

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Oct. 16, 2021 ~ Vol. 30 - No. 101 ~ 1 of 69

## Upcoming Events

### Saturday, Oct. 16

Oral Interp at Florence

State Soccer in Sioux Falls

Volleyball Tourney in Milbank (Groton vs. Sisseton at 9 a.m., vs. Sioux Valley at noon and Mobridge at 1 p.m. Finals are set for 3 p.m. and 4 p.m.)

### Monday, Oct. 18

Volleyball at Langford. JV at 6:30 p.m. followed by varsity.

### Tuesday, Oct. 19

Volleyball hosts Northwestern. 7th/C match at 5 p.m., 8th/JV at 6 p.m., Varsity to follow

### Wednesday, Oct. 20

Senior Scholarship Info Night at GHS Library Conference Room, 6 p.m.

### Thursday, Oct. 21

First Round Football Playoffs

### Friday, Oct. 22

End of First Quarter

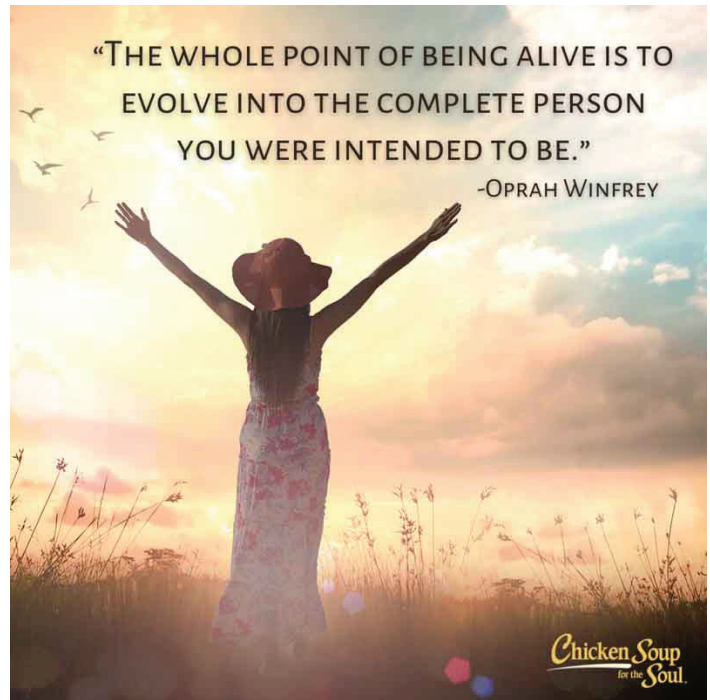
Volleyball at Aberdeen Roncalli. (7th at 5 p.m., 8th at 6 p.m., JV at 6 p.m. followed by varsity.

### Saturday, Oct. 23

State Cross Country at Yankton Trail Park in Sioux Falls.

Oral Interp at NSU Invitational

ACT Testing at GHS, 8 a.m. to Noon



**Starting 10/24/21, you must dial the area code for all calls. This change supports 988 as the new 3-digit code to reach the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.**

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

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

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## #476 in a series Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

I'm checking in today—early—so we can talk about that FDA advisory committee's meeting this week. We'll take a quick look at the numbers, take care of the advisory committee business, and clear up a couple of other news items that have popped up in the past couple of days; but this will be brief.

At midday today, we showed small declines in all categories. The seven-day new-case average is at 86,287, and our total cases are up to 44,760,674. I expect we'll hit 45 million before we talk again. Hospitalizations are still dropping too; the seven-day average stands at 64,085. Deaths are still stubbornly high with a seven-day average of 1818 and a total of 721,766. We still have areas of the country where hospitals are under enormous stress and nearing capacity, but most of these areas are showing some improvement. We have only four states with double-digit rates of increase: Colorado, Minnesota, Michigan, and Vermont. There's a glimmer of light up ahead.

So what's going to happen this winter? Good question. Many experts think there's another spike coming, but these same folks pretty much all agree it's not going to be as big as last winter when we had no vaccines and a country full of vulnerable people. We're close to 70 percent vaccinated, and if children down to the age of five become eligible, we could get well over that pretty darned quickly. This, along with the horrifying numbers of people who've been very ill with Covid-19 and therefore have some degree of protection, even if it's not as strong as it could be, might get us to a place where transmission is interrupted a good share of the time. That would be lovely, but this is probably not the time to get reckless. With good precautions, it's entirely possible we can dodge one last surge, and I'd vote for that.

I do have the news from the FDA's Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee (VRB-PAC) meeting on yesterday and today. Here's what we have:

I really expected the first of these, the meeting yesterday about booster doses for recipients of the Moderna vaccine, to be more contentious than it was. I guess my prognosticating skills aren't so sharp. They were finished up by mid-afternoon, and the decision was unanimous to recommend half-dose (50 microgram) boosters for the same groups for which boosters are being extended for the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine now: people 65 and older, people 18 to 64 with health conditions that place them at risk for severe disease, and those with occupational or institutional exposure that places them at risk. There was discussion of the evidence for a booster and whether it was sufficient; there was also discussion whether the risk for the rare side effect, myocarditis, would increase with a third dose; but an Israeli study of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine which is also associated with myocarditis showed no increased risk with a third dose. Because these vaccines are so similar, the panel considered this relevant information.

When I first heard about this recommendation, I was sort of surprised given the discussion of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine booster was far more contentious and Moderna's data in support of the need for a booster was weaker; but one member of the Committee Dr. Stanley Perlman of the University of Iowa explained, "From a pragmatic point of view, because we've already approved it for Pfizer, I don't see how we can possibly not approve it for Moderna." After the unanimous vote on this recommendation, members were asked about a broader authorization of boosters to younger ages, but there was no appetite for this at all. Some said they weren't entirely comfortable with voting for the recommendation that did pass. So maybe it was a little less enthusiastic than it at first appeared. One factor that seems to have tipped the balance for several members is the shortage of health care workers. Dr. Perlman said "We can't afford to have health care workers, even if not sick, be positive and infected and have to stay home from work because in parts of the country there's a shortage of health care workers and there's burnout

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everywhere." So it appears the nature of the emergency situation in which we find ourselves may have influenced some votes. There was a whole lot more enthusiasm expressed for getting additional people vaccinated than for boosting those who've already received full vaccination. I wish the Committee had some ideas how we could do that.

Today it was another unanimous vote on the Janssen/Johnson & Johnson booster. The recommendation was that the booster be given at least two months after the initial dose to everyone 18 and older (which would be everyone who's received a dose since it is authorized only for 18 and over). This is a difference from the booster recommendations for the two mRNA vaccines. The situation here was an unusual one: The FDA experts who usually comb through the data presented at these meetings warned the Committee that they had not had time to verify all of the data submitted—due to a late submission, I gather. That means the Committee was proceeding with less than the usual solid ground beneath its feet. There were questions raised about competing data from other research as well. The protection offered by this vaccine was lower than the mRNA vaccines from the start, but it appears to have held far better than the others did. Committee members indicated they think this should have been a two-dose vaccine from the start, which undoubtedly made the booster decision sort of a slam-dunk and explains why they're willing to see a second dose for all recipients—also why the interval before boosting is only two instead of six months. We should also note that the FDA will continue with its validation process for all of the data that were submitted and take appropriate action if it would turn out there is a problem with any of it—an unlikely occurrence, but they've covered it anyhow, just in case.

But the fact remains they didn't have anything like the quantity or quality of data either yesterday or today as they had a couple of weeks ago when the topic was a booster for Pfizer/BioNTech. The reason for that is simple, something we talked about just the other day: Israel's wealth of data on vaccination and almost exclusive reliance on the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine. The result is there are millions and millions of medical records available there related to its use and a great deal of research has been done with this data set. This leaves the Committee working from much less information this time around, but they felt some urgency to address the current state of the pandemic as conditions change. Members cited the difficulty of balancing the nature of the public emergency against the lack of robustness of the data, saying that we do not have the luxury of waiting for everything to be perfect before making decisions on the fly. I certainly do get that.

I was also able to listen to the second part of their discussion on heterologous boosting, or "mix-and-match." That was most interesting as they discussed some of the circumstances under which this approach might be warranted or desirable and suggested the FDA might wish to use wording in its authorization that gives some flexibility for those circumstances. The group was not scheduled to and did not make any recommendations on this matter; the purpose for this discussion was simply to air their thoughts and inform the FDA representatives just what they're going to want to see before they do meet to make a recommendation.

In case you were wondering who these people are on the all-important Committee, here's a quick look: There are 19 of them, experts in fields like vaccinology, immunology, and virology, many of them medical doctors and researchers themselves. Many of them are from major universities, and some of them work at the NIH or the CDC. It's a pretty distinguished group.

Remember that the next step is for these recommendations to be forwarded to Dr. Janet Woodcock, the acting commissioner of the FDA, who will act on them, deciding whether to authorize the boosters. This will likely happen within a few days. If she authorizes, then the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) will review this decision and make recommendations for the administration of boosters; they're scheduled to meet Thursday and Friday next week, so we won't have long to wait.

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Their recommendations will advance to the CDC's director, Dr. Rochelle Walensky, who will make the final decisions about whether boosters should be administered and who should receive them. State health departments generally follow the CDC's guidelines for immunization.

While we're on the subject of vaccination, here's an update on progress—and it's not a pretty picture. We have around 56.6 percent of the population fully vaccinated; this hasn't really budged much lately. 23.3 percent of the eligible population is not vaccinated. We're seeing less than a quarter-million people initiate vaccination each day, a number which has dropped almost 20 percent in the past week alone. If you think about the fact that at this rate, we're initiating vaccination in one percent of the population every two weeks, you can see the problem. We're administering just over 800,000 doses daily, and 15 states have not yet fully vaccinated half of their residents. These are Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Missouri, Arkansas, Louisiana, Indiana, Tennessee, Mississippi, Alabama, West Virginia, South Carolina, and Georgia. It's going to be a very, very long time until we're anywhere near our vaccination goals.

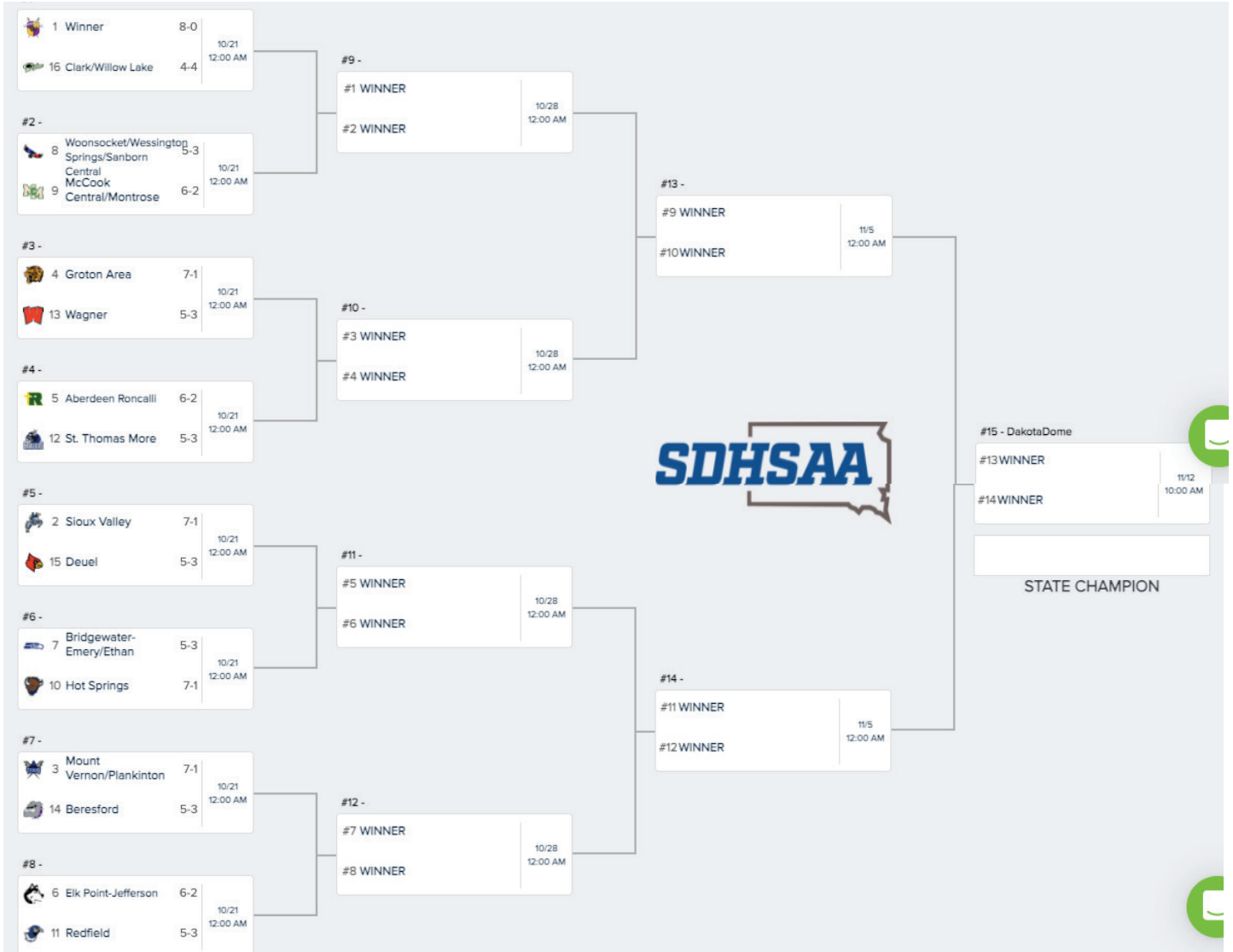
Giving VRBPAC a break, a different FDA advisory committee has scheduled a meeting. This one's the Antimicrobial Drugs Advisory Committee (AMDAC). They haven't been terribly busy during this pandemic, but now they're planning to meet on November 30 to discuss an emergency use authorization (EUA) for molnupiravir, that new antiviral for the treatment of Covid-19. We've talked about that drug quite a lot—first time in January when it first came on the horizon. Then we discussed how it works in the spring in my Update #380 posted March 9 at <https://www.facebook.com/marie.schwabmiller/posts/4508361435846894>. Most recently, we talked about progress in the clinical trials in my Update #471 posted October 1 at <https://www.facebook.com/marie.schwabmiller/posts/5159554904060874>. We knew the maker had applied for EUA; now we have a date for the first step in the process.

That's all we have today; I wanted to be able to report on the VRBPAC meeting, and so that was reason enough to put this together a couple of days ahead of schedule. Keep yourself well. We'll talk again soon.

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## 11B Football Brackets



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## Tigers win regular season finale over Sisseton

Groton Area finished its regular season Friday in Sisseton with a 60-6 win over the Redmen. Groton Area will advance to the playoffs in the number four spot and will host Wagner on Thursday.

Groton Area had 17 first downs while Sisseton had four.

In rushing, Groton Area carried the ball 28 times for 235 yards. Kaden Kurtz 3-82, Andrew Marzahn 3-35, Favian Sanchez 2-17, Pierce Kettering 4-20, Teylor Diegel 4-52, Christian Ehresmann 4-17, Jacob Lewandowski 8-16, Korbin Kucker 1-(-4). Sisseton had 16 carries for a minus one yard.

In passing, Kaden Kurtz completed seven of 10 passes for 127 yards and Jacob Lewandowski completed two of three passes for 20 yards. Sisseton's Ethan DeSpiegler completed five of 22 passes for 84 yards.

Receivers for Groton Area were Jordan Bjerke 2-43, Ethan Gengerke 2-30, Jackson Cogley 1-30, Andrew Marzahn 1-17, Teylor Diegel 1-15, Pierce Kettering 1-1, Favian Sanchez 1-11. Sisseton's Parker Hanson had five catches for 59 yards.

Groton Area lost one fumble. Sisseton recovered both of their fumbles. Groton Area was penalized two times for 30 yards while Sisseton was eight times for 52 yards.

Defensive leaders for Groton Area were Logan Ringgenberg, Evan Nehls and Pierce Kettering with four tackles each while Kettering and Holden Sippel each had an interception.

Groton Area is now 7-1 on the season and Sisseton is 0-8.

### First Quarter:

10:17: Kaden Kurtz 58 yard run. PAT: Jackson Cogley kick

7:17: Jackson Cogley 30 yard pass from Kaden Kurtz. PAT: Cogley kick

6:50: Kaden Kurtz 12 yard run. PAT: kick no good.

3:54: Kurtz 25 yard pass to Ethan Gengerke. PAT: Kurtz to Gengerke.

2:42: Andrew Marzahn 22 yard run. PAT kick no good.

### Second Quarter

9:40: Teylor Diegel 3 yard run. PAT run no good.

4:41: Favian Sanchez 5 yard run. PAT: Cogley kick.

### Third Quarter:

Sisseton: Parker Hanson 45 yard pass from Ethan DeSpiegler. PAT run no good.

3:28: Kurtz to Jordan Bjerke, 25 yards. PAT: Cogley kick.

### Fourth Quarter

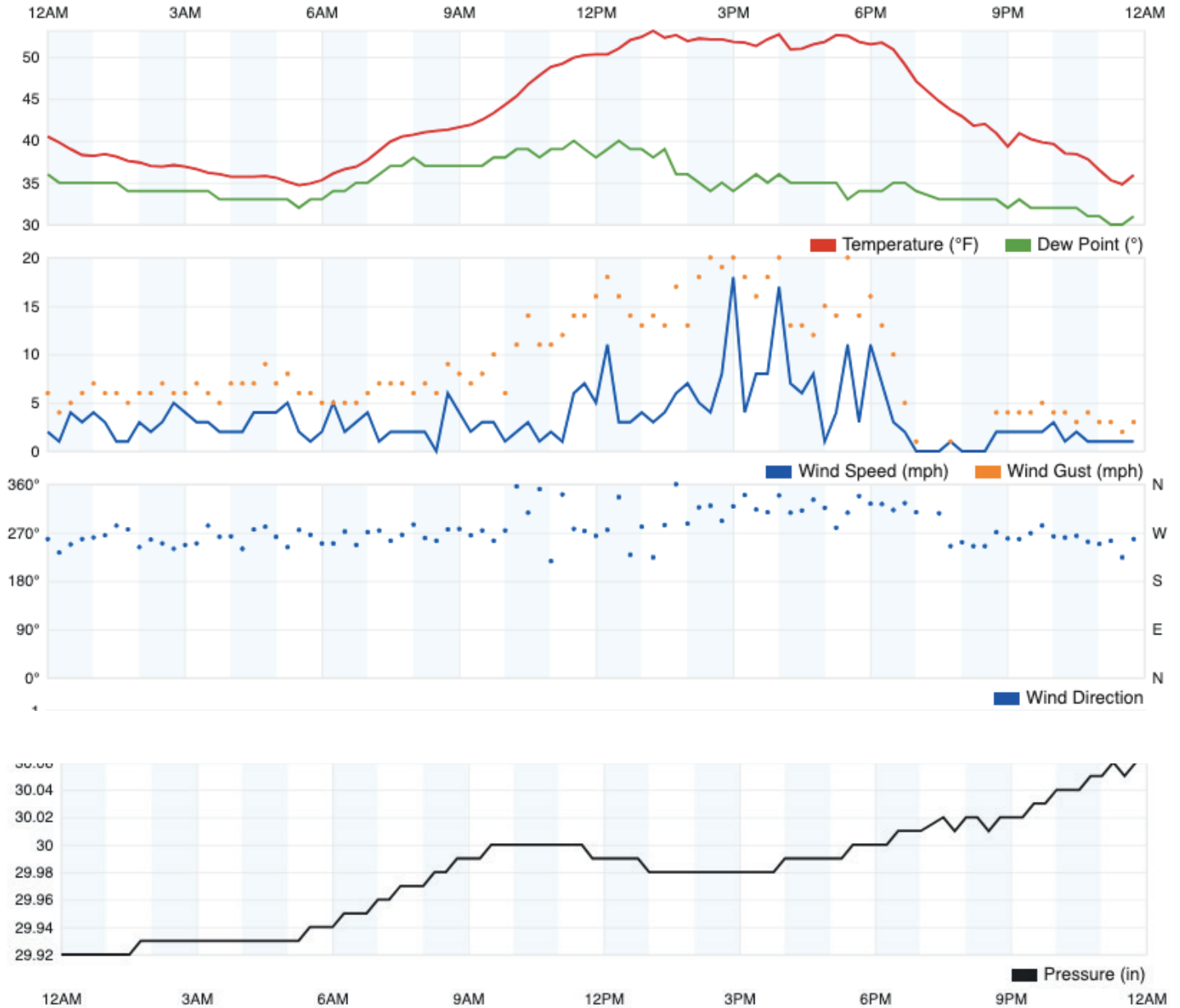
2:04: Teylor Diegel 32 yard run. Game over.

The game was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Bary Keith at Harr Motors, Allied Climate Professionals with Kevin Nehls, Mike-N-Jo's Body-N-Glass, Milbrandt Enterprises Inc. and the Doug Abeln Seed Company. Mike Nehls was a guest commentator.

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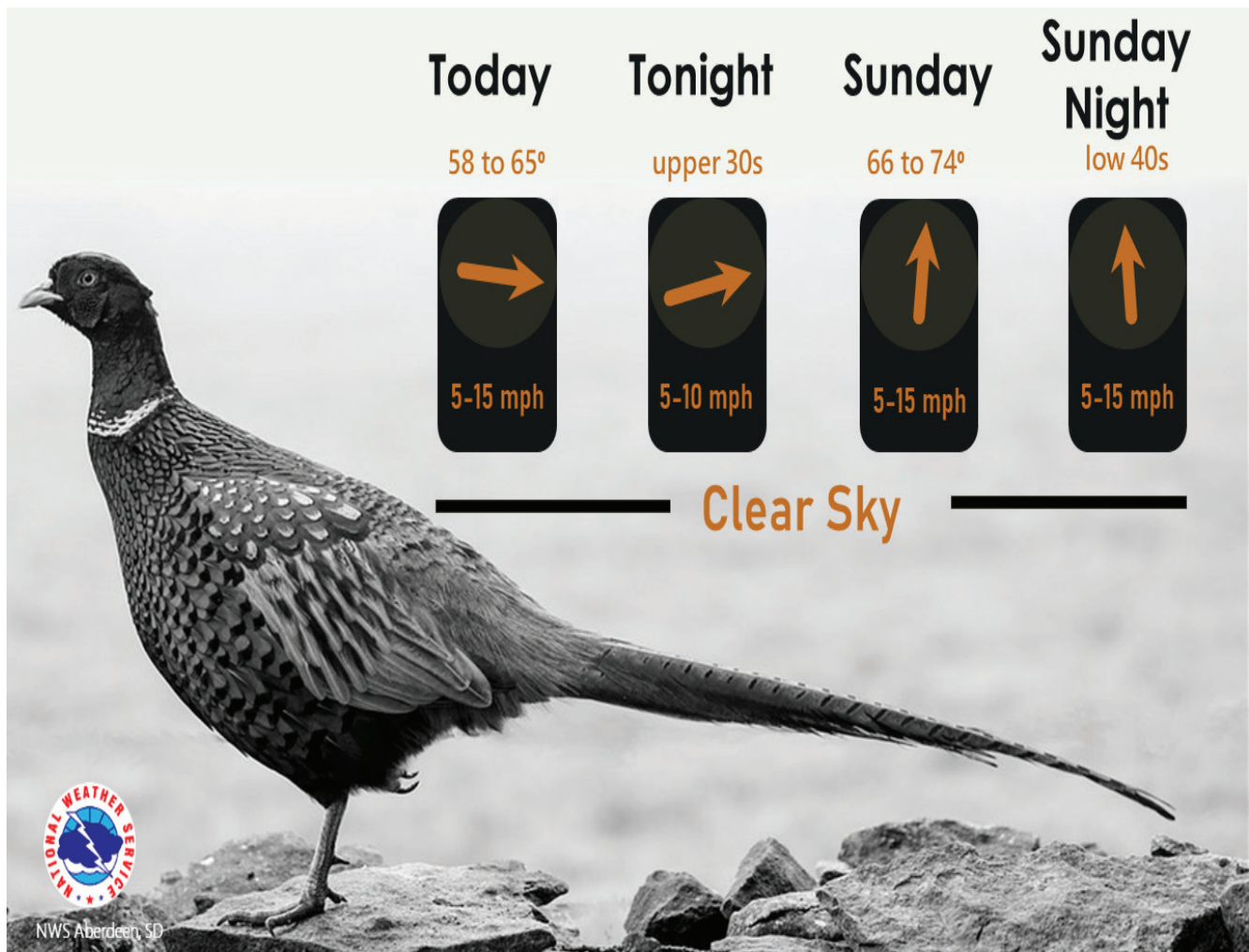
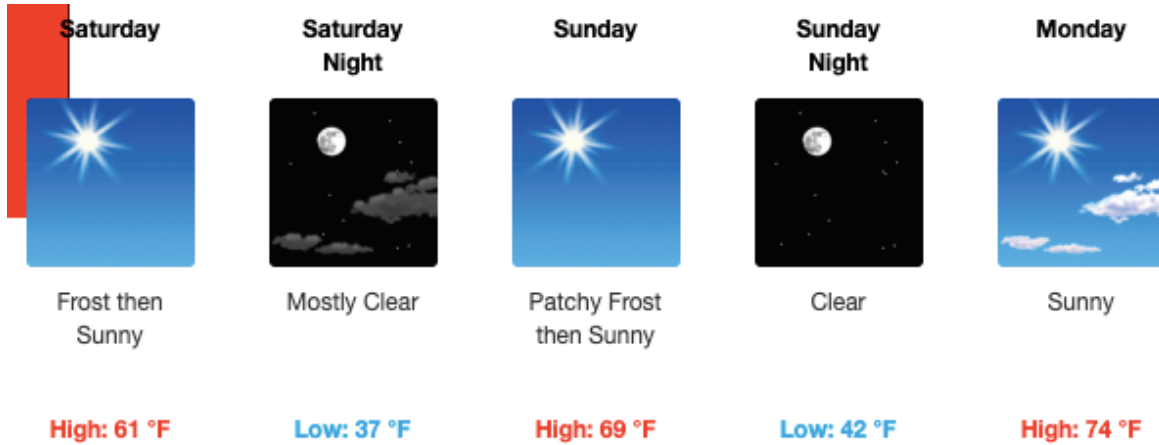
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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Expect a mostly clear sky, with a warming trend over the next couple of days. Highs will be mainly in the low 60s today, and rise into the upper 60s to low 70s on Sunday.



