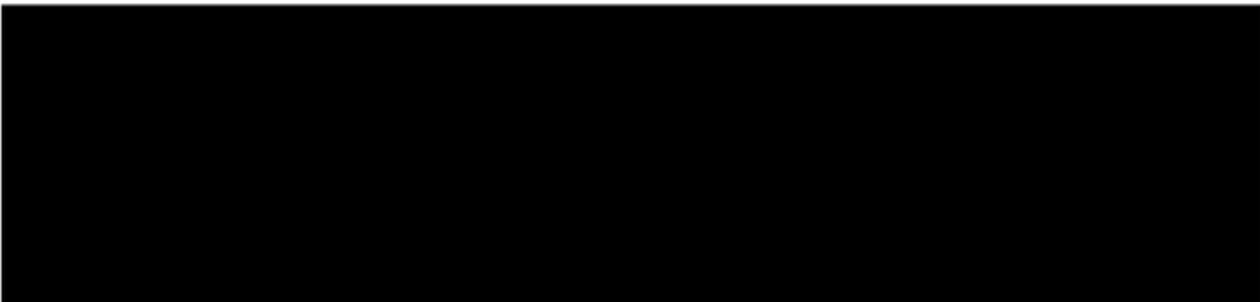


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 FBI News Briefing

TO: THE DIRECTOR AND SENIOR STAFF

DATE: FRIDAY, JULY 24, 2020 6:30 AM EDT

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LEADING THE NEWS

Judge Grants Restraining Order Against Federal Agents In Portland.

The [Washington Times](#) (7/23, Boyer, 492K) reports a federal judge granted a temporary restraining order Thursday night "against federal agents from arresting or using force against legal observers and journalists in Portland, Oregon." District Judge Michael Simon granted the restraining order "in response to a lawsuit filed by the American Civil Liberties Union of Oregon." [Axios](#) (7/23, Knutson, 521K) says the order "restricts law enforcement officers from the departments of Homeland Security and of Justice operating in Portland" for 14 days.

DOJ Probing Use Of Force By Federal Agents In Portland. [Reuters](#) (7/23, Lynch) reports the Justice Department's inspector general on Thursday launched probes into alleged use of force by federal agents in Portland and the District of Columbia during recent protests. Inspector General Michael Horowitz "said he would be coordinating with the internal watchdog for the Department of Homeland Security in his investigation into excessive force in Portland, a probe which was requested by the U.S. Attorney for the District of Oregon in addition to House Democrats."

The [AP](#) (7/23, Tucker, Long) reports that "local authorities in both cities have complained that the presence of federal agents have exacerbated tensions on the streets, while residents have accused the government of violating their constitutional rights." On Wednesday, [Politico](#)

(7/23, Cohen, 4.29M) reports Sens. Jeff Merkley (D-OR) and Ron Wyden (D-OR), and Reps. Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) and Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR), "requested that the DOJ and DHS OIGs investigate" what they called "the unrequested presence and violent actions of recently deployed federal forces in Portland." [USA Today](#) (7/23, Cummings, 10.31M) and the [Washington Times](#) (7/23, Dinan, 492K), among other news outlets, also report the announcement.

Trump Defends Deployment Of Agents To Portland. President Trump said on [Fox News' Hannity](#) (7/23, 535K), "In Portland, we had to do it because they are anarchists. That is a level people haven't seen. But they are anarchists. They were going wild for 51 days. And we went in and they've done a great job. They were going to rip down the courthouse, a gorgeous federal courthouse. So we went in and we have been very, very strong. ... Mayor Wheeler...made a fool out of himself. He wanted to be among the people, so we went into the crowd and they knock the hell out of him. That was the end of him. So it was pretty pathetic."

Wolf: "We Do Not Need An Invitation" To Deploy Federal Agents. During an appearance on [Fox News](#) (7/23, 1:02 p.m. ET, Kaplan, 1.4M), Acting DHS Secretary Wolf said, "We have the authority to protect the federal courthouse there in Portland. We have the authority to make arrests on individuals that are targeting that courthouse, committing criminal acts against that courthouse, and our law enforcement officers. The law is very clear about this. We do not need an invitation from the governor or the mayor to do that. Just as any other federal law-enforcement agency, such as the FBI, does not need an invitation to go in to investigate a criminal act and make arrests."

