 2009.

Unions also have a backer in the White House and Democratic control of the House and Senate. President Joe Biden promised to be "the most pro-union president you've ever seen." During the union drive at Bessemer, he pointedly expressed support for workers' right to choose a union, and he supports the PRO Act.

Passed 225-206 by the House, the act would reverse Right to Work laws, currently in effect in 27 states, which prevent unions from collecting dues from workers who refuse to join -- but still benefit from union contracts.

It would also give union organizers more control over how and where union votes are held and empower the National Labor Relations Board to fine companies that don't comply with the board's orders.

But the Senate appears to lack the 60 votes needed to overcome a filibuster, which will ultimately doom the effort. "The Democratic Party can't deliver because of the filibuster," Geoghegan said. "It's heartbreaking."

Even without a legislative victory, he said, Biden could boost unions by steering federal contracts to companies with collective bargaining agreements.

Michael Lind, founder of the New America think tank and author of a history of the American economy, said American unions are hobbled by the way they are forced to organize -- company by company or workplace by workplace, as in the case of the Amazon warehouse in Bessemer. Many European countries,

by contrast, organize union representation by whole industries or sectors.

"Let's just admit that enterprise-based bargaining is a rotten collapsed building," Lind said. "Let's start from scratch with sectoral bargaining."

Adam Ryan, a 32-year-old part-time Target employee in Virginia who founded a group called Target Workers Unite in 2019, notes that unions have for years been focused more on contract negotiations rather than the radical strikes they organized decades ago.

"A lot of times the stereotypes the corporations use to dissuade people from going to unions are largely true — the idea that they are third parties and they come in and take dues out of your paycheck and they really don't do much for you when you need them," he said.

Ryan argues that unions must reform themselves "to change people's sentiments towards them or people need to learn that there are different strategies of labor organizing that can be driven by the rank and file."

Others say, despite labor's long losing streak, it's too soon to count unions out. Philip Dray, author of "There is Power in a Union: The Epic Story of Labor in America," recalls the United Auto Workers' protracted struggle to organize workers at Ford and Cesar Chavez' fight to unionize California farm workers.

"Workers' collectives have never been an easy fit with this country," Dray said. "Unions have frequently lost a battle against formidable opposition, only to go on and win the war."

## Reforms follow deadly year in New York nursing homes

By MARINA VILLENEUVE Associated Press

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — After a deadly year in New York's nursing homes, state lawmakers have passed legislation intended to hold facility operators more accountable for neglect and potentially force them to spend more on patient care.

Rules passed in recent days as part of a state budget deal would require for-profit homes to spend at least 70% of their revenue on direct patient care, including 40% on staffers who work directly with residents.

Under the deal, set to be signed by Gov. Andrew Cuomo, a Democrat, home operators will also face limits on their profit margins. Any profits in excess of 5% would have to be sent to the state.

"The goal is here to not only protect people in nursing homes but to dissuade bad actors from coming into this business," Sen. Gustavo Rivera, Senate health committee chair, said. New York's budget would also send \$64 million to nursing home and acute care facilities to increase nurse staffing levels.

The nursing home industry has blasted the new revenue requirements, saying operators need flexibility for things like construction costs.

Stephen Hanse, president and CEO of the New York State Health Facilities Association, which represents nursing homes, said the big problem in the industry isn't owner greed, but poor reimbursement rates for care. He said it costs \$266 on average to provide skilled nursing care per resident each day, but New York pays an average of \$211.

The state's new spending mandate, he said, "harms the highest quality, fully staffed 4- and 5- star nursing homes by requiring that funds be redirected from other patient care investments and building improvements and be used only for certain staff."

More long-term care residents have died of COVID-19 in New York than any other state. Nursing homes alone have reported 13,800 deaths.

The Cuomo administration's decision to withhold information about those deaths from the public, for months, is being investigated by federal prosecutors and is one subject of a legislative impeachment inquiry.

Cuomo and lawmakers are also facing outcry from family members devastated by the state's high death toll and worries that residents, despite an ongoing vaccination campaign, are still at risk in some understaffed facilities.

"I had absolutely no idea this was how this nursing home industry was run until I had to deal with it," said Cecelia Potter, 63, of Cobleskill, whose 74-year-old husband is in a central New York nursing home.

Potter said her husband, a Navy veteran, hasn't been showered in weeks, receives little attention from overstretched aides and has declined "dramatically" over the past year.

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She said she has seen the owner of her husband's nursing home driving fancy cars, and wants to know how much money he makes from residents whose care is largely funded by Medicaid.

"We need massive nursing home reform, statewide we do, and it's probably countrywide," she said. "Just simply because these people that own these places are allowed to get away with a lot. They shouldn't be. This is our most vulnerable population."

One new law, signed by Cuomo this week, repeals a legal shield that protected nursing homes from some lawsuits during the COVID-19 pandemic.

New York's law was among the nation's most protective, and state Attorney General Letitia James called for lawmakers to repeal it in January.

"What immunity provision did is give a green light to facilities to engage in practices and staffing patterns known to create unreasonable risk to residents," Syracuse University School of Law professor Nina Kohn said.

The immunity repeal doesn't explicitly allow family members to sue for substandard care during the months of the pandemic when the shield was in place — a right advocates for the elderly had pushed for. But lawmakers hope their efforts could help families who try to sue anyway.

New York's new rules requiring 70% of revenues be used for patient care will be lower than in some states. New Jersey requires that at least 90% of revenues be spent on patient care.

But "significant numbers" of nursing homes are spending 50% and 60% of their revenue on care and services for the residents, according to Assembly member Richard Gottfried, a New York City Democrat and Assembly health committee chair.

"Until now there were almost no rules," Gottfried said. "So if they were siphoning off money, even when you prove that, it didn't have any consequences. The new system will require enforcement. It will require the health department or if necessary the state attorney general or comptroller, to audit the data and make sure that money is really being spent where the owner claims it is being spent."

Meanwhile, some family members and attorneys worry that for-profit nursing home operators will find ways around the revenue restrictions. About two-thirds of New York's nursing homes are for-profit.

John Dalli, an attorney who focuses on elder abuse and nursing home negligence, said the revenue cap doesn't, for example, prevent nursing home operators from doing business with related companies who may own the building they rent.

"I am skeptical about whether this 'cap' will have any real effect on the ultimate profits that flow through to these operators and their families," Dalli said.

## Too much? BBC gets complaints over Prince Philip coverage

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — The U.K.'s national broadcaster switched instantly into mourning mode when Prince Philip's death was announced but not everyone has agreed with that BBC decision.

The BBC canceled its regular programming Friday and aired special coverage hosted by black-clad news anchors throughout the day. Popular prime-time shows such as the cooking contest "MasterChef" were supplanted, and the network's music radio stations played instrumentals and somber tunes.

Some Britons saw the BBC's actions as a fitting mark of respect. For others, it was a bit much.

The broadcaster received so many complaints alleging its reporting was excessive that it set up a special website page for viewers to register objections if they felt there was "too much TV coverage of the death of HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh." It didn't disclose how many people had complained by Saturday.

Simon McCoy, a long-time BBC news presenter who recently left the network, suggested the wall-to-wall coverage was inordinate.

"BBC1 and BBC2 showing the same thing. And presumably the News Channel, too. Why? I know this is a huge event. But surely the public deserve a choice of programming?" McCoy said on Twitter.

The publicly funded BBC often finds itself under fire from all sides for its treatment of major national events. When the Queen Mother Elizabeth died in 2002, the broadcaster received criticism because the

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announcer who delivered the news did not wear a black tie.

Britain's other TV stations also gave extensive coverage to Philip's death at age 99 and after 73 years of marriage to Queen Elizabeth II. Commercial network ITV aired news coverage and tribute programs all day Friday in place of scheduled programming.

The BBC is under unique pressure, though, because it is taxpayer-funded. Scrutiny and questions about its role have grown in recent years as commercial rivals and streaming services give audiences more choice.

The BBC has often irked governments with its coverage of their failings and scandals. Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Conservative administration has been especially rankled, claiming a liberal bias in the broadcaster's coverage of issues such as Brexit.

For a time, the government refused to allow Cabinet ministers to appear on major BBC news programs, and it mulled the idea of scrapping the 159-pound (\$218) a year license fee that households pay to fund the broadcaster.

BBC Director-General Tim Davie has acknowledged the organization must evolve with changing times, but says it remains essential to British society.

"We have a different purpose" than broadcasters such as Netflix, Davie told U.K. lawmakers last month. "I'm not running a business for profit. I'm running ... an organization for purpose."

## **EXPLAINER: What is behind the latest unrest in N Ireland?**

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Young people have hurled bricks, fireworks and gasoline bombs at police and set hijacked cars and a bus on fire during a week of violence on the streets of Northern Ireland. Police responded with rubber bullets and water cannons.

The streets were calmer Friday night, as community leaders appealed for calm after the death of Prince Philip, Queen Elizabeth II's 99-year-old husband. But small gangs of youths pelted police with objects and set a car ablaze during sporadic outbreaks in Belfast.

The chaotic scenes have stirred memories of decades of Catholic-Protestant conflict, known as "The Troubles." A 1998 peace deal ended large-scale violence but did not resolve Northern Ireland's deep-rooted tensions.

A look at the background to the new violence:

### **WHY IS NORTHERN IRELAND A CONTESTED LAND?**

Geographically, Northern Ireland is part of Ireland. Politically, it's part of the United Kingdom.

Ireland, long dominated by its bigger neighbor, broke free about 100 years ago after centuries of colonization and an uneasy union. Twenty-six of its 32 counties became an independent, Roman Catholic-majority country. Six counties in the north, which have a Protestant majority, stayed British.

Northern Ireland's Catholic minority experienced discrimination in jobs, housing and other areas in the Protestant-run state. In the 1960s, a Catholic civil rights movement demanded change, but faced a harsh response from the government and police. Some people on both the Catholic and Protestant sides formed armed groups that escalated the violence with bombings and shootings.

The British Army was deployed in 1969, initially to keep the peace. The situation deteriorated into a conflict between Irish republican militants who wanted to unite with the south, loyalist paramilitaries who sought to keep Northern Ireland British, and U.K. troops.

During three decades of conflict more than 3,600 people, a majority of them civilians, were killed in bombings and shootings. Most were in Northern Ireland, though the Irish Republican Army also set off bombs in London and other British cities.

### **HOW DID THE CONFLICT END?**

By the 1990s, after secret talks and with the help of diplomatic efforts by Ireland, Britain and the United States, the combatants reached a peace deal. The 1998 Good Friday accord saw the paramilitaries lay down their arms and established a Catholic-Protestant power-sharing government for Northern Ireland. The question of Northern Ireland's ultimate status was deferred: it would remain British as long as that



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was the majority's wish, but a future referendum on reunification was not ruled out.

While the peace has largely endured, small Irish Republican Army splinter groups have mounted occasional attacks on security forces, and there have been outbreaks of sectarian street violence.

Politically, the power-sharing arrangement has had periods of success and failure. The Belfast administration collapsed in January 2017 over a botched green energy project. It remained suspended for more than two years amid a rift between British unionist and Irish nationalist parties over cultural and political issues, including the status of the Irish language. Northern Ireland's government resumed work at the start of 2020, but there remains deep mistrust on both sides.

## HOW HAS BREXIT COMPLICATED THINGS?

Northern Ireland has been called the "problem child" of Brexit, the U.K.'s divorce from the European Union. As the only part of the U.K. that has a border with an EU nation — Ireland — it was the trickiest issue to resolve after Britain voted narrowly in 2016 to leave the 27-nation bloc.

An open Irish border, over which people and goods flow freely, underpins the peace process, allowing people in Northern Ireland to feel at home in both Ireland and the U.K.

The insistence of Britain's Conservative government on a "hard Brexit" that took the country out of the EU's economic order meant the creation of new barriers and checks on trade. Both Britain and the EU agreed that border could not be in Ireland because of the risk that would pose to the peace process. The alternative was to put it, metaphorically, in the Irish Sea — between Northern Ireland and the rest of the U.K.

That arrangement has alarmed British unionists, who say it weakens Northern Ireland's place in the United Kingdom and could bolster calls for Irish reunification.

## WHY HAS VIOLENCE ERUPTED NOW?

The violence has been largely in Protestant areas in and around Belfast and Northern Ireland's second city, Londonderry, although the disturbances have spread to Catholic neighborhoods.

Britain left the EU's economic embrace on Dec. 31, and the new trade arrangements quickly became an irritant to Northern Ireland unionists who want to stay in the U.K. Early trade glitches, exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic, led to some empty supermarket shelves, fueling alarm. Border staff were temporarily withdrawn from Northern Ireland ports in February after threatening graffiti appeared to target port workers.

There was anger that British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who long insisted there would be no new checks on trade as a result of Brexit, had downplayed the scale of the changes wrought by leaving the EU. Some in Northern Ireland's British loyalist community feel as if their identity is under threat.

"Many loyalists believe that, de facto, Northern Ireland has ceased to be as much a part of the U.K. as it was," Ulster University politics professor Henry Patterson told Sky News.

Unionists are also angry at a police decision not to prosecute politicians from the IRA-linked Sinn Fein party who attended the funeral of a former Irish Republican Army commander in June, despite coronavirus restrictions.

Meanwhile, outlawed armed groups continue to operate as criminal drug gangs and still exert influence in working-class communities — though the main paramilitaries have denied involvement in the recent unrest.

Many of those involved in the violence were teenagers and even children as young as 12. They grew up after the Troubles, but live in areas where poverty and unemployment remain high and where sectarian divides have not healed. Two decades after the Good Friday peace accord, concrete "peace walls" still separate working-class Catholic and Protestant areas of Belfast.

The coronavirus pandemic has added new layers of economic damage, education disruptions and lockdown-induced boredom to the mix.

Despite calls for peace from political leaders in Belfast, London, Dublin and Washington, the knot of problems may prove difficult to resolve.

"These are areas of multiple deprivation with the sense of not much to lose," Katy Hayward, a professor of politics at Queen's University Belfast, said. "And when (people) are mobilized by social media telling them 'Enough is enough, now is the time to defend Ulster,' then many of them — too many — respond to that."

## High court halts Calif. virus rules limiting home worship

By JESSICA GRESKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court is telling California that it can't enforce coronavirus-related restrictions that have limited home-based religious worship including Bible studies and prayer meetings.

The order from the court late Friday is the latest in a recent string of cases in which the high court has barred officials from enforcing some coronavirus-related restrictions applying to religious gatherings.

Five conservative justices agreed that California restrictions that apply to in-home religious gatherings should be lifted for now, while the court's three liberals and Chief Justice John Roberts would not have done so.

California has already, however, announced significant changes loosening restrictions on gatherings that go into effect April 15. The changes come after infection rates have gone down in the state.

The case before the justices involved California rules that in most of the state limit indoor social gatherings to no more than three households. Attendees are required to wear masks and physically distance from one another. Different restrictions apply to places including schools, grocery stores and churches.

"California treats some comparable secular activities more favorably than at-home religious exercise," allowing hair salons, retail stores, and movie theaters, among other places, "to bring together more than three households at a time," the unsigned order from the court said. A lower court "did not conclude that those activities pose a lesser risk of transmission than applicants' proposed religious exercise at home," it said.

The court acknowledged that California's policy on gatherings will change next week but said the restrictions remain in place until then and that "officials with a track record of 'moving the goalposts' retain authority to reinstate those heightened restrictions at any time."

Justice Elena Kagan wrote in a dissent for herself and her liberal colleagues, Justice Stephen Breyer and Justice Sonia Sotomayor, that the court's majority was hurting state officials' ability to address a public health emergency.

"California limits religious gatherings in homes to three households. If the State also limits all secular gatherings in homes to three households, it has complied with the First Amendment. And the State does exactly that: It has adopted a blanket restriction on at-home gatherings of all kinds, religious and secular alike. California need not ... treat at-home religious gatherings the same as hardware stores and hair salons," she wrote. She added that "the law does not require that the State equally treat apples and watermelons."

The case before the justices involved two residents of Santa Clara County in the San Francisco Bay Area, who want to host small, in-person Bible study sessions in their homes. California had defended its policy of restricting social gatherings as "entirely neutral."

The court has dealt with a string of cases in which religious groups have challenged coronavirus restrictions impacting worship services. While early in the pandemic the court sided with state officials over the objection of religious groups, that changed following the death of liberal Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg last September and her replacement by conservative Justice Amy Coney Barrett.

In November, the high court barred New York from enforcing certain limits on attendance at churches and synagogues in areas designated as hard hit by the virus. And in February, the high court told California that it can't bar indoor church services because of the coronavirus pandemic, though it let stand for now a ban on singing and chanting indoors.

## Stalled at first jab: Vaccine shortages hit poor countries

By LORI HINNANT and MARIA CHENG Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — As many as 60 countries, including some of the world's poorest, might be stalled at the first shots of their coronavirus vaccinations because nearly all deliveries through the global program intended to help them are blocked until as late as June.

COVAX, the global initiative to provide vaccines to countries lacking the clout to negotiate for scarce

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supplies on their own, has in the past week shipped more than 25,000 doses to low-income countries only twice on any given day. Deliveries have all but halted since Monday.

During the past two weeks, according to data compiled daily by UNICEF, fewer than 2 million COVAX doses in total were cleared for shipment to 92 countries in the developing world — the same amount injected in Britain alone.

On Friday, the head of the World Health Organization slammed the “shocking imbalance” in global COVID-19 vaccination. WHO Director General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said that while one in four people in rich countries had received a vaccine, only one in 500 people in poorer countries had gotten a dose.

The vaccine shortage stems mostly from India’s decision to stop exporting vaccines from its Serum Institute factory, which produces the overwhelming majority of the AstraZeneca doses that COVAX counted on to supply around a third of the global population at a time coronavirus is spiking worldwide.

COVAX will only ship vaccines cleared by WHO, and countries are increasingly impatient. Supplies are dwindling in some of the first countries to receive COVAX shipments, and the expected delivery of second doses in the 12-week window currently recommended is now in doubt. In a statement, the vaccine alliance known as GAVI told The Associated Press that 60 countries are affected by the delays.

In vaccination tents set up at Kenyatta National Hospital in Nairobi, many of those who arrived for their first jabs were uneasy about when the second would arrive.

“My fear if I don’t get the second dose, my immune system is going to be weak, hence I might die,” said Oscar Odinga, a civil servant.

Internal WHO documents obtained by the AP show the uncertainty about deliveries “is causing some countries to lose faith in the COVAX (effort).” That is prompting WHO to consider speeding up its endorsement of vaccines from China and Russia, which have not been authorized by any regulators in Europe or North America.

The WHO documents show the U.N. agency is facing questions from COVAX participants about allotments in addition to “uncertainty about whether all those who were vaccinated in round 1 are guaranteed a second dose.”

WHO declined to respond specifically to the issues raised in the internal materials but has previously said countries are “very keen” to get vaccines as soon as possible and insisted it hasn’t heard any complaints about the process.

Concern over the link between the AstraZeneca shot and rare blood clots has also “created nervousness both around its safety and efficacy,” WHO noted. Among its proposed solutions is a decision to “expedite review of additional products” from China and Russia.

WHO said last month it might be possible to greenlight the Chinese vaccines by the end of April.

Some experts have noted that Sinopharm and Sinovac, two Chinese-made vaccines, lack published data, and there are reports of people needing a third dose to be protected.

“If there is something that we miss from not having thoroughly evaluated the risks of serious adverse events from these vaccines, that would undermine the confidence in all the good products that we’re using that we know are safe,” said Dora Curry, director of health equity and rights at CARE International.

Other experts worried that delays could erode faith in governments that were particularly efficient in their vaccination programs and were counting on second doses soon.

“In the absence of high vaccination coverage globally, we risk dragging out the pandemic for several more years,” said Lavanya Vasudevan, an assistant professor at Duke University’s Global Health Institute. “Every day that the virus is in circulation is an opportunity for it to mutate into a more deadly variant.”

Earlier this month, the WHO appealed to rich countries to urgently share 10 million doses to meet the U.N. target of starting COVID-19 vaccinations in every country within the first 100 days of the year. So far, countries have pledged hundreds of millions of dollars to COVAX. But there are simply no doses to buy, and no country has agreed to immediately share what it has.

Bilateral donations of doses tend to go along political lines, rather than to countries with the most infections, and they aren’t nearly enough to compensate for the goals that COVAX has set out. Think Global Health, a data site managed by the Council on Foreign Relations, identified 19 countries that have donated

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a total of 27.5 million doses to 102 nations as of Thursday.

"You can make a strong argument that we're better off making donations in crisis and getting the pandemic under control than vaccinating low-risk groups at home," said Thomas Bollyky, director of the Global Health Program at the Council on Foreign Relations. Bollyky said COVAX was both a great disappointment and the only available option for most the world.