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## Today in Weather History

October 16, 1980: A squall line packing damaging winds developed across portions of central South Dakota and raced into Minnesota during the afternoon and evening. The line of thunderstorms developed around 2 pm CDT and moved east and northeast at over 50 miles an hour. A large portion of southeast South Dakota was belted with winds of 50 to 70 miles an hour. Yankton reported winds of 60 to 70 mph while Sioux Falls was hit with a 62 mile an hour gust. Considerable damage was done in southeast South Dakota to trees, farm structures, and small buildings. Damage estimates were 100 to 200 thousand dollars. By late afternoon the thunderstorms were roaring through southwest Minnesota. Numerous outbuildings and many trees were downed or damaged. In Redwood County, two combines and a 24-foot travel trailer were tipped over and damaged.

1913 - The temperature in Downtown San Francisco soared to 101 degrees to equal their record for October. (The Weather Channel)

1937 - An unlikely winter-like storm produced as much as ten inches of snow in Minnesota and Iowa.

1944: The 1944 Cuba – Florida hurricane, also known as the Pinar del Rio Hurricane, struck western Cuba on this day as a Category 4. This storm killed an estimated 300 people in Cuba and nine in Florida. This hurricane is currently the 7th costliest U.S. Atlantic hurricane, with an estimated \$46.9 billion (2015 USD) in damages.

1987 - Ten cities in the southeastern U.S. reported record low temperatures for the date. The low of 34 degrees at Augusta GA marked their third straight morning of record cold. A cold front brought showers and thunderstorms to parts of the central U.S. Lightning struck a bull and six cows under a tree near Battiest OK. (The National Weather Summary)

1988: An F2 tornado carved a 6 mile long, east-northeast path through a mostly rural area of north-central Indiana. The extremely slow-moving tornado touched down 1.5 miles north of Nappanee, just 300 yards north of a high school, and shortly after that moved through a subdivision where 11 homes sustained damage.

1988 - Late afternoon thunderstorms produced severe weather in southwestern Lower Michigan and northern Indiana. One thunderstorm spawned a tornado north of Nappanee IN which caused half a million dollars damage. Six cities in California reported record high temperatures for the date. The afternoon high of 100 degrees at Red Bluff CA was the latest such reading of record for so late in the autumn season. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Heavy snow blanketed the foothills of Colorado. Up to three inches was reported around Denver. Echo Lake was buried under nineteen inches of snow. Temperatures again warmed into the 80s and lower 90s in the eastern and south central U.S. Thirteen cities reported record high temperatures for the date, including Atlantic City NJ with a reading of 84 degrees. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1999: Hurricane Irene moved across the Florida Keys producing heavy rainfall, strong winds, and high waves. A gust 102 mph was reported in Big Pine Key.

2007: A blinding sandstorm in the high desert north of Los Angeles wreaks havoc with local traffic causing a highway pileup involving dozens of vehicles. Two people die, and 16 are injured as a result of the storm, which reportedly raised dust to 1000 foot high.

2015: A well-defined waterspout was visible from Marquette, Michigan.

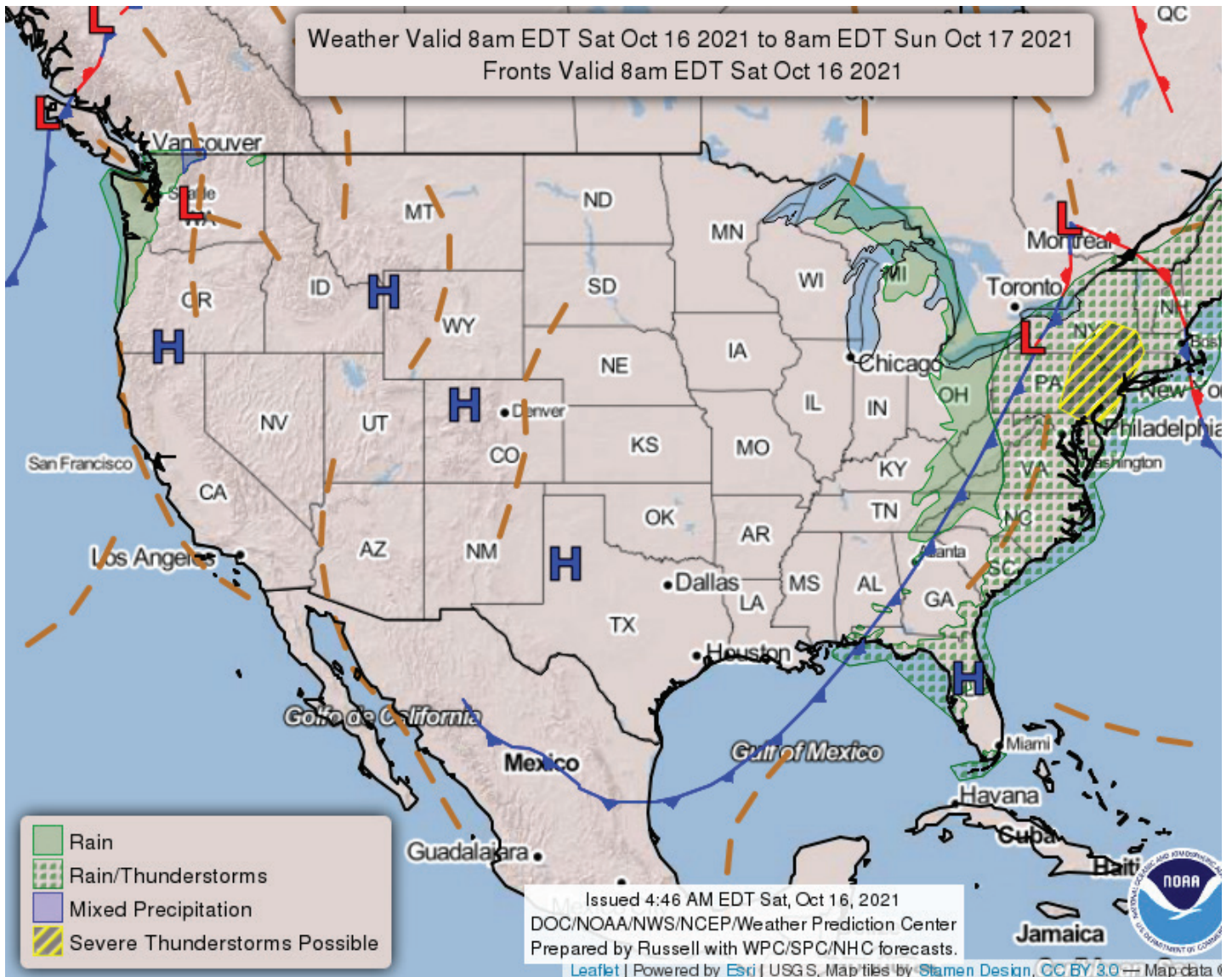
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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

**High Temp: 53.1 °F at 1:15 PM**  
**Low Temp: 34.7 °F at 5:30 AM**  
**Wind: 20 mph at 4:00 AM**  
**Precip: 0.00**

**Record High: 90° in 1991**  
**Record Low: 19° in 1976**  
**Average High: 59°F**  
**Average Low: 33°F**  
**Average Precip in Oct.: 1.21**  
**Precip to date in Oct.: 1.94**  
**Average Precip to date: 19.54**  
**Precip Year to Date: 17.36**  
**Sunset Tonight: 6:46:31 PM**  
**Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:50:29 AM**



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## FORGIVENESS

We rarely stop and count the many benefits that we have because of God's grace. Perhaps David clearly and carefully listed five of them beginning with what we can say is the entrance to the many benefits He has in store for us: His forgiveness.

The word forgiveness here means to "deviate" or to "stray" from the expectations, laws or commandments He established from the beginning of time. When we do so, we become guilty of sin and need His forgiveness for us to restore our relationship with Him and have a closeness with Him and enjoy His blessings.

Forgiveness is the beginning; the foundation of our relationship with God. And it is something some of us may need more often than others. The call of God's Word is first and foremost the call for us to ask for forgiveness and repent of our sins. When we repent and confess our sins, the Gospel promises us that He will cleanse us and forgive us. John wrote that "If we freely admit and confess our sins, He is faithful and just - true to His nature, His faithfulness, and His promises - and will forgive us of our sins and continuously cleanse us of all of our unrighteousness - everything that separates us from Him."

If, in our daily lives, we are not experiencing the benefits of His blessings, it is because there is some sin in our life that has come between the Lord and us. And if we want His blessings to return to our lives, we must go to Him in prayer and ask for His forgiveness. Forgiveness is not a once-in-a-lifetime event. It is something we must do whenever we feel isolated from Him because we have abandoned His teachings.

Prayer: Father, may Your Spirit make us aware of our sins when we sense a need to restore our relationship with You. Help us to stay close - always. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases. Psalm 103:3

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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  
06/17/2021 Groton Transit Fundraiser, 4-7 p.m.  
06/18/2021 SDSU Alumni & Friends Golf Tournament at Olive Grove  
06/19/2021 U8 Baseball Tournament  
06/19/2021 **Postponed to Aug. 28th:** Lions Crazy Golf Fest at Olive Grove Golf Course, Noon  
06/26/2021 U10 Baseball Tournament  
06/27/2021 U12 Baseball Tournament  
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  
08/13/2021 Groton Basketball Golf Tournament  
**Cancelled** Lions Club Crazy Golf Fest 9am Olive Grove Golf Course  
08/29/2021 Groton Firemen Summer Splash Day at GHS Parking Lot (4-5 p.m.)  
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  
10/29/2021 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)  
12/04/2021 Olive Grove Tour of Homes  
12/11/2021 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services 9am-Noon

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News from the  Associated Press

## Friday's Scores

The Associated Press undefined

PREP VOLLEYBALL=

Aberdeen Roncalli def. Britton-Hecla, 25-17, 25-12, 25-10

Brandon Valley def. Rapid City Central, 25-14, 25-22, 25-17

Some high school volleyball scores provided by Scorestream.com, <https://scorestream.com/>

Information from: ScoreStream Inc., <http://ScoreStream.com>

## Native Americans share stories of boarding school sorrow

By SIANDHARA BONNET Rapid City Journal

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Violet Catches remembers her mother, Mabel, crying after asking if she went to the Indian Boarding School after hearing her grandmother say she was taken from them long ago.

Catches, an elder from Cherry Creek, said her mother was named after her mother's aunt, Mabel Holy, who died at the Rapid City Indian Boarding School in 1901.

"My mom sat down and just cried," Catches said. "I think she remembered that was her aunt."

Catches spoke at the fourth Memorial Walk for the children who died at the Indian Boarding School. The school was operated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs from 1898 to 1933 to assimilate Native American children. By the 1920s, enrollment grew to 340 students. Between 40 and 50 children died at the school. Some of the children found have been identified, like Holy, while others remain unknown.

Heather Dawn Thompson, a lawyer and researcher with the Indian Boarding School Lands group, said Holy was the first known recorded death they were able to locate. She said Holy was buried at a marked grave and her family found her after 90 years of searching.

Lafawn Janis, a team member with the Indian Boarding School Lands team, said the group is grateful Catches speaks at the Memorial Walk and event every year, the Rapid City Journal reported.

"I can't imagine having to relive that pain and then relive that pain publicly in front of strangers," she said. "Every year we've found new family members that are descendants, and so having them here just shows the strength and resiliency of our Indigenous people."

Janis said there is a memorial park installation planned to honor the children. The group announced the park in October 2020 at the last walk. The park will be on the flat land and a hillside between Canyon Lake United Methodist Church and West Middle School and is expected to cost about \$2 million.

Janis said there will be walking paths that go up and have every child's name etched into a boulder. She said the project has a few donors, but needs "substantially more" for a groundbreaking.

She said they would like to break ground by next year.

The memorial will include the Tiwahe Sculpture by Dale Lamphere, which will be a life and a quarter sized bronze sculpture. He said a family stands in a circle with their backs to a sphere with a perforation with stars for each of the children who died.

Lamphere said there will be a light within the sphere that will shine through the openings.

"In the Lakota culture, there's a belief that when a child is born, they come down from the stars, so this is a way to send those spirits back," he said.

Catches said she went to a mission school in Chamberlain and had her mouth washed out with soap three to four times a day to make her forget how to speak Lakota. She said she was called a "dirty Indian" and a "heathen."

Chief Black Spotted Horse, 73, of Rapid City said he grew up in a boarding school. He said it wasn't the one in Rapid City, but that they're all the same. He said they went through a lot of rough stuff.

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"The things we went through at the boarding school, I hope nobody has to go through that," he said. "A child or today a man or a woman can never forget being beaten, even being raped, molested. All those things, you don't forget them."

Black Spotted Horse said as long as they continue to do the walk and remember the children, his people will never forget.

"Where they were, where they are and where they're going, and mostly don't forget themselves, who they are," he said.

Phil Little Thunder Sr. said he still gets choked up thinking about it, having gone to a boarding school himself in the '60s. He said his experience was a little more civilized, but he endured physical abuse. He said he ran away from the school.

Marlyce Miner said her grandmother Rose Brown told her stories about kids getting rounded up in a wagon and taken to the schools. She said sometimes the kids would just disappear.

"She said we all knew what happened, but they never came back," Miner said.

Miner said she's a boarding school residential survivor and comes every year for the walk. She said she's anxious to see the memorial.

Ben Rhodd, a member of the Rosebud Sioux who helped bring the remains of nine children back from the former Carlisle Indian Reform School, said he asks for the day to be one of joy.

"Be happy that our young are coming home now," he said. "Yes, there is much sorrow behind the events of this past."

Janis said part of truth in healing is having hard conversations, and it has to be done together.

"(We have to) dig deep and dive inside of ourselves to have those hard conversations so we don't relive the past," she said.

## SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Mega Millions

03-20-31-34-65, Mega Ball: 18, Megaplier: 3

(three, twenty, thirty-one, thirty-four, sixty-five; Mega Ball: eighteen; Megaplier: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$84 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$60 million

## Gov. Noem's head of finance announces resignation

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem's head of finance announced Friday that she is resigning.

Liza Clark, who has been the Commissioner of the Bureau of Finance and Management since 2016, will leave her post at the end of the year, the governor's office said in a statement. Clark oversaw the governor's budget recommendations, economic forecasting and played a central role in administering federal coronavirus relief funds. She also worked as the governor's Chief of Finance.

The Republican governor praised Clark in a statement and pointed out that she had helped the state grow its budget reserves by 92%. The state's budget saw an unprecedented inflow of federal funds during the pandemic, which has also spurred hundreds of millions of dollars being spent on infrastructure projects.

"She is a tremendous steward of taxpayer dollars, and we'll miss having her on the team," Noem said.

In the statement from the governor's office, Clark explained she wanted to strike a better work-life balance and spend more time with her children.

"Due to all the challenges we've encountered, nothing about the budget has been normal, but South Dakota is in a phenomenal financial situation as a result of our approach," she said.

## Natural gas pipeline project sues landowners for easements

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A natural gas company planning to replace pipeline in southeast South Dakota has negotiated easements with most landowners affected by the project after suing some in federal court.

Northern Natural Gas Co., based in Omaha, brought condemnation suits last month against the owners of 19 tracts of land. All but four have since negotiated easements, the Argus Leader reported. The company is planning to replace 79 miles of pipeline stretching from South Sioux City to Sioux Falls that was built in the 1940s and 1950s.

Northern Natural Gas was given the power of eminent domain because the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission certified the project, but it said it prefers to negotiate agreements with landowners. It has negotiated settlements with 195 property owners in South Dakota and Nebraska.

The pipeline replacement project started this year and the company is planning to complete it by Nov. 1, 2022.

## Mineral exploration company looks for gold in Black Hills

SPEARFISH, S.D. (AP) — A junior mineral exploration company is making a new push to find gold in the Black Hills.

Solitario Zinc Corp. arrived in Spearfish in July. Todd Christensen, a geologist with Solitario, says the company was invited to evaluate some claims from a group of investors and “we saw it as an opportunity to get our foot in the door and to evaluate exploration potential.”

Solitario will be combing through 580 mining claims that make up about 11,600 acres of land in Lawrence County.

Christensen said the company plans to conduct a multi-year surface exploration program and intends to look for deposits like the Homestake deposit.

The former Homestake Mine near Lead became the largest and deepest gold mine in North America and generated 40 million ounces of gold during its 126-year life. In 2002, it closed and became an underground research facility. Homestake’s origins were in the Black Hills gold rush of the 1870s.

“That’s going to be an expensive and long-term exploration strategy,” he said of the project. “Currently, we’re collecting samples to get an understanding of the geology and the mineralization potential.”

Christensen told the Black Hills Pioneer that Solitario has focused on zinc in recent years, but expanded to gold after a geologist with South Dakota roots gave a presentation at a mineral exploration conference in Toronto.

“Solitario’s CEO Chris Herald had recognized the significance of the Homestake deposit and that globally most of the giant ore deposits like Homestake have significant exploration potential,” Christensen said.

Solitario has 12 employees and contractors on the project. Most were hired locally or sourced from the Black Hills State University geology program to collect samples and perform basic reconnaissance on the claims. Christensen said the company is working with a graduate student with South Dakota roots who has ideas about how to use new technology and exploration methods in the Black Hills.

Solitario Zinc Corp has its roots in Crown Resources Corp., which was started in 1984. The smaller, junior exploration company was formed in 1993 to conduct mineral exploration in Latin America and is a U.S. company, publicly traded on the New York and Toronto Stock Exchanges.

## Assault victim who was left for dead in Sioux Falls has died

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A man who was assaulted and left in a Sioux Falls street, fighting for his life, had died, police said.

Sioux Falls police said Christopher Joel Mousseaux, 32, from Sioux Falls, died from his injuries on Wednesday, KELO-AM reported. He was assaulted on Sunday and two men are in custody on aggravated assault charges.

An autopsy on Mousseaux is pending.

Authorities initially said the man had been stabbed and injuries included cuts to his head.

## 'God have mercy': Tigray residents describe life under siege

By CARA ANNA Associated Press

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — As food and the means to buy it dwindled in a city under siege, the young mother felt she could do no more. She killed herself, unable to feed her children.

In a Catholic church across town, flour and oil to make communion wafers will soon run out. And the flagship hospital in Mekele, the capital of Ethiopia's Tigray region, wrestles with whether to give patients the expired medications that remain. Its soap and bleach are gone.

A year of war and months of government-enforced deprivation have left the city of a half-million people with rapidly shrinking stocks of food, fuel, medicine and cash. In rural areas, life is even grimmer as thousands of people survive on wild cactus fruit or sell the meager aid they receive. Man-made famine, the world's worst hunger crisis in a decade, has begun.

Despite the severing of almost all communication with the outside world, The Associated Press drew on a dozen interviews with people inside Mekele, along with internal aid documents, for the most detailed picture yet of life under the Ethiopian government's blockade of the Tigray region's 6 million people.

Amid sputtering electricity supplies, Mekele is often lit by candles that many people can't afford. Shops and streets are emptying, and cooking oil and baby formula are running out. People from rural areas and civil servants who have gone unpaid for months have swelled the ranks of beggars. People are thinner. Funeral announcements on the radio have increased.

"The coming weeks will make or break the situation here," said Mengstu Hailu, vice president for research at Mekele University, where the mother who killed herself worked.

He told the AP about his colleague's suicide last month as well as the deaths of two acquaintances from hunger and a death from lack of medication. "Are people going to die in the hundreds and thousands?" he asked.

Pleas from the United Nations, the United States, the European Union and African nations for the warring sides to stop the fighting have failed, even as the U.S. threatens new sanctions targeting individuals in Africa's second-most populous nation.

Instead, a new offensive by Ethiopian and allied forces has begun in an attempt to crush the Tigray fighters who dominated the national government for nearly three decades before being sidelined by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize winner.

Ethiopia is one of the top recipients of U.S. humanitarian aid. The government in Addis Ababa, fearing the assistance will end up supporting Tigray forces, imposed the blockade in June after the fighters retook much of Tigray, then brought the war into the neighboring Amhara and Afar regions. Hundreds of thousands are now displaced there, widening the humanitarian crisis.

After the AP last month reported the first starvation deaths under the blockade, and the U.N. humanitarian chief called Ethiopia a "stain on our conscience," the government expelled seven U.N. officials, accusing them of falsely inflating the scale of the crisis. The expulsions were "unprecedented and disturbing," the U.S. said.

Just 14% of needed aid has entered Tigray since the blockade began, according to the U.N., and no medicine at all.

"There is no other way to define what is happening to the people of Tigray than by ethnic cleansing," InterAction, an alliance of international aid groups, said this month of the conflict marked by mass detentions, expulsions and gang-rapes.

"The Tigrayan population of 6 million face mass starvation now," former U.N. humanitarian chief Mark Lowcock wrote in a separate statement.

In response to questions, the spokesperson for the Ethiopian prime minister's office, Billene Seyoum, again blamed Tigray forces for aid disruptions and asserted "the government has worked relentlessly to ensure humanitarian aid reaches those in need." She did not say when basic services would be allowed



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to Tigray.

At Tigray's flagship Ayder referral hospital, Dr. Sintayehu Misgina, a surgeon and the vice chief medical director, watches in horror.

Patients sometimes go without food, and haven't had meat, eggs or milk since June. Fuel to run ambulances has run out. A diesel generator powers equipment for emergency surgeries only when fuel is available.

"God have mercy for those who come when it's off," he said.

No help is in sight. A World Health Organization staffer told Sintayehu there was nothing left to give, even though a warehouse in neighboring Afar was full of life-saving aid.

Scores of badly malnourished and ill children have come to the hospital in recent weeks. Not all have survived.

"There are no drugs," said Mizan Wolde, the mother of a 5-year-old patient. Mehari Tesfa despaired for his 4-year-old daughter, who has a brain abscess and is wasting away.

"It's been three months since she came here," he said. "She was doing OK, then the medication ceased. She is now taking only oxygen, nothing else."

Across Tigray, the number of children hospitalized for severe acute malnutrition has surged, according to the U.N. children's agency — 18,600 from February to August, compared to 8,900 in 2020. The U.N. says hospitals outside of Mekele have run out of nutrition supplies to treat them.

"According to colleagues in the medical and agricultural sector, hundreds (of people) are dying each day, that's the estimation," Mekele University lecturer Nahusenay Belay said. He said one acquaintance died from lack of diabetes medication, and a young relative in the city's outskirts starved to death.

"I'm surviving by the help of family and friends like anyone else," he said.

Prices for essential goods are spiking. The U.N. last week said cooking oil in Mekele had shot up more than 400% since June and diesel more than 600%. In the town of Shire, swamped by scores of thousands of displaced people, diesel was up 1,200%, flour 300% and salt more than 500%.

The true toll of the deprivation in rural areas of the largely agricultural region is unknown as the lack of fuel prevents most travel.

One internal aid document dated last month and seen by the AP described thousands of desperate people who had fled "trapped and starved communities" near the border with Eritrea, whose soldiers have been blamed for some of the worst atrocities of the war.

"Most are able to eat at least one meal per day, largely thanks to the availability of cactus fruit," the document said. "The situation is likely to deteriorate after September when wild fruits are exhausted."

A document from another part of Tigray described "too many people to count" trying to sell items such as buckets and soap distributed by humanitarian groups. Some people walked straight from the distribution site to the roadside to sell.

"They have no option as they needed the money to buy food to supplement the inadequate food rations," the document stated, adding the forecast for famine is "terrifying."

A Catholic priest in Mekele, the Rev. Taum Berhane, described conditions echoing harsh tales from biblical times. Even before the war, parts of Tigray faced an invasion of desert locusts. Then hostile forces looted and burned crops and shot farmers' animals. Now, the blockade means people are going hungry despite having money in the bank.

"You see lactating mothers with no milk," he said. "We see babies dying. I saw myself people eating leaves like goats."

While the church struggles to support camps for thousands of displaced people, "they are telling us, 'Let us go back to our villages, even if there's nothing there. It's better to die at home.'"

The Catholic bishop in the town of Adigrat told him eight children have died at the hospital there, he said.

The priest, 70 years old and a diabetic, now watches his medication dwindle. His congregation's spirits, too. With cash in Tigray running out, the collection plate is no longer passed at Mass. The bread for communion will be depleted soon.

"Even if I survive, am I going to preach to a vacuum if all humans perish?" he asked. "The only hope is, to be frank, these people have to stop fighting and talk for sustainable peace."

## Islamic State claims mosque bombing in south Afghanistan

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — The Islamic State group claimed responsibility for a deadly suicide bombing on a Shiite mosque in southern Afghanistan that killed 47 people and wounded scores more.

In a statement posted late Friday on social media, IS said two of the group's members shot and killed security guards manning the entrance of the Fatimiya mosque in Kandahar province.

One detonated his explosives at the entrance of the mosque and the other inside.

IS's news agency Amaq in a statement gave the names of the attackers as Anas al-Khurasani and Abu Ali al-Baluchi, both Afghan nationals.

The attack came a week after a bombing claimed by the local Islamic State affiliate killed 46 people at a Shiite mosque in northern Afghanistan, raising fears that IS — an enemy of both the Taliban and the West — is expanding its foothold in Afghanistan.

Friday's attack was the deadliest to strike Afghanistan since the dramatic U.S. exit from the country, which allowed the Taliban to seize control of the Afghan capital. It was also the first major attack by the group in the country's south.

IS carries out frequent attacks in its eastern stronghold, but recently has shown signs of expansion, with attacks in the north and Kabul.

The attacks have brought into question the Taliban's ability to counter the growing IS threat.

The Taliban have pledged to restore peace and security after decades of war and have also given the U.S. assurances that they will not allow the country to be used as a base for launching extremist attacks on other countries.

## Moderate earthquake rocks Bali, killing at least 3

By FIRDIA LISNAWATI and NINIEK KARMINI Associated Press

DENPASAR, Indonesia (AP) — A moderately strong earthquake and an aftershock hit Indonesia's resort island of Bali early Saturday, killing at least three people and destroying dozens of homes.