Cuccinelli: Federal Officers Protecting Federal Building Not New. Acting DHS Deputy Secretary Ken Cuccinelli appeared on the [Glenn Beck](#) (7/23, 9:10 a.m. ET, 42K) radio program, where he was asked about criticism of federal law enforcement agents in American cities. Cuccinelli said, "There is a little-known agency called the Federal Protective Service that protects thousands of federal properties across the country. They've been protecting me this courthouse at issue in Portland since it was built in 1997. So this is not a new mission, it's a 24/7/365 mission."

Morgan: "Ridiculous" To Say Federal Agents Inciting Violence. Appearing on [Fox Business' Evening Edit](#) (7/23, 6:01 p.m. ET, 148K), CBP Commissioner Morgan was asked about a statement from Joe Biden that the Administration is attacking peaceful protesters and fueling division. Morgan said, "Every single night these criminals have taken over the protests. They meet, organize, plan with the willful intent to destroy federal property and seriously injure federal agents. That is the truth. The federal agents are there under Title 40, USC 13.15, which dictates that the Secretary, not has a choice, he must protect federal buildings. That is what our presence is there for. To say the presence of federal agents doing their statutory responsibility is inciting violence is ridiculous."

PROTESTS

Trump, Lightfoot Discussed Plans To Deploy Federal Agents In Chicago.

The [New York Post](#) (7/23, Woods, 4.57M) reports President Trump called Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot on Wednesday evening "to confirm his plans to send 200 federal agents to the city to combat" what he called "a rampage of violence." In a statement obtained by the [Chicago Sun-Times](#) (7/23, Sweet, 875K), the Mayor's office said Trump "reached out to Mayor Lightfoot this evening to confirm that he plans to send federal resources to Chicago to supplement ongoing federal investigations pertaining to violent crime." The statement said the call was "brief and straightforward."

Lightfoot, the [Washington Free Beacon](#) (7/23, Nester, 78K) reports, "suggested at a press conference on Wednesday that...Trump is deploying federal officers to cities because their mayors are Democratic women." Said the Mayor, "The president has been on a campaign now for some time against Democratic mayors across the country. Whether it's me, whether it's

Keisha Lance Bottoms in Atlanta, whether it's Muriel Bowser in Washington, D.C., whether it's Jenny Durkan in Seattle. You see a common theme here?" The [Washington Examiner](#) (7/23, Mastrangelo, 448K) also reports her comments.

The [Chicago Tribune](#) (7/23, Sturm, 2.65M), meanwhile, details the Justice Department's Operation Legend under which federal agents are "surged" into select cities, including Chicago. A [Washington Post](#) (7/23, Zapotosky, Gowen, 14.2M) analysis of the operation, which it says "in any other administration, might have been largely seen as inoffensive for a city that has experienced a massive spike in homicides from the prior year. But the timing...could hardly be worse" in "no small part because of Trump's politically charged rhetoric."

Asked on [Fox News' America's Newsroom](#) (7/23, 10:02 a.m. ET, 1.59M) about resistance by local leaders, White House Press Secretary Kayleigh McEnany said, "The responsibility that Mayor Lightfoot is not doing in patrolling her streets and securing her city and she should admit she needs the help of the federal government." When asked if this is an attempt to deflect attention from COVID-19, McEnany said: "That's absolutely not the case. This President has been very clear for four years that violent crime is a priority. We saw it going up at the end of the Obama Administration. As the Attorney General said yesterday, finally it started to come down under President Trump's Administration and now with the defund the police movement we're seeing it creep back up. This is about protecting the American citizenry. The top priority of this President."

Activist Groups Sue To Block Federal Agents From Making Arrests In Chicago.

The [AP](#) (7/23, Foody) reports that "a collection of Chicago activist groups want a judge to block federal agents sent to the city to combat violent crime from interfering in or policing protests, arguing in a lawsuit filed Thursday that the surge ordered by President Donald Trump will inhibit residents' ability to hold demonstrations." The suit names Attorney General Barr "along with the heads of other federal agencies whose agents are part of the surge plan announced at the White House on Wednesday." The lawsuit "also asks a judge to prevent agents in Chicago from making arrests or detaining people without probable cause, along with requiring agents to identify themselves and their agency and explain why someone is being arrested."