According to the International Rescue Committee, COVID-19 cases and deaths last month surged in numerous crisis-hit countries: by 322% in Kenya, 379% in Yemen and 529% in northeast Syria.

On Thursday, the agencies behind COVAX — WHO, vaccines alliance GAVI and CEPI, a coalition for epidemic preparedness — celebrated their delivery of 38 million lifesaving vaccines to more than 100 countries.

Brook Baker, a vaccines expert at Northeastern University, said the laudatory message was misplaced. "Celebrating doses sufficient for only 19 million people, or 0.25% of global population, is tone deaf," he said, adding it was time for WHO and partners to be more honest with countries.

"WHO and GAVI have repeatedly overpromised and underdelivered, so why should we believe that they will suddenly be able to ramp up production and deliveries in a couple of months?" he said.

Outside the vaccination tents in Nairobi on Thursday, Dr. Duncan Nyukuri, an infectious disease physician, tried to reassure people getting their first dose.

"If you receive the first dose and you fail to receive the second dose, this does not mean that your body will be any weaker or you will be at an increased risk of getting any infection," he said. "What it means is your body will have developed some immunity against the coronavirus infection. But this immunity is not as good as somebody who has received both doses."

## US to keep migrant families in hotels as amid rush for space

By ELLIOT SPAGAT Associated Press

Migrant families will be held at hotels in the Phoenix area in response to a growing number of people crossing the U.S.-Mexico border, authorities said Friday, another step in the Biden administration's rush to set up temporary space for them.

U.S. Sen. Kyrsten Sinema was told that U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement will occupy "several hotels along the southwest border, including in Chandler and Phoenix," her office said in a statement. Chandler is a Phoenix suburb that's more than 150 miles (241 kilometers) north of the border.

ICE declined to identify specific hotels and locations, saying only that its \$86.9 million contract announced last month with Endeavors Inc. will provide about 1,200 hotel beds in Texas and Arizona. Migrant families will generally stay less than 72 hours for processing.

The contract says the San Antonio-based provider of veterans care, disaster relief and migrant services already has beds available at hotels in Chandler and the Texas cities of El Paso and Cotulla, southwest of San Antonio. The first families to be housed in hotels under the contract were set to arrive Friday.

Sinema's office said the Democratic senator spoke with Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas and will hold him "accountable for protecting Arizona communities and ensuring all migrants are treated fairly and humanely."

The Border Patrol encountered 52,904 families along the Mexican border last month, up from 19,286 in February and 3,455 in March 2020. The Endeavors contract says authorities anticipate the highest number of family arrivals in 20 years during the 12-month period ending Sept. 30.

Only about one in three families encountered last month was quickly expelled from the U.S. under federal pandemic-related powers that deny people a chance to seek asylum. Immigration authorities have been releasing families with children 6 and younger into the country while their cases are decided.

Mexico also has resisted taking back Central American families with young children, especially in Tamaulipas state bordering Texas' Rio Grande Valley, the busiest corridor for illegal crossings. The U.S. flies some families to other border cities — San Diego and El Paso — to be expelled to Mexico from there.

To save time, the Border Patrol has been releasing migrant families — about 9,600 people as of Tuesday, according to U.S. Rep. Henry Cuellar — without notices to appear in court. Instead, they're told to report to an ICE office in 60 days.



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The contract with Endeavors comes as the administration is scrambling for more space to hold families and unaccompanied children. The Border Patrol picked up nearly 19,000 children traveling alone last month, its highest monthly total on record.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services — which places unaccompanied children with “sponsors,” most often parents and close relatives — has found space in convention centers, military bases and other large venues. Los Angeles County officials said Friday that its fairgrounds will be used to temporarily house up to 2,500 unaccompanied children.

Lawyers representing immigrant children in longstanding federal litigation over custody conditions raised concerns on Friday that Health and Human Services isn’t moving quickly enough to release the minors to sponsors. Without doing that, so long as border authorities continue detaining children at this pace, “it is difficult to see how a proliferation of overcrowded, irregular facilities can possibly be avoided,” the attorneys wrote in a court filing.

Government lawyers wrote in court papers that Health and Human Services’ office of refugee resettlement is ramping up efforts at recently-opened sites to quickly reunite these children with their families.

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott, a Republican and frequent Biden critic, asked the administration to close a holding facility for unaccompanied children at the Freeman Coliseum in San Antonio, citing allegations that they aren’t getting enough to eat and boys are unsupervised in showers.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki said Friday that the administration takes the “safety and the well-being of children in our care very seriously” and that authorities would investigate Abbott’s claims, but that, at this point, “we have no basis for his call” to shut down the facility.

## **Biden budget seeks more for schools, health care and housing**

By JOSH BOAK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden released a \$1.5 trillion wish list for his first federal budget, asking for substantial gains for Democratic priorities including education, health care, housing and environmental protection.

The request by the White House budget office Friday for an 8.4% increase in agency operating budgets spells out Biden’s top priorities as Congress weighs its spending plans for next year. It’s the first financial outline of the Democrats’ broader ambitions since the expiration of a 2011 law that capped congressional spending.

“I’m hoping it’ll have some bipartisan support across the board,” Biden said before an Oval Office meeting with his economics team, though prominent Senate Republicans immediately complained the plan would shortchange the military and national security in boosting domestic programs.

Bipartisanship in 2011 also restricted Democrats’ ambitions, a problem they’re now trying to address. White House press secretary Jen Psaki said the administration was “inheriting a legacy of chronic under-investment” because of the caps.

“The president is focused on reversing this trend and reinvesting in the foundations of our strength,” she told reporters at a briefing.

At stake is “discretionary spending,” roughly one-third of the huge federal budget that is passed by Congress each year, funding the military, domestic Cabinet department operations, foreign policy and homeland security. The rest of the budget involves so-called mandatory programs with locked-in spending, chiefly Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid.

The Biden request provides a significantly smaller 1.6% increase for the \$700 billion-plus Pentagon budget than for domestic accounts. Homeland security accounts would basically be frozen, reflecting opposition among Democratic progressives to immigration security forces.

Senate Republicans were quick to criticize the modest proposed increase for defense, with Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, Oklahoma’s Jim Inhofe, Florida’s Marco Rubio, South Carolina’s Lindsey Graham and Alabama’s Richard Shelby releasing a joint statement.

“Talk is cheap, but defending our country is not,” they said. “We can’t afford to fail in our constitutional

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responsibility to provide for the common defense. To keep America strong, we must balance domestic and defense spending priorities.”

The appropriations process was one of the few consistent success stories of former President Donald Trump’s tumultuous four-year tenure in office, but this year’s budget cycle is not governed by the formal spending caps of a broader outline. The lapse of those caps opens the door to more domestic spending favored by Biden and Democrats but invites a battle with Republicans over military accounts.

The Biden administration believes the caps, imposed by a long-abandoned 2011 budget deal, caused a decade of severe underinvestment in public services that the president is now trying to turn around with large increases that would mostly bypass national security programs.

The administration says the request would bring spending in line with historical averages. It seeks \$769 billion in non-defense discretionary funding, about equal to the 30-year average relative to the overall U.S. economy.

Biden wants to increase the Education Department’s budget by a massive 40.8% to \$102.8 billion, which includes an additional \$20 billion in grants for high-poverty schools.

The Department of Health and Human Services would get a 23.1% boost to \$133.7 billion. There would be additional funds to combat opioid addiction and for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, whose mission took on new urgency during the coronavirus pandemic. The administration is also asking for \$6.5 billion to establish a biomedical research agency to address cancer, diabetes, Alzheimer’s and other diseases.

Biden is seeking a \$14 billion increase across government agencies to address climate change. It’s part of a whole-of-government approach to the climate crisis that includes billions to boost environmental justice for communities near refineries, power plants and other hazardous sites.

Housing and Urban Development would get a 15.1% increase to \$68.7 billion, primarily to provide housing vouchers for an additional 200,000 families. The administration also seeks more money for civil rights enforcement and addressing gun violence as a public health epidemic.

Passing the president’s plan as written through Congress is typically a long shot. Recent history and guaranteed conflicts with Republicans are likely to force lawmakers to put discretionary accounts on autopilot for months after the Sept. 30 expiration of the budget year.

The plan also details how the Biden administration will try to deal with the influx of arrivals at the U.S. southern border. It includes \$861 million to invest in Central America to address the forces driving people to migrate to the United States. An additional \$345 million would go to immigration services to resolve delays in years-long naturalization and asylum cases. The budget for the Executive Office of Immigration Review would jump 21% to \$891 million in order to hire 100 new immigration judges and support teams to reduce the existing backlogs.

The president seeks modest increases for national security. Defense -- the largest department in the discretionary plan -- would get a 1.6% increase to \$715 billion. Homeland Security would edge up 0.2% to \$52 billion.

But the administration views diplomacy as a way to engage with the wider world. It’s pursuing a 12% increase in funding for the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development, taking their spending to \$63.5 billion.

Friday’s request does not include plans for tax revenues or mandatory federal spending. Nor does it include the planned spending in Biden’s infrastructure plan. A fuller budget proposal will be released later this spring.

## Trump addresses GOP as power to shape national debate wanes

By JILL COLVIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Former President Donald Trump insists he’s enjoying his life off Twitter. The press releases his aides fire off on an increasingly frequent basis are more “elegant,” he says. Plus there’s no risk of backlash for retweeting unsavory accounts.

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But since Trump was barred from major social media channels after helping incite the deadly Jan. 6 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol, his power to shape the national conversation is being tested.

Trump transformed from a reality television star to a politician and president by bending the tools of communication and the media to his will. He still connects with his supporters through his releases and appearances on Fox News and other conservative outlets, where he repeats misinformation about the 2020 election. And he remains a powerful force in the Republican Party, with a starring role Saturday at a Republican National Committee event that will be held at his Mar-a-Lago club.

Still, the sway over American life he once enjoyed appears to be eroding — at least for now.

"It'll never be the same for Trump unless he's a candidate again," said Harold Holzer, an historian who is director of Hunter College's Roosevelt House Public Policy Institute and wrote a book about presidents and the press. "I don't think it's unnatural for coverage to diminish. I'm sure it's tough on his ego, given how much oxygen he sucks up and how much ink he generates, but it's not unnatural for an ex-president to get less attention."

It's been a dramatic adjustment nonetheless. Trump's tweets used to drive the news cycle, with CNN, MSNBC and Fox News often spending dozens of hours a week combined displaying his missives, according to a GDELT analysis of television news archives. Since he was barred from Twitter and other platforms, Trump can no longer speak directly to large swaths of his audience and must now rely on his supporters and conservative and mainstream media to amplify his messages.

To compensate for the ongoing blackout, Trump aides have been pumping out statements and endorsements that often sound just like the tweets he used to dictate. "Happy Easter to ALL, including the Radical Left CRAZIES who rigged our Presidential Election, and want to destroy our Country!" read one sent from his political action committee. ("Happy Easter!" was the more subdued version offered by his official government office.)

At the same time, Trump has been ramping up his appearances on conservative media — even sitting down with his daughter-in-law for her online program. But few of those comments have reverberated as mainstream outlets, long criticized for allowing Trump to dictate coverage, have become increasingly wary of repeating his falsehoods, especially pertaining to the 2020 election.

While Trump still garners coverage, Google search results for his name are at their lowest point since 2015, as noted this week by The Washington Post. And on late night TV, some have tried to scrub him out entirely, with "Late Show" host Stephen Colbert refusing to say his name.

After five years of wall-to-wall Trump, the contrast is jarring.

"He was unlike any prior president in the amount of oxygen he sucked up. But he increasingly resembles many former president in how little oxygen he now gets," said Ari Fleischer, who served as press secretary to George W. Bush. While that is the reality for any former president, Fleischer argued that Trump continues to "loom large" in the party and could return to the spotlight if he chooses to run again.

And though his dominance of cable news has dropped precipitously from its peak in fall 2016, when he was mentioned tens of thousands of times a month, per GDELT data, he remains a presence on cable news channels nonetheless.

"Two months out of office, he's still roughly where he was in March of last year when the pandemic largely displaced him," said Kalev Leetaru, the project's creator. "It shows that even two months out of office, he's still looming large."

While most of Trump's statements garner relatively little coverage, some, like one that blasted Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell as "a dour, sullen, and unsmiling political hack," dominated news coverage, with CNN, in particular, running with it for more than 44 minutes.

"President Trump is the greatest news generator in American history," Trump spokesman Jason Miller said, insisting, "There was never this type of media interest in the post-Presidential careers of Clinton, Bush or Obama."

Others see it differently.

"I think he lost all momentum when he got pulled from the platforms. Politics is about momentum and

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he has none now," said presidential historian Douglas Brinkley.

While Trump has tried to inject himself into news coverage, Brinkley said his comments are largely treated as add-ons to coverage focused on other matters. "Where it used to be he was shooting tweets like Zeus, they were like thunderbolts from up high, and now it's little squeaks from the mouse of Mar-a-Lago," he said.

Yet Trump remains a commanding figure for the Republican Party. His endorsement is highly coveted heading into the 2022 Republican primaries. And he continues to publicly flirt with running again for president in 2024.

And Holzer believes Trump could reemerge if he is allowed to rejoin Twitter or goes through with much-hyped plans to launch his own social media outlet, as aides have said he is still considering.

GOP strategist Alex Conant argued Trump's power "is waning by the day" as other Republicans make plans to run in 2024, and said Trump could be taking a more strategic approach if he wants to remain part of the daily conversation.

"When you're president of the United States, it's very easy to insert yourself into every news cycle. But once you've left office, it has to be more strategic," Conant said, arguing Trump could have announced a book, sat for primetime interviews, or delivered a series of major speeches about the future of the party.

Fleischer, too, argued Trump could have greater influence by following in the footsteps of presidents Bush and Obama, whose statements garner attention because they are rare.

"The risk for a former president is you risk starting to be seen as former senators or former congressman or contributors who are on TV on a somewhat regular basis. A former president should be at an elevated posture," he said. "But Donald Trump has always done things differently with some success."

## Alibaba fined \$2.8 billion on competition charge in China

By JOE McDONALD AP Business Writer

BEIJING (AP) — Alibaba Group, the world's biggest e-commerce company, was fined 18.3 billion yuan (\$2.8 billion) by Chinese regulators on Saturday for anti-competitive tactics, as the ruling Communist Party tightens control over fast-growing tech industries.

Party leaders worry about the dominance of China's biggest internet companies, which are expanding into finance, health services and other sensitive areas. The party says anti-monopoly enforcement, especially in tech, is a priority this year.

Alibaba was fined for "abusing its dominant position" to limit competition by retailers that use its platforms and hindering "free circulation" of goods, the State Administration for Market Regulation announced. It said the fine was equal to 4% of its total 2019 sales of 455.712 billion yuan (\$69.5 billion).

"Alibaba accepts the penalty with sincerity and will ensure its compliance with determination," the company said in a statement. It promised to "operate in accordance with the law with utmost diligence."

The move is a new setback for Alibaba and its billionaire founder, Jack Ma, following a November decision by regulators to suspend the stock market debut of Ant Group, a finance platform spun off from the e-commerce giant. It would have been the world's biggest initial public stock offering last year.

Ma, one of China's richest and most prominent entrepreneurs, disappeared temporarily from public view after criticizing regulators in a November speech. That was followed days later by the Ant Group suspension, though finance specialists said regulators already had been worried Ant lacked adequate financial risk controls.

Alibaba, launched in 1999, operates retail, business-to-business and consumer-to-consumer platforms. It has expanded at a breakneck pace into financial services, film production and other fields.

The government issued anti-monopoly guidelines in February aimed at preventing anti-competitive practices such as exclusive agreements with merchants and use of subsidies to squeeze out competitors.

The next month, 12 companies including Tencent Holdings, which operates games and the popular WeChat messaging service, were fined 500,000 (\$77,000) each on charges of failing to disclose previous acquisitions and other deals.



Regulators said in December they were looking into possibly anti-competitive tactics by Alibaba including a policy dubbed "choose one of two," which requires business partners to avoid dealing with its competitors.

Also in December, regulators announced executives of Alibaba, its main competitor, JD.com, and four other internet companies were summoned to a meeting and warned not to use their market dominance to keep out new competitors.

## Group to study more justices, term limits for Supreme Court

By JONATHAN LEMIRE and JESSICA GRESKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden has ordered a study on overhauling the Supreme Court, creating a bipartisan commission Friday that will spend the next six months examining the politically incendiary issues of expanding the court and instituting term limits for justices, among other issues.

In launching the review, Biden fulfilled a campaign promise made amid pressure from activists and Democrats to realign the Supreme Court after its composition tilted sharply to the right during President Donald Trump's term. Trump nominated three justices to the high court, including conservative Justice Amy Coney Barrett, who was confirmed to replace the late liberal Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg just days before last year's presidential election. That gave conservatives a 6-3 split with liberals on the court.

During the campaign, Biden repeatedly sidestepped questions on expanding the court. A former chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Biden has asserted that the system of judicial nominations is "getting out of whack," but has not said if he supports adding seats or making other changes to the current system of lifetime appointments, such as imposing term limits.

Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell attacked the move in a statement Friday, saying it "is a direct assault on our nation's independent judiciary and another sign of the Far Left's influence over the Biden administration."

He cited statements of more progressive members of the court like Justice William Breyer and the late Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg cautioning against such a move.

"The president spent much of his campaign playing coy on the issue, but has now admitted from the safety of a four-year term that he views the judiciary as 'out of whack,'" McConnell said.

The 36-member commission, composed largely of academics, was instructed to spend 180 days studying proposed changes, holding public meetings and completing a report. But it was not charged with making a recommendation under the White House order that created it.

The panel will be led by Bob Bauer, who served as White House counsel for former President Barack Obama, and Cristina Rodriguez, a Yale Law School professor who served in the Office of Legal Counsel for Obama. Other prominent members include Walter Dellinger, a former top Supreme Court lawyer for the government during the Clinton administration; Harvard law professor Lawrence Tribe, who has supported the idea of expanding the court and Sherrilyn Ifill, president and director-counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund.

The makeup of the Supreme Court, always a hot-button issue, ignited again in 2016 when Democrats declared that Republicans gained an unfair advantage by blocking Obama's nomination of then-Judge Merrick Garland, now Biden's attorney general, to fill the seat left empty by the death of conservative Justice Antonin Scalia. Then-Senate Majority Leader McConnell refused to even hold hearings on filling the vacancy, even though it was more than six months until the next presidential election.

In the wake of McConnell's power play, some progressives have viewed adding seats to the court or setting term limits as a way to offset the influence of any one president on its makeup. Conservatives, in turn, have denounced such ideas as "court-packing" similar to the failed effort by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in the 1930s.

Biden pledged to create the commission during an October television interview. Its launch comes amid speculation as to whether he will be able to put his own stamp on the court if liberal Justice Stephen Breyer retires. If that were to happen, Biden has promised to nominate the first Black woman to the court.

The 82-year-old Breyer is the court's oldest member and the senior member of its three-justice liberal

wing. A number of progressive groups have urged Breyer to retire while Democrats still control the Senate and the confirmation process.

Earlier this week, Breyer himself warned liberal advocates of making big changes to the court, including expanding the number of justices. Breyer said in a speech Tuesday that advocates should think "long and hard" about what they're proposing. Politically driven change could diminish the trust Americans place in the court, Breyer said.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki, asked Friday what the president makes of the call for Breyer to step aside, said that Biden "believes that is a decision for Justice Breyer to make." And she said the president will wait for the commission to finish its work before weighing in about the size of the court.

The Supreme Court has had nine members since just after the Civil War. Any effort to alter it would be explosive, particularly at a moment when Congress is nearly evenly divided. Changing the number of justices would require congressional approval.

Some on the left slammed the commission's creation. Brian Fallon, executive director of Demand Justice, a liberal advocacy group that supports expanding the court and term limits for justices, said in a statement that: "A commission made up mostly of academics, that includes far-right voices and is not tasked with making formal recommendations, is unlikely to meaningfully advance the ball on Court reform."

But others seemed willing to give it a chance. "With five justices appointed by presidents who lost the popular vote, it's crucial that we consider every option for wresting back political control of the Supreme Court," said Nan Aron, president of the Alliance for Justice, a liberal judicial advocacy group. "President Biden's commission demonstrates a strong commitment to studying this situation and taking action."

There was concern among some conservatives. Mike Davis of the conservative Article III Project called the news of the commission's creation "alarming" in a statement, adding that "there is real danger in President Biden giving credibility to the idea of court packing; he is playing with fire and threatening the constitutional foundation of this country."

## **Explosive eruption rocks volcano on Caribbean's St. Vincent**

By DÁNICA COTO Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — An explosive eruption rocked La Soufriere volcano on the eastern Caribbean island of St. Vincent on Friday after the government ordered thousands to evacuate their homes nearby.