The quake hit just before dawn, causing people to run outdoors in a panic. It struck just after the island has begun to reopen to tourism as the pandemic wanes.

The U.S. Geological Survey said the magnitude 4.8 quake was centered 62 kilometers (38.5 miles) northeast of Singaraja, a Bali port town. Its shallow depth of 10 kilometers (6.2 miles) may have amplified the amount of damage.

A magnitude 4.3 aftershock followed. That quake was relatively deep, at 282 kilometers (174 miles).

Photos from the island showed homes buried in rocks and mud and buildings collapsed, walls splintered on the ground.

Gede Darmada, head of the island's Search and Rescue Agency, said the agency was still collecting updates on damage and casualties.

Apart from the three confirmed dead, at least seven people were reported hurt, with head injuries or broken bones.

The earthquake triggered landslides in a hilly district, killing at least two people and cutting off access to at least three villages, Darmada said.

It toppled homes and temples in Karangasem, the area closest to the epicenter, killing a 3-year-old girl who was hit by falling debris, he said.

"Nearly 60% of the houses in our village were damaged and can no longer be lived in," said I Nengah Kertawa, head of Bunga village in Karangasem, one of the worst-hit communities.

Houses and government facilities also were damaged in Trunyan and in Kintamani, a popular sightseeing destination with a stunning lake.

Known as the "island of the gods," Bali is home to more than 4 million mostly Hindu people in the mainly

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Muslim nation. It is famed for its temples, scenic volcanos and beautiful white-sand beaches.

On Thursday the island reopened to international travelers for the first time in more than a year after Indonesia's COVID-19 caseload declined considerably.

The country has had around 1,000 cases a day in the past week after peaking at around 56,000 daily new cases in July.

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 that arcs the Pacific.

The last major earthquake was in January when a magnitude 6.2 earthquake killed at least 105 people and injured nearly 6,500. More than 92,000 people were displaced after it struck Mamuju and Majene districts in West Sulawesi province.

Karmini reported from Jakarta, Indonesia

## Correa's time: Late HR helps Astros top Bosox in ALCS opener

By KRISTIE RIEKEN AP Sports Writer

HOUSTON (AP) — Carlos Correa paused a few seconds at the plate and tapped the spot on his wrist where a watch would be.

"It's my time!" the Houston Astros star screamed.

That it is.

And if his time with the Astros runs out at the end of this season, the star shortstop sure is making this an October to remember.

Correa hit a tiebreaking home run in the seventh inning, hollering toward his dugout before beginning his trot around the bases and propelling the Astros over the Boston Red Sox 5-4 Friday night in the AL Championship Series opener.

"When the playoffs start, (my teammates) always tell me: 'It's your time. Now to go out there, hit homers,'" Correa said. "They told me to hit the watch when I hit the homer."

Correa teamed with Jose Altuve to do just enough to overcome the heroics of Kiké Hernández, who starred with his bat and glove for the wild-card Red Sox.

"I've been watching them for years, and it's a pleasure to be watching them up close and personal," manager Dusty Baker said. "And, boy, they are some clutch guys."

Altuve tied the game with a two-run shot in the sixth before Correa connected off losing pitcher Hansel Robles with two outs in the seventh to put the Astros ahead 4-3.

Correa, who has been with the Astros since being selected first overall in 2012, becomes a free agent at season's end and it seems likely that he won't remain in Houston.

Correa has a history of big hits for Houston that includes 18 postseason home runs, several of them in key, late situations.

"Playoff time, baby," Correa said.

"We want to be in the spotlight," he said. "We want to be in the moment."

He had three hits, and his performance gave him 55 postseason RBIs, passing Albert Pujols for the most among active MLB players.

Hernández, who won a World Series with the Dodgers last year, homered twice among his four hits and likely saved multiple runs with two terrific catches.

His second homer came off closer Ryan Pressly to start the ninth and cut the lead to 5-4. But Pressly retired the next three batters to get the save.

"It would have been a lot cooler if we won the game," Hernández said.

Game 2 is Saturday in Houston.

Ahead 4-3, the Astros loaded the bases with no outs in the eighth when Hirokazu Sawamura plunked Martín Maldonado. Houston added some insurance when Yuli Gurriel slid in just before the tag to score

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on a sacrifice fly by Altuve that made it 5-3, beating a terrific throw by Hernandez.

Hernández has been red hot for the Red Sox this October, with 13 hits in his last four games to set an MLB record for most hits in a four-game span in one postseason. He passed Billy Hatcher (1999), Marquis Grissom (1995), Hideki Matsui (2004) and Randy Arozarena (2020), who all had 11.

"Enrique is en fuego," Red Sox manager Alex Cora said.

Chas McCormick singled with one out in the sixth before Altuve became the fourth player in MLB history to hit at least 20 postseason homers with his shot to left-center off Tanner Houck that tied it at 3.

Hernández opened a three-run third with his soaring homer to center field to tie it at 1-all.

Xander Bogaerts walked with one out and Rafael Devers singled. J.D. Martinez hit a grounder to Altuve for what should have been a routine play. But the ball grazed the second baseman's glove and rolled between his legs for an error that allowed Martinez to reach and Bogaerts to score to put Boston up 2-1.

Hunter Renfroe then hit an RBI double to left field to extend it to 3-1 before Houston's two brightest stars came through late.

"Experience matters," Correa said.

Altuve and Correa, connecting again for a team trying to reach the World Series for the second time in three years. The Astros also won the championship in 2017, a crown tainted by the team's sign-stealing scandal.

Both teams leaned heavily on their bullpens after both Boston starter Chris Sale and Houston's Framber Valdez were chased in the third.

Ryne Stanek got the last out of the seventh for the win.

Sale, who was tagged for five runs in one inning in his previous start against Tampa Bay in the AL Division Series, permitted five hits and a run in 2 2/3 innings Friday. Valdez gave up six hits and three runs — two earned — while also getting just eight outs.

"Everything as a whole clicked a little bit better tonight. My command was spotty at times, but when I really needed it, I could bear down and grab what I've been looking for," Sale said.

The Astros led 1-0 after Altuve scored on a sacrifice fly by Yordan Alvarez in the first.

For the next few innings it looked like it wouldn't be the Astros' night.

Houston loaded the bases with one out in the second, but Altuve struck out before Sale escaped the jam with a huge assist from Hernández in center field. Hernández, whose MLB debut came when he subbed for Altuve late in a game in 2014, sprinted to rob Michael Brantley with a diving catch in shallow center to end the inning.

The Astros had runners at first and second with two outs in the fifth when Hernández struck again. He made a back-handed grab in right-center on a ball hit by Kyle Tucker to leave them empty-handed once more.

Hernández even seemed surprised he made the grab, contorting his face into a shocked look after the ball hit his glove.

Hernández said the fly flew like a knuckleball.

"Tim Wakefield, R.A. Dickey, they've got nothing on that ball," he said.

UP NEXT

Boston's Nathan Eovaldi (1-0, 2.61 ERA) will have a homecoming of sorts Saturday when he starts opposite rookie Luis Garcia (0-0, 16.88). Eovaldi grew up in the Houston suburb of Alvin, also home to Hall of Famer Nolan Ryan, and visited the Astrodome and Minute Maid Park often growing up.

"It's definitely one of my favorite ballparks to pitch in," Eovaldi said.

Saturday will be his third start this postseason. He struck out eight in 5 1/3 innings and got the win in the wild-card victory over the Yankees. He also started Game 3 of the ALDS but did not factor in the decision in a 6-4 Red Sox win.

Garcia struggled in a Game 3 start in the division series, permitting five runs in just 2 2/3 innings of a 12-6 loss.

## Delicate dance for Trump, Youngkin in campaign's final weeks

By JILL COLVIN and SARAH RANKIN Associated Press

RICHMOND, Virginia (AP) — When Donald Trump rallied Republicans this week to vote for Glenn Youngkin for governor in Virginia, the former president called in to a rally of diehard supporters. That may be the closest he gets to campaigning in the most closely-watched election of 2021.

While schedules could evolve in the final weeks of the race, the two are not expected to campaign together in person before Election Day next month.

"Is Trump going to come to Virginia? Yes. But it will be after the election for a victory rally," said conservative talk show host John Fredericks, who served as Trump's campaign chairman in the state and also organized Wednesday's event. Youngkin's campaign confirmed Friday it does not have any plans for surrogates to join him in the race's final stretch.

The dynamic reflects the complex balancing act between Trump and Youngkin and could emerge as a model for other Republicans who face competitive campaigns in 2022. The former president remains the most popular figure in GOP politics and is eager to remain engaged. Youngkin needs Trump's supporters to show up to the polls and can't risk giving the former president a reason to turn on him in the race's final weeks. But he must also avoid being tied too closely to someone who is unpopular in crucial swaths of the state, particularly the populated suburbs that surround Washington and Richmond.

It's a delicate balancing act for Youngkin, who is locked in a tight race with Democrat Terry McAuliffe and steered clear of the Wednesday event. In addition to Fredericks, the rally was headlined by long-time Trump strategist Steve Bannon, who could soon find himself charged with contempt for refusing to cooperate with a House committee investigating the violent Jan. 6 storming of the Capitol. And it drew outrage after attendees recited the pledge of allegiance to a flag the emcee said had been flown that day, a move Youngkin later criticized.

While the former president remains the most powerful force in the party nine months after leaving office, he lost Virginia by 10 points in 2020 and is viewed favorably by just 44% of likely voters in the state, according to a recent Fox News poll.

If Trump were to hold a rally in the state, "it would be a disaster for Youngkin," said Bob Holsworth, a longtime local political analyst in the state. "This is a person who lost by 10 points in Virginia, lost in a landslide. He's extremely unpopular in Virginia. ... The more he shows up and he more he participates, the worse off it is for Youngkin."

That risk was underscored by the reaction to Wednesday's event, where Trump praised Youngkin as "a great gentleman," while spreading lies about the 2020 election.

Democrats immediately pounced, condemning what they labeled "Donald Trump's insurrectionist rally." McAuliffe's campaign cut an ad featuring Trump's praise for Youngkin, while McAuliffe held a press conference to tear into his opponent, both broadly for his focus on "dangerous conspiracy theories" and for his initial silence on the event itself.

Trump, for his part, also has little to gain by spending much more political capital on the race. If Youngkin wins, Trump is sure to try to take credit, citing his participation in Wednesday's rally, his May endorsement, and any future get out the vote efforts. But if Youngkin loses, Trump can blame him for not aligning himself more closely with the former president.

Indeed, Trump recently had warned the candidate about straying too far during an interview with Fredericks.

"The only guys that win are the guys that embrace the MAGA movement," he said. "When they try and go down a railroad track, you know, 'Hey, oh yeah, sure, I love it, love it. Oh yeah, I love Trump, love Trump, OK, let's go, next subject.' When they do that, they never win. They never win. They have to embrace it."

While Youngkin's campaign hasn't featured many big-name surrogates at his political events, McAuliffe

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has been summoning Democratic star power. President Joe Biden has already campaigned with McAuliffe and his campaign told The Associated Press this week that the president will return before the Nov. 2 vote. First lady Jill Biden appeared with McAuliffe at a rally Friday and former President Barack Obama will campaign with him next week.

Trump spokespeople did not respond to questions about the race, and Youngkin's campaign did not respond to questions about Trump.

Youngkin has aimed his pitch more toward moderate and independent voters since winning his party's primary. During that campaign, Youngkin declined to say whether Biden was fairly elected. He has since said he believes he was — and that he does not believe there was significant fraud last November.

Instead of following in the mold of other blue-state Republican governors like Maryland's Larry Hogan and Charlie Baker in Massachusetts, Youngkin has run on a solidly conservative set of platforms, embracing some GOP culture war issues and promising to help reject the "left liberal progressive agenda" he says is shaping Virginia.

After mostly pivoting away from his focus on election integrity in the nomination contest, he's centered campaign appearances and ads on issues like crime, taxes and school choice.

Democrats have criticized him, though, for recent remarks about auditing the state's voting machines and for campaigning with state Sen. Amanda Chase, a prominent promoter of election falsehoods who's garnered the nickname "Trump in heels."

Youngkin has also previously said Trump "represents so much of why I'm running."

"What Youngkin is trying to do is he's attempting to maintain the MAGA base while absorbing the suburban defectors from the Democrats. And that's tough," said Holsworth,

Fredericks said it was a winning strategy.

"Here's why Glenn Youngkin is going to win: We're holding the Trump base together by a thread," he said. "Glenn Youngkin and this campaign has never abandoned the core principles that are important to Trump voters, not one day."

Former Virginia governor, U.S. ambassador and GOP presidential candidate Jim Gilmore said Youngkin had done a good job of keeping the race tightly focused on his candidacy.

"I think that nationalizing this campaign is not helpful to either of the candidates," he said.

"Glenn's got to be his own man" and "run his own" race, agreed former U.S. Rep. Tom Davis, who represented northern Virginia's 11th Congressional District for 14 years.

Davis said he thinks Virginia voters are more concerned about Biden, whose approval rating has slumped, than Trump. People voted for Biden "to get Donald Trump out of their living room," he said. "But they didn't vote for all this stuff that Biden's bringing with him. And I think they're going to pump the brakes."

Several polls released since mid-September show a competitive race between McAuliffe and Youngkin. Some, including a recent poll by Fox News, suggest McAuliffe may have a slight advantage, though Youngkin remains within striking distance and some voters for both candidates said they may still change their minds.

Colvin reported from New York.

## Biden says he's open to shortening length of new programs

By ZEKE MILLER and ALEXANDRA JAFFE Associated Press

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) — President Joe Biden says he would prefer to cut the duration of programs in his big social services and climate change package rather than eliminate some entirely, as Democrats struggle to win support from moderates by trimming what had been a \$3.5 trillion proposal.

Biden's comments on Friday, reassuring progressives on what he hopes will be a landmark piece of his legacy, marked his clearest indication yet on how he hopes negotiations over the bill will play out. Appearing to side with a strategy preferred by progressive lawmakers, it marked at least a subtle break with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who has suggested that most Democrats prefer to focus on establishing a

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few enduring programs.

He also said there is no deadline for a deal.

"I'm of the view that it's important to establish the principle on a whole range of issues without guaranteeing to get the whole 10 years," Biden told reporters before boarding Air Force One to return to Washington from a trip to Connecticut. "It matters to establish it."

"So what happens is, you pass the principle and you build on it," he added. "You look back and either it works or it doesn't work."

Pelosi, however, in a Monday note to fellow Democratic lawmakers, said, "Overwhelmingly, the guidance I am receiving from members is to do fewer things well."

Biden said Friday that although he expects the package to shrink, "we're going to come back and get the rest" after it's passed.

"We're not going to get \$3.5 trillion. We'll get less than that, but we're gonna get it. And we're going to come back and get the rest," Biden said during remarks at a child care center in Connecticut.

Democrats on Capitol Hill are working to reduce the sweeping package to about \$2 trillion in spending, which would be paid for with higher taxes on corporations and the wealthy. The proposal includes everything from free child care and community college to dental, vision and hearing aid benefits for seniors and a number of significant provisions meant to combat climate change. They're all key items for progressives, but moderates have balked at the original \$3.5 trillion price tag.

One almost certain reduction would be in the proposal for free community college.

"I doubt whether we will get the entire funding for community colleges but I'm not going to give up on community colleges as long as I'm president," Biden said. His wife, Jill, is a professor of English at Northern Virginia Community College.

With slim margins in the House and the Senate, Democrats have no votes to spare on the bill. The whittling process has sparked concern from some progressives.

The party's internal debate was apparent as Senate Budget Committee Chairman Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., wrote an opinion column for a West Virginia newspaper calling out that state's Democratic Sen. Joe Manchin by name for blocking the domestic package so far.

Sanders named Manchin as one of only two Democratic senators who "remain in opposition" to the measure, thwarting the unanimous support the party needs in the 50-50 Senate to approve the still-evolving legislation.

"This is a pivotal moment in modern American history. We now have a historic opportunity to support the working families of West Virginia, Vermont and the entire country and create policy which works for all, not just the few," Sanders wrote in a piece scheduled to appear in Sunday's Charleston Gazette-Mail.

Manchin shot back in a statement late Friday, saying: "It isn't the first time an out-of-stater has tried to tell West Virginians what is best for them."

It's highly unusual for a senator to publicly criticize a colleague of the same party, particularly by wading into the other lawmaker's state.

Manchin has proposed holding the measure's overall 10-year cost to \$1.5 trillion and has said he wants to limit some health care initiatives to benefit only lower-earning people.

Sanders and Manchin stand, respectively, as among the Democrats' most progressive and conservative senators.

Biden has openly acknowledged the price tag of his package will have to come down. On Friday, he visited a child development center in Hartford to speak about a need for investments in child care and other social safety net programs, arguing they're imperative to keep America competitive in the global economy.

At the center, Biden promoted his proposal to make such care free for lower-income families, and ensure that families making up to 150% of their state's median income pay less than 7% of their salaries on child care. It's part of a massive expansion of the social safety net that Biden has championed and is aiming to pass with just Democratic votes in Congress.

"Too many folks in Washington still don't realize it isn't enough just to invest in our physical infrastruc-

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ture. We also have to invest in our people," he said.

Biden briefly greeted some of the children at the center's playground, at one point kneeling to give a child a hug.

The president's sales pitch comes as his Democratic allies have raised concerns that the American public does not understand the benefits of his package. There is renewed urgency among Democrats to push it through ahead of an end-of-month deadline on transportation funding, Biden's upcoming foreign trip, and a closer-than-anticipated race for Virginia's next governor.

The fate of the legislation, branded "Build Back Better" by Biden, is also holding up a more than \$1 trillion bipartisan infrastructure bill that passed the Senate this summer. House progressives are balking at supporting that roads-and-bridges bill until agreement is reached on a path forward for the social safety net package.

In an interview this week with The Associated Press, Terry McAuliffe, the Democratic candidate for Virginia governor, criticized Democrats including Biden over the lack of progress.

"They all got to get their act together and vote," McAuliffe said. Asked specifically if he was calling out Biden, McAuliffe said, "I put everybody there." McAuliffe is in a tight race with Republican newcomer Glenn Youngkin in a state Biden carried by 10 points last fall.

Biden also delivered remarks later at the dedication of the Dodd Center for Human Rights at the University of Connecticut, which is being renamed to honor a longtime friend, former Connecticut Sen. Chris Dodd, and Dodd's father, also a former senator.

Jaffe reported from Washington. AP writers Lisa Mascaro and Alan Fram in Washington contributed to this report.

## **Trump's not going away — and neither is investigator Schiff**

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — Nearly a year out of the White House, Donald Trump continues to circle the Republican Party, commanding attention and influence as he ponders another run for the presidency.

And still circling Trump is Rep. Adam Schiff.

Schiff, the Intelligence Committee chairman who rose to national prominence probing Russian election interference and leading the first Trump impeachment, says there's nothing less than democracy at stake with the former president's continued presence on the national political stage.

As a key member of the House Select Committee on the Jan. 6 Insurrection at the Capitol, the congressman whom Trump mercilessly mocks with derisive nicknames is turning his attention to Trump's role in that deadly riot.

"We want to show the country just how Jan. 6 came about -- and not just the mechanics of that day, in terms of the participation of the white nationalist groups ... but rather how this big falsehood about our elections propelled thousands of people to attack their own government," Schiff says in an interview on C-SPAN's Book TV, airing a week from Sunday.

"What did the president know about who was coming to this rally and what did he do when he found out?" Schiff asks. "Why did it go on so long? And so there are a lot of important unanswered questions."

As the committee ramps up its inquiry, it's a familiar role but also a new chapter for Schiff, the federal prosecutor turned congressman whose life's work is now defined in large part by the man he calls a "clear and present danger" to U.S. democracy.

Last winter, Trump was impeached a second time, accused of inciting the riot. But the House prosecutors, much like Schiff in the first trial that was focused on election interference involving the Trump campaign and Ukraine, failed to win conviction in the Senate.

This time, the California Democrat says the select committee expects to uncover fresh information about Trump's involvement that January day, as he encouraged the mob of his supporters to head to the Capitol and "fight like hell" to reverse his electoral defeat to Joe Biden. Deaths in the riot and its aftermath



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included Trump supporter Ashli Babbitt, who was shot and killed by police, and several officers who later took their own lives after the most serious attack on the Capitol since the War of 1812.

In a new book with a weighty title, "Midnight in Washington, How We Almost Lost Our Democracy and Still Could," Schiff writes his personal, gripping account of that day: Preparing to don a gas mask in the House chamber, being forced to flee as the mob approached.

Republican colleagues warned him he needed to stay out of sight because of his recognizable role as a Trump critic. But during the hours that followed, as the House returned to tally Electoral College votes for Biden, Schiff came to see Republican lawmakers, in "suits and ties," as an institutional threat as serious as the rioters who bludgeoned their way into the building in an effort to overturn the election.

The special committee is drilling down not just on Trump, but also potentially Republican Rep. Kevin McCarthy of California and the president's other allies in Congress who perpetuate the claim that the election was somehow rigged or illegitimate — though every state has certified its results as accurate, and dozens of court challenges have gone nowhere.

"I'm trying to convey the fragility of our democracy -- something that we always took for granted -- but something that in the last four years has been dismantled piece by piece by piece," Schiff said about his book.

He expects the committee to deliver "the definitive report," much as the 9/11 commission produced a comprehensive examination of the 2001 terror attack on the U.S.

Trump scoffs at the committee, refusing to participate. Two prominent GOP lawmakers, Reps. Liz Cheney of Wyoming and Adam Kinzinger of Illinois have essentially been disowned by their party for joining the panel and its probe.

Trump says the Democrats are "drunk on power," and he is urging some of his former staff and administration officials not to comply with subpoenas or other requests for testimony. He's basing that stance on claims of executive privilege even though he no longer holds office. This week, the panel announced it would vote to hold former Trump adviser Steve Bannon in contempt for defying a subpoena.

"The Radical Left Democrats tried the RUSSIA Witch Hunt, they tried the fake impeachments, and now they are trying once again to use Congress to persecute their political opponents," Trump said in a recent statement.

Schiff tweeted this week the panel is "not messing around" and expects Biden's Department of Justice to prosecute the criminal contempt cases to force compliance.

The goal, Schiff says, is for the committee's end product to be a "historic record as a way of exposing to the American people what went into that tragedy, but also as a way of forming recommendations about how do we move forward as a country, how do we protect our democracy."

With Trump ensconced at his Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida, weighing another White House run and visiting the early voting states to rally big crowds, Washington is waiting and wondering about his next move.

Schiff acknowledges that he and other Democrats were ill prepared for Trump's popularity, and still five years on struggle to mount a compelling counter-argument to woo back voters who left the party for Trump.

More immediately, Democrats face the prospect of a House Republican takeover in next fall's midterm elections, elevating McCarthy to replace Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

"If Kevin McCarthy were ever to become speaker, essentially Donald Trump would be speaker," Schiff warns.

He and Democratic colleagues have assembled a package of post-Watergate style legislation aimed at shoring up the nation's civic infrastructure and tightening ethics rules for the post-Trump era. But faced with Republican opposition, it is unlikely to pass the Senate.

Schiff positions America's experience alongside a broader "global struggle going on right now between autocracy and democracy. People around the world used to look to us as a beacon. Now they see people climbing on the outside of our Capitol, beating police officers," he said.

"So many of the things that we thought could never happen in this country have already happened."

## Clinton "doing fine" and will be out of hospital soon

By STEFANIE DAZIO and LOU KESTEN Associated Press

ORANGE, Calif. (AP) — Bill Clinton is doing fine and will be released soon from a Southern California hospital where he's being treated for an infection, President Joe Biden said.

Biden said Friday during remarks at the University of Connecticut that he had spoken to Clinton and the former president "sends his best."

"He's doing fine; he really is," Biden said.

"He's not in any serious condition," Biden said. "He is getting out shortly, as I understand it. Whether that's tomorrow or the next day, I don't know."

Clinton, 75, was admitted to the University of California Irvine Medical Center, southeast of Los Angeles, on Tuesday with an infection unrelated to COVID-19, his spokesman said.

An aide to the former president said Clinton had a urological infection that spread to his bloodstream, but he is on the mend and never went into septic shock, a potentially life-threatening condition.

Clinton spokesman Angel Ureña said Friday that Clinton would remain hospitalized overnight to receive further intravenous antibiotics.

"All health indicators are trending in the right direction, including his white blood count which has decreased significantly," Ureña said in a statement.

"President Clinton continues to be in excellent spirits, and is deeply grateful for the outstanding care he is receiving and the well wishes that people have sent from across America and around the world," the statement said.

The aide, who spoke to reporters at the hospital on the condition his name wasn't used, said Clinton was in an intensive care section of the hospital but wasn't receiving ICU care.

Clinton was reading books and watching TV coverage about his hospitalization, the aide said. Hillary Clinton was with him in the hospital, though not his daughter, Chelsea Clinton.

In the years since Clinton left the White House in 2001, the former president has faced health scares. In 2004, he underwent quadruple bypass surgery after experiencing prolonged chest pains and shortness of breath. He returned to the hospital for surgery for a partially collapsed lung in 2005, and in 2010 he had a pair of stents implanted in a coronary artery.

He responded by embracing a largely vegan diet that saw him lose weight and report improved health.

Clinton repeatedly returned to the stump, campaigning for Democratic candidates, mostly notably his wife, Hillary, during her failed 2008 bid for the presidential nomination. And in 2016, as Hillary Clinton sought the White House as the Democratic nominee, Bill Clinton — by then a grandfather and nearing 70 — returned to the campaign trail.

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Associated Press writer Zeke Miller contributed from Hartford, Connecticut. Associated Press writer Alexandra Jaffe contributed from Washington.

## AP source: No one else in NFL cited with email violations

By BARRY WILNER AP Pro Football Writer

The NFL has found no other current team or league personnel to have sent emails containing racist, homophobic or misogynistic language similar to messages written by Jon Gruden that led to his resignation as Las Vegas Raiders coach, according to a person familiar with the documents.