The [Chicago Sun-Times](#) (7/23, Schuba, Dudek, 875K) reports the suit was filed by "Black Lives Matter Chicago and other social justice groups."

[The Hill](#) (7/23, Wise, 2.98M) reports that the complaint, "filed in Illinois federal court, calls for a judge to issue an injunction blocking the federal government from directing officers to take part in the policing of peaceful demonstrations. It also asks that the court mandate that officers refrain from arresting individuals in the city without probable cause and to require that agents identify themselves before detaining anyone."

Lightfoot To Remove Christopher Columbus Statue From Grant Park. The [Chicago Tribune](#) (7/23, Pratt, Nickeas, 2.65M) reports Mayor Lightfoot is "planning to remove the controversial statue of Christopher Columbus from Chicago's Grant Park as soon as Thursday night, in part to avoid another high-profile confrontation between police and protesters like the one that happened last week, sources told the Tribune."

MSNBC's Heilemann: Troop Deployment "Trial Run" For Trump To Steal Election.

Matt Vespa writes for [Townhall](#) (7/23, 177K) that "given the Trump derangement syndrome that has infected the liberal media, it's no shocker that some think this is a preview of the military takeover...that's never going to happen. MSNBC's John Heilemann said that the deployment of federal agents into crime-ridden, Democratic-run cities was a 'trial run' for Trump to steal the 2020 election."

Fox's Faulkner Challenges Commentator To Name GOP-Led City Hit By Protests.

The [Daily Caller](#) (7/23, Kruta, 716K) reports Fox News anchor Harris Faulkner "challenged" commentator Marie Harf "to name one Republican-led city where widespread violence was as bad as in a number of Democrat-led cities" on Thursday's "Outnumbered." Harf "responded by saying that it was 'unfair' to say that those mayors did not care about their citizens and claiming that President Donald Trump was targeting Democrat-led cities for political reasons."

WPost: Deployment Of Federal Agents Politically Motivated. The [Washington Post](#) (7/23, 14.2M) editorializes that the announcement this week of the deployment of federal agents to additional US cities is an attempt by the President "to reframe the election as about anything but his abject failure to contain the most catastrophic public health crisis in a century." The Post argues that "by justifying the move in inflammatory partisan terms...he makes clear his real agenda" and "it has nothing to do with violent crime, and everything to do with his reelection."

Op-Ed: Trump Right To Send Federal Law Enforcement Workers To Chicago, Other Cities. Former Acting Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Director and current Fox News contributor Tom Homan argues in an online [Fox News](#) (7/23, 27.59M) (7/23, 27.59M) op-ed that President Trump's decision to try and reduce violent crime by sending federal law enforcement workers to Chicago and some other US cities "will save lives." Homan stresses that Trump, who "is sending in highly trained" individuals from the DEA, the FBI and some other federal law enforcement organizations, "does not want to prevent lawful peaceful protests, which are protected by our Constitution."

Detroit Officials Would Welcome Federal Help To Combat Gun Crimes.

The [AP](#) (7/23) reports, "The federal government wants to help Detroit fight violent crime, not patrol streets in search of protesters, city officials said Thursday." Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan "said Detroit hasn't experienced the protest-related violence seen in other cities. He said he and police Chief James Craig 'are comfortable' that any agents coming to the city will not be under the Department of Homeland Security. 'We haven't had the looting. We haven't had the fires, which you've seen in other cities,' the mayor said. 'I've never seen as many illegal guns on the streets as we have today. If they want to have more ATF officers dealing with the illegal trafficking of guns, that would be a welcome contribution.'"

The [Detroit Free Press](#) (7/23, Baldas, 1.52M) reports, "The White House says federal agents are coming to Detroit in the next few weeks as part of a broader effort to help crime-ridden cities fight escalating violence," but "it's not about the ongoing Black Lives Matter protests, Chief James Craig stressed. It's about a plan that was coordinated months ago to fight violent crime. 'There are no Homeland Security agents coming here to man protests,' Craig said to the Free Press Thursday. 'They are not here to do anything with protesters. This is not Portland. This is not Seattle.'" Craig "sought to quell rumors that federal agents are coming to Detroit to take on anti-police brutality protests in the wake of George Floyd's death in Minneapolis. His comments also clarify remarks that the White House posted on its website late Wednesday about President Trump's initiative to fight inner city violence."