Experts said the first explosion shot an ash column 32,000 feet (10 kilometers) into the sky and that the majority of the ash was headed northeast into the Atlantic Ocean. Lightning crackled through the towering column of smoke and ash late Friday.

Heavy ashfall was reported in communities around the volcano and beyond, with authorities saying some evacuations were limited by poor visibility.

Several flights also were canceled and islands including Barbados, St. Lucia and Grenada prepared for light ashfall as the 4,003-foot (1,220-meter) volcano continued to rumble. Authorities reported two other explosions later Friday as the island braced for possible additional activity.

"More explosions could occur," Erouscilla Joseph, director of the University of the West Indies Seismic Research Center said in a phone interview, adding that it was impossible to predict whether they might be bigger or smaller than the explosions that have occurred so far.

There were no immediate reports of casualties from the eruption that occurred four days short of the 42nd anniversary of the last sizable eruption.

In the coastal town of Barrouallie, about 14 kilometers (9 miles) from the volcano, evacuees trudged toward shelters carrying backpacks, duffel bags and shopping bags stuffed with personal belongings after the explosion. Some prepared to stay there, while others were expected to board cruise ships and go to nearby islands that have offered help.

Others still waited for transportation to a shelter, including one family who stood for at least an hour by the side of a road under the sun with their children and suitcases as they awaited a ride from someone.

The volcano last erupted in 1979, and a previous eruption in 1902 killed some 1,600 people.

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The new eruption followed mandatory evacuation orders issued Thursday for the roughly 16,000 people who live in the red zone near the volcano in the island's northern region. More than 2,000 people were staying in 62 government shelters.

"We have had hiccups here and there ... but by and large we are proceeding pretty well," Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves said in a press conference. He later wiped tears from his eyes and apologized for crying while he thanked people and other governments in the region for opening their homes and countries to St. Vincentians.

"On the dangerous road to Jericho, we have the good Samaritans," he said.

He said that depending on the damage done by the explosion, it could take up to four months for things to go back to normal.

As dozens of people streamed toward safer ground, officials worried the pandemic could hamper evacuation efforts.

Gonsalves said people have to be vaccinated if they go aboard a cruise ship or are granted temporary refuge in another island. He said two Royal Caribbean cruise ships and two Carnival Cruise Lines ones arrived Friday. Islands that have said they would accept evacuees include St. Lucia, Grenada, Barbados and Antigua.

He said he was talking to Caribbean governments to accept people's ID cards if they don't have a passport.

"This is an emergency situation, and everybody understands that," he said.

Gonsalves added that he highly recommends those who opt to go to a shelter in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, an island chain of more than 100,000 people, be vaccinated. Authorities said those staying in shelters would be tested for COVID-19, and that anyone who tests positive would be taken to an isolation center.

Emergency management teams have been going out to communities in the red zone and providing transportation to safer locations, including prearranged shelters, according to Joseph.

By late Thursday evening, shelters were filling up as a string of car lights making their way to safer ground twinkled through the darkened mountains.

John Renton, a school principal who was in charge of one shelter, said in a phone interview that they had plenty of masks and other personal protective equipment but needed more cots. While talking, he was interrupted by a phone call from a government official asking about the state of things. "We're over capacity," he responded, noting that the shelter could hold 75 people and was already filled up.

Meanwhile, the government warned of water shortages given that people were stocking up after the alert was issued.

Scientists alerted the government about a possible eruption after noting a type of seismic activity at 3 a.m. on Thursday that indicated "magma was on the move close to the surface," Joseph said.

A team from the seismic research center arrived in St. Vincent in late December after the volcano had an effusive eruption. They have been analyzing the formation of a new volcanic dome, changes to its crater lake, seismic activity and gas emissions, among other things.

Seventeen of the eastern Caribbean's 19 live volcanoes are located on 11 islands, with the remaining two underwater near the island of Grenada, including one called Kick 'Em Jenny that has been active in recent years.

The region's most active volcano in recent years has been Soufriere Hills in Montserrat, which has erupted continuously since 1995, destroying the capital of Plymouth and killing at least 19 people in 1997.

## Gaetz faces House ethics probe; federal investigation widens

By ERIC TUCKER, MICHAEL BALSAMO and LISA MASCARO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The House Ethics Committee announced an investigation Friday into Florida Rep. Matt Gaetz as federal prosecutors probing sex trafficking allegations against him are also scrutinizing the actions of some of his political allies and fellow Florida Republicans as part of a broader public corruption inquiry.

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Federal agents have, in recent months, been examining Gaetz's connections to several other influential Florida political figures.

They include Florida state senator Jason Brodeur; Halsey Beshears, the state's former top business regulator; Chris Dorworth, a lobbyist who had served in the state House of Representatives; and Jason Pirozzolo, a hand surgeon and Gaetz campaign donor who served on the board of the Orlando Airport Authority, a person familiar with the matter told The Associated Press.

Brodeur and Beshears did not respond to repeated calls seeking comment. An attorney for Pirozzolo also did not respond to a request for comment. Dorworth didn't comment.

The FBI's examination of a wide range of topics involving Gaetz and his associates exemplifies the breadth of the investigation.

Gaetz, who has vehemently denied any wrongdoing, has retained two prominent New York attorneys while facing a Justice Department investigation into sex trafficking allegations involving underage girls.

The scrutiny includes an examination of a trip that Gaetz and Pirozzolo took to the Bahamas with a group of women, and federal agents are looking into whether they were paid or received gifts to have sex with the men, the person said. CBS News first reported details of the trip.

The FBI has also started questioning people about that trip and others that Gaetz and his associates took with women, and agents are examining whether any of the women were later hired into government positions as political favors, the person said.

Investigators have been scrutinizing financial records, contact witnesses, former staff members and others who they believe may have been aware of the activities, according to the person.

The person could not publicly discuss details of the ongoing investigation and spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

Gaetz has not been charged with a crime and has sent fundraising appeals that portray him as a victim of a "smear campaign." During a high-profile appearance Friday night at former President Donald Trump's Doral golf club in Miami, he vowed, "I have not yet begun to fight."

"I'm built for the battle and I'm not going anywhere," Gaetz said. "The smears against me range from distortions of my personal life to wild — and I mean wild — conspiracy theories."

But a potentially ominous sign occurred in a Florida court Thursday when it was revealed that a Gaetz associate, Joel Greenberg, a former county tax collector, is working toward a plea deal. Such a move could potentially open the door for Greenberg's cooperation against Gaetz.

Prosecutors are examining whether Gaetz and Greenberg paid underage girls or offered them gifts in exchange for sex, according to two people familiar with the matter who spoke on condition of anonymity because they could not discuss details publicly. Greenberg entered a not guilty plea Friday through his attorney to a variety of charges ranging from child sex trafficking to fraud. A judge has set a May 15 deadline for Greenberg to reach a plea deal.

The House panel's bipartisan probe is one of the first official indications Gaetz's party leaders are willing to scrutinize his actions. It also appears sweeping in scope, reaching beyond the reports of sexual misconduct into broader allegations of public corruption, according to the committee chairman, Rep. Ted Deutch, D-Fla., and ranking Republican Rep. Jackie Walorski of Indiana. Unfolding alongside a federal criminal investigation, the ethics probe ensures Gaetz will have to confront simultaneous inquiries even as he maintains his innocence and plans to remain in Congress.

The Ethics Committee conducts its work in secret and usually issues a final report on what it finds, often many months later. Punishment for ethics violations is up to the House and can include censure, fines and even expulsion from Congress.

Separately Friday, a spokesperson for Gaetz said attorneys Marc Mukasey and Isabelle Kirshner will lead his legal team.

"Matt has always been a fighter. A fighter for his constituents, a fighter for the country, and a fighter for the Constitution. He's going to fight back against the unfounded allegations against him," the statement said, adding that the lawyers "will take the fight to those trying to smear his name with falsehoods."



## Rose clings to 1-shot Masters lead as Spieth, Thomas lurk

By DOUG FERGUSON AP Golf Writer

AUGUSTA, Ga. (AP) — Justin Rose apparently didn't get the memo that Augusta National was a little more forgiving Friday in the Masters. The consolation was still having the lead, but just barely.

Rose didn't hit one putt hard enough to get through the fringe behind the fourth green. Another putt on the sixth hole didn't have enough pace and returned back to him some 60 feet away.

All around him, major champions and a Masters rookie scored well enough to close the gap. The contenders even included Si Woo Kim, who broke his putter in anger and used a fairway metal to putt the final four holes.

Rose was among 12 players who broke par Thursday. He wasn't among the 40 who broke par on Friday.

"I didn't quite appreciate the scoring was going to be quite so good today," he said.

Even so, his even-par 72 was good enough for a one-shot lead going into a weekend filled with a little mystery how Augusta National will play and plenty of possibilities for who will win the green jacket.

One certainty: It won't be Dustin Johnson, who took 64 putts in 36 holes and missed the cut by two shots.

Rose was at 7-under 137, one shot ahead of Brian Harman (69) and Will Zalatoris (68), the 24-year-old from Dallas who still doesn't have a full PGA Tour card.

"I wanted to be here my entire life," Zalatoris said after birdies on his last three holes to get in the final group. "Some people shy away from that, but I'm excited to be here. There's no reason to feel intimidated now. I made it to here. And obviously, the job is not done by any means."

Jordan Spieth (68) and Marc Leishman (67) were two shots behind. Spieth stands out for his wizardry around Augusta National — one green jacket, two runner-up finishes and a third place in his seven appearances — and because he is coming off a victory in the Texas Open that ended a drought of nearly four years.

"Having made a triple and five over-par holes through two rounds, I feel pretty good about being at 5 under," Spieth said after a 68.

The group three shots behind included Kim, who shot 69 without having much a chance to make birdies with a fairway metal on the greens. After a three-putt bogey on the 14th and a chip that nearly ran off the green at the 15th, he jammed the head of the club into the turf and damaged it.

Asked if he had a backup putter, Kim replied, "No. I don't want to answer anymore. Sorry."

Rose was staked to a four-shot lead at the start of a warm, overcast day and it was gone after his fourth bogey in seven holes. He didn't drop a shot the rest of the way, picked up three birdies on the back nine and salvaged the day.

"Just a classic day at Augusta National when you're slightly off," Rose said. "I kind of told myself going up the eighth hole, 'You're leading the Masters.' Your frame of reference is a little bit different to yesterday. Four ahead is something, but you're still leading. So just enjoy it and keep it going."

The course played to an average score of 72.2, compared with 74.5 for the opening round.

Bernd Wiesberger of Austria and Tony Finau each had 66 to get within three shots. Also in that group was Justin Thomas, who can return to No. 1 in the world with a victory. He missed a short par putt on the final hole and shot 67.

"For as tough as this place has been playing, I felt like it was as easy as it could have been," Thomas said.

The wild card in all this is Zalatoris, built like a 1-iron and already renowned for his ball striking. His late run began with a 9-iron to a back right pin on the par-3 16th to 10 feet and ended with a wedge from 138 yards on the 18th to 5 feet.

"Being here is a childhood dream," he said. "Final group on Saturday is pretty cool."

Zalatoris played some of his best when golf was shut down during the pandemic. Zalatoris was on the Korn Ferry Tour and, when golf resumed, he had five straight finishes in the top six, including his first victory.

That got him into the U.S. Open, where he tied for sixth. Now he has temporary PGA Tour membership and is among the top 50 in the world, getting him into the Masters. That's why he talks of an "attitude

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of gratitude.”

Zalatoris also is a quick study with a long memory. He grew up with the kids of former PGA champion Lanny Wadkins, and took in tales of Wadkins and his 23 times playing the Masters. One story Zalatoris heard when he was 14 years old came in handy on the par-3 12th hole.

“He just said that whenever it’s into the wind ... it just doesn’t really affect the ball as much,” Zalatoris said. “And when it’s downwind, that’s where guys tend to struggle.”

The wind was about 10 mph into him and out of the left, 153 yards to the hole. He hit a shot that normally goes 152 yards and it carried 150. It helped that he made a 35-foot putt for birdie.

It has been 42 years since Fuzzy Zoeller became the most recent player to win the Masters on his first try.

Right there with Zalatoris is another Dallas resident — Spieth, who is looking like the Spieth of old at age 27. He thought he could win at Augusta even before he won last week in Texas.

“I’m in position now to think that for sure,” Spieth said. “But at the halfway point, I would have been pleased with being two back.”

## **Biden budget seeks more for schools, health care and housing**

By JOSH BOAK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden released a \$1.5 trillion wish list for his first federal budget Friday, asking for substantial gains for Democratic priorities including education, health care, housing and environmental protection.

The request by the White House budget office for an 8.4% increase in agency operating budgets spells out Biden’s top priorities as Congress weighs its spending plans for next year. It’s the first financial outline of the Democrats’ broader ambitions since the expiration of a 2011 law that capped congressional spending.

“I’m hoping it’ll have some bipartisan support across the board,” Biden said before an Oval Office meeting with his economics team, though prominent Senate Republicans immediately complained the plan would shortchange the military and national security in boosting domestic programs.

Bipartisanship in 2011 also restricted Democrats’ ambitions, a problem they’re now trying to address. White House press secretary Jen Psaki said the administration was “inheriting a legacy of chronic underinvestment” because of the caps.

“The president is focused on reversing this trend and reinvesting in the foundations of our strength,” she told reporters at a briefing.

At stake is “discretionary spending,” roughly one-third of the huge federal budget that is passed by Congress each year, funding the military, domestic Cabinet department operations, foreign policy and homeland security. The rest of the budget involves so-called mandatory programs with locked-in spending, chiefly Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid.

The Biden request provides a significantly smaller 1.6% increase for the \$700 billion-plus Pentagon budget than for domestic accounts. Homeland security accounts would basically be frozen, reflecting opposition among Democratic progressives to immigration security forces.

Senate Republicans were quick to criticize the modest proposed increase for defense, with Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, Oklahoma’s Jim Inhofe, Florida’s Marco Rubio, South Carolina’s Lindsey Graham and Alabama’s Richard Shelby releasing a joint statement.

“Talk is cheap, but defending our country is not,” they said. “We can’t afford to fail in our constitutional responsibility to provide for the common defense. To keep America strong, we must balance domestic and defense spending priorities.”

The appropriations process was one of the few consistent success stories of former President Donald Trump’s tumultuous four-year tenure in office, but this year’s budget cycle is not governed by the formal spending caps of a broader outline. The lapse of those caps opens the door to more domestic spending favored by Biden and Democrats but invites a battle with Republicans over military accounts.

The Biden administration believes the caps, imposed by a long-abandoned 2011 budget deal, caused a decade of severe underinvestment in public services that the president is now trying to turn around with

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large increases that would mostly bypass national security programs.

The administration says the request would bring spending in line with historical averages. It seeks \$769 billion in non-defense discretionary funding, about equal to the 30-year average relative to the overall U.S. economy.

Biden wants to increase the Education Department's budget by a massive 40.8% to \$102.8 billion, which includes an additional \$20 billion in grants for high-poverty schools.

The Department of Health and Human Services would get a 23.1% boost to \$133.7 billion. There would be additional funds to combat opioid addiction and for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, whose mission took on new urgency during the coronavirus pandemic. The administration is also asking for \$6.5 billion to establish a biomedical research agency to address cancer, diabetes, Alzheimer's and other diseases.

Biden is seeking a \$14 billion increase across government agencies to address climate change. It's part of a whole-of-government approach to the climate crisis that includes billions to boost environmental justice for communities near refineries, power plants and other hazardous sites.

Housing and Urban Development would get a 15.1% increase to \$68.7 billion, primarily to provide housing vouchers for an additional 200,000 families. The administration also seeks more money for civil rights enforcement and addressing gun violence as a public health epidemic.

Passing the president's plan as written through Congress is typically a long shot. Recent history and guaranteed conflicts with Republicans are likely to force lawmakers to put discretionary accounts on autopilot for months after the Sept. 30 expiration of the budget year.

The plan also details how the Biden administration will try to deal with the influx of arrivals at the U.S. southern border. It includes \$861 million to invest in Central America to address the forces driving people to migrate to the United States. An additional \$345 million would go to immigration services to resolve delays in years-long naturalization and asylum cases. The budget for the Executive Office of Immigration Review would jump 21% to \$891 million in order to hire 100 new immigration judges and support teams to reduce the existing backlogs.

The president seeks modest increases for national security. Defense -- the largest department in the discretionary plan -- would get a 1.6% increase to \$715 billion. Homeland Security would edge up 0.2% to \$52 billion.

But the administration views diplomacy as a way to engage with the wider world. It's pursuing a 12% increase in funding for the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development, taking their spending to \$63.5 billion.

Friday's request does not include plans for tax revenues or mandatory federal spending. Nor does it include the planned spending in Biden's infrastructure plan. A fuller budget proposal will be released later this spring.

## Ex-NFL player's brain to be probed for trauma-related harm

By MEG KINNARD and MICHELLE LIU Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — The brain of Phillip Adams — the former NFL player who killed a South Carolina physician, three family members and a repairman before fatally shooting himself — will be tested for a degenerative disease that has affected a number of pro athletes and has been shown to cause violent mood swings and other cognitive disorders, according to the local coroner.

York County Coroner Sabrina Gast said in a statement issued on Friday that she had gotten approval from Adams' family for the procedure to be included as part of his autopsy, which will be performed at the Medical University of South Carolina. The hospital will be working with Boston University, whose chronic traumatic encephalopathy center conducts research on the long-term effects of repetitive brain trauma in athletes and military personnel, according to its website.

According to police, Adams went to the home of Robert and Barbara Lesslie on Wednesday and shot and killed them, two of their grandchildren, 9-year-old Adah Lesslie and 5-year-old Noah Lesslie, and James

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Lewis, a 38-year-old air conditioning technician from Gaston who was doing work there. He also shot Lewis' colleague, 38-year-old Robert Shook, of Cherryville, North Carolina, who was flown to a Charlotte hospital, where he was in critical condition "fighting hard for his life," said a cousin, Heather Smith Thompson.

York County Sheriff Kevin Tolson said investigators hadn't figured out why Adams carried out the attack. Tolson said evidence left at the shooting scene led investigators to Adams as a suspect. He said they went to Adams' parents' home, evacuated them and then tried to persuade Adams to come out. Eventually, they found him dead of a single gunshot wound to the head in a bedroom, he said.

A person briefed on the investigation who spoke to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to speak publicly said Robert Lesslie had treated Adams, who lived with his parents not far from the Lesslies' home.

Tolson would not confirm that Adams had been the doctor's patient.

It will be months before results are available from the tests for chronic traumatic encephalopathy, or CTE, which can only be diagnosed in an autopsy. The disorder has been found in former members of the military, football players and boxers and others who have been subjected to repeated head trauma. A recent study found signs of the disease in 110 of 111 NFL players whose brains were inspected.

Several years ago, the league agreed to pay \$1 billion to retired players who claimed it misled them about the dangers of playing football.

Adams, 32, played in 78 NFL games over six seasons for six teams. He joined the 49ers in 2010 as a seventh-round draft pick out of South Carolina State, and though he rarely started, he went on to play for New England, Seattle, Oakland and the New York Jets before finishing his career with the Atlanta Falcons in 2015.

As a rookie late in the 2010 season, Adams suffered a severe ankle injury, resulting in surgery that included several screws being inserted into his leg. He never played for the 49ers again, released just before the 2011 season began. Later, with the Raiders, he had two concussions over three games in 2012.

Whether he suffered long-lasting concussion-related injuries wasn't immediately clear. Adams wouldn't have been eligible for testing as part of a broad settlement between the league and its former players over such injuries, because he hadn't retired by 2014.

Adams' father told a Charlotte television station that he blamed football for problems his son had, and which might have led him to commit Wednesday's violence.

"I can say he's a good kid — he was a good kid, and I think the football messed him up," Alonzo Adams told WCNC-TV. "He didn't talk much and he didn't bother nobody."

Adams' sister told USA Today that her brother's "mental health degraded fast and terribly bad" in recent years and that the family noticed "extremely concerning" signs of mental illness, including an escalating temper and personal hygiene neglect.

In a statement to McClatchy Newspapers, Adams' parents and siblings sent their condolences to the Lesslie, Lewis and Shook families, saying, "The Phillip we know is not a man that is capable of the atrocities he committed on Wednesday."

The relatives went on to say that they didn't know "if football played a role" in the violence, but "we do know there has to be some catalyst."

Gerald Dixon, a former NFL linebacker who retired in 2001, said that, when he coached Adams in high school, the young player was a team leader, yet also mild-mannered and humble.

Dixon added that he had spoken to Adams a few months ago, and had noticed no signs of depression or other mental health issues. "Anytime I talked to him, he was always happy and just reminiscing about old things," he said.