The person familiar with the investigation as well as emails told The Associated Press on Friday that the league "did not identify other areas and other individuals it has to contact at club leadership or league leadership levels." The person spoke on condition of anonymity because the league has not publicly released what is in the 650,000 emails the independent investigators collected during an investigation of sexual harassment and other workplace conditions at the Washington Football Team.

"The NFL did not identify any problems anywhere near what you saw with Jon Gruden," the person

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said. The person did not address any other areas of potential issues found in the emails beyond similarities with Gruden's comments.

Gruden resigned Monday as Raiders coach after the denigrating comments expressed in emails written from 2011-18 to then-Washington club executive Bruce Allen were reported. Gruden was not in the NFL during those years, when he was an analyst for ESPN.

The NFL would conduct a probe of Allen, who was fired in December 2019, should he attempt to return to the league, the person said.

The NFL also has categorized comparisons of Gruden's correspondences with Allen to those by top league counsel Jeff Pash as a mischaracterization. The person said that the league finds those emails "in a different category" as a part of Pash's job, and "appropriate."

Pash has been a conduit between the NFL office and teams for years.

There were a number of topics Pash discussed with Allen in emails, but the NFL found the attorney had not been "too chummy" with the Washington team president, nor was there anything that "led to any sort of undue influence that resulted in any gains by the Washington Football Team," the person said.

That franchise was docked \$36 million in salary cap room in 2012 and '13 by the league, with Pash heavily involved in the probe leading to that discipline.

The timeline of when the NFL was made aware of the content of the emails also has come into question. Such knowledge came toward the end of the investigation of the Washington franchise, with the investigating firm viewing the emails as beyond the scope of their probe. When the league became aware of some emails potentially of concern, it began to review those.

That led to the Gruden emails.

Confidentiality has been cited by the NFL and by the investigating firm in the Washington Football Team case for not publicly releasing specifics. The majority of those who participated in the investigation were promised they would remain anonymous.

But the league certainly is upset that detailed emails to and from Allen have been leaked, though the only comments it has made have been on the content of Gruden's emails.

"The league definitely is concerned about it, not happy what is viewed as confidential emails and part of confidential investigations show up in the newspaper," the person said.

NFL Players Association chief DeMaurice Smith again called for the league to release every email from the investigation.

"Our players deserve a full accounting of any other NFL misconduct," he said on Twitter, adding "any evidence or knowledge that this has been suppressed must be brought to light."

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AP Pro Football Writer Josh Dubow contributed.

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

## US vows to pay relatives of Afghans killed in drone strike

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. Defense Department said Friday that it is committed to offering condolence payments to relatives of the 10 people who were killed in an errant U.S. drone strike in Kabul, Afghanistan, in August.

Pentagon spokesman John Kirby said in a statement that the Defense Department was also working with the State Department to help surviving family members relocate to the United States.

Kirby said the matter arose in a meeting Thursday between Dr. Colin Kahl, under secretary of defense for policy, and Dr. Steven Kwon, founder and president of the nonprofit group Nutrition & Education International.

"Dr. Kahl reiterated Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin's commitment to the families, including offering ex gratia condolence payments," Kirby said. He did not say how much money would be offered.

On Aug. 29, a U.S. Hellfire missile struck a car driven by Zemerai Ahmadi, who had just pulled into the

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driveway of the Ahmadi family compound. In all, 10 members of the family, including seven children, were killed in the strike.

Weeks later, Marine Gen. Frank McKenzie, head of U.S. Central Command, called the strike a "tragic mistake" and said innocent civilians were indeed killed in the attack.

During the meeting Thursday, Kwon told Kahl that Ahmadi had work with NEI for many years, "providing care and lifesaving assistance for people facing high mortality rates in Afghanistan," according to Kirby.

The U.S. military initially defended the strike, saying it had targeted an Islamic State group's "facilitator" and disrupted the militants' ability to carry out attacks during the chaotic final stage of the withdrawal of U.S. and NATO troops from Afghanistan.

Discrepancies between the military's portrayal of the strike and findings on the ground quickly emerged. The Associated Press and other news organizations reported that the driver of the targeted vehicle was a longtime employee at a U.S. humanitarian organization. There were no signs of a large secondary blast, despite the Pentagon's assertion that the vehicle contained explosives.

The drone strike followed a devastating suicide bombing by an Islamic State offshoot that killed 169 Afghans and 13 U.S. military personnel at one of the gates to the Kabul airport in late August.

Last month, McKenzie said the United States was considering making reparation payments to the family of the drone strike victims.

## **Biden open to shortening length of programs in spending bill**

By ZEKE MILLER and ALEXANDRA JAFFE Associated Press

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) — President Joe Biden said Friday he would prefer to cut the duration of programs in his big social services and climate change package rather than eliminate some entirely, as Democrats struggle to win support from moderates by trimming what had been a \$3.5 trillion proposal.

Biden's comments, reassuring progressives on what he hopes will be a landmark piece of his legacy, marked his clearest comments yet on how he hopes negotiations over the bill will play out. Appearing to side with a strategy preferred by progressive lawmakers, it marked at least a subtle break with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who has suggested that most Democrats prefer to focus on establishing a few enduring programs.

He also said there is no deadline for a deal.

"I'm of the view that it's important to establish the principle on a whole range of issues without guaranteeing to get the whole 10 years," Biden told reporters before boarding Air Force One to return to Washington from a trip to Connecticut. "It matters to establish it."

"So what happens is, you pass the principle and you build on it," he added. "You look back and either it works or it doesn't work."

Pelosi, however, in a Monday note to fellow Democratic lawmakers, said, "Overwhelmingly, the guidance I am receiving from members is to do fewer things well."

Biden said Friday that although he expects the package to shrink, "we're going to come back and get the rest" after it's passed.

"We're not going to get \$3.5 trillion. We'll get less than that, but we're gonna get it. And we're going to come back and get the rest," Biden said during remarks at a child care center in Connecticut.

Democrats on Capitol Hill are working to reduce the sweeping package to about \$2 trillion in spending, which would be paid for with higher taxes on corporations and the wealthy. The proposal includes everything from free child care and community college to dental, vision and hearing aid benefits for seniors and a number of significant provisions meant to combat climate change. They're all key items for progressives, but moderates have balked at the original \$3.5 trillion price tag.

One almost certain reduction would be in the proposal for free community college.

"I doubt whether we will get the entire funding for community colleges but I'm not going to give up on community colleges as long as I'm president," Biden said. His wife, Jill, is a professor of English at Northern Virginia Community College.

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With slim margins in the House and the Senate, Democrats have no votes to spare on the bill. The whittling process has sparked concern from some progressives.

The party's internal debate was apparent as Senate Budget Committee Chairman Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., wrote an opinion column for a West Virginia newspaper calling out that state's Democratic Sen. Joe Manchin by name for blocking the domestic package so far.

Sanders named Manchin as one of only two Democratic senators who "remain in opposition" to the measure, thwarting the unanimous support the party needs in the 50-50 Senate to approve the still-evolving legislation.

"This is a pivotal moment in modern American history. We now have a historic opportunity to support the working families of West Virginia, Vermont and the entire country and create policy which works for all, not just the few," Sanders wrote in a piece scheduled to appear in Sunday's Charleston Gazette-Mail.

Manchin shot back in a statement late Friday, saying: "It isn't the first time an out-of-stater has tried to tell West Virginians what is best for them."

It's highly unusual for a senator to publicly criticize a colleague of the same party, particularly by wading into the other lawmaker's state.

Manchin has proposed holding the measure's overall 10-year cost to \$1.5 trillion and has said he wants to limit some health care initiatives to benefit only lower-earning people.

Sanders and Manchin stand, respectively, as among the Democrats' most progressive and conservative senators.

Biden has openly acknowledged the price tag of his package will have to come down. On Friday, he visited a child development center in Hartford to speak about a need for investments in child care and other social safety net programs, arguing they're imperative to keep America competitive in the global economy.

At the center, Biden promoted his proposal to make such care free for lower-income families, and ensure that families making up to 150% of their state's median income pay less than 7% of their salaries on child care. It's part of a massive expansion of the social safety net that Biden has championed and is aiming to pass with just Democratic votes in Congress.

"Too many folks in Washington still don't realize it isn't enough just to invest in our physical infrastructure. We also have to invest in our people," he said.

Biden briefly greeted some of the children at the center's playground, at one point kneeling to give a child a hug.

The president's sales pitch comes as his Democratic allies have raised concerns that the American public does not understand the benefits of his package. There is renewed urgency among Democrats to push it through ahead of an end-of-month deadline on transportation funding, Biden's upcoming foreign trip, and a closer-than-anticipated race for Virginia's next governor.

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"They all got to get their act together and vote," McAuliffe said. Asked specifically if he was calling out Biden, McAuliffe said, "I put everybody there." McAuliffe is in a tight race with Republican newcomer Glenn Youngkin in a state Biden carried by 10 points last fall.

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Jaffe reported from Washington. AP writers Lisa Mascaro and Alan Fram in Washington contributed to this report.

## More than 90 snakes found under Northern California home

By OLGA R. RODRIGUEZ undefined

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Al Wolf is used to clearing one or two snakes from under houses but recently was called by a woman who said she had seen rattlesnakes scurry under her Northern California house and was surprised to find more than 90 rattlesnakes getting ready to hibernate.

Wolf, director of Sonoma County Reptile Rescue, said he crawled under the mountainside home in Santa Rosa and found a rattlesnake right away, then another and another. He got out from under the house, grabbed two buckets, put on long, safety gloves, and went back in. He crawled on his hands, knees and stomach, tipping over more than 200 small rocks.

"I kept finding snakes for the next almost four hours," Wolf said Friday. "I thought 'oh, good, it was a worthwhile call' but I was happy to get out because it's not nice, you run into spider webs and dirt and it smells crappy and it's musty and you're on your belly and you're dirty. I mean it was work."

But the work paid off. He used a 24-inch (60-centimeter) snake pole to remove 22 adult rattlesnakes and 59 babies when he first visited the home in the Mayacamas Mountains on Oct. 2. He returned another two times since and collected 11 more snakes. He also found a dead cat and dead possum.

All the snakes were Northern Pacific rattlesnakes, the only venomous snake found in Northern California, he said.

Wolf, who has been rescuing snakes for 32 years and has been bitten 13 times, said he responds to calls about snakes under homes in 17 counties and has seen dozens of them in one place in the wild but never under a home.

He said he releases the rattlesnakes in the wild away from people and sometimes in private land when ranchers request them for pest control.

Wolf said there are plans to return to the house again before the end of the month to see if any more snakes arrived.

"We know it's a den site already because of the babies, and the amount of females I found," he said.

Rattlesnakes usually hibernate from October to April and look for rocks to hide under and warm places and will return to the same place year after year. The homeowners didn't remove any rocks when they built the house, making it an attractive place for the reptiles, Wolf said.

"The snakes found the house to be a great place for them because the rocks give them protection but the house, too, gives them protection from being wet during the winter so, it's double insulation for them," he said.

## Authorities call fatal stabbing of UK lawmaker terrorist act

By JO KEARNEY and JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LEIGH-ON-SEA, England (AP) — A long-serving member of Parliament was stabbed to death Friday during a meeting with constituents at a church in England, in what police said was a terrorist incident. A 25-year-old man was arrested in connection with the attack, which united Britain's fractious politicians in shock and sorrow.

Counterterrorism officers were leading the investigation into the slaying of Conservative lawmaker David Amess. In a statement early Saturday, the Metropolitan Police described the attack as terrorism and said the early investigation "has revealed a potential motivation linked to Islamist extremism."

Amess, 69, was attacked around midday Friday at a Methodist church in Leigh-on-Sea, a town about 40 miles (62 kilometers) east of London. Paramedics tried without success to save him. Police arrested the suspect and recovered a knife.

They did not identify the suspect, who was held on suspicion of murder. Police said they believed the suspect acted alone, and were not seeking anyone else in connection with the killing, though investigations continue.

The slaying came five years after another MP, Jo Cox, was murdered by a far-right extremist in her small-town constituency, and it renewed concern about the risks politicians run as they go about their

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work representing voters. British politicians generally are not given police protection when they meet with their constituents.

Tributes poured in for Amess from across the political spectrum, as well as from the community he had served for decades. Residents paid tribute to him at a vigil at a church in Leigh-on-Sea.

"He carried that great East London spirit of having no fear and being able to talk to people and the level they're at," the Rev. Jeffrey Woolnaugh said at the vigil, attended by about 80 people. "Not all politicians, I would say, are good at that."

Conservative Prime Minister Boris Johnson said he and his Cabinet were "deeply shocked and heart-stricken."

"David was a man who believed passionately in this country and in its future, and we've lost today a fine public servant and a much-loved friend and colleague," Johnson said.

The prime minister would not say whether the attack meant politicians needed tighter security, saying, "We must really leave the police to get on with their investigation."

Amess had been a member of Parliament for Southend West, which includes Leigh-on-Sea, since 1997, and had been a lawmaker since 1983, making him one of the longest-serving politicians in the House of Commons.

A social conservative on the right of his party, he was a well-liked figure with a reputation for working hard for his constituents and campaigning ceaselessly to have Southend declared a city.

Amess, who leaves a wife and five children, was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II in 2015 for his service, becoming Sir David.

Flags at Parliament were lowered to half-staff amid a profusion of questions about lawmakers' security.

"This is an incident that will send shockwaves across the parliamentary community and the whole country," House of Commons Speaker Lindsay Hoyle said. "In the coming days we will need to discuss and examine MPs' security and any measures to be taken, but for now, our thoughts and prayers are with David's family, friends and colleagues."

Violence against British politicians is rare, but concerns have grown about the increasingly bitter polarization of the country's politics.

In 2016, a week before the country's divisive Brexit referendum, Cox, a Labour Party lawmaker, was fatally stabbed and shot in northern England. Also, several people have been jailed in recent years for threatening lawmakers.

British lawmakers are protected by armed police when they are inside Parliament, and security there was tightened after an attacker inspired by the Islamic State group fatally stabbed a police officer at the gates in 2017.

But politicians have no such protection in their constituencies. Amess published the times and locations of his open meetings with constituents on his website.

Two other British lawmakers have been attacked over the past two decades during their "surgeries," regular meetings where constituents can present concerns and complaints.

Labour legislator Stephen Timms was stabbed in the stomach in 2010 by a student radicalized by online sermons from an al-Qaida-linked preacher.

In 2000, Liberal Democrat Nigel Jones and his aide Andrew Pennington were attacked by a man wielding a sword during such a meeting. Pennington was killed and Jones wounded in the attack in Cheltenham, England.

Former Prime Minister Theresa May, a Conservative, tweeted that Amess' killing was a "tragic day for our democracy," and former Labour Prime Minister Tony Blair said he was "shocked and horrified."

Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon of the Scottish National Party said on Twitter: "In a democracy, politicians must be accessible and open to scrutiny, but no one deserves to have their life taken while working for and representing their constituents."

Kim Leadbeater, Jo Cox's sister and now a member of Parliament herself, said it was "horrific" that Amess' family was experiencing what hers had gone through.

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"They will think about this every single day for the rest of their lives," she said.

"I find myself now working as a politician and trying to do good things for people, and it's really important you get good people in public life, but this is the risk we are all taking, and so many MPs will be scared by this."

Lawless reported from London. Pan Pylas also contributed to this report.

## Jill Biden travels to Virginia, New Jersey to help Democrats

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

HENRICO, Va. (AP) — First lady Jill Biden campaigned Friday for Democrats in governors' races in Virginia and New Jersey, saying "this election will set a course for a year from now" during her first political trip of her husband's presidency.

Biden spoke at an early voting rally at Middlesex College in Edison, New Jersey, where Democratic Gov. Phil Murphy is running against Republican Jack Ciattarelli, an ex-state Assembly member. She also hit an evening event in suburban Richmond, Virginia, alongside Democrat Terry McAuliffe, a former governor who is running to regain the post and facing a tighter race than expected against Republican Glenn Youngkin, a businessman.

"We can't get complacent. We have to get to work," the first lady, who was born in New Jersey and clapped on stage to "It's My Life," by New Jersey icon and President Biden supporter Jon Bon Jovi, told the crowd in Edison. The loudest applause of the event came when Jill Biden joked, "Heck, today's Friday. So go grab a beer and go vote."

Democrats, eager to boost turnout for the off-year elections, dispatched the first lady to rally support in the Nov. 2 governors' races. It marks the first time that Biden has been back on the campaign trail since stumping for her husband in last year's presidential campaign, and it underscores the political stakes for the White House.

In Virginia especially, which President Joe Biden won by a comfortable 10 percentage points last year, a defeat in the governor's race could spell trouble for Democrats in the 2022 midterms, when control of Congress is at risk of flipping to Republicans. The president's approval ratings have fallen to some of the lowest levels of his White House tenure amid congressional fights over infrastructure and voting rights.

The first lady capped her trip by addressing a crowd of about 300 at a grassroots mobilizing rally outside a recreation center in Henrico, Virginia. She was twice interrupted by protesters who appeared to be decrying federal fossil fuel subsidies, and she said, laughing, "You've gotta love democracy."

"Virginia, you need somebody that you can trust, and that's Terry McAuliffe," Biden said. She warned of misinformation becoming more prevalent online with Election Day looming, adding, "There are a lot of people who like to twist the words around. But we know Terry. We know his heart."

McAuliffe called Biden "my very good friend" and said, "I cannot tell you how much is at stake in this election." He called Youngkin a "want-a-be" of former President Donald Trump.

Acknowledging the stakes, President Biden noted Friday to reporters while traveling in Connecticut: "Now, look, I think everybody understandably reads the two gubernatorial off-year elections as being a bellwether of what may happen. Sometimes it's been right; sometimes it's been wrong."

He continued: "I think Terry is going to win. If he doesn't win, I don't know how much you read into that, but, you know, I -- well, I think he'll win."

McAuliffe said Biden would be visiting Virginia in the coming days, as are former President Barack Obama and Stacey Abrams, the 2018 Georgia gubernatorial candidate who has risen to national prominence.

In Jill Biden's role as first lady, she has regularly traveled the country — including to reliably red states — to promote such issues as improving public education and community college, reopening schools amid the pandemic and urging people to get vaccinated against the coronavirus.

She has also continued to teach writing and English at Northern Virginia Community College, where she's held a position since 2009 — the first first lady to leave the White House to log hours at a full-time job.



The first lady's travels came as the president spent Friday in Connecticut promoting a massive spending plan that Democrats are trying to muscle through Congress despite deep divisions within their own ranks over the final price tag.

Also on Friday, the government watchdog group Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington said it had filed an ethics complaint against White House press secretary Jen Psaki for a comment she made about McAuliffe from the briefing room.

In response to a reporter's question Thursday about Virginia's election, Psaki said, "We're going to do everything we can to help former Gov. McAuliffe, and we believe in the agenda he's representing."

After CREW filed its complaint, Psaki said in a CNN interview that she should have used the word "he" instead of "we" in response to the question. In a statement, Psaki said she would "choose my words more carefully moving forward."

## 'Lawless city?' Worry after Portland police don't stop chaos

By SARA CLINE Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — A crowd of 100 people wreaked havoc in downtown Portland, Oregon, this week – smashing storefront windows, lighting dumpsters on fire and causing at least \$500,000 in damage – but police officers didn't stop them.

Portland Police Bureau officials say that's because of legislation passed by Oregon lawmakers this year, which restricts the tools they can use to confront people vandalizing buildings and causing mayhem.

"The reason that we did not intervene goes back to what we talked about last month with House Bill 2928 and the restrictions placed on us in a crowd control environment," KOIN reports that Portland Police Lt. Jake Jensen said in a neighborhood meeting Thursday.

Residents frustrated by the latest round of destructive demonstrations Tuesday questioned whether that meant anything goes now in Portland.

"Does that mean we are now like a lawless city?" Linda Witt asked during the meeting with police. Jensen replied saying people can still face consequences later.

The legislation in question is House Bill 2928, which prohibits the use of things like pepper spray and rubber bullets for crowd control. However there is an exception – when the circumstances constitute a riot and if the officer using the chemical incapacitant reasonably believes its use is necessary to stop and prevent more destructive behavior.

"The law clearly allows Portland Police to use effective tools necessary to control violent crowds," House Minority Leader Christine Drazan told The Associated Press on Friday. "However, activist attorneys are deliberately misinterpreting legislation to prevent police from intervening. They have no business putting law enforcement and community safety at risk."

Portland Police Sgt. Kevin Allen told AP that officers have been made aware of the "potential implications" of the legislation and that it's being analyzed by the city attorney's office.

"Until we have some clarity on the bill we have to follow the most restrictive interpretation of it," Allen said.

Mayor Ted Wheeler's office didn't respond to multiple requests for comment on Friday. Neither did lawmakers of the Democratic legislative caucuses of the Legislature, which is controlled by the Democratic Party.

Portland has seen ongoing, often violent protests since the murder of George Floyd by police in Minneapolis. Some activists have complained that the police have been heavy handed in their response.

On Tuesday, police say 35 separate locations were targeted — including banks, retail stores, coffee shops, and government buildings.

Authorities say although police did not directly intervene, officers did give direction to disperse over a loudspeaker and a Mobile Field Force moved in, at which point the crowd splintered.

Report for America is a nonprofit national service program that places journalists in local newsrooms to report on undercovered issues.

## Bill Clinton recovering from urological infection, aide says

By STEFANIE DAZIO and LOU KESTEN Associated Press

ORANGE, Calif. (AP) — Bill Clinton will remain hospitalized overnight as he recovers from a urological infection. But a spokesman said Friday that he was doing better and was in good spirits.

"All health indicators are trending in the right direction, including his white blood count which has decreased significantly," spokesman Angel Ureña said in a statement.

Clinton, 75, will remain at the University of California Irvine Medical Center overnight so that he can receive further intravenous antibiotics, Ureña said.

"President Clinton continues to be in excellent spirits, and is deeply grateful for the outstanding care he is receiving and the well wishes that people have sent from across America and around the world," the statement said.

An aide to the former president said that Clinton was in an intensive care section of the hospital, though not receiving ICU care.

The aide, who spoke to reporters at the hospital on the condition his name wasn't used, did not elaborate on the reason Clinton was in the ICU. He said Clinton had a urological infection that spread to his bloodstream, but he is on the mend and never went into septic shock, a potentially life-threatening condition.

Clinton was in good spirits and juggling books and watching TV coverage about his hospitalization, the aide said. Hillary Clinton was with him in the hospital, though not his daughter, Chelsea Clinton. There was no immediate word on any timeline for his release.

President Joe Biden said Friday during remarks at the University of Connecticut that he had spoken to Clinton and the former president "sends his best."

"We're all thinking about President Clinton today," he said. "He's always been the comeback kid."

Later, Biden told reporters that Clinton is "not in any serious condition" and is "getting out shortly."

Clinton was hospitalized on Tuesday evening for what Ureña only described as a non-COVID-19-related infection.

In the years since Clinton left the White House in 2001, the former president has faced health scares. In 2004, he underwent quadruple bypass surgery after experiencing prolonged chest pains and shortness of breath. He returned to the hospital for surgery for a partially collapsed lung in 2005, and in 2010 he had a pair of stents implanted in a coronary artery.

He responded by embracing a largely vegan diet that saw him lose weight and report improved health.

He repeatedly returned to the stump, campaigning for Democratic candidates, mostly notably his wife, Hillary, during her failed 2008 bid for the presidential nomination. And in 2016, as Hillary Clinton sought the White House as the Democratic nominee, Bill Clinton — by then a grandfather and nearing 70 — returned to the campaign trail.

A spokesman for the Clinton Foundation said the former president was in the Los Angeles area for private events related to his charitable organization. The UCI Medical Center is in Orange County, about 40 miles (64 km) southeast of Los Angeles.

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Associated Press writer Zeke Miller contributed from Hartford, Connecticut. Associated Press writers Alexandra Jaffe contributed from Washington and Robert Jablon contributed from Los Angeles.

## Climate activists resume weeklong protest at Capitol

By MATTHEW DALY and PADMANANDA RAMA Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Indigenous groups and other environmental activists marched to the Capitol Friday as they continued a weeklong protest demanding that Congress and the Biden administration stop new fossil fuel projects and act with greater urgency on climate change.

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Nearly 80 people were arrested on the fifth day of the "People vs. Fossil Fuels" protest. That brings the total arrested during the week to more than 600, organizers said.

Under a banner declaring "We did not vote for fossil fuels," activists pressed President Joe Biden to stop approving new pipelines and other fossil fuel projects and declare a climate emergency. Demonstrators urged members of Congress to "listen to the people" who sent them to Washington and take urgent action to phase out fossil fuels that contribute to global warming.

Capitol Police said 78 people were arrested on obstruction or crowding charges. Three of those arrested also were charged with assault on a police officer.

Speakers said Biden was not following through on his promises to act on climate change.

"It's ridiculous. He promised, just like they've done in the past, 'We'll talk about it, we'll bring it to the table.' Where's our seat?" asked Isabelle Knife, 22, a member of the Yankton Sioux tribe of South Dakota.

"We haven't had a seat. We haven't been heard," Knife said. "It takes youth to be on the frontlines. It takes us to put our bodies on the line."

White House press secretary Jen Psaki said the administration was "listening to advocates and people who have been elevating the issue of climate for decades."

Environmental activists "have important voices, and they've put climate on the front of the agenda when it wasn't 10 years and 20 years ago," Psaki said Thursday.

She encouraged activists and anyone who supports action on climate change to look at Biden's proposals in a bipartisan infrastructure bill and a larger Democratic-only plan to address social and environmental issues.

"He's trying to push across the finish line ... an enormous investment and commitment to addressing the climate crisis," Psaki said. "That's in his legislative agenda that's currently working its way through Congress now. It doesn't mean his climate commitment ends once he signs this into law; it just means that's what our focus is on now, and it will have a dramatic, important impact."

The Capitol protest followed a sit-in Thursday at the Interior Department in downtown Washington. Demonstrators clashed with police as they challenged pipelines and other fossil fuel projects and called for declaration of a climate emergency. More than 50 people were arrested.

An Interior Department spokeswoman said a group of protesters rushed the lobby, injuring at least one security officer who was taken to a nearby hospital. Police and protesters clashed outside the building, and officers used Tasers against several unarmed protesters, a spokeswoman for the protest group said.