Trump To Send Federal Agents To Milwaukee To Combat Violence.

The [Milwaukee Journal Sentinel](#) (7/23, Spicuzza, 632K) reports Milwaukee is "one of five cities that will see a surge in federal resources to address violent crime in coming weeks, President Donald Trump announced this week." The deployment "will coincide with Milwaukee hosting a scaled-back, mostly virtual Democratic National Convention and ongoing protests against police brutality and racism."

Cleveland Officials To Address Federal Intervention.

The [Cleveland Plain Dealer](#) (7/23, Astolfi, 895K) reports, "Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson will hold a Friday press conference to address a decision by President Donald Trump to send federal law enforcement agents into the city of Cleveland to combat crime." Jackson "will hold the conference at 11:30 a.m., along with Cleveland Police Chief Calvin Williams, and Safety Director Karrie Howard. The mayor made the announcement one day after the Trump administration said Cleveland would be among a handful of U.S. cities that will see a surge in federal agents as part of an expansion of 'Operation LeGend,' a program the White House said is intended to 'restore safety and peace in U.S. cities.' Other cities include Detroit, Milwaukee, Chicago,

Albuquerque and Kansas City. The Trump administration is sending agents with the FBI, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the U.S. Marshals Service and the Department of Homeland Security to various cities."

FBI Announces Arrest In Burning Of Salt Lake City Police Car.

[KTVX-TV](#) Salt Lake City (7/23, Verdadeiro) reports from Salt Lake City, Utah, "FBI Special Agent in Charge Paul Haertel and U.S. Attorney for Utah John Huber announced an arrest of one of the suspects in the arson of a police car during the May 30th protests in Salt Lake City." KTVX-TV adds, "Agent Haertel said that on May 30th they saw people hijack what was a peaceful and lawful protest to 'incite violence and damage property.' He stated that rather than join in the pursuit of equality and justice they sought to undermine the greater message." Haertel "said that on Friday, July 17th members of the JTTF located one of those suspects. Christopher Rojas as he left his apartment and got into an Uber. They were able to take Rojas into custody following a traffic stop. He said the investigation is not over and the FBI is still looking for the other individual who set fire to the police car."

[KTVX-TV](#) Salt Lake City (7/23, Francis) reports, "A police brutality protest suddenly turned violent that Saturday afternoon when several people surrounded an SLCPD cruiser at the intersection of 400 South and 200 East and after the officer fled, overturned it, and set it on fire. 'May 30th of 2020 was a dark day in Utah,' United States Attorney John Huber said during a news conference. 'It's a day that opportunists and extremists hijacked a peaceful protest and overran the typically safe streets of Salt Lake City.'" KTVX-TV adds, "In the days since five people were arrested for overturning the patrol car and FBI agents sought two other men for lighting a piece of cloth and putting it inside. Agents poured over videos to capture still photos of the masked suspects and offered a reward for information on them. 'It was a responsible civilian who tipped police and the FBI as to Rojas' identity,' Attorney Huber said."

Wolf: Federal Agents Are Needed In Portland Due To Local Officials' Failures.

The [Washington Post](#) (7/23, Barrett, 14.2M) reports Acting DHS Secretary Wolf indicated Thursday that the agency is "not sending more federal agents to other cities to secure federal courthouses." Wolf is quoted as saying, "We are not sending any other DHS law enforcement officers to guard federal courthouses like we are in Portland. Why? Because every other city in America knows if you work with the federal government, you can secure your city." Wolf "also accused Portland's mayor, Ted Wheeler (D), of aligning himself with violent criminals" after Wheeler "went to speak to protesters outside the Portland federal courthouse Wednesday night." Wolf said, "The mayor chose to go to that violent activity. He has legitimized criminal behavior by doing that."

Asked on [CBS This Morning](#)^{Vi} (7/23, 2.33M) if agents in Portland are "inflaming the situation," Wolf said, "No, absolutely not. What we know is before DHS law enforcement, civil law enforcement officers arrived in Portland, the mayor is on record as saying that the city...had a certain level of violence. It was ongoing for a month before we arrived. The mayor's been outspoken on that. So just as it was before DHS arrived, it was very violent. And it continues to be violent. ... There are both peaceful protesting going on in Portland and then very violent, criminal activity going on in Portland."