Dixon acknowledged that the repeated hits to the head sustained in the game could have affected Adams, as they have negatively affected many of the other NFL players Dixon has known who were later diagnosed with CTE.

"You never know what's going on in a person's mind after they've went through these concussions," Dixon said.

Agent Scott Casterline told The Associated Press that Adams did not participate in the physical and mental health programs that are easily accessible for ex-players.



"We encouraged him to explore all of his disability options and he wouldn't do it," Casterline said, noting that Adams' career was undercut by the 2010 ankle injury. "I knew he was hurting and missing football but he wouldn't take health tips offered to him. He said he would, but he wouldn't."

## Medical examiner blames police pressure for Floyd's death

By AMY FORLITI, STEVE KARNOWSKI and TAMMY WEBBER Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — The chief medical examiner who ruled George Floyd's death a homicide testified Friday that the way police held him down and compressed his neck "was just more than Mr. Floyd could take," given the condition of his heart.

Dr. Andrew Baker, the Hennepin County medical examiner, took the stand at the murder trial of former Officer Derek Chauvin for pressing his knee on or close to Floyd's neck for what prosecutors say was as much as 9 1/2 minutes as the 46-year-old Black man lay on the pavement last May.

Asked about his finding that police "subdual, restraint and neck compression" caused Floyd's heart to stop, Baker said that Floyd had severe underlying heart disease and an enlarged heart that needed more oxygen than normal to function, as well as narrowing of two heart arteries.

Baker said being involved in a scuffle raises adrenaline, which asks the heart to beat even faster and supply more oxygen.

"And in my opinion, the law enforcement subdual, restraint and the neck compression was just more than Mr. Floyd could take by virtue of that, those heart conditions," the medical examiner said.

Other medical experts, including a leading lung specialist, have gone further, testifying that Floyd died of asphyxia — or insufficient oxygen — because his breathing was constricted as he lay on his stomach with his hands cuffed behind his back, his face jammed against the ground and Chauvin's knee on his neck.

Baker has not ruled asphyxiation as a cause of Floyd's death. And at one point, he said he is not an expert on lack of oxygen because he doesn't treat living people, and he would defer certain questions to experts on breathing.

Baker also said that based on his viewing of the video, he believed Chauvin's knee was "primarily on the back, or the side or the area in between on Mr. Floyd's neck." And he said that in his opinion, the placement of Chauvin's knee would not have cut off Floyd's airway.

Chauvin, 45, is charged with murder and manslaughter in Floyd's death May 25. Floyd was arrested outside a neighborhood market after being accused of trying to pass a counterfeit \$20 bill.

Bystander video of Floyd crying that he couldn't breathe as onlookers yelled at the white officer to get off him sparked protests and scattered violence around the U.S.

Chauvin attorney Eric Nelson has argued that the now-fired officer did what he was trained to do and that Floyd's illegal drug use and underlying health conditions killed him. An autopsy found fentanyl and methamphetamine in Floyd's system.

Ted Sampsell-Jones, a law professor at Mitchell Hamline School of Law in St. Paul, Minnesota, said evidence about Floyd's cause of death is shaping up to be the biggest weakness for prosecutors. He said that with Baker's testimony, the jury is starting to see that the prosecution has been forced to distance itself from its own medical examiner.

"It could possibly raise a reasonable doubt about cause of death," he said.

However, Sampsell-Jones said the legal standard for establishing causation is quite low. The state has to show only that Chauvin's conduct was a substantial contributing cause.

"If the state had to show that Chauvin's conduct was the sole or even primary cause of death, the case would be in real trouble," he said.

In his testimony, Baker said that neither Floyd's heart problems nor drugs caused his death. Under cross-examination, though, he agreed with Nelson that those factors "played a role" in the death.

A medical expert who testified Thursday said a healthy person subjected to what Floyd endured would also have died.

Nelson asked Baker whether he has certified deaths by fentanyl overdose at levels lower than that seen

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in Floyd's blood, and Baker said yes. But Baker also noted that levels of fentanyl must be considered in the context of how long someone had used the drug, any tolerance built up to it, and what other substances may be involved.

The medical examiner said that he did not watch the harrowing video of the arrest before examining Floyd so that he would not be unduly influenced by what he saw.

"I did not want to bias my exam by going in with any preconceived notions that might lead me down one pathway or another," he said.

Other medical experts called as prosecution witnesses have likewise blamed Floyd's death on the way he was pinned down on the ground.

Dr. Lindsey Thomas, a forensic pathologist who retired in 2017 from the Hennepin County Medical Examiner's Office and did not work on Floyd's case, testified earlier Friday that she agreed with Baker's findings, but appeared to go further, saying the "primary mechanism of death" was insufficient oxygen.

She said she reached that conclusion mostly from video that showed Floyd struggling to breathe.

During cross-examination, Nelson noted that Floyd's bigger heart needed more blood and was working hard in a moment of stress and adrenaline, and that one of his arteries had a 90% blockage.

The defense attorney pressed Thomas by posing a hypothetical question.

"Let's assume you found Mr. Floyd dead in his residence. No police involvement, no drugs, right? The only thing you found would be these facts about his heart. What would you conclude to be the cause of death?" Nelson asked.

"In that very narrow set of circumstances, I would probably conclude that the cause of death was his heart disease," Thomas replied.

In response to another hypothetical posed by Nelson, she agreed that she would certify Floyd's death as a drug overdose if there were no other explanations.

But during re-questioning, prosecutor Jerry Blackwell ridiculed the defense attorney's hypotheticals.

"Aren't those questions a lot like asking, 'Mrs. Lincoln, if we take John Wilkes Booth out of this ...'" Blackwell began, before Nelson objected.

For the first time, a seat designated for Chauvin's family was occupied Friday, by a woman. She wasn't immediately identified. Chauvin's marriage ended in divorce in the months after Floyd's death.

Also on Friday, Judge Peter Cahill called in a juror and questioned her about whether she had been subject to any outside influences. She replied that she briefly saw TV coverage with the sound off and said that her mother-in-law had texted her, "Looks like it was a bad day" but that she didn't reply.

The judge allowed her to remain on the jury.

## Plan would return beachfront taken from Black family in '20s

By JOHN ANTCZAK Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Los Angeles County plans to return prime beachfront property to descendants of a Black couple who built a seaside resort for African Americans but suffered racist harassment and were stripped of it by local city leaders a century ago, a county official said Friday.

"It is the county's intention to return this property," Janice Hahn, a member of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, told a news conference at what was known as Bruce's Beach in the city of Manhattan Beach.

The decision in Los Angeles County, the nation's most populous, comes at a time of national reckoning on race and discussions at the local, state and federal levels over reparations.

It comes after multiple property transfers over the decades. Today, a county lifeguard training headquarters building sits on the property along some of the most coveted coastline in Southern California.

The property encompasses two parcels purchased in 1912 by Willa and Charles Bruce, who built the first West Coast resort for Black people at a time when segregation barred them from many beaches. They built a lodge, café, dance hall and dressing tents with bathing suits for rent. Initially it was known as Bruce's Lodge.

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"Bruce's Beach became a place where Black families traveled from far and wide to be able to enjoy the simple pleasure of a day at the beach," Hahn said.

It did not last long.

The Bruces and their customers were harassed by white neighbors and the Ku Klux Klan attempted to burn it down. The Manhattan Beach City Council finally used eminent domain to take the land away from the Bruces in the 1920s, purportedly for use as a park.

"The Bruces had their California dream stolen from them," Hahn said. "And this was an injustice inflicted not just upon Willa and Charles Bruce but generations of their descendants who almost certainly would have been millionaires if they had been able to keep this property and their successful business."

After lying unused for years, the land was transferred to the state of California in 1948 and in 1995 it was transferred to Los Angeles County for beach operations and maintenance.

The last transfer came with restrictions that limit the ability to sell or transfer the property and can only be lifted through a new state law, Hahn said.

State Sen. Steven Bradford said that on Monday he will introduce legislation, SB 796, that would exempt the land from those restrictions.

"After so many years we will right this injustice," he said.

If the law passes, the transfer to the descendants would have to be approved by the county's five-member Board of Supervisors, said Liz Odendahl, Hahn's director of communications.

Manhattan Beach is now a tony city of about 35,000 people on the south shore of Santa Monica Bay. Its picturesque pier juts into swells prized by surfers, and luxury residences have replaced many of the beach houses along an oceanfront walk called The Strand. According to Census data, its population is 78% white and 0.5% Black.

The current City Council this week formally acknowledged and condemned city leaders' efforts in the early 20th century to displace the Bruces and several other Black families, but stopped short of formally apologizing, Southern California News Group reported.

"We offer this Acknowledgement and Condemnation as a foundational act for Manhattan Beach's next one hundred years," a document approved by the council says, "and the actions we will take together, to the best of our abilities, in deeds and in words, to reject prejudice and hate and promote respect and inclusion."

A hill rising steeply behind the beachfront property has a beach parking lot and above that is an ocean-view city park that was renamed Bruce's Beach in 2006.

The lot and park were not part of the Bruces' property and would not be part of a transfer to the family, Odendahl said.

The value of the property has not been assessed, she said.

A return of the land could include an option for the Bruce descendants to lease the land back to the county for continued use.

## **ADL: Fox should fire Carlson for white-supremacist rhetoric**

By TALI ARBEL AP Technology Writer

The Anti-Defamation League has called for Fox News to fire prime-time opinion host Tucker Carlson because he defended a white-supremacist theory that says whites are being "replaced" by people of color.

In a letter to Fox News CEO Suzanne Scott on Friday, the head of the ADL, Jonathan Greenblatt, said Carlson's "rhetoric was not just a dog whistle to racists — it was a bullhorn."

The civil rights group listed numerous instances Carlson has used anti-immigrant language. Those include saying immigration makes the U.S. "poorer and dirtier" and questioning whether white supremacy is real. Greenblatt said that "given his long record of race-baiting, we believe it is time for Carlson to go."

The white-nationalist "great replacement theory," otherwise known as "white genocide," says people of color are replacing white people through immigration in the Western world, according to the Southern Poverty Law Center. Some white supremacists also say that Jews and progressive politicians are furthering

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this change, the civil rights group says.

The "theory" is a "classic white supremacist trope," the letter said, noting that it has been linked to mass shootings in the U.S. and New Zealand and was referenced during a deadly far-right protest in Charlottesville, Virginia, in 2017.

It's the first time the ADL has asked for Fox to fire Carlson, said the group's spokesman Todd Gutnick, but it has contacted the network before about things Carlson has said.

Carlson is Fox News Channel's most popular personality.

He said Thursday during a guest appearance on "Fox News Primetime" that "the left and all the little gatekeepers on Twitter become literally hysterical if you use the term 'replacement,' if you suggest that the Democratic Party is trying to replace the current electorate of voters now casting ballots with new people, more obedient voters from the Third World."

Carlson said he was concerned about his "voting rights," and that he had "less political power because they are importing a brand new electorate," but said it's not a racial issue.

Fox News did not immediately reply to a request for comment.

## 'Nothing less than a giant': Rapper-actor DMX dies at 50

By JONATHAN LANDRUM Jr. and JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — DMX, the iconic hip-hop artist behind the songs "Ruff Ryders' Anthem" and "Party Up (Up in Here)" whose distinctively gruff voice and thoughtful messages in his rhymes made him one of rap's biggest stars, has died, according to a family statement Friday. He was 50.

The Grammy-nominated performer died after suffering "catastrophic cardiac arrest," according to a statement from the hospital in White Plains, New York, where he died. He was rushed there from his home April 2.

His family's statement said DMX, whose birth name was Earl Simmons, died with relatives by his side after several days on life support.

"Earl was a warrior who fought till the very end. He loved his family with all of his heart, and we cherish the times we spent with him," the family said, adding that his music "inspired countless fans across the world."

Memorial plans were not yet set.

DMX — who rapped with a trademark raspy delivery that was often paired with growls, barks and "What!" as an ad-lib — built a multiplatinum career in the late 1990s and early 2000s, but he also struggled with drug addiction and legal problems that repeatedly put him behind bars.

"His message of triumph over struggle, his search for the light out of darkness, his pursuit of truth and grace brought us closer to our own humanity," his record label, Def Jam Recordings, said in a statement describing him as "nothing less than a giant."

Fellow hip hop artists remembered him likewise, with Eve praising him as "one of the most special people I have ever met" and Nas calling him "Gods poet" in an Instagram post.

DMX made a splash in 1998 with his first studio album, "It's Dark and Hell is Hot," which debuted No. 1 on the Billboard 200 albums chart. The multiplatinum-selling album was anchored by several hits including "Ruff Ryders' Anthem," "Get At Me Dog," "Stop Being Greedy" and "How It's Goin' Down."

DMX followed up with four straight chart-topping albums including "... And Then There Was X," "Flesh of My Flesh, Blood of My Blood," "The Great Depression" and "Grand Champ." He released seven albums, earned three Grammy nominations and was named favorite rap/hip-hop artist at the 2000 American Music Awards.

DMX arrived on the rap scene around the same time as Jay-Z, Ja Rule and others who dominated the charts and emerged as platinum-selling acts. They were all part of rap crews, too: DMX fronted the Ruff Ryders collective, which helped launch the careers of Grammy winners Eve and Swizz Beatz, and relaunch The Lox, formerly signed to Bad Boy Records. Ruff Ryders had success on the charts and on radio with its "Ryde or Die" compilation albums.



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Along with his musical career, DMX paved his way as an actor. He starred in the 1998 film "Belly" and appeared in 2000's "Romeo Must Die" with Jet Li and Aaliyah. DMX and Aaliyah teamed up for "Come Back in One Piece" on the film's soundtrack.

The rapper would later open Aaliyah's tribute music video, "Miss You," alongside her other friends and collaborators, including Missy Elliott, Lil' Kim and Queen Latifah, after Aaliyah's 2001 death in a plane crash at age 22.

The rapper also starred in 2001's "Exit Wounds" with Steven Seagal and 2003's "Cradle 2 the Grave" with Li. But while DMX made his mark as one of hip-hop's most recognizable names for his rap artistry and as an actor, the rapper was personally stifled by his legal battles — he was repeatedly arrested and jailed within a decade — and drug addiction. His addiction first took hold at age 14 when smoked a marijuana cigarette that was laced with cocaine.

"Earl Simmons was a wonderful, caring father, and a sensitive, thoughtful man," said Lyor Cohen, a former executive at Def Jam, in a statement. "Unfortunately, Dark Man X took over and ran amok, tormented and struggling to find the light. ... DMX gave me the inspiration to keep going at Def Jam when rap became soft and silly."

DMX pleaded guilty in 2004 after he posed as an undercover federal agent and crashed his SUV through a security gate at New York's Kennedy Airport. He was arrested in 2008 on drug and animal cruelty charges following an overnight raid on his house in Phoenix. He tried to barricade himself in his bedroom but emerged when a SWAT team entered his home.

In 2010, he was sentenced to a year in prison for violating terms of his probation. After he was admitted to rehab numerous times over the next year, he said he had finally beat his drug addiction.

First responders helped bring DMX back to life after he was found in a hotel parking lot in New York in 2016. The rapper said he suffered from asthma.

A couple years later, DMX was sentenced to a year in prison for tax fraud. Prosecutors said he concocted a multiyear scheme to hide millions of dollars in income from the IRS and get around nearly \$2 million in tax liabilities.

After his release, DMX planned a 32-date tour to mark the 20th anniversary of "It's Dark and Hell is Hot." But the rapper canceled a series of shows to check himself into a rehab facility in 2019. In an Instagram post, his team said he apologized for the canceled shows and thanked his fans for the continued support.

Besides his legal troubles, DMX took the initiative to help the less fortunate. He gave a group of Philadelphia men advice during a surprise appearance at a homeless support group meeting in 2017, and helped a Maine family with its back-to-school purchases a couple years later.

Last year, DMX faced off against Snoop Dogg in a Verzuz battle, which drew more than 500,000 viewers.

"You can't be a fan and not feel empathy for him in his journey," hip-hop and electronic music producer Flying Lotus said in an interview while DMX was hospitalized this week. "You think of 'Belly' and all the great stuff that he was part of. But he was dealt such a weird hand, I think, with the drug stuff. And I just have empathy."

Survivors include his 15 children and his mother.

## Siblings find closure a year after COVID-19 thrashed choir

By MANUEL VALDES Associated Press

SEDRO-WOOLLEY, Wash. (AP) — With dish soap, brushes and plastic water jugs in hand, Carole Rae Woodmansee's four children cleaned the gravestone their mother shares with their father, Jim. Each scrub shined engraved letters spelling out their mother's name and the days of her birth and death: March 27, 1939, and March 27, 2020.

Carole passed away on her 81st birthday.

That morning marked a year since she died of complications of COVID-19 after contracting it during a choir practice that sickened 53 people and killed two — a superspreader event that would become one of the most pivotal transmission episodes in understanding the virus.

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For the siblings, the somber anniversary offered a chance at closure after the pandemic stunted their mourning. They were finally holding a memorial befitting of their mother's footprint in the community.

"The hardest thing is that there was no goodbye. It was like she just disappeared," said Carole's youngest child, Wendy Jensen.

After cleaning, the siblings reminisce. They say their father must be happy to be back with his wife of 46 years. They thank them for being good parents and recall how their mother used to say "my" before calling their names and those of other loved ones.

"I was always 'My Bonnie,'" Bonnie Dawson tells her siblings. "I miss being 'My Bonnie.'"

"She had been missing Dad for a long time," eldest sibling Linda Holeman adds. Their father, Jim, passed away in 2003.

Of the more than 550,000 people who have died of the virus in the United States, Carole was among the first. Her death came just weeks after the first reported outbreak at a nursing home in Kirkland, about an hour south of Mount Vernon. Carole, who survived heart surgery and cancer, had fallen ill at her home. Bonnie took care of her until they called the paramedics.

"You're trying to say goodbye to your mom, and they're telling you to get back. It was a very hard, emotional ... to have to yell, 'I love you, Mom,' as she's being wheeled out the door with men standing in our yard 10 feet out because they didn't want to be near our house," Bonnie said.

The rehearsal of the Skagit Valley Chorale, a community choir made up mostly of retirees and not associated with the church where they practiced, happened two weeks before Gov. Jay Inslee shut down the state. The choir had taken the precautions known at the time, such as distancing themselves and sanitizing. But someone had the virus.

"The choir themselves called us directly, and they left a voicemail. The voicemail said a positive person in the choir, 24 people now sick," said Lea Hamner, communicable disease and epidemiology lead for Skagit County Public Health. "It was immediately evident that we had a big problem."

Hamner and her team went to work interviewing choir members, often repeatedly, and those with whom they came in contact after the practice, a total of 122 people. They meticulously pieced together the evening, tracking things like where people sat and who ate cookies or stacked chairs.

That level of access and detail is rare among outbreak investigations, Hamner said, so when cases waned in the county a few weeks later, she sat down to write a report.

"There was a lot of resistance to calling it an airborne disease," Hamner said. "But we found this middle ground of this disease that can both be droplet and airborne. So that was a big shift. After the paper, the CDC started to acknowledge airborne transmission."

The outbreak had gained notoriety after a Los Angeles Times article, prompting other researchers to study the event and further cementing the conclusion about how the virus traveled during the rehearsal.

"I think this outbreak in the choir is viewed ... as the one event that really woke people up to the idea that the virus could be spreading through the air," said Linsey Marr, a Virginia Tech professor and expert in airborne transmission. Marr was among 239 experts who successfully lobbied the World Health Organization to change its guidelines on transmission.

The other person who died from the choir practice was 83-year-old Nancy "Nicki" Hamilton. Originally from New York, Hamilton settled north of Seattle in the 1990s. She put out a personal ad in the Everett Herald, and that's how she met her husband.

"We went down to the bowling alley in Everett," said 85-year-old Victor Hamilton. "We picked it up from there."

Hamilton hasn't been able to hold a memorial for her. Their families are spread throughout the country, and he'd like to have it in New York City if possible. He's eyeing June 21 — her birthday.

In nearby Mount Vernon, family and friends stream into Radius Church, gazing at an installation of a few dozen photos of Carole that the siblings put together. Wendy also displays a quilt her daughter made using Carole's music camp T-shirts.

Pastor Ken Hubbard tells attendees the service isn't really a funeral but a memorial, a chance to share

stories about Carole.

"I'm pretty sure her prayers saved my life a time or two," grandson David Woodmansee says.

Loved ones recall Carole's devotion to her family, faith and music. Others remember how she welcomed them into her family, gave piano lessons and did volunteer work for her church.

They sing "Blessed Assurance," her favorite hymn. Its lyrics were among her last words to her children from the hospital.

After the service, the family returns to the cemetery to lay flowers. They sing again too, closing the day with a spontaneous, smile-filled rendition of "Happy Birthday."

Later, Wendy reflects on the choir practice where her mother contracted the virus, noting the knowledge gained from it that helped advance preventative measures.