Interior Secretary Deb Haaland, the first Native American Cabinet member, was traveling Thursday and was not in the building during the protest.

The protest was part of "a historic surge of Indigenous resistance" in the nation's capital that started on Monday, Indigenous Peoples' Day, outside the White House, said Jennifer Falcon, a spokeswoman for the Indigenous Environmental Network, a part of the coalition that organized the protest. More than 100 people were arrested as protesters linked arms and sat along the White House fence line to urge faster action to combat climate change.

The Andrew Jackson statue at the center of Lafayette Park across the street from the White House was defaced with the words "Expect Us" — part of a rallying cry used by Indigenous people who have been fighting against fossil fuel pipelines.

Protesters also climbed a flagpole outside the Army Corps of Engineers office, demanding a stop to Line 3, an oil pipeline upgrade that was recently completed in Minnesota. The pipeline will bring tar sands oil from Canada to Wisconsin.

"In November we made a choice to vote for a president who said he would be the climate president, who said he would stop pipelines, and right now we are seeing a betrayal from the White House and Congress," said Zanagee Artis, co-executive director of Zero Hour, a youth-led climate justice organization.

"We need climate action now. We are out of time to address this issue," Artis said, adding that he campaigned for Biden and called voters on his behalf.

"Black and brown people voted in droves" for Biden, and young people voted in record numbers for a

president who promised action on climate change, Artis said. Now Biden has the power to revoke permits for Line 3 and other pipelines "and he has not. He has the power to revoke fossil fuel leases and he has not."

## **Watchdog: Psaki violated ethics law by promoting McAuliffe**

By AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A government watchdog group said Friday that it had filed an ethics complaint against White House press secretary Jen Psaki for a comment she made about former Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe, a Democrat who is running for election to his old post.

Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington said Psaki violated the Hatch Act when she appeared to endorse McAuliffe during a White House press briefing on Thursday. The Hatch Act prevents federal employees from engaging in political work while performing their official duties.

In response to a reporter's question about Virginia's Nov. 2 election, Psaki said, "We're going to do everything we can to help former Gov. McAuliffe, and we believe in the agenda he's representing."

Immediately before making the comment in support of McAuliffe, Psaki said she needed to be "careful about how much political analysis" she offered in her official capacity.

After CREW filed its complaint, Psaki said in a CNN interview Friday that she should have used the word "he" instead of "we" in response to the question.

"While the president has publicly expressed his support for McAuliffe, we'll leave it to the press and the campaign to provide commentary on the race," Psaki said in a statement. "I take ethics very seriously and will choose my words more carefully moving forward."

Early voting is underway in Virginia, where McAuliffe faces Republican Glenn Youngkin, a former top executive at the private equity firm the Carlyle Group. First lady Jill Biden is campaigning with McAuliffe on Friday, and McAuliffe said President Joe Biden was expected to visit in coming days.

During the presidency of Donald Trump, the Office of Special Counsel, which is tasked with enforcing the Hatch Act, officially reported several of Trump's aides for ethics violations and called on the president to fire his senior counselor Kellyanne Conway for repeatedly ignoring the rules. It is up to the president to determine any appropriate disciplinary action for workers who violate the law, and Trump declined to take action against Conway or the others.

In a statement about the Psaki complaint, CREW President Noah Bookbinder noted the flagrant and repeated violations of the Hatch Act by the Trump White House.

"While (Psaki's) conduct does not come close to rising to the level of the outrageous offenses of the Trump administration, that does not mean we should be casual about compliance with an important ethics law," Bookbinder said. "The Biden administration should not follow the Trump administration down that path."

## **Cities, police unions clash as vaccine mandates take effect**

By BOBBY CAINA CALVAN and JOHN SEEWER Associated Press

Police departments around the U.S. that are requiring officers to get vaccinated against COVID-19 are running up against pockets of resistance that some fear could leave law enforcement shorthanded and undermine public safety.

Police unions and officers are pushing back by filing lawsuits to block the mandates. In Chicago, the head of the police union called on members to defy the city's Friday deadline for reporting their COVID-19 vaccination status.

Seattle's police department sent detectives and non-patrol officers to emergency calls this week because of a shortage of patrol officers that union leaders fear will become worse because of vaccine mandates.

The standoffs are playing out at a time when many police departments already are dealing with surging homicide rates and staff shortages unrelated to the vaccine. Cities and police leaders are now weighing the risk of losing more officers to resignations, firings or suspensions over their refusal to get vaccinated.

Chicago's mayor on Friday filed a complaint in court against the leader of the local Fraternal Order of

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Police, accusing him of “engaging in, supporting and encouraging work stoppage or strike” by saying the city’s more than 12,000 uniformed officers should ignore the order to report their vaccination status.

On Thursday, Mayor Lori Lightfoot said officers would not be sent home if they showed up to work Friday and refused to provide their information. Instead, she said, they would be put on unpaid leave after the weekend, because confirming compliance would take a few days.

Refusing to provide the information, Lightfoot said, would constitute an act of insubordination.

John Catanzara, president of the FOP local in Chicago, said about half of his members have not been vaccinated and called a mandate requiring inoculation “absolutely wrong.”

“They were willing to go into a no-pay status at midnight tonight and get sent home,” he said, suggesting during an appearance on Fox News that the city could not afford to lose police officers.

“You know, the reality is we have a profession nobody else wants to do right now. They cannot get anybody to go into this police academy,” he said.

In Los Angeles County, Sheriff Alex Villanueva said he won’t force his 18,000 employees to be vaccinated despite a county mandate. “I don’t want to be in a position to lose 5, 10% of my workforce overnight,” he said last week.

Hundreds of police officers in San Diego said they would consider quitting instead of complying with a vaccination mandate.

Resistance is bubbling up even though first responders have been hit hard by COVID-19. More than 460 law enforcement officers have died from the virus, according to the Officer Down Memorial Page, which tracks deaths in the line of duty.

Disputes over government and business vaccine requirements have spilled over into a variety of workplaces, including one of the nation’s premier nuclear weapons laboratories and the NBA.

Workers at Los Alamos National Laboratory — the birthplace of the atomic bomb — faced a deadline Friday to get vaccinated or risk being fired. A New Mexico judge denied a last-minute request by dozens of scientists and others to block the mandate.

In the NBA, the Brooklyn Nets are not allowing star Kyrie Irving to practice or play until he is vaccinated.

In Italy, protests erupted Friday as vaccine requirements went into effect for all workers, from magistrates to maids, to help control the spread of the coronavirus

The number of Americans getting vaccines has steadily increased over the past three months as boosters have become available and mandates have taken effect. The number of shots administered per day has topped 840,000 on average.

No national statistics show the vaccination rate for America’s first responders, but individual police and fire departments across the country have reported figures far below the national rate of 77% for adults who have had at least one dose.

Police departments in Los Angeles, San Francisco and Denver are also among those under vaccine mandates or facing one. New York’s mayor has said he is looking at the idea despite opposition from the city’s largest police union.

The union representing some 1,000 Seattle police personnel suggests that the mandate could worsen staffing shortages, which in turn could risk public safety. The union’s president, Mike Solan, said the city’s police force lost some 300 officers over the past 18 months and anticipates another “mass exodus” in the coming weeks.

As of last week, nearly 300 of the 1,000 uniformed officers in Seattle had either not turned in paperwork showing they were vaccinated or were seeking an exemption, the mayor’s office said. But scores more are believed to have been vaccinated since then.

“People believe in personal choice, and we as a union have to represent everybody,” Solan said. “We’re not going to play the games of segregating between the vaxxed and the unvaxxed, It’s not about that. This is about saving jobs.”

In recent weeks, judges have rejected attempts by a group of Oregon State Police troopers and Denver police officers to block vaccine mandates.

Associated Press writers Susan Montoya Bryan in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and Don Babwin in Chicago contributed to this report.

## States can reserve COVID-19 shots for younger kids next week

By MIKE STOBBE AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — U.S. health officials are setting the stage for a national COVID-19 vaccination campaign for younger children, inviting state officials to order doses before the shots are authorized.

Pfizer's coronavirus vaccine is currently being given to people as young as 12 in the U.S. In the next three weeks, federal officials plan to discuss making smaller-dose versions available to the nation's 28 million children between the ages of 5 and 11.

To help states and cities prepare, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention this week sent out a seven-page document with guidance on how to set up expanded vaccination programs.

For example, it notes pharmacies in every state can give COVID-19 shots to children, but it clarifies that only doses prepared and packaged specifically for children are to be used for those under 12.

It doesn't speak to some thornier questions, however, such as how much school-based clinics should be relied on or whether kids should be required to get their shots as a condition of school attendance.

Those questions will have to be worked out in each state and city.

The guidance comes as communities are gearing up for a new phase in the 10-month-old effort to vaccinate as many people as possible against a virus that has killed more than 720,000 in the U.S.

The disease has been most dangerous to older adults, who have higher rates of death and hospitalization than children. But some kids are at risk for severe illness, and more than 540 U.S. children have died from COVID-19, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Just as important, health officials believe that vaccinating children will reduce virus spread to vulnerable adults.

Pfizer and its German partner BioNTech are furthest along in researching use of their vaccine in younger children. They say a two-dose vaccine series — one-third as potent as the version given to people over 12 years old — is safe and effective in 5- to 11-year-olds.

An independent expert panel that advises the Food and Drug Administration is scheduled to publicly debate the evidence at a meeting in late October. If the FDA authorizes the kid-size doses, a different expert panel advising the CDC would take up the matter in early November, and then offer a recommendation to the CDC.

It's not yet clear how many people will get shots for their younger kids right away, said Dr. Marcus Plescia, chief medical officer of the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials.

"We're going to have potentially a very busy, and perhaps modestly chaotic time" initially, he said.

But there probably will not be the kind of heavy demand seen when shots first became available for adults, he added.

The new CDC guidance calls for shots to be given at the offices of pediatricians and family-practice doctors, and at pharmacies, rural health clinics and federally-qualified health centers.

The CDC discussed the option of vaccination clinics at schools, but stopped short of endorsing that as a primary way to get kids vaccinated. School clinics are logistically appealing, but many parents may not be comfortable with the idea, Plescia said.

The guidance also warns health care providers to only use doses that have been prepared especially for kids, and not try to fraction adult doses, Plescia noted.

CDC guidance said immunization program managers can start ordering doses Wednesday, though vials wouldn't be delivered until the FDA and CDC sign off.

When the coronavirus vaccines were first authorized in December, the U.S. government prioritized having hospitals and pharmacies administer them. Some office-based physicians felt left out.

Dr. Jesse Hackell registered early with New York state to be able to administer the shots to teens. He said his office, located 25 miles north of New York City, didn't receive doses for that until May.

But Hackell said the CDC has reassured pediatricians that once authorization happens for 5- to-11-year-olds, the process will go more smoothly and pediatricians' offices will be able to get shipments quickly.

Dr. Richard Besser called on the government to do more to address racial and economic disparities that might emerge in the push to vaccinate younger kids.

For example, kids may not get shots if parents can't get time off from work to bring them in.

"It's really important that we recognize the barriers to vaccinations," said Besser, chief executive of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and former acting director of the CDC.

AP medical writer Lindsey Tanner contributed to this report from Three Oaks, Michigan.

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## FDA panel endorses booster shot for J&J COVID-19 vaccine

By MATTHEW PERRONE and LAURAN NEERGAARD Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. health advisers endorsed a booster of Johnson & Johnson's COVID-19 vaccine Friday, citing concern that Americans who got the single-dose shot aren't as protected as those given two-dose brands.

J&J told the Food and Drug Administration that an extra dose adds important protection as early as two months after initial vaccination — but that it might work better if people wait until six months later. Unable to settle the best timing, the FDA's advisory panel voted unanimously that the booster should be offered at least two months after people got their earlier shot.

"I think this frankly was always a two-dose vaccine," said FDA adviser Dr. Paul Offit of Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. "It would be hard to recommend this as a single-dose vaccine at this point."

The FDA isn't bound by the recommendation as it makes a final decision — and adding to the debate's complexity, new research also suggests that J&J recipients might have a stronger immune response if their booster dose is from a competing brand.

Preliminary results from an ongoing study of different ways to "mix and match" different shots showed that a booster of any sort revved up people's levels of virus-fighting antibodies — at least for a few weeks. And the most dramatic jump came from giving a Pfizer or Moderna shot after the single-dose J&J vaccination.

FDA's advisers didn't vote on whether that should be recommended but told the government to allow flexibility with boosters, saying there were no safety red flags even if it's not yet clear just how much difference, if any, mixing and matching may make in long-term protection.

"In the real world all these kind of combinations are already happening so I think it's a matter of some urgency for the FDA to help sort out what is admittedly a complicated and challenging scenario," said Dr. Ofer Levy of Boston Children's Hospital.

The government says all three U.S. vaccines continue to offer strong protection against hospitalization and death from COVID-19, and that the priority is getting first shots to the 66 million eligible but unvaccinated Americans who are most at risk. But with the spread of the extra-contagious delta variant and signs of waning immunity against milder infections, the nation is moving toward a broader booster campaign.

Last month Pfizer boosters started being offered to seniors and younger adults at high risk from COVID-19 because of poor health, jobs or living conditions — at least six months after their initial vaccination. Thursday, the FDA advisory panel recommended the same approach for half-dose Moderna boosters.

But J&J's vaccine has consistently shown lower effectiveness levels across a series of studies — and the FDA panel ultimately settled on another shot for any recipient 18 or older at least two months after their first vaccination.

"This is really -- with the second dose -- bringing it, I think, on par with those other vaccines in terms of effectiveness," said Dr. Archana Chatterjee of Rosalind Franklin University.

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The FDA will use its advisers' recommendations to decide whether to authorize boosters for both J&J and Moderna. Next, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention would rule on who should roll up their sleeves.

The vast majority of the 188 million Americans who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 have received the Pfizer or Moderna options, while J&J recipients account for only about 15 million.

J&J's vaccine is made with a different technology and on Friday, the company pitched its booster as a way to strengthen a robust vaccine that they said has retained its protective power over eight months. But FDA scientists pointedly challenged that assertion.

"There are data that suggest the effectiveness of this vaccine is actually less robust than the company's presentation here," said Dr. Peter Marks, FDA's top vaccines official. "And that is a finding of concern particularly because that's been seen in minority communities potentially and others."

As for its booster, J&J presented results from a large study that found giving a second dose just two months after the first bumped protection against symptomatic COVID-19 to 94% from 70% in U.S. recipients. Giving that booster six months later instead prompted an even bigger jump in virus-fighting antibodies.

But in their own review, FDA scientists noted only a tiny portion of cases involved the delta variant, by far the dominant strain in the U.S. And while FDA's reviewers found no new safety concerns about a second J&J dose, they noted other shortcomings. J&J followed booster recipients for little more than a month, making it hard to draw conclusions about the durability of protection. Also, FDA scientists stressed they hadn't had time to independently confirm J&J's data, which were submitted shortly before the meeting. That's highly unusual and drew serious concern from the advisory panel.

The J&J vaccine was highly anticipated for its one-and-done formulation. But its rollout earlier this year was hurt by a series of troubles including manufacturing problems and some rare but serious side effects including a blood clot disorder and a neurological reaction called Guillain-Barre syndrome. In both cases, regulators decided the shot's benefits outweighed those risks.

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## China crackdown on Apple store hits holy book apps, Audible

By MATT O'BRIEN AP Technology Writer

Amazon's audiobook service Audible and phone apps for reading the holy books of Islam and Christianity have disappeared from the Apple store in mainland China, the latest examples of the impact of the country's tightened rules for internet firms.

Audible said Friday that it removed its app from the Apple store in mainland China last month "due to permit requirements."

The makers of apps for reading and listening to the Quran and Bible say their apps have also been removed from Apple's China-based store at the government's request.

Apple didn't return requests for comment Friday. A spokesperson for China's embassy in the U.S. declined to speak about specific app removals but said the Chinese government has "always encouraged and supported the development of the Internet."

"At the same time, the development of the Internet in China must also comply with Chinese laws and regulations," said an emailed statement from Liu Pengyu.

China's government has long sought to control the flow of information online, but is increasingly stepping up its enforcement of the internet sector in other ways, making it hard to determine the causes for a particular app's removal.

Chinese regulators this year have sought to strengthen data privacy restrictions and limit how much time children can play video games. They are also exerting greater control over the algorithms used by tech firms to personalize and recommend content.



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The popular U.S. language-learning app Duolingo disappeared from Apple's China store over the summer, as have many video game apps. What appears to link Audible with the religious apps is that all were recently notified of permit requirements for published content.

Pakistan Data Management Services, which makes the Quran Majeed app, said it is awaiting more information from China's internet authority about how it can be restored. The app has nearly 1 million users in China and about 40 million worldwide, said the Karachi-based company.

Those who had already downloaded the app can still use it, said Hasan Shafiq Ahmed, the company's head of growth and relationships.

"We are looking to figure out what documentation is needed to get approval from Chinese authorities so the app can be restored," he said in an email.

The maker of a Bible app said it removed it from the Apple store in China after learning from Apple's App Store review process that it needed special permission to distribute an app with "book or magazine content." Olive Tree Bible Software, based in Spokane, Washington, said it's now reviewing the requirements to obtain the necessary permit "with the hope that we can restore our app to China's App Store and continue to distribute the Bible worldwide."

The Council on American-Islamic Relations condemned Apple's actions, saying the company was enabling China's religious persecution of Muslims and others.

"This decision must be reversed," said a statement from CAIR's national deputy director, Edward Ahmed Mitchell. "If American corporations don't grow a spine and stand up to China right now, they risk spending the next century subservient to the whims of a fascist superpower."

The removals were first detected this week by watchdog website AppleCensorship, which monitors Apple's app store to detect when apps have been blocked, especially in China and other countries with authoritarian governments.

This week, Microsoft said that it would shut down its main LinkedIn service in China later this year, citing a "significantly more challenging operating environment and greater compliance requirements in China."

Unlike LinkedIn, which has been offering a specialized Chinese service since 2014, Amazon-owned Audible said it does not have a dedicated service for customers in China.

## Trump's not going away — and neither is investigator Schiff

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — Nearly a year out of the White House, Donald Trump continues to circle the Republican Party, commanding attention and influence as he ponders another run for the presidency.

And still circling Trump is Rep. Adam Schiff.

Schiff, the Intelligence Committee chairman who rose to national prominence probing Russian election interference and leading the first Trump impeachment, says there's nothing less than democracy at stake with the former president's continued presence on the national political stage.

As a key member of the House Select Committee on the Jan. 6 Insurrection at the Capitol, the congressman whom Trump mercilessly mocks with derisive nicknames is turning his attention to Trump's role in that deadly riot.

"We want to show the country just how Jan. 6 came about -- and not just the mechanics of that day, in terms of the participation of the white nationalist groups ... but rather how this big falsehood about our elections propelled thousands of people to attack their own government," Schiff says in an interview on C-SPAN's Book TV, airing a week from Sunday.

"What did the president know about who was coming to this rally and what did he do when he found out?" Schiff asks. "Why did it go on so long? And so there are a lot of important unanswered questions."

As the committee ramps up its inquiry, it's a familiar role but also a new chapter for Schiff, the federal prosecutor turned congressman whose life's work is now defined in large part by the man he calls a "clear and present danger" to U.S. democracy.

Last winter, Trump was impeached a second time, accused of inciting the riot. But the House pros-

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ecutors, much like Schiff in the first trial that was focused on election interference involving the Trump campaign and Ukraine, failed to win conviction in the Senate.

This time, the California Democrat says the select committee expects to uncover fresh information about Trump's involvement that January day, as he encouraged the mob of his supporters to head to the Capitol and "fight like hell" to reverse his electoral defeat to Joe Biden. Deaths in the riot and its aftermath included Trump supporter Ashli Babbitt, who was shot and killed by police, and several officers who later took their own lives after the most serious attack on the Capitol since the War of 1812.

In a new book with a weighty title, "Midnight in Washington, How We Almost Lost Our Democracy and Still Could," Schiff writes his personal, gripping account of that day: Preparing to don a gas mask in the House chamber, being forced to flee as the mob approached.

Republican colleagues warned him he needed to stay out of sight because of his recognizable role as a Trump critic. But during the hours that followed, as the House returned to tally Electoral College votes for Biden, Schiff came to see Republican lawmakers, in "suits and ties," as an institutional threat as serious as the rioters who bludgeoned their way into the building in an effort to overturn the election.

The special committee is drilling down not just on Trump, but also potentially Republican Rep. Kevin McCarthy of California and the president's other allies in Congress who perpetuate the claim that the election was somehow rigged or illegitimate — though every state has certified its results as accurate, and dozens of court challenges have gone nowhere.

"I'm trying to convey the fragility of our democracy -- something that we always took for granted -- but something that in the last four years has been dismantled piece by piece by piece," Schiff said about his book.

He expects the committee to deliver "the definitive report," much as the 9/11 commission produced a comprehensive examination of the 2001 terror attack on the U.S.

Trump scoffs at the committee, refusing to participate. Two prominent GOP lawmakers, Reps. Liz Cheney of Wyoming and Adam Kinzinger of Illinois have essentially been disowned by their party for joining the panel and its probe.

Trump says the Democrats are "drunk on power," and he is urging some of his former staff and administration officials not to comply with subpoenas or other requests for testimony. He's basing that stance on claims of executive privilege even though he no longer holds office. This week, the panel announced it would vote to hold former Trump adviser Steve Bannon in contempt for defying a subpoena.

"The Radical Left Democrats tried the RUSSIA Witch Hunt, they tried the fake impeachments, and now they are trying once again to use Congress to persecute their political opponents," Trump said in a recent statement.

Schiff tweeted this week the panel is "not messing around" and expects Biden's Department of Justice to prosecute the criminal contempt cases to force compliance.

The goal, Schiff says, is for the committee's end product to be a "historic record as a way of exposing to the American people what went into that tragedy, but also as a way of forming recommendations about how do we move forward as a country, how do we protect our democracy."

With Trump ensconced at his Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida, weighing another White House run and visiting the early voting states to rally big crowds, Washington is waiting and wondering about his next move.

Schiff acknowledges that he and other Democrats were ill prepared for Trump's popularity, and still five years on struggle to mount a compelling counter-argument to woo back voters who left the party for Trump.

More immediately, Democrats face the prospect of a House Republican takeover in next fall's midterm elections, elevating McCarthy to replace Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

"If Kevin McCarthy were ever to become speaker, essentially Donald Trump would be speaker," Schiff warns.

He and Democratic colleagues have assembled a package of post-Watergate style legislation aimed at shoring up the nation's civic infrastructure and tightening ethics rules for the post-Trump era. But faced

with Republican opposition, it is unlikely to pass the Senate.

Schiff positions America's experience alongside a broader "global struggle going on right now between autocracy and democracy. People around the world used to look to us as a beacon. Now they see people climbing on the outside of our Capitol, beating police officers," he said.

"So many of the things that we thought could never happen in this country have already happened."

## Suicide attack on Shiite mosque in Afghanistan kills 47

By SAMYA KULLAB and TAMEEM AKHGAR Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — Suicide bombers attacked a Shiite mosque packed with worshippers attending Friday prayers in southern Afghanistan, killing at least 47 people and wounding 70, a Taliban official said. It was the deadliest day since the U.S. military withdrawal.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the carnage at the Fatimiya mosque in Kandahar province. The attack came a week after a bombing claimed by the local Islamic State affiliate killed 46 people at a Shiite mosque in northern Afghanistan.

The sectarian bloodletting has raised fears that IS — an enemy of both the Taliban and the West — is expanding its foothold in Afghanistan.

Hafiz Sayeed, the Taliban's chief for Kandahar's department of culture and information, said 47 people had been killed and at least 70 wounded in the attack.

Murtaza, a worshiper who like many Afghans goes by one name, said he was inside the mosque during the attack and reported four explosions: two outside and two inside. He said Friday prayers at the mosque typically draw hundreds of people.

Another witness, also named Murtaza, was in charge of security at the mosque and said he saw two bombers. He said one detonated explosives outside the gate, and the other was already among the worshippers inside the mosque.

He said the mosque's security personnel shot another suspected attacker outside.

Video footage showed bodies scattered across bloodstained carpets, with survivors walking around in a daze or crying out in anguish.

The Shiite Assembly of Ahl al-Bayt, a global religious society, condemned the attack in Kandahar, accusing the security forces in Afghanistan of being "incapable" of addressing such assaults.

The Islamic State group, which like Afghanistan's ruling Taliban is made up of Sunni Muslims, views Shiite Muslims as apostates deserving of death.

IS has claimed a number of deadly bombings across the country since the Taliban seized power in August amid the withdrawal of U.S. forces. The group has also targeted Taliban fighters in smaller attacks.

If the attack was carried out by IS, it would be the first major assault by the extremist group in southern Afghanistan since the U.S. departure enabled the Taliban to consolidate control of the country. Recent attacks in the north, the east and the Afghan capital have cast doubt on the Taliban's ability to counter the threat posed by IS.

Neighboring Pakistan, which has urged world leaders to work with the ruling Taliban, condemned the "despicable attacks on places of worship" in a statement from its foreign ministry.

The Taliban have pledged to restore peace and security after decades of war and have also given the U.S. assurances that they will not allow the country to be used as a base for launching extremist attacks on other countries.

The Taliban have also pledged to protect Afghanistan's Shiite minority, which was persecuted during the last period of Taliban rule, in the 1990s.

Both the Taliban and IS adhere to a rigid interpretation of Islamic law, but IS is far more radical, with better-known branches in Iraq and Syria.

And while the Taliban say they are creating an Islamic state in Afghanistan, within the borders of that country, IS says it is THE Islamic State, a global caliphate that it insists all Muslims must support. It is contemptuous of the Taliban's nationalist goals and doesn't recognize them as a pure Islamic movement.

Akhgar reported from Istanbul.

## Southern Baptist leader resigns amid rifts over sex abuse

By HOLLY MEYER Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — A top Southern Baptist Convention administrator is resigning amid internal rifts over how to handle an investigation into the SBC's response to sexual abuse, a decision that underscores the broader ongoing turmoil in the nation's largest Protestant denomination.