"As far as we know, that was God's plan, for her to be a help in that."

"I think my mom would be willing to give up her life in order to save lives," Bonnie said. "That was the kind of person she was."

## Philip, defined by role of husband to British queen, dies

By JILL LAWLESS and GREGORY KATZ Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Prince Philip, the irascible and tough-minded husband of Queen Elizabeth II who spent more than seven decades supporting his wife in a role that both defined and constricted his life, has died, Buckingham Palace said Friday. He was 99.

His life spanned nearly a century of European history, starting with his birth as a member of the Greek royal family and ending as Britain's longest serving consort during a turbulent reign in which the thousand-year-old monarchy was forced to reinvent itself for the 21st century.

He was known for his occasionally deeply offensive remarks — and for gamely fulfilling more than 20,000 royal engagements to boost British interests at home and abroad. He headed hundreds of charities, founded programs that helped British schoolchildren participate in challenging outdoor adventures, and played a prominent part in raising his four children, including his eldest son, Prince Charles, the heir to the throne.

Philip spent a month in the hospital earlier this year before being released on March 16.

"It is with deep sorrow that Her Majesty The Queen has announced the death of her beloved husband, His Royal Highness The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh," the palace said. "His Royal Highness passed away peacefully this morning at Windsor Castle."

Philip saw his sole role as providing support for his wife, who began her reign as Britain retreated from empire and steered the monarchy through decades of declining social deference and U.K. power into a modern world where people demand intimacy from their icons.

In the 1970s, Michael Parker, an old navy friend and former private secretary of the prince, said of him: "He told me the first day he offered me my job, that his job — first, second and last — was never to let her down."

Speaking outside 10 Downing St., Prime Minister Boris Johnson noted the support Philip provided to the queen, saying he "helped to steer the royal family and the monarchy so that it remains an institution indisputably vital to the balance and happiness of our national life."

The queen, a very private person not given to extravagant displays of affection, once called him "her rock" in public.

In private, Philip called his wife Lilibet; but he referred to her in conversation with others as "The Queen."

Condolences poured in Friday from statesmen and royals around the globe — many of whom noted Philip's wit and personality, as well as his service during World War II and beyond.

U.S. President Joe Biden and first lady Jill Biden said the impact of the prince's decades of public service was evident in the causes he advocated, while Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan tweeted that "Britain has lost a wise elder who was imbued with a unique spirit of public service." Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta called him a "towering symbol of family values and the unity of the British people as well as the entire global community."

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French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said his country "celebrates the European and British destiny of a man who, not without panache, served as the contemporary to a century of ordeals and hopes for our continent." And Greece's former king, Constantine II, told The Associated Press in a statement that his relative was "a remarkable man who dedicated his entire life to duty and service for his country and the Commonwealth."

Prince William and Prince Harry marked their grandfather's death in full-page tributes on the websites of their respective foundations.

British politics was put on pause, with figures from all parties expressing condolences. The government said all official flags would fly at half-staff across all U.K. government buildings.

Over the decades, Philip's image changed from that of handsome, dashing athlete to arrogant and insensitive curmudgeon. In his later years, the image finally settled into that of droll and philosophical observer of the times, an elderly, craggy-faced man who maintained his military bearing despite ailments.

The popular Netflix series "The Crown" gave Philip a central role, with a slightly racy, swashbuckling image. He never commented on it in public, but the portrayal struck a chord with many Britons, including younger viewers who had only known him as an elderly man.

Philip's position was a challenging one — there is no official role for the husband of a sovereign queen — and his life was marked by extraordinary contradictions between his public and private duties. He always walked three paces behind his wife in public, in a show of deference to the monarch, but he played a significant role at home. Still, his son Charles, as heir to the throne, had a larger income, as well as access to the high-level government papers Philip was not permitted to see.

Philip often took a wry approach to his unusual place at the royal table.

"Constitutionally, I don't exist," said Philip, who in 2009 became the longest-serving consort in British history, surpassing Queen Charlotte, who married King George III in the 18th century.

He frequently struggled to find his place — a friction that would later be echoed in Prince Harry's decision to give up royal duties.

"There was no precedent," he said in a rare interview with the BBC to mark his 90th birthday. "If I asked somebody, 'What do you expect me to do?' they all looked blank."

But having given up a promising naval career to become consort when Elizabeth became queen at age 25, Philip was not content to stay on the sidelines and enjoy a life of ease and wealth. He promoted British industry and science, espoused environmental preservation long before it became fashionable, and traveled widely and frequently in support of his many charities.

In those frequent public appearances, Philip developed a reputation for being impatient and demanding and was sometimes blunt to the point of rudeness.

Many Britons appreciated what they saw as his propensity to speak his mind, while others criticized behavior they labeled racist, sexist or out of touch.

In 1995, for example, he asked a Scottish driving instructor, "How do you keep the natives off the booze long enough to pass the test?" Seven years later in Australia, when visiting Aboriginal people with the queen, he asked: "Do you still throw spears at each other?" On one visit to a military barracks, he asked a sea cadet instructor if she worked in a strip club.

Many believe his propensity to speak his mind meant he provided needed, unvarnished advice to the queen.

"The way that he survived in the British monarchy system was to be his own man, and that was a source of support to the queen," said royal historian Robert Lacey. "All her life she was surrounded by men who said, 'yes ma'am,' and he was one man who always told her how it really was, or at least how he saw it."

Lacey said at the time of the royal family's difficult relations with Princess Diana after her marriage to Charles broke down, Philip spoke for the family with authority, showing that he did not automatically defer to the queen.

Philip's relationship with Diana became complicated as her separation from Charles and their eventual divorce played out in a series of public battles that damaged the monarchy's standing.

It was widely assumed that he was critical of Diana's use of broadcast interviews, including one in which



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she accused Charles of infidelity. But letters between Philip and Diana released after her death showed that the older man was at times supportive of his daughter-in-law.

After Diana's death in a car crash in Paris in 1997, Philip had to endure allegations by former Harrods owner Mohamed Al Fayed that he had plotted the princess's death. Al Fayed's son, Dodi, also died in the crash.

During a lengthy inquest into their deaths, a senior judge acting as coroner instructed the jury that there was no evidence to support the allegations against Philip, who did not publicly respond to Al Fayed's charges.

Philip's final years were clouded by controversy and fissures in the royal family.

His third child, Prince Andrew, was embroiled in scandal over his friendship with Jeffrey Epstein, an American financier who died in a New York prison in 2019 while awaiting trial on sex trafficking charges.

U.S. authorities accused Andrew of rebuffing their request to interview him as a witness, and Andrew faced accusations from a woman who said that she had several sexual encounters with the prince at Epstein's behest. He denied the claim but withdrew from public royal duties amid the scandal.

At the start of 2020, Prince Harry and his wife, the American former actress Meghan Markle, announced they were quitting royal duties and moving to North America to escape intense media scrutiny that they found unbearable.

Last month, they gave an explosive interview to Oprah Winfrey, saying that Meghan had suffered neglect and racist attitudes while a working member of the family, though Winfrey said Harry told her one particularly hurtful remark did not come from either of his grandparents. The palace called the issues "concerning" and said they would be "addressed by the family privately."

Born June 10, 1921, on the dining room table at his parents' home on the Greek island of Corfu, Philip was the fifth child and only son of Prince Andrew, younger brother of the king of Greece. His grandfather had come from Denmark during the 1860s to be adopted by Greece as the country's monarch.

Philip's mother was Princess Alice of Battenberg, a descendant of German princes. Like his future wife, Elizabeth, Philip was also a great-great-grandchild of Queen Victoria.

When Philip was 18 months old, his parents fled to France. His father, an army commander, had been tried after a devastating military defeat by the Turks. After British intervention, the Greek junta agreed not to sentence Andrew to death if he left the country.

The family was not exactly poor but, Philip said: "We weren't well off" — and they got by with help from relatives. He later brought only his navy pay to a marriage with one of the world's richest women.

Philip's parents drifted apart when he was a child, and Andrew died in Monte Carlo in 1944. Alice founded a religious order that did not succeed and spent her old age at Buckingham Palace. A reclusive figure, often dressed in a nun's habit, she was little seen by the British public. She died in 1969 and was posthumously honored by Britain and Israel for sheltering a Jewish family in Nazi-occupied Athens during the war.

Philip went to school in Britain and entered Britannia Royal Naval College Dartmouth as a cadet in 1939. He got his first posting in 1940 but was not allowed near the main war zone because he was a foreign prince of a neutral nation. When the Italian invasion of Greece ended that neutrality, he joined the war, serving on battleships in the Indian Ocean, the Mediterranean and the Pacific.

On leave in Britain, he visited his royal cousins, and, by the end of war, it was clear he was courting Princess Elizabeth, eldest child and heir of King George VI. Their engagement was announced July 10, 1947, and they were married on Nov. 20.

After an initial flurry of disapproval that Elizabeth was marrying a foreigner, Philip's athletic skills, good looks and straight talk lent a distinct glamour to the royal family.

Elizabeth beamed in his presence, and they had a son and daughter while she was still free of the obligations of serving as monarch.

But King George VI died of cancer in 1952 at age 56.

Philip had to give up his naval career, and his subservient status was formally sealed at the coronation, when he knelt before his wife and pledged to become "her liege man of life and limb, and of earthly worship."

The change in Philip's life was dramatic.

"Within the house, and whatever we did, it was together," Philip told biographer Basil Boothroyd of the

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years before Elizabeth became queen. "People used to come to me and ask me what to do. In 1952, the whole thing changed, very, very considerably."

Said Boothroyd: "He had a choice between just tagging along, the second handshake in the receiving line, or finding other outlets for his bursting energies."

So Philip took over management of the royal estates and expanded his travels to all corners of the world, building a role for himself.

From 1956, he was Patron and Chairman of Trustees for the largest youth activity program in Britain, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, a program of practical, cultural and adventurous activities for young people that exists in over 100 countries. Millions of British children have had some contact with the award and its famous camping expeditions.

He painted, collected modern art, was interested in industrial design and planned a garden at Windsor Castle. But, he once said, "the arts world thinks of me as an uncultured, polo-playing clot."

In time, the famous blond hair thinned and the long, fine-boned face acquired a few lines. He gave up polo but remained trim and vigorous.

To a friend's suggestion that he ease up a bit, the prince is said to have replied, "Well, what would I do? Sit around and knit?"

But when he turned 90 in 2011, Philip told the BBC he was "winding down" his workload and he reckoned he had "done my bit."

The next few years saw occasional hospital stays as Philip's health flagged.

He announced in May 2017 that he planned to step back from royal duties, and he stopped scheduling new commitments — after roughly 22,000 royal engagements since his wife's coronation. In 2019, he gave up his driver's license after a serious car crash.

Philip is survived by the queen and their four children — Prince Charles, Princess Anne, Prince Andrew and Prince Edward — as well as eight grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

## NOT REAL NEWS: A look at what didn't happen this week

By The Associated Press undefined

A roundup of some of the most popular but completely untrue stories and visuals of the week. None of these are legit, even though they were shared widely on social media. The Associated Press checked them out. Here are the facts:

New Georgia voting law is far stricter than that in Colorado CLAIM: Major League Baseball moved the All-Star game to Colorado because Georgia now requires voter ID, but Colorado has the same requirement.

THE FACTS: Colorado does not require a photo identification card to vote, while Georgia's new law requires voters to use such IDs to request vote-by-mail ballots and existing state law requires them for voting in person. Furthermore, Georgia's newly passed voting rules that caused a backlash among critics are more sweeping than just ID requirements. Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp signed a 98-page measure into law on March 25 that rewrote Georgia election rules. Critics say the new law is too restrictive and will lead to voter disenfranchisement. They highlighted a provision that make it a misdemeanor to hand out water or food to anyone waiting in line to vote within 150 feet of the polling place and within 25 feet of anyone in line. The new law requires voters applying to receive a mailed ballot to include a driver's license or state-issued ID number in their application, and then write that number on the envelope when they mail back their ballots. The law, which also gives the Republican-controlled legislature more authority over local election administration, follows former President Donald Trump's false claims that widespread voter fraud occurred in Georgia and other states he lost in the November election. After the law passed, Major League Baseball released a statement on April 2 saying it would no longer hold its All-Star game in Truist Park in Atlanta because the organization "fundamentally supports voting rights for all Americans and opposes restrictions to the ballot box." MLB announced Tuesday that the new location for the game would be Denver's Coors Field. Social media users compared voter laws in the two states to falsely claim that Colorado's laws are not that different from Georgia's. One tweet that was widely shared on Twitter

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and Facebook spread the falsehood that the states have the same voter ID requirements, proving that the move was foolish. "Soooo! MLB moved the All-Star game from Georgia because of voter ID requirements, to Colorado WHICH ALREADY HAS VOTER ID!!" one Facebook post said. Despite what the posts online say, Colorado, a Democratic-controlled state, has less restrictive voting rules than Georgia. The state does not require voters to show photo identification to vote, according to the Colorado Secretary of State's Office. David Becker, executive director of the Center for Election Innovation and Research, said 94% of Colorado's voters cast their ballots by mail in November since the state sends all registered voters mailed ballots automatically. "The simple fact is Colorado is one of the easiest states to vote in and also has the highest election integrity of any state in the country," Becker said. When voters choose to cast ballots in person, the state accepts many forms of identification that prove a voter's name and address, including a current copy of a utility bill, paycheck or bank statement. Voters who use a mailed ballot for the first time may also be asked to send in a photocopy of one of those documents.

— Associated Press writer Beatrice Dupuy in New York contributed this report.

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Masks remain mandatory in Ohio

CLAIM: Masks are no longer mandatory in Ohio, and Republican Gov. Mike DeWine isn't saying a word about it.

THE FACTS: Masks remain mandatory in Ohio in indoor spaces as well as outdoors when social distancing is not possible. Ohio rescinded its previous coronavirus health guidelines, including its facial covering requirement, on April 5. Social media users posted the order from the Ohio Department of Health with false claims it means masks are no longer required in the Buckeye State. "Just a PSA — Masks are no longer mandatory in OHIO & Dewine isn't saying a word about it," one Facebook user wrote in a Wednesday post viewed more than 20,000 times. The social posts failed to mention that the previous orders were rescinded as part of a larger move by state officials to update and consolidate pandemic restrictions to make them simpler. A new order issued the same day — April 5 — requires individuals across the state to wear a facial covering at all times when in an indoor location that is not a residence, when outdoors without 6 feet of social distancing from others, and while using public transit, taxis, car services or ride-hailing services. The order also outlines several exemptions to the mask requirement, including children under 10, people with certain health conditions and people actively engaged in exercise in a gym or athletic competition. "Everyone should wear a mask when engaging with others outside their household," the order reads.

— Associated Press writer Ali Swenson in Seattle contributed this report.

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The U.S. government has no plans to require 'vaccine passports'

CLAIM: The federal government wants to require Americans to present a health passport or vaccine certificate "on demand," including for domestic travel.

THE FACTS: The U.S. government has no plans to require so-called vaccine passports to travel domestically, or for any other purpose. While private businesses are considering vaccine passports for certain activities, Biden administration officials have said the federal government will not mandate vaccine passports. A vaccine passport is documentation that shows a person has been vaccinated against the novel coronavirus or recently tested negative. The information will be in the form of a scannable code that can be stored on a smartphone or printed out. During a press conference on Tuesday, Press Secretary Jen Psaki said that the Biden administration is "not now nor will we be supporting a system that requires Americans to carry a credential. There will be no federal vaccinations database and no federal mandate requiring everyone to obtain a single vaccination credential." But posts circulating on social media are falsely implying that vaccine passports will be mandatory in the U.S., including for domestic travel. "President Biden and the Democrats want to force Americans to present a 'vaccine passport' upon demand, yet they oppose presenting an ID to cast a vote," reads a tweet by South Carolina Gov. Henry McMaster. A Facebook post claims: "So, now, I will need a Health Passport to travel IN America, but Illegals don't need any kind of Passport to enter INTO America!" Such claims are "patently false," according to Lawrence O. Gostin, a professor, and director of the O'Neill Institute for National and Global Health Law at Georgetown University.

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"There are no plans in the US to introduce a vaccine passport for domestic travel," Gostin said to the AP in an email. "Neither the government nor the US airline industry have announced any plans for requiring proof of vaccination as a condition of interstate travel." Gostin explained that foreign carriers were discussing a voluntary COVID vaccine passport system, but it did not include U.S. carriers yet. In the U.S., only one state has rolled out a vaccine passport. New York introduced an app through a limited government partnership with a private company. People can show proof of vaccination or a negative test with an app to enter places like entertainment venues. Lawmakers in a handful of states, including Pennsylvania, are trying to ban vaccine passports. Last week, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis also issued an executive order banning businesses from requiring customers to show proof they got the shot. The Facebook post's claim that people without legal status in the U.S. are allowed to enter without documentation is also misleading. Those trying to enter the U.S. must show proof they are an American citizen or documents showing they have permission to enter the country, otherwise they are placed in expedited removal proceedings and face deportation. The law does allow those without documents who have a credible fear of returning to their home country to enter and apply for asylum.

— Associated Press writer Arijeta Lajka in New York contributed this report.

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False posts claim Biden suffered Easter health emergency at White House

CLAIM: President Joe Biden needed a special medical team at the White House and was taken to the hospital late Sunday.

THE FACTS: Biden was not at the White House on Easter Sunday; he celebrated the holiday at Camp David. Social media users shared a 2019 video clip of White House reporters and falsely claimed that the press was "scrambling" to cover Biden being admitted to the hospital. While Biden was with his family at Camp David, a presidential retreat in Maryland, social media users posted baseless claims suggesting that he had received medical attention at the White House and had been hospitalized Sunday night. Some social media users shared a video clip of what appeared to be reporters running on White House grounds to attend a press conference, but the video was filmed during the Trump administration. Washington Post photographer Jabin Botsford shot the original video and shared it on Instagram on January 9, 2019. "Then a tail of two press conferences where we hear President Trump walked out of shutdown negotiations after Democrats rejected wall money," the Instagram story's caption stated. Early Monday, an Instagram user shared a post containing the 2019 video and falsely claimed that "a special medical team reportedly entered the White House" and that there was a "news team on the way to the White House." The video was also shared on Twitter with the same false claims. Biden returned to Washington via Marine One around noon on Monday, according to reporting by The Associated Press, and appeared with the first lady and a masked Easter Bunny. Biden spoke about the holiday and how the virus is still a part of people's lives. The AP reached out to the White House, which declined to comment.

— Arijeta Lajka

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CLAIM: Doctors in Russia violated a World Health Organization rule by performing autopsies on deceased COVID-19 patients. They determined the illness is caused by bacteria — not a virus — and can be treated with antibiotics and aspirin.

THE FACTS: Popular posts on Instagram made multiple false claims about the coronavirus and autopsies of COVID-19 patients. WHO does not prohibit COVID-19 autopsies, which have been performed since the early months of the pandemic. "Russia is the first country in the world to dissect Covid-19 corpses, and after a thorough investigation, it was determined that COVID-does NOT EXIST AS A VIRUS," reads the erroneous post. The post's caption further claims that "Doctors in Russia are violating the World Health Organization (WHO) law that does not allow autopsies of people with Covid-19," which is also false. The WHO does not discourage autopsies of deceased COVID-19 patients. In fact, the organization issued guidance on how to handle such autopsies in March 2020. The first published full autopsy of a deceased COVID-19 patient with photographs appeared in a Chinese journal in February 2020, according to a German study of COVID-19 autopsies. In December, Russian Deputy Prime Minister Tatyana Golikova said



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that autopsies in Russia are routinely performed when people die of the disease. "We have autopsies in 100 percent of cases, except some exclusions for religious reasons. But in case of infectious diseases, and the coronavirus is considered a highly dangerous infectious disease, we have autopsies in 100 percent of cases," she said, according to the Russian state news agency Tass. Multiple Instagram posts falsely claimed that the cause of COVID-19 is not a virus, "but rather bacteria that cause death and lead to the formation of blood clots in the veins and nerves, from which the patient dies because of these bacteria." Scientists have identified SARS-CoV-2, a coronavirus, as the virus that causes COVID-19. WHO officials in China were first informed about the virus in December 2019, and the virus was isolated on Jan. 7 by Chinese authorities, The Associated Press reported.

— Arijeta Lajka

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French police tossed cuffs in protest, but not for lockdowns

CLAIM: Video shows French police symbolically dropping their handcuffs to declare they will no longer participate in national lockdowns to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

THE FACTS: The video is from June 2020 and does not show a protest against COVID-19 restrictions. The French police officers in the video were dropping their cuffs to protest new limits on arrest tactics and criticism of alleged violence and racism in their ranks after George Floyd's death in the United States. Floyd, a Black man, died May 25 after Officer Derek Chauvin, who is white, pressed his knee against Floyd's neck while Floyd was held face-down on the ground. Protests over police killings erupted worldwide, including in France, where Interior Minister Christophe Castaner announced in June that the nation's police force would no longer teach or permit chokeholds during arrests. Castaner acknowledged that there are racist police officers and promised "zero tolerance" for racism within the force going forward. Police officers in France responded with their own protests, gathering in several cities to throw down their handcuffs in symbolic opposition to Castaner's announcement. The digital media company Brut covered one such protest on June 11 at a police headquarters in the Paris suburb of Bobigny. In a tweet with a video of the event, a Brut reporter said the police denounced the stigmatization of their profession and disagreed with Castaner's decision to forbid the strangulation method during arrests. A clip of Brut's livestream that day is circulating anew this week along with false claims it shows a COVID-19 anti-lockdown protest. "French police declare they are no longer participating in the lockdown by symbolically dropping their cuffs," text over the video reads in a Monday TikTok post. The same video was shared with thousands of likes on Twitter and Instagram. A side-by-side analysis confirmed this is an old video. There's no evidence for the claim that French police are boycotting coronavirus restrictions.

— Ali Swenson

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Kansas City schools superintendent didn't tweet at rapper

CLAIM: Mark Bedell, the superintendent of Kansas City Public Schools, tweeted in response to rapper and influencer Bhad Bhabie's post about sending private messages on OnlyFans, a social media platform that allows people to sell explicit content to subscribers.

THE FACTS: The tweet came from an account impersonating the superintendent, both Bedell and an Associated Press analysis of the image confirmed. This week, an image falsely claiming to show a tweet from a superintendent in Kansas City, Missouri, circulated widely on Facebook and Twitter. The image showed an April 1 tweet from rapper Bhad Bhabie, whose real name is Danielle Bregoli. In the tweet, she said she planned to respond to direct messages on OnlyFans, a platform where models and social media influencers charge subscribers to view explicit images, videos and other content. A Twitter user appearing to have the same picture and Twitter handle as Bedell replied to Bregoli's tweet, saying he had "been waiting" and accusing Bregoli of "teasing" users. However, a closer look at the image shows the user's Twitter handle employs an uppercase "I" instead of a lowercase "L" to impersonate Bedell's handle, which is @MarkBedell\_KCPS. The account that posted the tweet has been deactivated. Twitter has permanently suspended a different account with a similar handle to Bedell for violating the Twitter rules on impersonation, a Twitter spokesperson confirmed. Bedell responded to the fake accounts on Monday in a tweet

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that was shared by Kansas City Public Schools. "You may be seeing some fake accounts popping up under my name; please know that your senses are correct—they are fake!" Bedell wrote. "We have removed 3 fake accounts over the last 10 days. We are in the process of verifying my account with @Twitter."

## No region in the world spared as virus cases, deaths surge

By VANESSA GERA Associated Press

WARSAW, Poland (AP) — Hospitals in Turkey and Poland are filling up. Pakistan is restricting domestic travel. The U.S. government will send more help to the state with the country's worst infection increase.

The worldwide surge in coronavirus cases and deaths includes even Thailand, which has weathered the pandemic far better than many nations but now struggles to contain COVID-19.

The only exceptions to the deteriorating situation are countries that have advanced vaccination programs, most notably Israel and Britain. The U.S., which is a vaccination leader globally, is also seeing a small uptick in new cases, and the White House announced Friday that it would send federal assistance to Michigan to control the state's worst-in-the-nation transmission rate.

The World Health Organization said infection rates are climbing in every global region, driven by new virus variants and too many countries coming out of lockdown too soon.

"We've seen rises (in cases) worldwide for six weeks. And now, sadly, we are seeing rises in deaths for the last three weeks," Dr. Margaret Harris, a WHO spokeswoman, said at a briefing in Geneva.

In its weekly epidemiological update, the WHO said over 4 million COVID-19 cases were reported in the last week. New deaths increased by 11% compared to last week, with over 71,000 reported.

The increasing infections, hospitalizations and deaths extend to countries where vaccinations are finally gaining momentum. That leaves even bleaker prospects for much of the world, where large-scale vaccination programs remain a more distant prospect.

In Turkey, which is among the badly hit countries, most new cases of the virus can be traced to a variant first found in Britain.

Ismail Cinel, head of the Turkish Intensive Care Association, said the surge was beginning to strain the nation's relatively advanced health care system and "the alarm bells are ringing" for intensive care units, which are not yet at full capacity.

"The mutant form of the virus is causing more harm to the organs," Cinel said. "While 2 out of 10 patients were dying previously, the number is now 4 out of 10. And if we continue this way, we will lose six."

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan eased COVID-19 restrictions in early March to minimize pain to his nation's ailing economy. The new spike forced him to announce renewed restrictions, such as weekend lockdowns and the closure of cafes and restaurants during Ramadan, which starts April 13.

Turkish medical groups say the reopening in March was premature and that the new measures do not go far enough. They have been calling for full lockdowns during the holy Muslim month.

In the U.S. capital, President Joe Biden's administration outlined how the federal government planned to help Michigan better administer the doses already allocated to the state, as well as expand testing capacity and the availability of drugs. The effort will not include any extra vaccine doses, a move Gov. Gretchen Whitmer sought.

Doses are currently allocated to states proportionally by population. Whitmer has called for extra doses to be shifted to states like hers experiencing a sharp rise in cases. She also urged a voluntary two-week halt to in-person high school classes, youth sports and indoor restaurant dining, but stopped short of issuing new restrictions.

In Brazil, which has the second-highest death toll in the world after the U.S., Sao Paulo has started night burials to cope with demand, and school vans have been used to transport coffins. With the pace of vaccination already slow — less than 3% of Brazil's 210 million people have received both vaccine doses, according to the research site Our World in Data — some governors have expressed concern about vaccine supplies.

The death toll in Iran is also rising, prompting new restrictions that will take effect for 10 days in 257 cit-

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ies beginning Saturday. They involve the closure of all parks, restaurants, confectionaries, beauty salons, malls and bookstores.

Authorities in Pakistan, which is in the middle of a third surge of infections, are restricting inter-city transportation on weekends starting at midnight Friday.

Elsewhere in Asia, authorities in Thailand ordered new restrictions Friday in an effort to contain a growing coronavirus outbreak just days before the country's traditional Songkran New Year's holiday, when millions of people travel.

In Germany, Poland and other countries in the 27-member European Union, vaccination programs are finally ramping up after a slow start blamed on delivery shortages.

Thousands of German medical practices joined the vaccination campaign this week, helping the country reach consecutive daily records for doses administered. So far, 14.7% of the population has received at least one dose and 5.8% has received both shots.

Yet German health officials are warning of a steep rise in intensive care patients and are calling for stronger action to contain infections.

Neighboring Poland is also seeing a dramatic spike in deaths, and hospitals have been forced to turn away cancer and other patients as ICU and other hospital beds are taken by COVID-19 patients. Hospitalizations of virus patients there have jumped 20% in the past two weeks.

Harris, from the WHO, said the world knows how to fight these surges. She cited good news from the U.K., where new coronavirus cases dropped 60% in March amid a strong vaccination program, "but we have to do it all."

"We have to keep on social distancing. We have to avoid indoor crowded settings," she said. "We have to keep wearing the masks, even if vaccinated."

## **Kremlin says it fears full-scale fighting in Ukraine's east**

By VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — The Kremlin said Friday it fears a resumption of full-scale fighting in eastern Ukraine and could take steps to protect Russian civilians there, a stark warning that comes amid a Russian troop build-up along the border.

The statement by Russian President Vladimir Putin's spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, reflected the Kremlin's determination to prevent Ukraine from using force to try to retake control over separatist-controlled territory in eastern Ukraine.

Ukraine's military chief dismissed the Russian claims that the country's armed forces are preparing for an attack on the rebel east.

Ukrainian forces and Russia-backed separatists have been fighting in eastern Ukraine since shortly after Moscow's 2014 annexation of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula. More than 14,000 people have died in the conflict, and efforts to negotiate a political settlement have stalled.

Ukraine and the West have accused Russia of sending in troops and weapons to help separatists, accusations that Moscow has denied. The White House says Russia now has more troops on its border with Ukraine than at any time since 2014.

Russia also claimed that it had to protect Russian-speakers in Crimea when it sent troops into the Black Sea peninsula and then annexed it in March 2014 following a hastily-called public vote.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Friday after visiting troops in the east that 26 Ukrainian soldiers have been killed so far this year. Increasingly frequent breaches of a July truce agreement mean that "we again face the need to establish a cease-fire," Zelenskyy said.

The separatist authorities in Donetsk said 20 troops and 2 civilians have been killed this year.

Western and Ukrainian officials have raised concerns in recent weeks about increasingly frequent cease-fire violations in the country's industrial heartland. They also expressed worries about the Russian troop build-up along the border with Ukraine.

The concerns appeared to intensify Friday as US Secretary of State Antony Blinken spoke to his French

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and German counterparts about the matter. The State Department said Blinken, German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas and French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian discussed the need for Russia to cease its military build-up and heated rhetoric.

During a call with Putin on Thursday, German Chancellor Angela Merkel "called for the removal of these troop reinforcements in order to achieve a de-escalation of the situation."

Peskov said Russia is free to deploy its troops wherever it wants on its territory. He accused the Ukrainian military of an "escalation of provocative actions" along the line of control in the east that threatens Russia's security.

"The Kremlin has fears that a civil war could resume in Ukraine. And if a civil war, a full-scale military action, resumes near our borders that would threaten the Russian Federation's security," Peskov said. "The ongoing escalation of tensions is quite unprecedented."

In Kyiv, Col.-Gen. Ruslan Khomchak, the commander-in-chief of Ukraine's armed forces, rejected Moscow's claims of the alleged Ukrainian preparations for an offensive in the east as part of a "disinformation campaign" and a "hybrid war."

The Russian military, meanwhile, said its scouts have trained for missions behind enemy lines during the latest drills in the Belgorod region that borders Ukraine. And in the Black Sea, the Russian navy's missile boats have practiced striking enemy ships.

Dmitry Kozak, a Putin aide who serves as Russia's top negotiator with Kyiv, warned Ukraine on Thursday against using force to retake control of the east, where many residents have Russian citizenship. Such a move would mark "the beginning of an end for Ukraine," he said, adding that Russia would likely act to protect its citizens.

Asked about Kozak's comment, Peskov alleged that virulent nationalist rhetoric in Ukraine was inflaming hatred against the mostly Russian-speaking population of the east. He claimed that if civilians in eastern Ukraine faced the threat of a massacre, "all countries, including Russia, will take steps to prevent such tragedies."

A Turkish Foreign Ministry official said Friday the United States has notified Turkey that two U.S. warships will sail to the Black Sea on April 14 and April 15 and stay there until May 4 and May 5. The official spoke on condition of anonymity in line with government rules.

Such visits by the U.S. and other NATO ships have vexed Moscow, which long has bristled at Ukraine's efforts to build up defense ties with the West and its aspirations to eventually join NATO.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova warned Friday that Ukraine's NATO bid "wouldn't only lead to a massive escalation of the situation in the southeast but could also entail irreversible consequences for the Ukrainian statehood."

## **COVID, Philip's no-fuss attitude mean simpler funeral plan**

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Prince Philip will be laid to rest with all the honors due a prince of the United Kingdom and a consort to Queen Elizabeth II.

But the coronavirus pandemic means it will be a more low-key farewell than has marked many royal deaths. The pandemic has required changes to the well-prepared plans for Philip's passing, code-named Operation Forth Bridge.

"During the coronavirus pandemic, and in light of current government advice and social distancing guidelines, modified Funeral and ceremonial arrangements for His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh are being considered by Her Majesty The Queen," Buckingham Palace said in a statement. "Details will be confirmed in due course."

Flags on government buildings and royal residences were lowered to half-mast and British television networks canceled scheduled programs to allow for special coverage after Philip died Friday at 99.

His death will be marked with 41-gun salutes at noon on Saturday at locations across the country, including the Tower of London and Edinburgh Castle, as well as in Gibraltar and on Royal Navy ships at sea.



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But the palace and the British government urged people not to gather or lay flowers outside the royal residences to honor him. The palace instead invited well-wishers to sign a book of condolences — but only online, to avoid crowds and queues.

Britain, which has Europe's highest toll in the pandemic at over 127,000 dead, is still under some lockdown restrictions to combat the spread of COVID-19.

When the Queen Mother Elizabeth — the last royal consort to pass on — died in 2002, her coffin lay in state at Parliament's Westminster Hall, and thousands of people filed past to pay their last respects.

Philip's body will not lie in state, a function both of the pandemic and his own "no fuss" attitude. Nor will it be a state funeral, in keeping with his wishes.

The College of Arms, the body that oversees ceremonial protocol, said Friday that the duke's body will lie at rest in Windsor Castle, 25 miles (40 kilometers) west of London, where he spent his final weeks with the queen. His funeral will be held in St. George's Chapel at the castle, the site of centuries of royal burials — and royal weddings, including the 2018 union of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle.

"This is in line with custom and with His Royal Highness's wishes," the college said.

Buckingham Palace will announce later when the funeral will be held and how many people will attend. Funerals are currently restricted to 30 people or fewer under England's coronavirus rules, so it's likely to be immediate family only.

It's thought that Harry will try to travel from his home in Montecito, California, to say goodbye to his grandfather but he could have to navigate Britain's coronavirus rules.

Travelers from the U.S. must produce a negative COVID-19 test before they get on the plane and must self-isolate for 10 days upon arrival, but that quarantine can end early if a test after five days comes back negative. His wife Meghan is quite pregnant with their second child and is not expected to make the trip.

Some aspects of British life will pause until after the funeral, with run-of-the mill government visits and announcements suspended.

Britain's political parties on Friday paused campaigning for next month's local and Scottish elections, as Prime Minister Boris Johnson led political tributes. Lawmakers will return a day early from their Easter break so they can pay tribute to Philip in the House of Commons on Monday.

## Caitlyn Jenner considers run for California governor

By MICHAEL R. BLOOD and KATHLEEN RONAYNE Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Caitlyn Jenner has been an Olympic hero, a reality TV personality and a transgender rights activist. Her next step could be candidate for California governor.

The 71-year-old longtime Republican has been consulting with GOP advisers as she considers joining the field of candidates hoping to replace Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom in a likely recall election later this year. Jenner has spoken to Dave Rexrode, executive director of the Republican Governors Association, about a potential run, a spokesperson for the organization said.

The celebrity activist, who described herself as "economically conservative, socially progressive" in a People magazine interview last year, immediately would stand out in a field that so far has failed to attract a nationally known contender. Her potential run would come nearly two decades after the ascendancy of Arnold Schwarzenegger, another Republican who used his Hollywood fame as a springboard to the state's highest office in a 2003 recall election.

Still, a potential run by first-time candidate Jenner also has spotlighted the many unknowns about her positions on critical issues facing the nation's most populated state, from how she would manage the coronavirus pandemic to slowing a homelessness crisis.

If the recall qualifies for the ballot, as expected, voters would be asked two questions: first, whether Newsom should be removed from office. The second would be a list of replacement candidates to choose from, if more than 50% of voters support removing Newsom from office.

The effort has been largely fueled by criticism of Newsom's handling of the pandemic. Republicans who have announced their intention to run include former San Diego Mayor Kevin Faulconer, former U.S. Rep.

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Doug Ose and businessman John Cox, who lost to Newsom in the 2018 governor's race.

Jenner is evaluating key questions in a possible candidacy: Is she ready for the rigors of a statewide campaign, the pressure to raise tens of millions of dollars and ultimately, can she win? said people familiar with her plans or who had conversations with those advising her but were not authorized to speak publicly.

The team around her includes former President Donald Trump's campaign manager, Brad Parscale, who is helping Jenner assemble an inner circle; longtime Republican strategist Ryan Erwin, a veteran of California and presidential politics who would become the campaign's general consultant; and GOP fundraiser Caroline Wren.

California Republican National Committee member Harmeet Dhillon declined to comment on a Politico report saying she would serve as the campaign's general counsel.

"My understanding is she is in the research phase, trying to assess her chances, trying to understand the pathway to victory," said Jim Brulte, a former chairman of the California Republican Party. He has not spoken directly to Jenner.

Jenner made headlines in recent years with her back-and-forth relationship with Trump, who remains broadly unpopular in California outside his GOP base. Trump lost the heavily Democratic state to Joe Biden in November by over 5 million votes.

Jenner supported Trump in 2016 but later criticized his administration's reversal of a directive on transgender access to public school bathrooms. She also criticized Trump after he said transgender people would not be allowed to serve in the U.S. military.

As an untested candidate in a potentially crowded field, it's difficult to predict what her coalition of supporters might look like. Republican social conservatives, for example, might be hesitant to line up with a transgender candidate.

Newsom, who as San Francisco mayor ignored the law and issued marriage licenses to same-sex couples in 2004, has close ties to the LGBTQ community.

It's also not known what role Trump might play in the election, if any, and how the GOP donor community that is crucial to funding a campaign would react. Jenner also could face questions about a 2015 fatal crash in which she rear-ended two cars. A 69-year-old woman was killed when her car was pushed into the path of an oncoming Hummer.

In a typical election, Jenner, as a Republican, would face long odds in a state dominated by Democrats. But with dozens of candidates expected to join the ballot in a likely recall election, the threshold to win would be far lower with the vote divided among many contenders.

Jenner's celebrity status would be an advantage in what could be a chaotic two-month campaign. She's widely known from shows including "Keeping Up with the Kardashians" and the spin-off "I Am Cait."

With multiple candidates, California Republican national committeeman Shawn Steel said it's possible that a winner could top the field with as little as 20% of the vote.

Jenner "is not to be discounted at all," said Steel, who has not spoken with her about the race. If she enters the contest, "Caitlyn adds a whole new level of excitement."

It's not uncommon in California for residents to seek recalls, but they rarely get on the ballot — and even fewer succeed. Recent statewide polling has suggested that Newsom would hold his office.

County election officials are reviewing the signatures submitted by recall organizers to determine whether it will qualify. The vote likely would take place in the fall.

Axios first reported Jenner's interest in running, and Politico on Thursday first reported her conversation with the Republican Governors Association and the hiring of several prominent Republican consultants.

A representative for Jenner could not immediately be reached.

## Adams said to have spurned NFL, union health programs

By BARRY WILNER AP Pro Football Writer

The NFL and its players' union have an array of health programs designed to help players in their life after football. According to his agent, Phillip Adams did not avail himself of those opportunities.

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Adams, a journeyman player, spent six seasons in the league. Authorities say he fatally shot five people in South Carolina — including a prominent doctor, his wife and their two grandchildren — before killing himself early Thursday.

Agent Scott Casterline told The Associated Press the 32-year-old Adams did not participate in the physical and mental health programs that are easily accessible for ex-players.

"We encouraged him to explore all of his disability options and he wouldn't do it," Casterline said, noting that Adams' career was undercut by a severe ankle injury as a rookie in 2010. "I knew he was hurting and missing football but he wouldn't take health tips offered to him. He said he would but he wouldn't.

"I felt he was lost without football, somewhat depressed."

The NFL Players Association offers assistance through its Players Athlete Foundation, Former Players department, and The Trust, which launched in 2013 and assists members by providing access to resources, experts and partners after football.

The Trust's Brain & Body Assessment uses individually tailored assessments by such medical institutions as the Cleveland Clinic and Mass General to give retired players an in-depth evaluation of overall health. The assessments include internal, neurological, neuropsychological/behavioral, cardiovascular and musculoskeletal exams. Also featured is rehabilitation and evaluations of sleep habits, body composition and diet.

"All the areas they examined and assessed," former NFL player Kendall Simmons said, "from nutrition to body composition, to orthopedics, to mental health examinations, to cognitive and general wellness assessments. I felt very secure having had such a thorough physical."

Also available through the NFLPA is a supplemental mental health benefit offering access to outpatient psychiatry and counseling services in the former player's home community. Eligible services covered include psychiatric evaluations and follow-up appointments, outpatient and partial hospitalization programs, and individual counseling to address mental/behavioral health concerns.

The league's Total Wellness Program and NFL Player Care Foundation are available to all active and retired players. Included are such benefits as work/life resources, enhancement assessment and counseling, and neurological treatment.

The Player Care Foundation was created in 2007 as an independent organization dedicated to helping retired players improve their quality of life. It assists with medical, emotional, financial, social and community issues.

Nine years ago, an NFL grant created the NFL Life Line. It serves current and former players, coaches, team and league staff, and family members, who might be in crisis. Life Line is a free, confidential and independently operated resource that connects callers with trained counselors who can help with personal or emotional crises. That service is available around the clock.

Citing confidentially, the league and union would not say whether Adams took advantage of any of these programs.