Ronnie Floyd, president and CEO of the SBC's Executive Committee, announced his departure Thursday in a statement critical of recent decisions related to the third-party review that is getting underway. An investigative firm is looking into allegations the Executive Committee mishandled abuse reports and mistreated survivors.

"Due to my personal integrity and the leadership responsibility entrusted to me, I will not and cannot any longer fulfill the duties placed upon me as the leader of the executive, fiscal, and fiduciary entity of the SBC," said Floyd, who is leaving at the end of the month.

Members of the divided Executive Committee voted Oct. 5 to waive attorney-client privilege, agreeing to turn over legally protected records to investigators. The vote was the result of multiple meetings and mounting pressure from across the convention in favor of the waiver.

Proponents of the waiver of attorney-client privilege said it was a key demand of the thousands of Southern Baptist delegates who set the third-party review into motion. Opponents said it was financially risky and could jeopardize insurance policies.

Floyd's statement said the Executive Committee was committed to the review, but it could have been done "without creating these potential risks relating to the Convention's liability."

Floyd, a longtime Arkansas pastor who became the Executive Committee president in 2019, is not the only recent departure. Several members of the Executive Committee have resigned their posts, and the committee's longtime law firm cut ties with the body, citing the decision to waive privilege.

This is the latest tension point in the convention's ongoing reckoning with a sex abuse scandal that was thrust into the spotlight by a 2019 Houston Chronicle and San Antonio Express-News report that documented hundreds of cases of abuse in Southern Baptist churches, including several in which alleged perpetrators remained in ministry.

"The last several weeks have been trying and difficult for our convention," said SBC President Ed Litton in a statement. "While I was grateful for the outcome of last week's Executive Committee meeting, I regret that Dr. Floyd and other trustees feel that this has placed them in a position where they can no longer continue to serve in their current capacities."

The response to sex abuse is one of several issues causing controversy in the conservative evangelical denomination, which has experienced years of declining membership in addition to some high-profile departures. Tensions have flared in recent years over critical race theory, women's leadership roles in the church and partisan politics.

"What we're seeing in the Southern Baptist Convention is both a reflection and a magnification of the tumult in the culture," said Ed Stetzer, a Southern Baptist and executive director of the Wheaton College Billy Graham Center.

"The SBC is perpetually at war with itself for as long as I've known it," Stetzer said. In June, Litton was elected the new SBC president in a narrow vote, temporarily tamping down an effort to push the convention even further to the right but embittering critics who remain hostile to him.

Stetzer thinks the SBC needs to fix its problems and then focus on the evangelical mission that unites the convention.

"The SBC is at a key fork in the road and who the SBC will be is really going to be decided in the next few months and years," said Stetzer.

The Executive Committee has become a lightning rod for controversy as its members wrestled with how

to handle the investigation. The third-party review is being funded by the Executive Committee, conducted by Guidepost Solutions and overseen by a new Southern Baptist sexual abuse task force.

The Executive Committee's reputation has suffered because of this ordeal, said Adam Greenway, president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. He was among the wave of Southern Baptists calling on the committee to move the third-party review forward without further delay.

The committee "should function like the sound technician in your church, which means you should never hear about it or talk about it if it's doing its job well," Greenway said.

The committee acts on behalf of the SBC when it is not holding its two-day national meeting. Greenway said it is not meant to be the face or the voice of the decentralized denomination and its leadership should see its role as supporting and facilitating the work of the convention and its more than 40,000 churches.

Executive Committee member Dean Inserra, a Florida pastor who supported waiving attorney-client privilege, said he wishes Floyd had carried out the assignment given by the delegates.

"It's just really been honestly sad just to see the state of affairs," said Inserra, a new committee member. "The good news is I think culture change is in play and is coming. So I actually truly am optimistic."

The Rev. Robert Jeffress of First Baptist Dallas, an SBC megachurch, expressed hope that the turmoil would not harm the the individual churches that give the denomination its strength. Yet he expressed concern.

The departure of Floyd and other Executive Committee members "does not portend well for the denomination's future," Jeffress said via email. "As Jesus said, 'A house divided against itself cannot stand.'"

Christa Brown, a church sexual abuse survivor and a longtime critic of the SBC's sexual abuse response, said Floyd's resignation is worth celebrating, but the work of pushing for institutional reforms continues.

"A systemic cure for this institution's ails will be painful, and it will mean sacrifice," Brown said. "But if the SBC winds up needing to sell nearly all its assets for the sake of providing reparations and restitution to those it has so grievously harmed, then this would be for the good."

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Associated Press reporters Peter Smith and David Crary contributed to this report.

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## Judge firms up trial date for Smollett, won't dismiss case

CHICAGO (AP) — A judge on Friday denied a last-ditch effort to dismiss a criminal case against actor Jussie Smollett, who is accused of lying to police when he reported that he was the victim of a racist, anti-gay attack in downtown Chicago in January 2019.

An attorney for the former "Empire" actor said Smollett's rights were being violated since he had already performed community service and given up a \$10,000 bond under a previous deal with Cook County prosecutors to drop charges.

"A deal is a deal. That's ancient principle," attorney Nenyé Uche said.

But Judge James Linn noted that Smollett's case now was being led by a special prosecutor appointed by another judge, an arrangement that he would not upset.

Linn said jury selection in Smollett's trial would start Nov. 29.

Smollett, a gay Black man, told police in 2019 that two masked men attacked him when he was in Chicago working on "Empire." But he was charged weeks later with filing a false police report, after investigators concluded that he staged the attack and paid two brothers to carry it out because he was unhappy about his salary and wanted to promote his career. That case, however, was dropped.

The case was revived when a special prosecutor charged Smollett with disorderly conduct over the police reports. The actor has pleaded not guilty.

Although Uche tried to have the case dismissed, he said Smollett wants "nothing more than to go to a jury and clear his name."

## **EXPLAINER: Texas abortion law again on path to high court**

By JESSICA GRESKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Justice Department said Friday that the federal government will ask the Supreme Court to reverse a lower court decision on a restrictive Texas law that has banned most abortions since September. A federal appeals court on Thursday said the Texas law should stay in force while a Department of Justice lawsuit challenging the law proceeds through the courts. It's just the latest court action on the law, which is now headed for the Supreme Court for a second time.

Here are some questions and answers about the law and its path through the courts.

### **HOW EXACTLY DID TEXAS' LAW GET TO THIS POINT?**

Texas' Republican Gov. Greg Abbott in May signed a law that bans abortions in Texas before many women even know they are pregnant. The law bans abortions once cardiac activity is detected, usually around six weeks. The law differs from similar efforts to restrict abortions in other states by leaving enforcement to private citizens, who can sue doctors or anyone who helps a woman get an abortion.

The law was challenged by abortion rights advocates before it went into effect in September, but its unique enforcement mechanism frustrated those efforts at the time. The law made one previous trip to the high court, which declined to intervene. After the law went into effect, the Biden administration filed a separate lawsuit challenging the law. It's that lawsuit that's now on track for the high court.

### **WHAT HAPPENED PREVIOUSLY WHEN THE LAW WENT TO THE SUPREME COURT?**

The court let the law go into effect, voting 5-4 to deny an emergency appeal from abortion providers and others. The justices in the majority said "serious questions" had been raised about the law. But they cited a host of issues including the law's novel enforcement mechanism and the fact that no one had yet actually attempted to sue someone under the law for helping a woman get an abortion as among the reasons they declined to intervene. The majority stressed it was not making any conclusions about the constitutionality of the law.

Liberal justices and Chief Justice John Roberts dissented. Justice Sonia Sotomayor called her conservative colleagues' decision "stunning." Justice Elena Kagan wrote that the law was "patently unconstitutional," and Justice Stephen Breyer said a "woman has a federal constitutional right to obtain an abortion during" the first stage of pregnancy.

### **WHAT EXACTLY HAPPENED MOST RECENTLY AT THE APPEALS COURT?**

This time around, with the Biden administration's lawsuit, a federal judge in Texas put the law on hold. Judge Robert Pitman took Texas to task in a 113-page opinion, saying Republican lawmakers had "contrived an unprecedented and transparent statutory scheme" by trying to circumvent the courts.

"From the moment S.B. 8 went into effect, women have been unlawfully prevented from exercising control over their lives in ways that are protected by the Constitution," wrote Pitman, who was appointed to the bench by former President Barack Obama.

Pitman's ruling allowed abortions to resume in Texas for a brief window before the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals temporarily halted it. A three-judge panel ruled 2-1 on Thursday to put a more lasting hold in place while the Biden administration lawsuit continues. As of now, Texas' law is in effect.

### **WHAT NOW?**

The Justice Department said Friday it intends to appeal to the Supreme Court. There's no timetable for Supreme Court action, but it would take days or even longer for both sides to file briefs with the court, and then additional time for the court to act.

The court wouldn't be asked to rule on constitutionality of the law at this point, just whether Texas should be allowed to enforce its law while the Biden administration's challenge continues.

The Supreme Court already has a major abortion case on its docket for December that could reshape abortion rights in America. What happens in that case could affect what ultimately happens in Texas.

### **HOW IS IT POSSIBLE THAT TEXAS HAS SUCH A RESTRICTIVE LAW?**

Two major Supreme Court precedents, *Roe v. Wade* and *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, prevent states

from banning abortion before viability, the point at which a fetus can survive outside the womb. That happens around 24 weeks of pregnancy. But the Texas law's unique enforcement mechanism has made it hard to challenge.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE IMPACT OF THE LAW IN TEXAS?

Since the law took effect in early September, providers say 80% or more of abortions previously provided in the state are now prohibited. Texas women have sought out abortion clinics in neighboring states, some driving hours through the middle of the night and including patients as young as 12 years old. The law makes no exception in cases of rape or incest.

## Attorney: Cruz to plead guilty to Parkland school massacre

By TERRY SPENCER Associated Press

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) — The gunman who killed 14 students and three staff members at a Parkland, Florida, high school will plead guilty to their murders, his attorneys said Friday, bringing some closure to a South Florida community more than three years after an attack that sparked a nationwide movement for gun control.

The guilty plea would set up a penalty phase where Nikolas Cruz, 23, would be fighting against the death penalty and hoping for life without parole.

Cruz attorney David Wheeler told Circuit Judge Elizabeth Scherer that he will plead guilty Wednesday to 17 counts of first-degree murder in the February 2018 shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. The pleas will come with no conditions and prosecutors still plan to seek the death penalty. That will be decided by a jury, with the judge hoping to start the trial in January after choosing a jury from thousands of prospects starting in November.

Cruz will also plead guilty to 17 counts of attempted first-degree murder. He was not initially present during the hearing, but later entered the Broward County courtroom to plead guilty to attacking a jail guard nine months after the shooting.

Cruz said he understood that prosecutors can use the conviction as an aggravating factor when they later argue for his execution.

The trial has been delayed by the pandemic and arguments over what evidence could be presented to the jury, frustrating some victims' families and the wounded.

Samantha Grady, who was injured in the massacre and lost her best friend, 17-year-old Helena Ramsay, said she is glad Cruz is finally acknowledging the damage he caused.

"I hope we can start the process of truly moving on," she said. "His punishment should be equal to the lives he has taken, the stress and horrors he has caused in a whole community, a whole state."

Mitch and Annika Dworet, the only victims' parents to attend the hearing, said they are relieved the case is finally moving toward closure. Their 17-year-old son Nick died in the shooting while his younger brother Alex was wounded.

Mitch Dworet said he tries hard not to think about the case, saying he wants to focus on their sons. But his wife interjected, "We want justice — it's time." For them, that means Cruz's execution.

"We would like to see him suffer," he said.

Andrew Pollack, whose 18-year-old daughter Meadow was killed, said in a phone interview he also wants Cruz executed. "Death by lethal injection seems too peaceful to me. I'd rather see a hanging in a public square."

In the aftermath of the shooting, Parkland student activists formed March for Our Lives, a group that rallied hundreds of thousands around the country for tighter gun laws, including a nationally televised march in Washington, D.C.

The decision by Cruz to plead guilty came unexpectedly. He had been set to go on trial next week for the attack on the Broward County jail guard.

Cruz and his lawyers had long offered to plead guilty to the shooting in exchange for a life sentence, but prosecutors had rejected that deal.

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Attorney David Weinstein, a former Florida prosecutor who is not involved in the case, said by pleading guilty to the murder charges, Cruz's lawyers will be able to tell the jury in the penalty hearing that he "has accepted responsibility, has shown remorse and saved the victim's families the additional trauma of a guilt phase trial."

The jurors also won't repeatedly see the security videos that reportedly captured the shooting in graphic detail. Their goal will be to persuade one juror to vote for a life sentence — unanimity will be required to sentence Cruz to death.

Cruz's rampage crushed the veneer of safety in Parkland, an upper-middle-class community outside Fort Lauderdale with little crime.

Cruz was a longtime, but troubled resident. Broward sheriff's deputies were frequently called to the home in an upscale neighborhood he shared with his widowed mother and younger brother for disturbances, but they said nothing was ever reported that could have led to his arrest.

Cruz alternated between traditional schools and those for troubled students.

He attended Stoneman Douglas starting in 10th grade, but his troubles remained — at one point, he was prohibited from carrying a backpack to make sure he didn't carry a weapon. Still, he was allowed to participate on the school's rifle team.

He was expelled about a year before the attack after numerous incidents of unusual behavior and at least one fight. He then began posting videos online in which he threatened to commit violence, including at the school.

When Cruz's mother died of pneumonia four months before the shooting, he began staying with friends, taking his 10 guns with him.

Someone worried about his emotional state called the FBI a month before the shooting to warn agents he might kill people. The information was never forwarded to the agency's South Florida office.

Another acquaintance called the Broward Sheriff's Office with a similar warning, but when the deputy learned Cruz was then living with a family friend in neighboring Palm Beach County he told the caller to contact that sheriff's office.

In the weeks before the shooting, Cruz began making videos proclaiming he was going to be the "next school shooter of 2018."

The shooting happened on Valentine's Day. Students had exchanged gifts and many were dressed in red.

Cruz, then 19, arrived at the campus that afternoon in an Uber, assembled his rifle in a stairwell and then opened fire in the three-story classroom building.

Cruz eventually dropped his rifle and fled, blending in with his victims as police stormed the building. He was captured about an hour later walking through a residential neighborhood.

The shooting led to a state law that requires all Florida public schools to have an armed guard on campus during class hours.

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Associated Press reporters Freida Frisaro in Fort Lauderdale, Adriana Gomez Licon in Miami and Curt Anderson in St. Petersburg, Florida, contributed to this story.

## DOJ will ask Supreme Court to halt Texas abortion law

By PAUL J. WEBER Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — The Biden administration said Friday it will turn next to the U.S. Supreme Court in another attempt to halt a Texas law that has banned most abortions since September.

The move comes as the Texas clinics are running out of avenues to stop the GOP-engineered law that bans abortions once cardiac activity is detected, which is usually around six weeks. It amounts to the nation's biggest curb to abortion in nearly 50 years and makes no exception for cases of rape or incest.

By going to the Supreme Court, the Justice Department is taking the route that clinics have sought as other legal challenges have failed. In the meantime, Texas women have turned to abortion clinics in neighboring states, some driving hours through the middle of the night and including patients as young



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as 12 years old.

"People are scared, confused, and other than very early abortion, have nowhere to turn to access safe, legal abortion unless they are able to travel hundreds of miles to another state," said Jeffrey Hons, president of Planned Parenthood South Texas, whose clinics have stopped offering all abortion services since the law took effect Sept. 1.

The latest defeat for clinics came Thursday night when a federal appeals panel in New Orleans, in a 2-1 decision, allowed the restrictions to remain in place for a third time in the last several weeks alone. Justice Department spokesman Anthony Coley said the federal government will now ask the Supreme Court to reverse that decision but did not say how quickly.

The court already once allowed the restrictions to take effect, but did so without ruling on the law's constitutionality.

The Texas Attorney General's Office called Thursday night's decision by the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals a "testament that we are on the right side of the law and life."

A 1992 decision by the Supreme Court prevented states from banning abortion before viability, the point at which a fetus can survive outside the womb, around 24 weeks of pregnancy. But Texas' law has outmaneuvered courts so far because it offloads enforcement to private citizens. Anyone who brings a successful lawsuit against an abortion provider for violating the law is entitled to claim at least \$10,000 in damages, which the Biden administration says amounts to a bounty.

Only once has a court moved to put the restrictions on hold — and that order stood for just 48 hours.

During that brief window, some Texas clinics rushed to perform abortions on patients past six weeks, but many more appointments were canceled after the 5th Circuit moved to swiftly reinstate the restrictions last week.

Texas had roughly two dozen abortion clinics before the law took effect, and operators have said some may be forced to close if the restrictions stay in place for much longer.

Texas Right to Life, the state's largest anti-abortion group, set up a tip line to receive allegations against abortion providers but has not filed any lawsuits. Kimberlyn Schwartz, a spokeswoman, said Thursday the group expected the Biden administration to go to the Supreme Court next and was "confident Texas will ultimately defeat these attacks on our life-saving efforts."

Already the stakes are high in the coming months over the future of abortion rights in the U.S. In December, the new conservative majority on the Supreme Court will hear Mississippi's bid to overturn the landmark Roe v. Wade decision that guarantees a woman's right to an abortion.

On Wednesday, 18 state attorneys generals from mostly GOP-controlled states threw new support behind the Texas law, urging the court to let the restrictions stand while accusing the federal government of overstepping in bringing the challenge in the first place. Last month, more than 20 other states, mostly run by Democrats, had urged the lower court to throw out the law.

U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland has called the law "clearly unconstitutional" and warned that it could become a model elsewhere in the country unless it's struck down.

## **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:

Online posts misrepresent scope of tax proposal, policy

CLAIM: A new tax policy allows the IRS to "monitor all transactions involving bank accounts worth more than \$600." Another new policy taxes all payments of more than \$600 made through applications like PayPal and Venmo.

THE FACTS: Current tax proposals and policies do not call for either of these actions. As part of its efforts to crack down on tax evasion by the wealthy, the Biden administration has proposed a policy aimed at

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reducing the tax gap and improving tax compliance. Under this proposal, financial institutions — which are already required to report to taxpayers and the IRS when bank accounts earn interest that exceeds \$10 — would also document the total amount deposited and withdrawn from personal and business accounts annually. The requirement would not extend to bank accounts that have less than \$600 in transactions per year or contain a balance of less than \$600. The Biden administration argues this data may give the IRS a better sense of who might be receiving large incomes that they aren't reporting. But claims the proposal would allow "direct access to your bank transactions" are incorrect. Banks would not be able to report individual transactions to the IRS. "The statement that has been making the rounds that the IRS will be monitoring every transaction is extremely misleading," said Samantha Jacoby, a senior tax legal analyst at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. "The only thing that the IRS would have access to is two new numbers, total gross inflows and gross outflows for the whole year." The suggested new rules remain in proposal form and are still being discussed. In recent days, House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Rep. Richard Neal, a Democrat from Massachusetts, has suggested the reporting threshold could change from \$600 to \$10,000. Additionally, some social media users have made a separate false claim alleging that new taxes will be placed on people who use third-party payment apps including Zelle, Cash App, Venmo or PayPal. This stems from a misunderstanding of a provision in the Biden administration's American Rescue Plan Act, an economic stimulus bill that was passed in March and is set to go into effect in January 2022, according to Steven Rosenthal, a senior fellow at the Tax Policy Center. That policy requires a tax form called a 1099-K to be filed for business owners earning \$600 or more a year on payments that are received through third-party applications. The rule does not apply to noncommercial payments like reimbursing someone for food or rent or other one-off transactions such as selling an old piece of furniture, Rosenthal said. "The American Rescue Plan requires Venmo and PayPal and others to report commercial transactions, those are transactions for the sale of goods or services to any seller whose receipts exceed \$600," Rosenthal told the AP. "That's merely information reporting. It does not impose any tax liability on its own."

— Associated Press writer Sophia Tulp in Atlanta contributed this report.

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No, an employee strike didn't force Denver airport restaurants to close

**CLAIM:** The owner of five restaurants in Terminal C at Denver International Airport told employees they needed to get vaccinated for COVID-19 by Nov. 1 or they would be fired. None of the cooks, dishwashers, bussers or hosts showed up to work, so there were no restaurants open in Terminal C. The owner immediately sent an email reversing the vaccine mandate.

**THE FACTS:** Social media users this week are baselessly claiming that restaurant employees at Denver's airport reversed a vaccine mandate by not showing up to work. "Denver airport," read a tweet shared more than 5,000 times on Thursday. "The owner of 5 restaurants in C terminal made a Nov. 1 mandate or get fired. None of the cooks, dishwashers, bussers, & hosts showed up to work. So there were no restaurants open in C Terminal. He immediately sent an email reversing mandate." The message in the tweet, which was later deleted, circulated widely on Twitter, Facebook and the messaging app Telegram, despite offering no specifics or evidence that the incident occurred. In fact, it didn't happen, according to Alex Renteria, public information officer for the Denver International Airport. "We have not had any concession employee strike, nor have any restaurants on Concourse C been closed other than their normal hours of operation," Renteria said "We can confirm this is false information." Earlier this month, Denver airport janitors staged a one-day strike for higher pay, according to local news reports. And security officials told a local TV station this week they had voted to strike for the same reason. These job actions didn't appear to be related to any vaccine requirements. There is no airport-wide vaccine mandate, Renteria said, and companies with retail stores in the airport decide individually whether to require their employees to get vaccinated. Three different companies that appear to own restaurants in Concourse C of the Denver airport — Tastes on the Fly, Paradies Lagardère and Edible Beats — did not respond to emailed requests for comment on their vaccination policies.

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— Associated Press writer Ali Swenson in New York contributed this report.

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No evidence for claim that a vaccinated pilot died during flight

CLAIM: A Delta Airlines pilot who had recently been vaccinated for COVID-19 died mid-flight within the last 10 days, forcing the plane to make an emergency landing.

THE FACTS: This false claim circulated widely on video-sharing websites, blogs and Instagram this week following a Monday segment on the conservative talk show "The Stew Peters Show." Show guest Jane Ruby, a political pundit, said that she had heard about the incident from three whistleblowers. "A pilot died in flight within the last, I'd say, 10 days, according to these sources," Ruby said. "The flight had to make an emergency landing." Ruby added that the pilot was based at the Los Angeles International Airport and that staff on board "did land the plane safely." She also said she had heard from one of the whistleblowers that the pilot had recently received his second COVID-19 vaccine dose. But the claim is entirely false, Delta Airlines said in a statement addressing the topic on Wednesday. "Delta is aware of reports suggesting one of the airline's pilots passed away from vaccine complications while operating a flight, resulting in an emergency landing," the statement read. "All of these allegations are false." The FAA also told the AP in an email it "has found no evidence such an event occurred." Emergency landings or medical issues on commercial flights frequently appear in news articles, but an internet search turned up no news article matching any similar incident from October 1 to 11, 2021, the time period that the claim referenced. A search on a website tracking global aviation-related incidents also turned up no emergency landing incidents involving Delta Airlines during this time period. The media company that hosts "The Stew Peters Show" did not immediately respond to a request for comment from Peters or Ruby. The false story was one example of misinformation that surged online this week surrounding airline pilots and COVID-19 vaccinations. When Southwest Airlines canceled more than 2,000 flights last weekend, social media users made the unverified claim that it was because of employees protesting vaccine mandates. Southwest Airlines denied these claims, saying bad weather and air traffic control issues caused the disruptions.

— Ali Swenson

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Study did not find that masks do not work

CLAIM: A 2018 study that looked at the effectiveness of N95 masks versus medical masks found that masks don't stop the spread of viruses.

THE FACTS: The study found that N95 masks and medical masks are equally effective at protecting against viral respiratory infections and illnesses -- not that masks do not work. The trial tracked groups of health care workers who were randomly assigned to wear either N95 or medical masks, also known as surgical masks, when around patients with respiratory or influenza-like illness. It looked at the health outcomes of these health workers at 137 outpatient sites over four flu seasons. Derek Cummings, a professor of biology and infectious disease epidemiologist at the University of Florida, said the study built on previous research that showed masks are effective at preventing the spread of viruses. "The study was not designed to assess whether N95 masks work or not," he said. "What we were trying to do was to say that we know N95s work. We don't know how much better they are than medical masks." The study, which first appeared online in 2018 and then was published in the Journal of the American Medical Association in 2019, determined that both kinds of masks worked equally well. A line from the study's conclusion reads in part: "neither N95 nor MM resulted in superior protection." Social media users shared screenshots of that section and falsely claimed it was evidence that masks do not work. Trish Perl, chief of the division of infectious diseases and geographic medicine at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, also co-authored the study. Perl said she was mortified when she saw the misinformation about the study circulating online. "We found there was not a difference between wearing a respirator and wearing a medical mask in that study," she said. "We didn't say masks don't work or N95 masks don't work." Since the start of the pandemic in 2020, misinformation around masks has been circulating online. Health officials, including the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, recommend masks to prevent those who

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are infected with coronavirus from spreading it.

— Associated Press writer Beatrice Dupuy in New York contributed this report.

Video does not show woman collapsing after COVID-19 vaccination in London

CLAIM: Video shows people dropping “dead” outside a COVID-19 vaccination clinic in London after receiving a shot.

THE FACTS: The video, which circulated on Twitter, does not show anyone dying, or even collapsing, after receiving a COVID-19 vaccine. Rather, it shows a protest outside the North Kensington Fire Station in London, where a bus was providing COVID-19 vaccinations. The nature of the protest isn’t entirely clear from the video, but it appears to be related to COVID-19. In the video, a woman passes the bus as she walks down the street and then collapses off camera. The woman can then be seen lying on the sidewalk as onlookers are heard asking if she is all right. A man asks if the woman was “jabbed,” a common way of asking if someone has received the vaccine. “Protesters outside a covid vaccination clinic watch in horror as people drop dead before their eyes!!!” states the tweet making the false claim. The incident took place on Oct. 6. In fact, the woman “had not been on the bus but was walking on the road where the vaccine bus was parked,” according to a spokesperson for the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. “She fainted,” the spokesperson said. “I am not sure what the cause was. Only that she didn’t have a vaccine from the vaccine bus.” The Associated Press also reached out to the London Fire Brigade for further details. A spokesperson with the brigade said no information had been logged by the North Kensington Fire Station about the incident.