"He was a good quiet kid. He overworked," said former Dallas Cowboys defensive back Kevin Smith, who helped train Adams for the 2012 draft. "I used to have to tell him you don't have to do so much. ...

"Recently, our only communication was through Instagram and he was real short. He didn't say a whole lot. That was just him. He was such a good kid. I didn't see mental issues outside of the fact that his pride was a double-edged sword. What drove him, all the hard work, also worked against him."

## 'Blue wall of silence' takes hit in Chauvin's murder trial

By JIM SALTER Associated Press

Police accused of wrongdoing can usually count on the blue wall of silence — protection from fellow officers that includes everything from shutting off body cameras to refusing to cooperate with investigators. But that's not the case with Derek Chauvin, with many colleagues quick to condemn his actions in George Floyd's death, some even taking the stand against him.

Minneapolis Police Chief Medaria Arradondo testified that Chauvin's kneeling on the handcuffed Floyd's neck was "in no way, shape or form" in line with department policy or training. Homicide detective Lt.

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Richard Zimmerman testified, "If your knee is on a person's neck, that can kill him."

Chauvin's former supervisor, retired Sgt. David Ploeger, testified that the force used on Floyd went on too long and should have ended when the Black man was handcuffed and stopped resisting. An inspector acquainted with Chauvin for two decades and an officer who said the defendant spent a day as her training officer took the witness stand as well.

The criticism didn't start at trial. Fourteen officers, including Zimmerman, signed an open letter last year saying Chauvin "failed as a human and stripped George Floyd of his dignity and life. This is not who we are."

It's unclear whether officers are becoming more willing to call out a colleague, or if the extraordinary circumstances of this particular case are at play. While police agencies across the country have instituted reforms that promote more ethical behavior, some experts say the unblinking video of Chauvin with his knee on Floyd's neck as the dying man pleads for air is the impetus for fellow officers to stand against Chauvin.

"I sincerely wish I could see a crumbling of the blue wall, but sadly I do not see that," said Bill Hall, a former Justice Department mediator who handled brutality cases, and a political science adjunct professor at Webster University in Missouri.

The damning police testimony — and the public criticism — against Chauvin is coming from the top of the department, not patrol officers. All 14 signers of the June letter were ranked as sergeant or higher. Hall said supervisory police officials have incentive to show the fault lies with the officer, not with their policies and procedures.

Still, in June, the head of the Minneapolis police union, Lt. Bob Kroll, a usually militant defender of officers, agreed that Chauvin's firing was warranted, calling what was shown on camera "horrific." Meanwhile, the three other officers charged in Floyd's death, fired soon after and facing their own trials in August, are likely to blame the far more senior Chauvin for what happened.

The number of Chauvin's Minneapolis colleagues who have turned on him is telling, said Rick Rosenfeld, a criminologist at the University of Missouri-St. Louis.

"We don't usually see a dozen or more police officers from the very same agency come out opposed to the actions taken by a police officer," Rosenfeld said.

It's a far cry from the code of silence that has surrounded cases of police brutality and killings for so long in so many places — including Minneapolis.

In 2017, Officer Mohamed Noor shot and killed Justine Ruszczyk Damond as she approached Noor's squad car in the alley behind her home. Court testimony showed that an incident commander turned off her body camera when talking to Noor shortly after the shooting. Other officers told him not to say anything. Prosecutors told the court that about 20 police officers refused to talk to investigators and met with union officials to discuss withholding information.

Noor was one of the rare officers to be convicted anyway. He is serving a 12½-year prison term.

In another Minnesota case, former St. Anthony officer Jeronimo Yanez was acquitted in the July 2016 killing of Philando Castile. Fellow officers were in court throughout that trial supporting Yanez.

Chauvin still has the legal support of the Minnesota Police and Peace Officers Association. The association's legal defense fund is paying for his defense, and is obligated to do so because his years paying dues to his local union earned him the right to representation, said Brian Peters, executive director of the association.

Eric Nelson, Chauvin's attorney, is one of 12 attorneys for the MPPOA who take turns handling officer-involved cases.

Some new programs seek to address the blue wall head-on.

New Orleans police in 2015 implemented a program called Ethical Policing Is Courageous, or EPIC. Training emphasizes peer intervention if an officer is doing something wrong such as committing an assault or planting evidence. The idea is that if one bystander officer intervenes, others will follow and the peer pressure will halt the bad act.

New Orleans Chief of Detectives Paul Noel said Floyd's death could have been prevented if Minneapolis police had a program like EPIC.

"It would have taken just one officer to say, 'hey, get off of him,'" Noel said.



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But John Kleinig, professor emeritus of criminology at John Jay College of Criminal Justice at City University of New York, believes that in most cases, police officers will remain inclined toward actions that protect their wayward colleagues.

"For the police, it's not a simple matter of coverup," Kleinig said. "There's a moral impetus to the blue wall of silence. In other words, 'we owe loyalty to each other.'"

## **Biden orders gun control actions — but they show his limits**

By ALEXANDRA JAFFE, AAMER MADHANI and MICHAEL BALSAMO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden put on a modest White House ceremony Thursday to announce a half-dozen executive actions to combat what he called an "epidemic and an international embarrassment" of gun violence in America.

But he said much more is needed. And while Biden had proposed the most ambitious gun-control agenda of any modern presidential candidate, his moves underscored his limited power to act alone on guns with difficult politics impeding legislative action on Capitol Hill.

Biden's new steps include a move to crack down on "ghost guns," homemade firearms that lack serial numbers used to trace them and are often purchased without a background check. He's also moving to tighten regulations on pistol-stabilizing braces like the one used in Boulder, Colorado, in a shooting last month that left 10 dead.

The president's actions delivered on a pledge he made last month to take what he termed immediate "common-sense steps" to address gun violence, after a series of mass shootings drew renewed attention to the issue. His announcement came the day after yet another episode, this one in South Carolina, where five people were killed.

But his orders stop well short of some of his biggest campaign-trail proposals, including his promise to ban the importation of assault weapons, his embrace of a voluntary gun buyback program and a pledge to provide resources for the Justice Department and FBI to better enforce the nation's current gun laws and track firearms.

And while gun control advocates lauded Thursday's moves as a strong first step in combating gun violence, they, too, acknowledged that action from lawmakers on Capitol Hill is needed to make lasting change.

"Some of the other big-ticket items are legislative," said Josh Horowitz, executive director of the Coalition to Stop Gun Violence. "And that's going to be very difficult."

Biden mentioned a formidable list of priorities he'd like to see Congress tackle, including passing the Violence Against Women Act, eliminating lawsuit exemptions for gun manufacturers and banning assault weapons and high-capacity magazines. He also called on the Senate to take up House-passed measures to close background check loopholes.

But with an evenly-divided Senate — and any gun control legislation requiring 60 votes to pass — Democrats would have to keep every member of their narrow majority on board while somehow adding 10 Republicans.

Horowitz said "it's hard to think" who those Republicans would be, and though that doesn't mean it's impossible to move on gun control "we're going to have to change some of the people who are in the Senate."

Gun control advocates say the National Rifle Association's legal and financial issues have greatly weakened the once mighty pro-gun lobby and helped turn the public tide in favor of some restrictions on gun ownership. They say a shift in public perception will eventually trickle down to Republicans on Capitol Hill.

But so far that hasn't materialized in votes. The House passed two bills in March largely along party lines that would expand and strengthen background checks for gun sales and transfers, a move that has broad public support. But most Republicans argue that strengthened checks could take guns away from law-abiding gun owners.

A small, bipartisan group of senators is trying to find compromise based on a 2013 deal that would have expanded background checks to gun shows and internet sales but was rejected then by five votes. Demo-

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cratic Sen. Chris Murphy of Connecticut said at a rally in his state last week that he is talking to his colleagues every day to come a deal, and that he believes the public is more supportive than ever of changes.

Murphy acknowledged last weekend on NBC's "Meet the Press" that the background check bill that passed the House isn't likely to succeed in the Senate, but he suggested a more narrowly tailored bill might, and said he was working to build on that legislation to win over Republican support.

"You are going to have to make some reasonable accommodations if you want 10 Republican votes. And I am already talking to Republicans who are not unwilling to sit down at the table," he said.

Even some of the limited moves Biden took Thursday had already been making their way through the bureaucracy.

The federal government has been working on a proposed rule that would change the definition of a firearm to include lower receivers, the essential piece of a semiautomatic rifle, in an effort to combat the proliferation of "ghost guns" and stave off losing court battles on the issue.

The process started in the waning months of the Trump administration, according to four people familiar with the matter. Justice Department leaders and officials at the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives had been working on language for a proposed rule since at least summer 2020, they said.

The proposal had gone through several layers of review by agency attorneys by last fall, and ATF officials have met with gun manufacturers and others to discuss the possibility of expanding the definition of a firearm, the people said.

They could not publicly discuss the details of the process and spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

While Biden said the moves he took Thursday were just the beginning of his administration's actions on guns, it's not known what further steps he'll be willing — or able — to take.

With Biden already focused on passing his \$2.3 trillion infrastructure package, after delivering a massive COVID-19 relief bill, it's unclear how much political capital he has to spend to get any gun-control bills across the finish line. Asked last month if he felt he had the political sway to pass new gun laws, Biden told reporters: "I don't know. I haven't done any counting yet."

Some activists, while they praised Biden for his executive actions Thursday, said they wanted to see him more actively involved in the fight on Capitol Hill.

"I think he needs to engage directly and I think he needs to be counting the votes. I'm not sure what he's waiting for," said Igor Volsky, executive director of Guns Down America.

Volsky said his group would like to see Biden lay out a comprehensive package of reforms focused on gun violence, similar to what the administration has done on immigration. And he said Biden "could do more in using the presidential bully pulpit" to communicate with the public about the need for gun control measures and to pressure Congress to act.

"As he pointed out on the campaign trail, repeatedly, there's no time to wait to act on this issue. So my view is that this should be a priority for him," Volsky said.

## Airlines pull Boeing Max jets to inspect electrical systems

By DAVID KOENIG and MICHELLE CHAPMAN AP Business Writers

Airlines pulled dozens of Boeing Max 737s out of service for inspections after the aircraft maker told them about a possible electrical problem, the latest setback for the plane.

Boeing said Friday that the issue affected planes used by 16 airlines. The company did not say how many planes are affected or how long it will take for inspections and, if necessary, repairs.

Max jets were grounded worldwide in March 2019 after two crashes killed 346 people. The planes resumed flying in December after regulators in the U.S., Europe, Canada and Brazil approved changes Boeing made to an automated flight-control system that played a role in the crashes.

Boeing said the new issue, in which a component in the electrical power system might not be correctly grounded, was unrelated to the flight-control system.

Southwest Airlines, which began flying the Max again last month, said it removed 30 of its 58 Max jets

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from its schedule to inspect them. Southwest spokesman Brian Parrish said the airline has not experienced any known problems related to the electrical issue.

Southwest has a fleet of more than 700 Boeing 737s, most of them older models than the Max. Parrish said the airline will use other planes to operate flights that had been scheduled with Max jet, and it anticipates only minimal disruption to its operation.

American Airlines temporarily removed 17 of its 41 Max planes from service, according to a memo to employees. Boeing traced the issue to a production change made after the worldwide fleet of Max jets was grounded in 2019, American's chief operating officer, David Seymour, said in the memo.

"We will never knowingly operate an aircraft with a known or potential issue," Seymour said.

American was the first U.S. airline to resume flying the Max, in late December.

United Airlines said it temporarily grounded 16 of its 30 Max planes and will try to operate all flights with its other planes. The airline said it was in contact with Boeing and federal regulators to determine what steps are needed before the planes can return to service.

Alaska Airlines said it removed all four of its Max jets from service "to allow for inspections and for work to be done."

Boeing said the electrical issue was discovered on a plane on the production line. The company said it is working closely with the Federal Aviation Administration on the matter.

Since the Max crashes, Boeing has made internal changes in response to accusations that it short-changed safety in pursuit of profits. Lawyers suing Boeing over the crashes seized on the latest problem with the planes.

"This grounding calls into question the safety of the Max and why Boeing's claims of a 'changed culture' continue to ring hollow," said Steven Marks, one of the lawyers representing relatives of passengers who were on board an Ethiopian Airlines Max that crashed in March 2019. "We don't know what other issues exist."

Shares of Boeing Co., based in Chicago, fell about 1% in afternoon trading.

## Slain South Carolina doctor wrote of faith, life's fragility

By MEG KINNARD Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — Robert Lesslie — the South Carolina physician and author who authorities say was killed, along with three family members and a repairman, by former NFL player Phillip Adams — frequently wrote of the fragility of life and a deep-seated Christian faith that guided him personally and professionally.

"I know without a doubt that life is fragile," the 70-year-old doctor wrote in one of his books, a collection of missives he termed "inspiring true stories" from his medical work. "I have come to understand that humility may be the greatest virtue. And I am convinced we need to take the time to say the things we deeply feel to the people we deeply care about."

"Life is uncertain. Things happen. Lives are unexpectedly changed or ended. And it happens suddenly," he wrote in his online blog entry.

Lesslie's lessons on faith were passed down to his children, as was evident in a statement from his family that law enforcement shared at a news conference on Thursday, a day after the attack. Even in their grief, the family said their "hearts are bent toward forgiveness and peace," York County Sheriff Kevin Tolson told reporters. He said they were also praying for the family of Adams, a former NFL journeyman who authorities say shot and killed himself early Thursday after officers surrounded his parents' home.

According to police, Adams went to the home of Robert and Barbara Lesslie on Wednesday and shot and killed them, two of their grandchildren, 9-year-old Adah Lesslie and 5-year-old Noah Lesslie, and James Lewis, a 38-year-old air conditioning technician from Gaston who was doing work there. He also shot Lewis' colleague, 38-year-old Robert Shook, of Cherryville, North Carolina, who was flown to a Charlotte hospital, where he was in critical condition "fighting hard for his life," said a cousin, Heather Smith Thompson.

Tolson said investigators hadn't figured out why Adams carried out the attack: "There's nothing right now that makes sense to any of us."

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A person briefed on the investigation who spoke to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to speak publicly said Robert Lesslie had treated Adams, who lived with his parents not far from the Lesslies' home.

Tolson would not confirm that Adams had been the doctor's patient.

Barbara Lesslie had been heavily involved in fine arts, including theater in Rock Hill, said Gary Simrill, the Republican leader of the South Carolina House and a longtime Rock Hill resident. Having practiced medicine in Rock Hill for more than three decades, her husband had indeed treated many of its citizens. Simrill said that after years in emergency medicine, Robert Lesslie founded two urgent care centers that were the opposite of what many might expect from a quick-service medical practice.

"People developed a great relationship with him because he wasn't just the doctor that saw you," Simrill said. "He was the doctor that got to know you."

Among his patients were Trent Faris, the spokesman for the York County Sheriff's Office, and Adams' father, Alonzo Adams.

Community members planned a Sunday prayer vigil for the Lesslie family in Fountain Park in downtown Greenville.

"If you know the Lesslie family you know just how special they are to so very many of us," organizers wrote on a Facebook event page. "You also know how they made sure we knew how special we were to them."

Tolson said evidence left at the shooting scene led investigators to Adams as a suspect. He said they went to Adams' parents' home, evacuated them and then persuade Adams to come out. Eventually, they found him dead of a single gunshot wound to the head in a bedroom, he said.

Adams, 32, played in 78 NFL games over six seasons for six teams. He joined the 49ers in 2010 as a seventh-round draft pick out of South Carolina State, and though he rarely started, he went on to play for New England, Seattle, Oakland and the New York Jets before finishing his career with the Atlanta Falcons in 2015.

As a rookie late in the 2010 season, Adams suffered a severe ankle injury that required surgery that included several screws being inserted into his leg. He never played for the 49ers again, getting released just before the 2011 season began. Later, with the Raiders, he had two concussions over three games in 2012.

Whether he suffered long-lasting concussion-related injuries wasn't immediately clear. Adams would not have been eligible for testing as part of a broad settlement between the league and its former players over such injuries, because he hadn't retired by 2014.

Adams' father told a Charlotte television station that he blamed football for problems his son had, and which might have led him to commit Wednesday's violence.

"I can say he's a good kid — he was a good kid, and I think the football messed him up," Alonzo Adams told WCNC-TV. "He didn't talk much and he didn't bother nobody."

Robert Lesslie reveled in writing about his faith and his work as a physician, penning more than half a dozen books that were collections of what he termed "inspiring true stories" from his work.

In a 2014 interview, he spoke of how he came to write one, "Angels in the ER," saying he saw value in the stories he had collected through his decades in medicine, focusing on "people who had impacted me through their faith, and the way they had dealt with things that life had sent their way."

"When I talk about angels, I do believe that God ministers to us in a lot of different ways," Lesslie said. "I don't write about wings and halos and that kind of thing, but I do believe that God does speak to us through his spirit - and through other people."

In a Thursday message to congregants, pastors from the Lesslies' church, First Associate Reformed Presbyterian Rock Hill, wrote that all four of the Lesslies "are in the presence of Jesus and worshipping Him face to face. One day we will see them again. Therefore, we can grieve as those who have hope."

The church planned to keep its sanctuary open until 8 p.m. Thursday, for anyone wishing to pray. According to church officials, no funeral arrangements had been finalized.

As he wrote on his blog recently, Lesslie felt comfortable in his faith, imagining Heaven as a place filled



with joy, and where he would be reunited with family and his cherished dog, Dox.

"We have no idea what Heaven will look like, only that it will be perfect," Lesslie wrote. "And because of that I know that one day, when I've experienced the presence and joy of that surrounding host of saints, I will find myself walking with Barbara in a field of lush, green grass. ... The words of Jesus will echo through that glade — 'Behold, I make all things new.'"

## Musk statement on Tesla production raises questions

By TOM KRISHER AP Auto Writer

DETROIT (AP) — Tesla CEO Elon Musk is once again drawing scrutiny for questionable comments he made to Wall Street analysts, this time involving the status of his company's vehicle production.

On a Jan. 27 conference call to discuss Tesla's fourth-quarter earnings, Musk stated that the company was producing new versions of its oldest models, the S sedan and X large SUV. He added that a "Plaid" high-performance version of the electric S would be available in February.

In reality, Tesla produced none of either model during the quarter, according to delivery and production figures that the company released late last week. Instead, all the roughly 180,000 vehicles that Tesla made from January through March were of its other models, the 3 small sedan and the Y small SUV.

Experts say the disparity between Musk's statement to analysts and the figures that showed zero production risks drawing the attention of Musk's longtime nemesis, the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. For years, the agency has grappled with Musk over questionable statements he has made on Twitter that affected Tesla's share price.

"I think he might have himself into a bit of trouble with the SEC," said Anthony Sabino, an attorney and law professor at St. John's University. "These are fairly direct statements. They are fairly unequivocal."

John C. Coffee Jr., a Columbia University professor who is a leading authority on securities law and corporate governance, said Musk's assertion sounded like a statement of fact and not merely a projection of Tesla's future production. If the SEC agrees, Coffee said, it could initiate an inquiry.

At the same time, Coffee noted, Tesla could argue that Musk's statement was only a prediction and not a declaration of fact, and that something later happened to alter that prediction. If regulators agree, Musk's statement would be protected by Tesla's standard disclaimers about the uncertainty of forward-looking statements, Coffee said.

The SEC declined to comment. Messages left for Tesla, which has disbanded its press office, went unanswered.

This is hardly the first time Musk has raised questions with a claim about Tesla's vehicle production. In 2017, the SEC investigated statements he had made about Tesla's production of the Model 3 at its factory in Fremont, California. The agency closed the inquiry in 2019 without taking action, according to Tesla's 2020 annual financial report. The Justice Department also asked for production information. The status of its inquiry is unknown.

"To our knowledge," Tesla's report said, "no government agency in any ongoing investigation has concluded that any wrongdoing occurred."

In 2018, the SEC charged Musk with securities fraud for statements he had made on Twitter saying that he had the funding he needed to take Tesla private — a contention that drove up Tesla's share price. In fact, Musk did not have the money secured. The matter was settled, with Musk and Tesla each agreeing to pay a \$20 million fine and to hire someone to review Musk's tweets before they are sent.

Musk has made no secret of his disdain for the SEC. Distorting the meaning of the agency's acronym, he has branded the SEC the "shortseller enrichment commission" — short sellers bet that a stock price will fall — and said in a television interview that he doesn't respect the commission.

There is no doubt that Musk stated on the conference call that Tesla was producing the Models S and X.

"We're super excited to announce the new Model S and Model X Plaid are in production now and will be delivered in February," Musk said on the call. "So we have been able to bring forward the Plaid Model S and X — Model S will be delivered in February and Model X a little later. The Model S Plaid, we're actually

in production now, and we'll be delivering next month."