— Associated Press writer Arijeta Lajka in New York contributed this report.

TikTok video spreads unsupported claim of human trafficking trap

CLAIM: Car seats are being left in public places as a sex trafficking ploy to kidnap women.

THE FACTS: There is no evidence that this is a ploy being used by traffickers, officials say. A viral TikTok video viewed more than 13 million times references a Wilkesboro, North Carolina, police department announcement but ignores what it actually said: that, contrary to rumors, a car seat left in a Walmart parking lot was not found to be associated with trafficking. In the video, a woman shows the police department’s Facebook post with a photo of a pink and black car seat in a parking lot. She asks viewers if they’ve ever seen “this type of car seat just out of nowhere.” She goes on to say: “That’s actually a trap. Please do not go near that car seat. That’s actually a sex trafficking car seat where they’re just waiting for you to walk up, you as a woman to walk up, where they can grab you.” She encourages women who “see a random car seat” to call the National Human Trafficking Hotline. But the police department’s Facebook post was actually refuting — not supporting — the idea that the car seat in the photo was left as part of a human trafficking trap. “The Wilkesboro Police Department has investigated this incident and discovered the circumstances of how the seat was left in the parking lot,” the department wrote. “Two customers walked out of Wal-Mart after purchasing a new child car seat. An older seat was removed from their car and placed on the ground and the new child seat was installed. The customers then left the parking lot leaving the old child seat behind on the ground. At no time was this incident deemed to be involved in any criminal activity.” Tommy Rhodes, interim chief of the department, said in a phone interview that police reviewed security footage and watched the events unfold to determine what actually happened. “If we for one second thought that was a sex trafficking ploy, we would be all over that,” he said.

— Associated Press writer Angelo Fichera in Philadelphia contributed this report.

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**NOT REAL NEWS: A look at what didn’t happen this week**

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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:

Online posts misrepresent scope of tax proposal, policy

CLAIM: A new tax policy allows the IRS to "monitor all transactions involving bank accounts worth more than \$600." Another new policy taxes all payments of more than \$600 made through applications like PayPal and Venmo.

THE FACTS: Current tax proposals and policies do not call for either of these actions. As part of its efforts to crack down on tax evasion by the wealthy, the Biden administration has proposed a policy aimed at reducing the tax gap and improving tax compliance. Under this proposal, financial institutions — which are already required to report to taxpayers and the IRS when bank accounts earn interest that exceeds \$10 — would also document the total amount deposited and withdrawn from personal and business accounts annually. The requirement would not extend to bank accounts that have less than \$600 in transactions per year or contain a balance of less than \$600. The Biden administration argues this data may give the IRS a better sense of who might be receiving large incomes that they aren't reporting. But claims the proposal would allow "direct access to your bank transactions" are incorrect. Banks would not be able to report individual transactions to the IRS. "The statement that has been making the rounds that the IRS will be monitoring every transaction is extremely misleading," said Samantha Jacoby, a senior tax legal analyst at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. "The only thing that the IRS would have access to is two new numbers, total gross inflows and gross outflows for the whole year." The suggested new rules remain in proposal form and are still being discussed. In recent days, House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Rep. Richard Neal, a Democrat from Massachusetts, has suggested the reporting threshold could change from \$600 to \$10,000. Additionally, some social media users have made a separate false claim alleging that new taxes will be placed on people who use third-party payment apps including Zelle, Cash App, Venmo or PayPal. This stems from a misunderstanding of a provision in the Biden administration's American Rescue Plan Act, an economic stimulus bill that was passed in March and is set to go into effect in January 2022, according to Steven Rosenthal, a senior fellow at the Tax Policy Center. That policy requires a tax form called a 1099-K to be filed for business owners earning \$600 or more a year on payments that are received through third-party applications. The rule does not apply to noncommercial payments like reimbursing someone for food or rent or other one-off transactions such as selling an old piece of furniture, Rosenthal said. "The American Rescue Plan requires Venmo and PayPal and others to report commercial transactions, those are transactions for the sale of goods or services to any seller whose receipts exceed \$600," Rosenthal told the AP. "That's merely information reporting. It does not impose any tax liability on its own."

— Associated Press writer Sophia Tulp in Atlanta contributed this report.

No, an employee strike didn't force Denver airport restaurants to close

CLAIM: The owner of five restaurants in Terminal C at Denver International Airport told employees they needed to get vaccinated for COVID-19 by Nov. 1 or they would be fired. None of the cooks, dishwashers, bussers or hosts showed up to work, so there were no restaurants open in Terminal C. The owner immediately sent an email reversing the vaccine mandate.

THE FACTS: Social media users this week are baselessly claiming that restaurant employees at Denver's airport reversed a vaccine mandate by not showing up to work. "Denver airport," read a tweet shared more than 5,000 times on Thursday. "The owner of 5 restaurants in C terminal made a Nov. 1 mandate or get fired. None of the cooks, dishwashers, bussers, & hosts showed up to work. So there were no restaurants open in C Terminal. He immediately sent an email reversing mandate." The message in the tweet, which was later deleted, circulated widely on Twitter, Facebook and the messaging app Telegram,

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despite offering no specifics or evidence that the incident occurred. In fact, it didn't happen, according to Alex Renteria, public information officer for the Denver International Airport. "We have not had any concession employee strike, nor have any restaurants on Concourse C been closed other than their normal hours of operation," Renteria said "We can confirm this is false information." Earlier this month, Denver airport janitors staged a one-day strike for higher pay, according to local news reports. And security officials told a local TV station this week they had voted to strike for the same reason. These job actions didn't appear to be related to any vaccine requirements. There is no airport-wide vaccine mandate, Renteria said, and companies with retail stores in the airport decide individually whether to require their employees to get vaccinated. Three different companies that appear to own restaurants in Concourse C of the Denver airport – Tastes on the Fly, Paradis Lagardère and Edible Beats – did not respond to emailed requests for comment on their vaccination policies.

— Associated Press writer Ali Swenson in New York contributed this report.

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No evidence for claim that a vaccinated pilot died during flight

CLAIM: A Delta Airlines pilot who had recently been vaccinated for COVID-19 died mid-flight within the last 10 days, forcing the plane to make an emergency landing.

THE FACTS: This false claim circulated widely on video-sharing websites, blogs and Instagram this week following a Monday segment on the conservative talk show "The Stew Peters Show." Show guest Jane Ruby, a political pundit, said that she had heard about the incident from three whistleblowers. "A pilot died in flight within the last, I'd say, 10 days, according to these sources," Ruby said. "The flight had to make an emergency landing." Ruby added that the pilot was based at the Los Angeles International Airport and that staff on board "did land the plane safely." She also said she had heard from one of the whistleblowers that the pilot had recently received his second COVID-19 vaccine dose. But the claim is entirely false, Delta Airlines said in a statement addressing the topic on Wednesday. "Delta is aware of reports suggesting one of the airline's pilots passed away from vaccine complications while operating a flight, resulting in an emergency landing," the statement read. "All of these allegations are false." The FAA also told the AP in an email it "has found no evidence such an event occurred." Emergency landings or medical issues on commercial flights frequently appear in news articles, but an internet search turned up no news article matching any similar incident from October 1 to 11, 2021, the time period that the claim referenced. A search on a website tracking global aviation-related incidents also turned up no emergency landing incidents involving Delta Airlines during this time period. The media company that hosts "The Stew Peters Show" did not immediately respond to a request for comment from Peters or Ruby. The false story was one example of misinformation that surged online this week surrounding airline pilots and COVID-19 vaccinations. When Southwest Airlines canceled more than 2,000 flights last weekend, social media users made the unverified claim that it was because of employees protesting vaccine mandates. Southwest Airlines denied these claims, saying bad weather and air traffic control issues caused the disruptions.

— Ali Swenson

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## Prosecutors: Capitol cop told Jan. 6 rioter to hide evidence

By MICHAEL BALSAMO and COLLEEN LONG Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A U.S. Capitol Police officer has been indicted on obstruction of justice charges after prosecutors say he helped to hide evidence of a rioter's involvement in the Jan. 6 insurrection.

The officer, Michael A. Riley, is accused of tipping off someone who participated in the riot by telling them to remove posts from Facebook that had showed the person inside the Capitol during the Jan. 6 attack, according to court documents.

Riley, 50, appeared virtually in federal court in Washington and was released with several conditions, including that he surrender any firearms and not travel outside the U.S. without permission from a judge. He was ordered to return to court later this month.

Riley, who responded to a report of a pipe bomb on Jan. 6 and has been a Capitol Police officer for about 25 years, had sent the person a message telling them that he was an officer with the police force who "agrees with your political stance," an indictment against him says.

The indictment spells out how Riley sent dozens of messages to the unidentified person, encouraging them to remove incriminating photos and videos and telling them how the FBI was investigating to identify rioters.

Riley's attorney did not immediately respond to a reporter's message seeking comment.

In a statement, U.S. Capitol Police Chief Tom Manger said the department learned of the investigation against Riley several weeks ago and placed him on administrative leave when he was arrested Friday. Manger called the indictment a "very serious allegation" and said the department's Office of Professional Responsibility was also opening an internal investigation.

His arrest and the accusation that an active duty Capitol Police officer was trying to obstruct the investigation into the attack is particularly notable because many of his colleagues were brutally beaten in the insurrection. The riot left dozens of police officers bloodied and bruised as the crowd of pro-Trump rioters, some armed with pipes, bats and bear spray, charged into the Capitol, quickly overrunning the overwhelmed police force.

One officer was beaten and shocked with a stun gun repeatedly until he had a heart attack; another was foaming at the mouth and screaming for help as rioters crushed him between two doors and bashed him in the head with his own weapon.

More than 600 people face charges in the Jan. 6 attack, in which a mob loyal to then-President Donald Trump stormed the Capitol, battled police and tried to stop the certification of the election victory for President Joe Biden.

In the days after the attack, scores of rioters flaunted their participation in social media posts that bragged about their ability to get inside the Capitol. But then many started realizing it could be used as evidence and began deleting it.

An Associated Press review of court records has found that at least 49 defendants are accused of trying to erase incriminating photos, videos and texts from phones or social media accounts documenting their conduct as the pro-Trump mob stormed Congress and briefly interrupted the certification of Democrat Joe Biden's election victory.

Experts say the efforts to scrub the social media accounts reveal a desperate willingness to manipulate evidence once these people realized they were in hot water. They say it can serve as powerful proof



of people's consciousness of guilt and can make it harder to negotiate plea deals and seek leniency at sentencing.

Riley told the rioter that the scene was a "total s---show." "I'm glad you got out of there unscathed. We had over 50 officers hurt, some pretty bad," the officer wrote, according to the complaint.

When the rioter said through messaging that he didn't think he'd done anything wrong, Riley responded, according to court papers: "The only thing I can see is if you went into the building and they have proof you will be charged. You could always articulate that you had nowhere to go, but that's for court."

Later in January, after two had discussed their love of fishing, Riley told the man to get off social media. "They're arresting dozens of people a day," he wrote, according to the posting. "Everyone that was in the building. Engaged in violent acts or destruction of property and they're all being charged federally with felonies."

Making digital content vanish isn't as easy as deleting content from phones, removing social media posts or shutting down accounts. Investigators have been able to retrieve the digital content by requesting it from social media companies, even after accounts are shut down. Posts made on Facebook, Instagram and other social media platforms are recoverable for a certain period of time, and authorities routinely ask those companies to preserve the records until they get court orders to view the posts.

Despite initial criticism that Capitol police did not do enough to stop the rioters, Riley is the first Capitol police officer to be charged with a crime involving the insurrection.

But several current and former police officers were arrested on riot-related charges, including two Virginia police officers who posed for a photo during the attack. In July, authorities arrested an off-duty Drug Enforcement Administration agent accused of posing for photographs in which he flashed his DEA badge and firearm outside the Capitol during the riot.

Other law enforcement officers were investigated for their presence at the Capitol that day or at Trump's rally before the riot. In January, an Associated Press survey of law enforcement agencies nationwide found that at least 31 officers in 12 states are being scrutinized by their supervisors for their behavior in the District of Columbia or face criminal charges for participating in the riot.

In September, Capitol Police said officials had recommended disciplinary action in six cases after an internal review of officer behavior stemming from the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol. The department's Office of Professional Responsibility had opened 38 internal investigations and was able to identify 26 of the officers involved, police said in a statement at the time. In 20 of the cases, no wrongdoing was found.

It isn't clear whether Riley was among the officers who were referred for disciplinary action.

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Associated Press writers Jacques Billeaud in Phoenix and Michael Kunzelman in College Park, Md. contributed to this report.

## Russia struggles to meet global orders for Sputnik V vaccine

By REGINA GARCIA CANO, DARIA LITVINOVA and JUAN PABLO ARRAEZ Associated Press  
CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — Esperita García de Perez got her first vaccination against COVID-19 in May. That, along with her Catholic faith, made her feel better protected against the virus, and she had hoped to get her second shot of the Russian-developed Sputnik V vaccine a few weeks later.

But the 88-year-old is still waiting. She was infected with the virus last month, and now her hopes for survival are pinned on the host of medications and home care she is receiving.

Millions in developing nations from Latin America to the Middle East also are waiting for more doses of Sputnik V after manufacturing woes and other issues have created huge gaps in vaccination campaigns. One firm estimates that Russia has only exported 4.8% of the roughly 1 billion doses it promised.

The head of the Russian state-controlled fund that invested in the vaccine insisted Wednesday the supply problems have been resolved.

Venezuela, which designated Sputnik for those over 50, ordered 10 million doses in December 2020 but has gotten slightly less than 4 million. Argentina, the first country in the Western Hemisphere to administer Sputnik, got its first shipment Dec. 25 but it is still waiting for many of the 20 million it purchased.

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"I had a long time now, many months, anguished because (the vaccine) was going to arrive, then it was not going to arrive, then I was going to have to wait, then I was not going to have to wait," García de Perez said, adding that "you want the certainty and hope that the thing is going to come."

Launched in August 2020 and proudly named after the world's first satellite to symbolize Russia's scientific prowess, Sputnik V has been approved in some 70 countries. Russian state media earlier this year broadcast triumphant reports about it "conquering the world" as Moscow aggressively marketed it after wealthy nations kept supplies of Western-developed vaccines for themselves.

For a while it was "the only game in town," said Judy Twigg, a professor specializing in global health at Virginia Commonwealth University, but adds that Russia's window of opportunity "to really stake a claim as the savior" in the pandemic is gone.

Unlike other COVID-19 vaccines, Sputnik's first and second shots are different and not interchangeable. Manufacturing in Russia has been marred by reports of production difficulties, particularly in making its second component. Experts have pointed to limited production capacity as well as the fact that the process is very complicated.

Sputnik is a viral vector vaccine, which uses a harmless virus that carries genetic material to stimulate the immune system. Manufacturers can't guarantee stable output because working with biological ingredients involves a lot of variables in terms of the quality of the finished product.

Airfinity, a life science data analytics firm, estimates that 62 countries have supply agreements for about 1 billion doses of Sputnik V, with only 48 million doses exported so far. It said it isn't clear whether these doses are supposed to be delivered in 2021 or over a longer period.

The Russian Direct Investment Fund, which bankrolls and markets the vaccine abroad and has production contracts with 25 manufacturing sites in 14 countries, says it "is in full compliance of the Sputnik V supply contracts, including of the second component, after a successful production ramp-up in August and September."

The fund's CEO, Kirill Dmitriev, said in an interview with The Associated Press that all supply issues "have been fully resolved. All the issues with the second component are resolved in all of the countries."

"There is not one vaccine manufacturer in the world that didn't have vaccine delivery issues," he said.

Although the West largely relied on vaccines made in the U.S. and Europe, such as Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna and AstraZeneca, many developing nations have sought easier-to-get vaccines from China and Russia. The World Health Organization and the European Medicines Agency have not yet approved Sputnik V for use.

In Argentina, the delays in shipments of Sputnik and a virus surge in March led to public pressure on the government to speed up negotiations with other pharmaceutical companies.

An initial agreement was for 20 million doses, of which the country had received about 14.2 million as of Tuesday. A later agreement was signed for a local laboratory to produce the vaccine with the active ingredient shipped from Russia. It has produced about 1.2 million first doses and some 3.6 million second doses.

This month, Argentinian officials said the fund's requested the return of 1.3 million doses for packaging reasons. The doses have been replaced.

Virus-battered Iran on Thursday received a 14th batch of Sputnik vaccines, bringing the number of doses to 1.77 million out of 60 million it had been promised. The Iranian news agency IRNA quoted the country's ambassador to Russia as saying in April that the doses were expected to be shipped between May and November.

There are indications that Iran also has struggled with a shortage of Sputnik's second component. Deputy Health Minister Alireza Raisi last month urged those who received the first dose to get a second shot of AstraZeneca, citing the "uncertainty" of when Russia will come through.

A similar problem appears to have prevented Turkey from rolling out Sputnik altogether. Officials announced a deal to get 50 million doses in April, with news reports saying the vaccines would be delivered within six months. As of June, only 400,000 had arrived.

"Russia squandered that opportunity," said Twigg, the VCU professor. "I think in some cases, it's actually

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left Russia's reputation in Iran, Guatemala, Argentina, maybe Mexico, perhaps even a little worse off than it would have been if it had done nothing, or if it had waited and made more fulfillable promises from the very beginning, because people are disappointed."

Turkish Health Minister Fahrettin Koca said in August that Turkey has not been able to roll out Sputnik because it didn't have the second doses in hand. Koca later said Turkey was "engaged in an effort" to obtain both the first and second doses. A Health Ministry official would not comment on whether Turkey still hopes to receive the second doses or if it has simply abandoned the rollout.

"The whole process is a black box. There is no transparency," opposition lawmaker Murat Emir said last month in questioning Koca about the fate of the Sputnik rollout, including whether Turkey would get a refund for the 400,000 unused doses.

India was promised 125 million two-dose sets of Sputnik but had administered fewer than 1 million by Oct. 6.

The Sputnik delays in Argentina and Venezuela have prompted some people to get a different vaccine for their second dose, even though scientists are still studying the effects of such mixing and matching.

Dr. Chris Beyrer, public health and human rights professor at Johns Hopkins University, noted that the early purchases of highly effective vaccines by wealthiest nations has made it harder for developing countries to protect their populations.

"One dose is better than no dose. So, I think, for countries that have already started with Sputnik, it does make sense to go for the second dose, even if there's been a delay," he said. "But if they're not getting that vaccine at all, then they absolutely should be looking at other vaccines."

Litvinova reported from Moscow and Garcia Cano from Mexico City. Associated Press writers Jorge Rueda in Caracas, Venezuela; Debora Rey in Buenos Aires, Argentina; Nasser Karimi in Tehran, Iran; Suzan Fraser in Ankara, Turkey; Tanya Titova in Moscow; and Aniruddha Ghosal in New Delhi, India, contributed.

## Puerto Rico ponders race amid surprising census results

By DÁNICA COTO Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — The number of people in Puerto Rico who identified as "white" in the most recent census plummeted almost 80%, sparking a conversation about identity on an island breaking away from a past where race was not tracked and seldom debated in public.

The drastic drop surprised many, and theories abound as the U.S. territory's 3.3 million people begin to reckon with racial identity.

"Puerto Ricans themselves are understanding their whiteness comes with an asterisk," said Yarimar Bonilla, a political anthropologist and director of the Center for Puerto Rican Studies at Hunter College in New York. "They know they're not white by U.S. standards, but they're not Black by Puerto Rico standards."

Nearly 50% of those represented in the 2020 census — 1.6 million of 3.29 million — identified with "two races or more," a jump from 3% — or some 122,200 of 3.72 million — who chose that option in the 2010 census. Most of them selected "white and some other race."

Meanwhile, more than 838,000 people identified as "some other race alone," a nearly 190% jump compared with some 289,900 people a decade ago, although Bonilla said Census Bureau officials have yet to release what races they chose. Experts believe people likely wrote "Puerto Rican," "Hispanic" or "Latino," even though federal policy defines those categories as ethnicity, not race.

Among those who changed their response to race was 45-year-old Tamara Texidor, who selected "other" in 2010 and this time opted to identify herself as "Afrodescendent." She said she made the decision after talking to her brother, who was a census worker and told her how people he encountered when he went house to house often had trouble with the question about race.

Texidor began reflecting about her ancestry and wanted to honor it since she descended from slaves on her father's side.

"I'm not going to select 'other,'" she recalled thinking when filling out the census. "I feel I am something."

Experts are still debating what sparked the significant changes in the 2020 census. Some believe several

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factors are at play, including tweaks in wording and a change in how the Census Bureau processes and codes responses.

Bonilla also thinks a growing awareness of racial identity in Puerto Rico played a part, saying that "extra intense racialization" in the past decade might have contributed. She and other anthropologists argue that change stemmed from anger over what many consider a botched federal response to a U.S. territory struggling to recover from Hurricane Maria and a crippling economic crisis.

"They've finally understood that they're treated like second-class citizens," Bárbara Abadía-Rexach, a sociocultural anthropologist, said of Puerto Ricans.

Another critical change in the 2020 census was that only a little over 228,700 identified solely as Black or African American, a nearly 50% drop compared with more than 461,000 who did so a decade ago. The decline occurred even as grass-roots organizations in Puerto Rico launched campaigns to urge people to embrace their African heritage and raised awareness about racial disparities, although they said they were encouraged by the increase in the "two or more races" category.

Bonilla noted Puerto Rico currently has no reliable data to determine whether such disparities have occurred during the pandemic, noting that there is no racial data on coronavirus testing, hospitalizations or fatalities.

The island's government also does not collect racial data on populations, including those who are homeless or incarcerated, Abadía-Rexach added.

"The denial of the existence of racism renders invisible, criminalizes and dehumanizes many Black people in Puerto Rico," she said.

The lack of such data could be rooted in Puerto Rico's history. From 1960 to 2000, the island conducted its own census and never asked about race.

"We were supposed to be all mixed and all equal, and race was supposed to be an American thing," Bonilla said.

Some argued at the time that Puerto Rico should be tracking racial data while others viewed it as a divisive move that would impose or harden racial differences, a view largely embraced in France, which does not collect official data on race or ethnicity.

For Isar Godreau, an anthropologist and professor at the University of Puerto Rico, that type of data is crucial.

"Skin color is an important marker that makes people vulnerable to more or less racial discrimination," she said.

The data helps people fight for racial justice and determines the allocation of resources, Godreau said.

The major shift in the 2020 census — especially how only 560,592 people identified as white versus more than 2.8 million in 2010 — comes amid a growing interest in racial identity in Puerto Rico, where even recent surveys about race prompted responses ranging from "members of the human race" to "normal" to "I get along with everyone." Informally, people on the island use a wide range of words to describe someone's skin color, including "coffee with milk."

That interest is fueled largely by a younger generation: They have signed up for classes of bomba and plena — centuries-old, percussion-powered musical traditions — as well as workshops on how to make or wear headwraps.

More hair salons are specializing in curly hair, eschewing the blow-dried results that long dominated professional settings in the island. Some legislators have submitted a bill that cites the results of the 2020 census and that if approved would make it illegal to discriminate against someone based on their hair style. Several U.S. states already have similar laws.

As debate continues on what sparked so many changes in the 2020 census, Bonilla said an important question is what the 2030 census results will look like. "Will we see an intensification of this pattern, or will 2020 have been kind of a blip moment?"

**In trial over Arbery death, racial reckoning looms large**

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By RUSS BYNUM and AARON MORRISON Associated Press  
BRUNSWICK, Ga. (AP) — A framed photo on the wall of Travis Riddle's soul food restaurant shows the local sheriff arresting a gray-bearded white man with hands cuffed behind his back, a reminder to all who enter that for Riddle justice still waits to be served in the slaying of Ahmaud Arbery.

It shows Greg McMichael on the day last year that he and his son, Travis McMichael, were jailed on murder charges in the 25-year-old Black man's killing.

The McMichaels are charged with chasing Arbery in a pickup truck and fatally shooting him after spotting him running in their neighborhood. More than two months passed before their arrests after video of the shooting was leaked online and sparked a national outcry.

Jury selection in the murder trial of the McMichaels and William "Roddie" Bryan, a neighbor who joined the pursuit and took the video, is scheduled to begin Monday. For many, it's not just the three white defendants on trial, but rather a justice system that allowed them to remain free for weeks after they pursued and killed a Black man.

"You've got the corruption, then the good ole boy system, then the racism — that's how I see it," said Riddle, who hopes to break away from his restaurant, Country Boy Cooking, to attend some of the trial.

Local activists plan a weekend rally at the Glynn County Courthouse in Brunswick, a working-class port city 70 miles (112 kilometers) south of Savannah, and a car caravan through the neighborhood where Arbery was slain.

"It's shaken the faith of the Black and brown community in their ability to trust the justice system," said the Rev. John Perry, who was president of the Brunswick NAACP chapter when Arbery was killed.

Arbery's death on Feb. 23, 2020, later became part of the broader reckoning on racial injustice in the criminal legal system after a string of fatal encounters between Black people and police — George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and Rayshard Brooks, among others. Akeem Baker, a close friend of Arbery's, still takes runs on the 23rd day of each month for a distance of exactly 2.23 miles to keep his memory alive.

Baker said he is frequently tagged in social media posts by people doing similar memorial runs as far away as the U.K.

"I have to believe that this is going to bring needed changes to Brunswick and to the nation, in terms of racial justice," Baker said.

The McMichaels and Bryan are charged with nine counts each, including malice murder, felony murder, aggravated assault and other crimes. The men told police they used pickup trucks to keep Arbery from fleeing the Satilla Shores neighborhood. Security cameras in an open-framed house under construction had previously recorded him on the site, and they suspected he was stealing.

Greg McMichael, a retired investigator for the area district attorney, can be seen playing up his law enforcement ties on recordings taken by police body cameras of officers dispatched to the scene after the shooting.

Prosecutors contend Arbery was merely jogging on a street just 2 miles (3.2 kilometers) from his home. They say he was unarmed and police found no evidence he had stolen anything.

What remains to be seen is how much prosecutors emphasize evidence of racism in Arbery's killing. At a court hearing last year, a Georgia Bureau of Investigation agent testified that Bryan told investigators he witnessed Travis McMichael stand over Arbery and utter a racist slur — "f - - - ing n - - - er" — while Arbery bled in the street from three shotgun blasts.

Travis McMichael's attorneys deny that.

Investigators also found text messages on Travis McMichael's cellphone from a year before the shooting in which he used the N-word twice in one exchange. Prosecutors included the texts in evidence filed in the public court record, but haven't requested to use them during the trial.

Meanwhile, defense attorneys want the judge to block prosecutors from showing the jury photos of the truck the McMichaels used to chase Arbery, which show a front bumper vanity plate of Georgia's former state flag with the Confederate battle emblem.

Attorneys for the McMichaels and Bryan have insisted they committed no crimes, saying they had reason to suspect Arbery was a burglar and were legally trying to stop him. At the time, Georgia law allowed

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arrests by private citizens. They contend Travis McMichael shot Arbery in self-defense after Arbery attacked him with his fists and grappled for his gun.

"The jury will see this case is simply about protecting one's neighbors and oneself," Jason Sheffield, an attorney for Travis McMichael, said in an email to The Associated Press.

Arbery's family has long said he was targeted because of his race. His relatives cheered when the U.S. Justice Department brought federal hate crimes charges against the McMichaels and Bryan in April. A separate trial in that case is scheduled for February.

"Race will be all over this case," said Lee Merritt, a civil rights attorney for the Arbery family. "The nation is going to get a front row seat into where culturally Glynn County, Georgia, is in 2021, or where it was in 2020 at the very least."

Georgia was one of just four U.S. states without a hate crimes law at the time Arbery was slain, though Georgia lawmakers quickly adopted one amid the outcry over his death. They also all but gutted the state citizen's arrest statute.

Thea Brooks, Arbery's aunt, says he was the victim of a "modern-day lynching." She noted that security cameras at the same construction site the McMichaels suspected Arbery of looting had recorded others entering to look around — including white people and children.

"It really makes me feel like, on that day, it was a racially profiled situation," Brooks said.

For local activist Elijah Bobby Henderson, Arbery's killing exposed boundaries between white and Black Brunswick residents to maintain what he called "a comfortable tension between races." He recalled being told as a child that Black children shouldn't go trick-or-treating in the Satilla Shores neighborhood where Arbery died.

"As long as everyone respects those boundaries, there can be peace," Henderson said. "Ahmaud dared to cross one of those boundaries."

James Yancey Jr., a Black criminal defense attorney in Brunswick who is not involved in the Arbery case, said issues of race will likely loom large in the trial whether prosecutors emphasize it or not.

"Any time you have a case involving particularly a white person and a Black person ... I think it's probably impossible to overlook that fact," Yancy said.

Arbery's death prompted Henderson and other Black activists in Glynn County to form the group A Better Glynn to promote racial and socio-economic justice. In its first year, the nonprofit registered voters ahead of a 2020 election that saw longtime District Attorney Jackie Johnson defeated. The county also hired its first full-time Black police chief after the group pressed for a national search.

Meanwhile, Perry and Riddle are among eight candidates running in the Nov. 2 election to be Brunswick's next mayor.

The Rev. James Woodall, a former president of the Georgia NAACP, called the electoral strides a sign more changes would come to Brunswick and other communities like it.

"You're seeing a wave of organizing to lift up the issues of people in that community and to get folks engaged like never before," said Woodall, now a public policy associate at the Southern Center for Human Rights.

"We're looking forward to building a state where justice is literally the order of the day and not just an expectation of a small, minute portion of our community."

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Morrison reported from New York City.

## Crime at the center of Atlanta mayor's race as voting begins

By KATE BRUMBACK and JEFF AMY Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Atlanta mayoral candidates are talking about affordable housing, hoping to stave off a secession movement in a wealthy neighborhood and trading increasingly pointed jabs. But as in so many places across the country, the election is really about crime.

News is dominated by reports of violence, and residents poor and rich demand solutions, even as many

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say they want to balance policing and social justice. Candidates seeking to mollify voters are competing in a wide-open race after Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms surprised many in May by announcing she didn't want a second term. Now, with 14 names on the Nov. 2 ballot, a runoff in the nonpartisan race seems almost certain.

Early in-person voting began this week and recent polls show many voters still undecided. Kasim Reed, Bottoms' predecessor, is a top contender. City Council President Felicia Moore, long a Reed critic, is another leading candidate. Attorney Sharon Gay and council members Andre Dickens and Antonio Brown also have gained support.

Like cities across the country, homicides have increased in Atlanta. As of Oct. 9, murders were up 14% over the same period last year and 60% compared with 2019, Atlanta police data show. High-profile killings — a woman and her dog stabbed to death late at night in the city's premier park, a bartender abducted and fatally shot as she returned home after a late shift — have frightened residents. Neighborhood social media sites teem with posts about crime, generating dozens of frustrated and fearful comments.

Reed, who served two four-year terms beginning in 2010, left office amid a federal investigation into corruption at City Hall. A half-dozen members of his administration have been indicted. Some pleaded guilty and others await trial.

Reed was never charged. His campaign released a statement from his lawyers saying federal prosecutors told them in August that "their inquiry regarding Kasim Reed was completed and that the inquiry regarding Mr. Reed is closed. There is no federal investigation of Kasim Reed."

Asked to confirm that, a spokesperson for the U.S. attorney's office in Atlanta declined to comment.

Reed said he wouldn't have challenged Bottoms, but once she announced her exit, he said he was motivated by the crime surge to seek a third term. He's uniquely qualified to confront it, he says, citing the low crime rate and hundreds of police officers hired when he was mayor.

"I think voters have a really simple question to ask themselves: Do they think that they're better off today than they were four years ago when I was mayor? My sense is that we were definitely better off four years ago," he said.

But Reed remains polarizing, with some residents convinced he's the proven leader needed to fight crime, while others question his integrity and believe he's driven primarily by self-interest.

Moore, who talks constantly about ethics, transparency and accountability, said crime pushed her to enter the race, even before Bottoms bowed out.

"I was just getting so much increasing contact with me about crime, people just being victims of crime, sometimes 1 or 2 in the morning, consoling people," she said. "I needed to step up and attempt to take the wheel of the ship."

Gay, recently managing partner of a law firm, says she brings a fresh approach as someone who hasn't held elected office and isn't tied to past mistakes. To combat crime, she would focus on problem properties, restore police morale and get officers on the street, she says.

Dickens touts increasing the number of officers, arresting gang leaders and implementing community policing. He also aims to increase affordable housing, improve infrastructure and ensure current residents qualify for high-paying jobs coming to the city.

Brown says generational poverty, gentrification and insufficient affordable housing feed unemployment, homelessness and crime. He stresses a focus on those root causes and emphasizes community policing.

Brown is currently under federal indictment, accused of borrowing money and making credit card purchases and then claiming he was the victim of identity theft. The alleged crimes took place before his election to City Council, and Brown denies guilt.

Organizers who want the upscale Buckhead neighborhood to become its own city — taking about 20% of Atlanta's population and a disproportionately higher chunk of its tax base with it — cite crime as a key factor. The top mayoral candidates say they'll take Buckhead's concerns seriously, hoping to quash support for a referendum in the Georgia legislature or to convince voters to reject separation if it makes the ballot.

Atlanta's population grew 19% from 2010 to 2020, rising to nearly 500,000, last year's census found. That

growth has been accompanied by corporate expansions in close-in neighborhoods. Property values have soared, and longtime residents say the crunch has reached traditionally more affordable neighborhoods.

While the Black population increased slightly, the white, Asian and Hispanic populations all rose faster over the past 10 years. People who identify as Black now make up less than a majority of Atlantans for the first time in decades.

Tammy Greer, a political science professor at Clark Atlanta University, says longtime Black residents are expressing anxieties through concerns over affordable housing and jobs.

"You have this perceived black Mecca of the South that is dwindling in Black population and has not had the political, economic and social capital that comes with the name," Greer said.

Although new people are arriving, Greer said "legacy" residents still control politics, and for them, times don't seem as good. That has to do, in part, with the city's steep income inequality. White households have a median income above \$100,000, while Black households typically make about \$35,000.

The race may ultimately hinge on which candidate has the most enthusiastic supporters — or is seen as less objectionable to supporters of candidates who don't make a runoff. The last two mayors won by tight margins, with just hundreds of votes sealing their victories.

## Nothing funny about bad year for Maine's clownish puffins

By PATRICK WHITTLE Associated Press

PORTLAND, Maine (AP) — Maine's beloved puffins suffered one of their worst years for reproduction in decades this summer due to a lack of the small fish they eat.

Puffins are seabirds with colorful beaks that nest on four small islands off the coast of Maine. There are about 1,500 breeding pairs in the state and they are dependent on fish such as herring and sand lance to be able to feed their young.

Only about a quarter of the birds were able to raise chicks this summer, said Don Lyons, director of conservation science for the National Audubon Society's Seabird Institute in Bremen, Maine. About two-thirds of the birds succeed in a normal year, he said.

The puffin colonies have suffered only one or two less productive years in the four decades since their populations were restored in Maine, Lyons said. The birds had a poor year because of warm ocean temperatures this summer that reduced the availability of the fish the chicks need to survive, he said.

"There were fewer fish for puffins to catch, and the ones they were able to were not ideal for chicks," Lyons said. "It's a severe warning this year."

The islands where puffins nest are located in the Gulf of Maine, a body of water that is warming faster than the vast majority of the world's oceans. Researchers have not seen much mortality of adult puffins, but the population will suffer if the birds continue to have difficulty raising chicks, Lyons said.

The discouraging news comes after positive signs in recent years despite the challenging environmental conditions. The population of the birds, which are on Maine's state threatened species list, has been stable in recent years.

The birds had one of their most productive seasons for mating pairs in years in 2019. Scientists including Stephen Kress, who has studied the birds for decades, said at the time that birds seemed to be doing well because the Gulf of Maine had a cool year that led to an abundance of food.

The puffins are Atlantic puffins that also live in Canada and the other side of the ocean. Internationally, they're listed as "vulnerable" by the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

## MIT grapples with early leader's stance on Native Americans

By PHILIP MARCELO Associated Press

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. (AP) — As the third president of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Francis Amasa Walker helped usher the school into national prominence in the late 1800s.

But another part of his legacy has received renewed attention amid the nation's reckoning with racial



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justice: his role in shaping the nation's hardline policies toward Native Americans as a former head of the U.S. office of Indian Affairs and author of "The Indian Question," a treatise that justified forcibly removing tribes from their lands and confining them to remote reservations.

MIT is now grappling with calls from Native American students and others to strip Walker's name from a campus building that is central to student life — part of a broader push for the nation's higher education institutions to atone for the role they played in the decimation of Native American tribes.

"Walker might be the face of Indian genocide and it is troubling that his name is memorialized at MIT," says David Lowry, the school's newly-appointed distinguished fellow in Native American studies and a member of the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina.

MIT President L. Rafael Reif wrote in a recent column in MIT Technology Review that addressing Walker's legacy is an "essential step" in the school's commitment to its Native American community. Native students account for 155 of the school's nearly 3,700 students this year.

"The question we are working through now is what to do with these facts, as well as other aspects of the history of MIT and Native communities," wrote Reif, who stopped short of weighing in on the name change debate in his column and declined to be interviewed.

Built in 1916, Walker Memorial houses student group offices, the college radio station and a campus pub. Its focal point is a great hall decorated with soaring murals meant to depict scientific learning and experimentation.

Alvin Harvey, a doctoral student and president of the MIT Native American Student Association, says the classical-style building overlooking the Charles River is one of the most visible reminders of the school's white, Western-centric past.

"As a Native American individual, you feel the full brunt of what MIT built its foundations on," said Harvey, a 25-year-old New Mexico native and member of Navajo Nation. "The ideology that Western men, white men are going to lead the United States and the world into a new utopia of technological development."

MIT was among the nation's first colleges to benefit from the Morrill Act, a 1862 law that helped create the U.S. public higher education system. The law allowed for the transfer and sale of federal lands to colleges to help establish their campus, or bolster an existing one. But many millions of those acres were actually confiscated from Native American tribes.

In MIT's case, it received at least 366 acres scattered across California and a number of Midwest states, High Country News reported last year. At the time, their sales helped generate nearly \$78,000, or more than \$1.6 million in today's dollars, the magazine said.

Lowry cautions that those land and revenue estimates are likely conservative and that some students in his course on the "Indigenous History of MIT" are working on a fuller accounting.

Simson Garfinkel, an MIT alum who wrote a recent article on Walker's life and legacy in MIT Technology Review, worries that renaming Walker Memorial would only serve to erase the contributions of a singular figure in MIT history.

"Without Walker there would be no MIT. He was pivotal to making it the institution it is today," Garfinkel said. "He placed it on vastly better financial footing, dramatically expanded enrollment and brought a discipline to the school that was really needed."

As president from 1881 until his death in 1897, the former Union Army general and Boston native helped improve student life and oversaw the introduction of the first female and Black students on campus.

Garfinkel also argued that "The Indian Question" offered significant and lasting contributions to the wider understanding of indigenous peoples, even if its analysis and policy recommendations were ultimately racist and "problematic."

The book, published in 1874, included detailed descriptions of American tribes, their populations and the offenses incurred against them, mainly by white people illegally settling on their lands and instigating violence.

But Walker also described Native Americans as "an obstacle to the national progress" and concluded the country was justified in pushing Native Americans off their ancestral lands. He recommended confining

them to reservations and forcing them to adopt European farming and production methods.

Rather than remove Walker's name from the building, Garfinkel suggests providing more historical context by installing an informational marker on site.

"Walker was an amazing person who we need to understand in all of his complexity," he said. "It's easy to rename buildings, but much harder to learn about the past."

Harvey said MIT has taken promising steps, such as appointing Lowry, recognizing Indigenous Peoples Day and providing a new campus space for Native American student groups.

But it still needs to hire more Native faculty and provide other support for Native students, he said. As for Walker Memorial, Harvey suggests not only renaming it, but turning it into a center for indigenous sciences.

"MIT is missing out on this huge swath of indigenous knowledge," he said. "Indigenous people are practicing their own valuable sense of science, engineering and knowledge of the natural world, and it's being completely shut out."

This story has been corrected to show that Walker Memorial was built in 1916, not 1816.

## Israel quietly advances settlements with little US pushback

By JOSEPH KRAUSS Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel is quietly advancing controversial settlement projects in and around Jerusalem without making major announcements that could anger the Biden administration. Critics say the latest moves, while incremental, pave the way for rapid growth once the political climate changes.

On Wednesday, as Foreign Minister Yair Lapid met with U.S. officials in Washington, a local planning committee in Jerusalem approved the expropriation of public land for the especially controversial Givat Hamatos settlement, which would largely cut the city off from Palestinian communities in the southern West Bank.

The same committee advanced plans for the construction of 470 homes in the existing east Jerusalem settlement of Pisgat Zeev. Authorities have scheduled a Dec. 6 hearing for another project in east Jerusalem to build 9,000 settler homes in the Atarot area, according to Ir Amim, an Israeli rights group that closely follows developments in the city.

A military body has meanwhile scheduled two meetings in the coming weeks to discuss a planned settlement of 3,400 homes on a barren hillside outside Jerusalem known as E1. Critics say it would largely bisect the occupied West Bank, making it impossible to establish a viable Palestinian state alongside Israel. A two-state solution is still seen internationally as the only realistic way to resolve the century-old conflict.

"The fact that simultaneously all of these very controversial plans that have been longstanding international red lines have now been advancing ... is very indicative that the Israeli government intends to advance and ultimately approve these plans," said Amy Cohen of Ir Amim.

Jerusalem's deputy mayor Fleur Hassan-Nahoum downplayed the latest developments, noting that Givat Hamatos was approved years ago. "Nothing's changed over the last few years," she said. "We are a city and we're providing for our residents."

Spokespeople from the defense and housing ministries, which are also involved in approving settlements, declined to comment.

Construction is already underway in Givat Hamatos, where tenders for more than 1,200 homes were announced last November. The other projects are still progressing through a long bureaucratic process, and it could be months or years before shovels break ground.

But critics of the settlements say every step matters.

"The thing with those plans is that in order to make them come true you need to do the whole process," said Hagit Ofran, of the Israeli anti-settlement monitoring group Peace Now. "Every step on the way is in the control of the government... If they don't act to stop it, then it happens."

Every Israeli government since 1967 has expanded settlements in east Jerusalem and the West Bank,

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territories Israel seized in the Mideast war that year which the Palestinians want for their future state. The Palestinians view the settlements — now housing some 700,000 settlers — as the main obstacle to peace, and most of the international community considers them illegal.

Israel annexed east Jerusalem and considers the entire city to be its capital. It views the West Bank as the biblical and historical heartland of the Jewish people. But it has refrained from annexing the territory because of international pressure and because it is home to more than 2.5 million Palestinians, the absorption of whom could erode Israel's Jewish majority.

U.S. presidents from both parties opposed the settlements until President Donald Trump broke with that tradition, proposing a Mideast plan in which Israel would keep all of them. The Trump era witnessed explosive growth in settlements, and Trump's secretary of state, Mike Pompeo, broke with precedent by visiting one last year. Pompeo, a possible Republican presidential hopeful in 2024, was back in Israel this week and paid another supportive visit to a settlement.

President Joe Biden's administration has criticized settlement construction as an obstacle to eventually reviving the long-moribund peace process but has not demanded a freeze. In 2010, Israel announced a major settlement project during a visit by then-Vice President Biden, aggravating a diplomatic rift that festered throughout President Barack Obama's presidency.

Biden, who as president is prioritizing other challenges like COVID-19, China and climate change, appears keen to avoid a showdown with Israel, a close U.S. ally.

"We have been clear publicly and in private about where we stand on settlement activity and on annexation," State Department spokesman Ned Price said Thursday. "We oppose any unilateral steps that put a two-state solution further out reach."

When asked whether that concern had grown recently, he said it had "remained constant."

Israel's political system is dominated by pro-settlement parties and its new prime minister, Naftali Bennett, is opposed to a Palestinian state. But he heads an unwieldy coalition of parties from across the political spectrum — some opposed to settlements — and appears to be seeking middle ground that would sideline the issue at home and abroad.

A senior Israeli official who participated in Lapid's meetings in Washington said the discussions had focused primarily on Iran and Israel's relations with its Arab neighbors but acknowledged that the Americans had raised the settlements issue.

However, the Palestinian issue was "not the dominant theme in the region" during the discussion, the official said. The official was not authorized to discuss the details of the private talks and spoke on condition of anonymity.

A State Department readout of Secretary of State Antony Blinken's meeting with Lapid made no specific reference to settlements in the one sentence it devoted to the Palestinians.

With U.S. attention focused elsewhere, and the Palestinian leadership divided and increasingly unpopular, Israel faces few if any immediate consequences for expanding settlements.

But critics have long warned that the failure to create a viable Palestinian state will leave millions of Palestinians living under permanent Israeli rule without the same rights as Jews. Two well-known human rights groups say Israel has already become an apartheid state.

"These are all incremental steps in order to create a new reality on the ground, an irreparable reality," Ir Amim's Cohen said about the advancement of settlements. "You are foiling any prospect of a two-state framework."

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Associated Press writer Matthew Lee in Washington contributed to this report.

## White House targeting economic risks from climate change

By JOSH BOAK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Biden administration is taking steps to address the economic risks from climate change, issuing a 40-page report Friday on government-wide plans to protect the financial, insurance and

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housing markets and the savings of American families.

The report lays out steps that could potentially alter the mortgage process, stock market disclosures, retirement plans, federal procurement and government budgeting.

It's a follow-up to a May executive order by President Joe Biden that essentially calls on the government to analyze how the world's largest economy could be affected by extreme heat, flooding, storms, wildfires and the broader adjustments needed to address climate change.

"If this year has shown us anything, it's that climate change poses an ongoing urgent and systemic risk to our economy and to the lives and livelihoods of everyday Americans, and we must act now," Gina McCarthy, the White House national climate adviser, told reporters.

A February storm in Texas led to widespread power outages, 210 deaths and severe property damage. Wildfires raged in Western states. The heat dome in the Pacific Northwest caused record temperatures in Seattle and Portland, Oregon. Hurricane Ida struck Louisiana in August and caused deadly flooding in the Northeast.

The actions being recommended by the Biden administration reflect a significant shift in the broader discussion about climate change, suggesting that the nation must prepare for the costs that families, investors and governments will bear.

The report is also an effort to showcase to the world how serious the U.S. government is about tackling climate change ahead of the United Nations Climate Change Conference running from Oct. 31 to Nov. 12 in Glasgow, Scotland.

Among the steps outlined is the government's Financial Stability Oversight Council developing the tools to identify and lessen climate-related risks to the economy. The Treasury Department plans to address the risks to the insurance sector and availability of coverage. The Securities and Exchange Commission is looking at mandatory disclosure rules about the opportunities and risks generated by climate change.

The Labor Department on Wednesday proposed a rule for investment managers to factor environmental decisions into the choices made for pensions and retirement savings. The Office of Management and Budget announced the government will begin the process of asking federal agencies to consider greenhouse gas emissions from the companies providing supplies. Biden's budget proposal for fiscal 2023 will feature an assessment of climate risks.

Federal agencies involved in lending and mortgages for homes are looking for the impact on the housing market, with the Department of Housing and Urban Development and its partners developing disclosures for homebuyers and flood and climate-related risks. The Department of Veterans Affairs will also look at climate risks for its home lending program.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency is updating the standards for its National Flood Insurance Program, potentially revising guidelines that go back to 1976.

"We now do recognize that climate change is a systemic risk," McCarthy said. "We have to look fundamentally at the way the federal government does its job and how we look at the finance system and its stability."

## Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Saturday, Oct. 16, the 289th day of 2021. There are 76 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Oct. 16, 1859, radical abolitionist John Brown led a raid on the U.S. arsenal at Harpers Ferry in what was then a part of western Virginia. (Ten of Brown's men were killed and five escaped. Brown and six followers were captured; all were executed.)

On this date:

In 1793, during the French Revolution, Marie Antoinette, the queen of France, was beheaded.

In 1934, Chinese Communists, under siege by the Nationalists, began their "long march" lasting a year

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from southeastern to northwestern China.

In 1962, the Cuban missile crisis began as President John F. Kennedy was informed that reconnaissance photographs had revealed the presence of missile bases in Cuba.

In 1964, China set off its first atomic bomb, codenamed "596," on the Lop Nur Test Ground.

In 1968, American athletes Tommie Smith and John Carlos sparked controversy at the Mexico City Olympics by giving "Black power" salutes during a victory ceremony after they'd won gold and bronze medals in the 200-meter race.

In 1978, the College of Cardinals of the Roman Catholic Church chose Cardinal Karol Wojtyla (voy-TEE'-wah) to be the new pope; he took the name John Paul II.

In 1984, Anglican Bishop Desmond Tutu was named winner of the Nobel Peace Prize for his decades of non-violent struggle for racial equality in South Africa.

In 1991, a deadly shooting rampage took place in Killeen, Texas, as a gunman opened fire at a Luby's Cafeteria, killing 23 people before taking his own life.

In 1995, a vast throng of Black men gathered in Washington, D.C. for the "Million Man March" led by Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan.

In 2002, President George W. Bush signed a congressional resolution authorizing war against Iraq. The White House announced that North Korea had disclosed it had a nuclear weapons program.

In 2009, agricultural officials said pigs in Minnesota had tested positive for the H1N1 virus, or swine flu, the first such cases in the U.S.

In 2017, Army Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl, who had been captured and held by the Taliban for five years after walking away from his post in Afghanistan, pleaded guilty to desertion and endangering his comrades. (A military judge later decided not to send him to prison.)

Ten years ago: The Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial was formally dedicated in Washington, D.C. British race car driver Dan Wheldon, 33, died in a fiery 15-car wreck in the Las Vegas Indy 300. Danell Leyva became the first American male gymnast to win a gold medal at the World Championships since 2003, taking the parallel bars title in Tokyo. The St. Louis Cardinals captured their 18th National League pennant with a 12-6 victory over the Milwaukee Brewers in Game 6 of the NLCS.

Five years ago: Joy, jubilation and dancing erupted when a group of Nigerian parents were reunited with 21 schoolgirls kidnapped by Boko Haram 2 1/2 years earlier and freed in the first negotiated release organized by the government and the Islamic extremist group. Singer Randy Travis, fiddler Charlie Daniels and producer Fred Foster were inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame.

One year ago: A French history teacher who had opened a discussion with his high school students about caricatures of Islam's Prophet Muhammad was beheaded on a street northwest of Paris; police shot and killed the suspect, an 18-year-old radical Islamist. After initially denying the request, the Trump administration approved California's application for disaster relief funds to clean up damage from six deadly and destructive wildfires. Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey said the company had been wrong to block weblinks to an unverified story focusing on the son of Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden. A federal judge refused to block New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo's order limiting worship to as few as 10 congregants in communities seeing spikes in coronavirus infections.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Angela Lansbury is 96. Actor Peter Bowles is 85. Actor-producer Tony Anthony is 84. Actor Barry Corbin is 81. Sportscaster Tim McCarver is 80. Rock musician C.F. Turner (Bachman-Turner Overdrive) is 78. Actor Suzanne Somers is 75. Rock singer-musician Bob Weir is 74. Producer-director David Zucker is 74. Record company executive Jim Ed Norman is 73. Actor Daniel Gerroll is 70. Actor Morgan Stevens is 70. Actor Martha Smith is 69. Comedian-actor Andy Kindler is 65. Actor-director Tim Robbins is 63. Actor-musician Gary Kemp is 62. Singer-musician Bob Mould is 61. Actor Randy Vasquez is 60. Rock musician Flea (Red Hot Chili Peppers) is 59. Movie director Kenneth Lonergan is 59. Actor Christian Stolte is 59. Actor Todd Stashwick is 53. Actor Terri J. Vaughn is 52. Singer Wendy Wilson (Wilson Phillips) is 52. Rock singer Chad Gray (Mudvayne) is 50. Actor Paul Sparks is 50. Actor Kellie Martin is 46. Singer John Mayer is 44. Actor Jeremy Jackson is 41. Actor Caterina Scorsone is 41. Actor Brea Grant is 40. U.S.