Even if Musk's assertion is protected by disclaimers about production estimates, legal experts say they expect the SEC to at least look into the matter and perhaps open an investigation.

"Sometimes the force of personality of certain corporate leaders and the potential market impact of their statements raises the specter of regulatory scrutiny," said Jacob Frenkel, a former SEC enforcement attorney and ex-federal prosecutor who practices with the firm Dickinson Wright in Washington.

Frenkel said much hinges on whether the SEC finds Musk's statements to be "material" — that is, something a reasonable investor would find important in deciding whether to trade a company's shares.

"Production disclosures could be considered material," Frenkel said.

Also, Frenkel noted, the SEC is under new leadership with the election of President Joe Biden and may "have a different view of accountability" than it did under the Trump administration.

As it happened, Musk's assertion didn't benefit Tesla's stock. The share price fell 3% the day after the conference call. Since then, it is down more than 20% as the shine has worn off tech and electric vehicle stocks. For all of 2020, though, Tesla shares soared more than 700%.

Before the company announced its numbers last week, analysts had expected Tesla to deliver about 13,000 S and X models in the first quarter.

On the Jan. 27 conference call, Tesla's chief financial officer, Zachary Kirkhorn, echoed Musk, saying the company was producing S and X models, though Kirkhorn cautioned that the output would be low because of the transition to new versions.

Kirkhorn added that the company was trying to manage a global shortage of semiconductors — a shortage that has bedeviled the entire auto industry, forcing many automakers to cut production. Some analysts have attributed Tesla's zero S and X production to the chip shortage.

"I doubt they would pursue him if there was a legitimate glitch or problem," Coffee said.

But Frenkel said Tesla's disclaimers might not help.

"One cannot disclaim away a false statement or omission to disclose a material fact," Frenkel said. "Otherwise, it would give no credibility to corporate disclosures."

## Philip, in role with no job description, was queen's bedrock

By JILL LAWLESS and GREGORY KATZ Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — When Prince Philip married the heir to the British throne, he knew he was stepping into virtually uncharted territory.

There was no official role for the husband of a sovereign queen, no constitutional duty or legal responsibility.

"There was no precedent," he said when he turned 90. "If I asked somebody, 'What do you expect me to do?' They all looked blank. They had no idea."

His wife Elizabeth knew exactly what she had to do when she became queen in 1952 after the premature death of her father, King George VI. For Philip, though, her ascension to the throne marked the end of his career as a naval officer and a plunge into uncertainty.

But at that crucial moment, he carved out the part he would carry through the decades: the queen's honest and unwavering bedrock of support through a turbulent reign in which the thousand-year-old monarchy was forced to reinvent itself for the 21st century. It was a role the Duke of Edinburgh played until his death Friday at age 99.

His marriage both defined and constricted his life, placing the irascible, tough-minded Philip three steps behind the queen in public, even if he played a significant role at home, including in raising four children.

His life spanned nearly a century of European history, starting with his birth as a member of the Greek royal family and ending with him as the longest serving consort in British history, surpassing Queen Charlotte, wife of King George III.

He was known for his occasionally deeply offensive remarks — and for gamely fulfilling more than 20,000 royal engagements to boost British interests home and abroad. He headed hundreds of charities, founded

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programs that helped British schoolchildren participate in challenging outdoor adventures.

Philip saw his sole role as providing support for his wife as she confronted the changing demands placed on a constitutional monarch who began her reign as Britain retreated from empire and steered the monarchy through decades of declining social deference and U.K. power into a modern world where people demand intimacy from their icons.

In the 1970s, Michael Parker, an old navy friend and former private secretary of the prince, said of him: "He told me the first day he offered me my job, that his job — first, second and last — was never to let her down."

The queen — a very private person not given to extravagant displays of affections — once called him "her rock" in public.

In private, Philip called his wife Lilibet; but he referred to her in conversation with others as "The Queen."

Over the course of the decades, Philip's image changed from that of handsome, dashing athlete to arrogant and insensitive curmudgeon. In his later years, the image finally settled into that of droll and philosophical observer of the times, an elderly, craggy-faced man who maintained his military bearing in public despite a host of ailments.

Not content to stay on the sidelines, he promoted British industry and science, espoused environmental preservation long before it became fashionable, and traveled widely and frequently in support of his many charities.

In those frequent public appearances, Philip developed a reputation for being impatient and demanding and was sometimes blunt to the point of rudeness.

Many Britons appreciated what they saw as his propensity to speak his mind, while others criticized behavior they labeled as racist, sexist or out of touch.

In 1995, for example, he asked a Scottish driving instructor, "How do you keep the natives off the booze long enough to pass the test?" Seven years later in Australia, when visiting Aboriginal people with the queen, he asked: "Do you still throw spears at each other?" On one visit to a military barracks, he asked a sea cadet instructor if she worked in a strip club.

Many believe his propensity to speak his mind meant he provided needed, unvarnished advice to the queen.

"The way that he survived in the British monarchy system was to be his own man, and that was a source of support to the queen," said royal historian Robert Lacey. "All her life she was surrounded by men who said, 'yes ma'am,' and he was one man who always told her how it really was, or at least how he saw it."

Lacey said that during the royal family's difficult times with Diana, Philip spoke for the family with authority, showing that he did not automatically defer to the queen despite her position as monarch and head of state.

Philip's relationship with Diana became complicated as her separation from Charles and their eventual divorce played out in a series of public battles that damaged the monarchy's standing. It was widely assumed that he was critical of Diana's use of broadcast interviews, including to accuse Charles of infidelity.

But letters between Philip and Diana released after her death showed that the older man was at times supportive of his daughter-in-law.

After Diana's death in a car crash in Paris in 1997, Philip had to endure allegations by former Harrods owner Mohamed Al Fayed that he had plotted the princess's death. Al Fayed's son, Dodi, also died in the crash.

During a lengthy inquest into their deaths, a senior judge acting as coroner instructed the jury that there was no evidence to support the allegations against Philip, who did not publicly respond to Al Fayed's charges.

Philip's final years were clouded by controversy and fissures in the royal family.

His third child, Prince Andrew, was embroiled in controversy over his friendship with Jeffrey Epstein, an American financier who died in a New York prison in 2019 while awaiting trial on sex trafficking charges.

U.S. authorities accused Andrew of rebuffing their request to interview him as a witness, and Andrew faced accusations from a woman who said that she had several sexual encounters with the prince at Epstein's behest. He denied the claim but withdrew from public royal duties amid the scandal.

At the start of 2020, Philip's grandson Prince Harry and his wife, the American former actress Meghan

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Markle, announced they were quitting royal duties and moving to North America to escape intense media scrutiny that they found unbearable.

Last month, they gave an explosive interview to Oprah Winfrey, saying that Meghan had suffered neglect and racist attitudes while a working member of the family, though Winfrey later said Harry told her one particularly hurtful remark did not come from either of his grandparents. The palace called the issues raised by the couple "concerning" and said they would be "addressed by the family privately."

Born June 10, 1921, on the dining room table at his parents' home on the Greek island of Corfu, Philip was the fifth child and only son of Prince Andrew, younger brother of the king of Greece. His grandfather had come from Denmark during the 1860s to be adopted by Greece as the country's monarch.

Philip's mother was Princess Alice of Battenberg, a descendant of German princes. Like his future wife, Elizabeth, Philip was also a great-great-grandchild of Queen Victoria.

When Philip was 18 months old, his parents fled into exile in France. His father, an army commander, had been tried after a devastating military defeat by the Turks. After British intervention, the Greek junta agreed not to sentence Andrew to death if he left the country.

Philip went to school in Britain and entered Dartmouth Naval College as a cadet in 1939. He got his first posting in 1940 but was not allowed near the main war zone because he was a foreign prince of a neutral nation. When the Italian invasion of Greece ended that neutrality, he joined the war, serving on battleships in the Indian Ocean, the Mediterranean and the Pacific.

On leave in Britain, he visited his royal cousins and, by the end of war, it was clear he was courting Princess Elizabeth, eldest child and heir of King George VI. Their engagement was announced July 10, 1947, and they were married Nov. 20.

Then, in 1952, King George VI died of cancer at age 56.

Philip had to give up his naval career and his subservient status was formally sealed at the coronation, when he knelt before his wife and pledged to become "her liege man of life and limb, and of earthly worship."

The change in Philip's life was dramatic.

"Within the house, and whatever we did, it was together," Philip told biographer Basil Boothroyd of the years before Elizabeth became queen. "People used to come to me and ask me what to do. In 1952, the whole thing changed, very, very considerably."

Said Boothroyd: "He had a choice between just tagging along, the second handshake in the receiving line, or finding other outlets for his bursting energies."

So Philip took over management of the royal estates and expanded his travels to all corners of the world, building a role for himself.

Since 1956 he had been Patron and Chairman of Trustees for the largest youth activity program in Britain, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, a voluntary, non-competitive program of practical, cultural and adventurous activities for young people that exists in over 100 countries worldwide.

He painted, collected modern art, was interested in industrial design and planned a garden at Windsor Castle. But, he once said, "the arts world thinks of me as an uncultured, polo-playing clot."

In time, the famous blond hair thinned and the long, fine-boned face acquired a few lines. He gave up polo but remained trim and vigorous.

To a friend's suggestion that he ease up a bit, the prince is said to have replied, "Well, what would I do? Sit around and knit?"

But when he turned 90 in 2011, Philip told the BBC he was "winding down" his workload and he reckoned he had "done my bit."

The next few years saw occasional hospital stays as Philip's health flagged. He announced in May 2017 that he planned to step back from royal duties — after roughly 22,000 royal engagements since his wife's coronation.

Philip is survived by the queen and their four children as well as eight grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.



## Visitors tiptoe through the tulips in Dutch virus test

By MIKE CORDER Associated Press

LISSE, Netherlands (AP) — Finally, after bleak winter months of a coronavirus lockdown, springtime shoots of hope emerged Friday as restrictions were relaxed at a Dutch flower garden and other public venues.

Under a government-approved pilot scheme, the world-famous Keukenhof garden opened its gates to let a few thousand people tiptoe through the 7 million tulips, hyacinths, daffodils and myriad other flowers meticulously hand-planted throughout its manicured lawns by a small army of gardeners.

A maximum of 5,000 visitors were allowed into the garden, nestled amid the pancake flat bulb fields between Amsterdam and The Hague, if they could show proof that they had just tested negative for COVID-19.

Minke Kleinen, who visited the central city of Arnhem with her friend Ilse van Egten, said it felt like their “first legal day out.” The friends took rapid tests before setting off and got their negative results by email as they drove.

“It feels strange that we can stand next to one another,” said Van Egten, giving Kleinen a quick hug. “It’s nice!”

The Keukenhof lost an entire season last year to the pandemic as the first deadly wave of infections swept over the Netherlands. Its scheduled March 20 opening this year never happened because of the country’s strict virus lockdown.

The limited opening — six days spread over two weeks in April — is welcome to the 40 gardeners who spend months preparing for the annual spring season. In a normal year, the garden the size of 50 soccer fields can accommodate 10 times as many visitors each day.

Park director Bart Siemerink had mixed feelings.

“Of course, happy today. It’s the first day of Keukenhof 2021,” he said, but added that the park still felt different with such a relatively small number of visitors.

“So it’s a good feeling that we can open, but this is not Keukenhof as it’s supposed to be,” he said.

In pre-pandemic years, Keukenhof’s paths, park benches and cafes are crowded with visitors from around the world taking photos and selfies with one of the Netherlands’ most iconic products — the tulip.

On Friday, small groups of visitors were scattered around the lawns. You could get a plate of poffertjes — a Dutch treat of tiny pancakes covered in icing sugar — without having to wait in a long line.

The Dutch government announced this week that hundreds of public venues would be allowed to reopen under strict conditions to evaluate whether rapid testing can safely help the country ease coronavirus restrictions amid rising levels of vaccinations and warmer weather.

Under the scheme, visitors to the Keukenhof — as well as museums, zoos and other venues — are allowed entry if they order a ticket online and get a negative virus test within 40 hours of their visit. All virus tests are free and a result is emailed within an hour to the tested person. That code, in turn, can be scanned at venues.

The tests come against a backdrop of stubbornly high infections that have begun edging lower in the past week after months of lockdown.

Health Minister Hugo de Jonge sees the limited openings as a way of easing back toward normal life as vaccinations reach more and more people.

Visiting the Keukenhof felt like a privilege for those who got in.

“This is a gift,” said blogger Berry de Nijs. “It feels great today. It is beautiful weather anyway ... but to walk through the tulips is fantastic!”

## Islamic leaders battle misconception about vaccines, fasting

By DAVID SHARP and MARIAM FAM Associated Press

PORTLAND, Maine (AP) — Islamic leaders are using social media, virtual town halls and face-to-face discussions to spread the word that it’s acceptable to be vaccinated for the coronavirus during daily fasting that happens during Ramadan, the most sacred month of the year for Muslims.

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During the holy month which begins next week, Muslims across the world abstain from all food and drink from sunrise to sunset before typically congregating for evening prayers and iftar meals. The vaccine discussion centers on whether an inoculation amounts to the prohibited act of ingesting something while fasting.

It doesn't, said Mohamud Mohamed, imam of the Maine Muslim Community Center, who is working to assure Muslims at his Portland mosque that getting the vaccine is perfectly fine but finds that some people are clinging to misperceptions.

"There is a lot of bad information going around," said Mohamed, who devoted his address during recent Friday prayers to promoting the vaccine. A vaccine clinic is being held at the mosque on Saturday.

He and others seeking to reassure the faithful have the theological backing of top Islamic authorities. Saudi Arabia's highest cleric, Grand Mufti Sheikh Abdulaziz Al Sheikh, and Sunni Islam's top religious leader in Lebanon, Grand Mufti Sheikh Abdul-Latif Derian, have both said that getting the coronavirus vaccine does not constitute breaking one's fast.

Still, Safiya Khalid, a city council member in Lewiston, about 30 miles north of Portland, sparked a lively conversation among fellow Muslims when she raised the issue on social media. Others questioned whether the vaccine violated fasting — until an imam weighed in.

"We need more communication," said Khalid, who has already had her first vaccine dose and will get her second shot during Ramadan. "You can do this and protect your community and your family."

On New York's Staten Island, imam and NYPD chaplain Tahir Kukaj, whose mosque was administering 1,000 vaccines on Thursday and Friday, said he has heard all sorts of misconceptions about vaccines, and some "people tend to believe nonsense rather than facts."

But protecting others is a core teaching of Islam, and Kukaj said Muslims are taught to do whatever they can to save lives. Getting vaccinated is a way to do that: "Of course, we have to save our own life first."

Out west, the Utah Muslim Civic League has partnered with the Salt Lake County Health Department to put on two vaccination clinics including a drive-through one at a mosque that was held before Ramadan. The group also organized a virtual town hall Thursday night featuring imams and health professionals to discuss issues surrounding vaccination and fasting.

The goal is raising awareness and "myth-busting," said the league's executive director, Luna Banuri, who found that many community members had wanted to avoid getting vaccinated during Ramadan.

"When you are starting the month of fasting, there's a sense of resolve. ... So a lot of folks are trying to make sure that there are no disruptions during that period," she said. "Even if they believe that they can take the vaccine and it doesn't affect their fast ... (what) they're not wanting to do is to get sick."

Medicine and fasting is nothing new. Muslims may forgo fasting if they fall ill and make up for "missed" days at a later time, after Ramadan.

"If you miss a day because of the effects of the vaccine, then that is not a sinful act," said Ahmed Abdirahman, a respiratory therapist at a Portland hospital and community service coordinator at the Maine Muslim Community Center. "Protecting lives is the ultimate goal in Islam."

Dr. Hasan Shanawani, president of the American Muslim Health Association, said he's encouraging everyone to be vaccinated even if that means getting the jab during Ramadan.

A lung specialist, he said he has treated dozens if not hundreds of people with COVID-19 and seen firsthand the horrific toll the disease can take.

"This is not just a decision that weighs on you," Shanawani said from his office in Michigan. "It weighs on everybody."

Similar conversations have played out in other countries.

The British Islamic Medical Association circulated a WhatsApp message reassuring people that "taking the Covid-19 vaccines currently licensed in UK does not invalidate the fast during Ramadan as per the opinion of the majority of Islamic scholars."

Association vice president Dr. Wajid Akhter said there is a growing understanding among Muslims in his community of the importance of not delaying vaccinations due to Ramadan. But for any who may be

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wavering, he emphasized that COVID-19 represents a threat that cannot be ignored.

"How many fasts are you going to miss if you catch COVID? How many fasts are you going to lose if you get long COVID? ... And how many fasts will you lose if you die from COVID?" Akhter said. "You're never going to fast again."

## Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Saturday, April 10, the 100th day of 2021. There are 265 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On April 10, 1947, Brooklyn Dodgers President Branch Rickey purchased the contract of Jackie Robinson from the Montreal Royals.

On this date:

In 1912, the British liner RMS Titanic set sail from Southampton, England, on its ill-fated maiden voyage.

In 1932, German President Paul Von Hindenburg was reelected in a runoff, with Adolf Hitler coming in second.

In 1963, the fast-attack nuclear submarine USS Thresher (SSN-593) sank during deep-diving tests east of Cape Cod, Massachusetts, in a disaster that claimed 129 lives.

In 1971, a table tennis team from the United States arrived in China at the invitation of the communist government for a goodwill visit that came to be known as "ping-pong diplomacy."

In 1972, the United States and the Soviet Union joined some 70 nations in signing an agreement banning biological warfare.

In 1981, imprisoned IRA hunger striker Bobby Sands was declared the winner of a by-election to the British Parliament.

In 1992, comedian Sam Kinison was killed in a car crash outside Needles, California, at age 38.

In 1998, the Northern Ireland peace talks concluded as negotiators reached a landmark settlement to end 30 years of bitter rivalries and bloody attacks.

In 2005, Tiger Woods won his fourth Masters with a spectacular finish of birdies and bogeys.

In 2010, Polish President Lech Kaczynski (lehk kah-CHIN'-skee), 60, was killed in a plane crash in western Russia that also claimed the lives of his wife and top Polish political, military and church officials. "Designing Women" co-star Dixie Carter, 70, died in Houston.

In 2015, the Apple Watch made its debut.

In 2019, scientists released the first image ever made of a black hole, revealing a fiery, doughnut-shaped object in a galaxy 53 million light-years from earth.

Ten years ago: The House Homeland Security Committee examined Muslim extremism in America during a hearing punctuated by tearful testimony and angry recriminations. (Chairman Peter King, R-N.Y., accused U.S. Muslims of doing too little to help fight terror in America; Democrats warned of inflaming anti-Muslim sentiment.)

Five years ago: Donald Trump and his Republican rivals turned their presidential debate in Miami into a mostly respectful but still pointed discussion of Social Security, Islam, trade and more. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau made an official visit to the White House. Sir Ken Adam, the British film production designer behind the sets for some of the James Bond movies and "Dr. Strangelove," died in London at age 95.

One year ago: The worldwide death toll from the coronavirus surged past 100,000. On Good Friday, Pope Francis presided over a torch-lit procession in an otherwise empty St. Peter's Square, with nurses and doctors among those holding a cross.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Liz Sheridan is 92. Football Hall of Famer John Madden is 85. Actor Steven Seagal is 69. Folk-pop singer Terre Roche (The Roches) is 68. Actor Peter MacNicol is 67. Actor Olivia Brown is 64.

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Rock musician Steven Gustafson (10,000 Maniacs) is 64. Singer-producer Kenneth "Babyface" Edmonds is 63. Rock singer-musician Brian Setzer is 62. Rock singer Katrina Leskanich (les-KAH'-nich) is 61. Actor Jeb Adams is 60. Olympic gold medal speedskater Cathy Turner is 59. Rock musician Tim "Herb" Alexander is 56. R&B singer Kenny Lattimore is 54. Actor-comedian Orlando Jones is 53. Rock musician Mike Mushok (Staind) is 52. Rapper Q-Tip (AKA Kamaal) is 51. Actor David Harbour is 46. Blues singer Shemekia Copeland is 42. Actor Laura Bell Bundy is 40. Actor Harry Hadden-Paton is 40. Actor Chyler Leigh is 39. Pop musician Andrew Dost (fun.) is 38. Actor Ryan Merriman is 38. Singer Mandy Moore is 37. Actor Barkhad Abdi (BAHRK'-hahd AHB'-dee) is 36. Actor Shay Mitchell is 34. Actor Haley Joel Osment is 33. Actor Molly Bernard (TV: "Younger") is 33. Country singer Maren Morris is 31. Actor Alex Pettyfer is 31. Actor-singer AJ (AKA Amanda) Michalka (mish-AL'-kah) is 30. Actor Daisy Ridley is 29. Singer-actor Sofia Carson is 28. Actor Audrey Whitby is 25. Actor Ruby Jerins is 23.