[USA Today](#) (7/23, Hughes, 10.31M) reports Wheeler warned, "President Trump needs to focus on coronavirus and get his troops out of the city. My biggest fear is that somebody's going to die. I want them to leave. This is going to come to a city near you if we don't stop it."

The [AP](#) (7/23, Flaccus) reports that on Wednesday night, Wheeler was "tear-gassed by U.S. government agents as he stood outside [the] federal courthouse during another night of protests." [ABC World News Tonight](#)^{Vi} (7/23, story 6, 0:30, Muir, 6.89M) reported Wheeler called the tactics "flat-out urban warfare, telling the New York Times he saw nothing to provoke that response." [NBC Nightly News](#)^{Vi} (7/23, story 6, 1:30, Holt, 5.52M) reported Wheeler, "who is also Portland's police commissioner, was booed by protesters."

The [New York Times](#) (7/23, Baker, 18.61M) reports that as "Wheeler went through the crowds on Wednesday, some threw objects in his direction, and others called for his resignation, chanting, 'Tear Gas Teddy.'" The [Washington Post](#) (7/23, Lang, 14.2M) reports that "for hours before Wheeler's brush with chemical irritants, the mayor made a contentious and, at times, tense attempt to talk with protesters." The [Daily Caller](#) (7/23, Lancaster, 716K), among other news outlets, also reports on Wheeler's appearance Wednesday night at the protests.

President Trump [tweeted](#), "Recently watched failed RINO Tom Ridge, former head of Homeland Security, trying to justify his sudden love of the Radical Left Mayor of Portland, who last night was booed & shouted out of existence by the agitators & anarchists. Love watching pathetic Never Trumpers squirm!"

Portland Suburb Criticized For Raising Black Lives Matter Flag Over City Hall.

The [Washington Times](#) (7/23, Richardson, 492K) reports the Portland suburb of Gresham, Oregon, "has sent ripples through the community by flying a Black Lives Matter flag over city hall." The flag was raised July 15 "on a flagpole below the Oregon state flag following a unanimous vote of the city council."

Portland NAACP President: Protests Have Turned Into "Spectacle." E.D.

Mondainé, President of the Portland branch of the NAACP, argues in the [Washington Post](#) (7/23, 14.2M) that the protests in Portland "and around the country had a very specific origin" – the killing of George Floyd. Unfortunately, Mondainé writes, "spectacle" is "now the best way to describe Portland's protests."

Albuquerque Mayor Rejects Deployment Of Federal Agents.

[Reuters](#) (7/23, Hay, Layne) reports that "even as Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot said she would accept...Trump's plan to send a 'surge' of federal agents to fight violent crime in Democratic-led cities," Albuquerque Mayor Tim Keller "has rejected the deployment outright." In a statement, Keller said, "We won't sell out our city for a bait and switch excuse to send secret police to Albuquerque. Operation Legend is not real crime fighting; it's politics standing in the way of police work and makes us less safe."

APOA President: Expansion Of Anti-Crime Operation Will Help Albuquerque.

An online [Fox News](#) (7/23, 27.59M) (7/23, 27.59M) report says President Trump has announced that a federal anti-crime operation will be expanded to Albuquerque, New Mexico. Fox News interviewed Albuquerque Police Officers' Association (APOA) President Shaun Willoughby, who welcomed the announcement because it means federal law enforcement will be working in partnership with local law enforcement "to really combat violent crime. The irony behind what's going on is we're already working with these folks. We already have partnerships with the DEA and the Secret Service and the FBI." A video clip of the Willoughby interview segment accompanies the online Fox News story.

Administration Sending Tactical Team To Seattle.

The [New York Times](#) (7/23, Kanno-Youngs, Goldman, Baker, 18.61M) reports that amid "outrage over the presence of federal agents in Portland," the Administration is sending a team to Seattle. The Special Response Team being deployed "is similar to the tactical teams currently operating in Portland," where "local officials have vehemently objected to their efforts." Seattle officials have "also said they do not want federal agents sent to target protesters."

Minnesota Lawmakers Reach Deal On Police Reform.

The [Minneapolis Star Tribune](#) (7/23, Van Oot, Bierschbach, 1.04M) reports, "Twenty-five days after George Floyd's death by Minneapolis police, top lawmakers in Minnesota's divided Legislature came together...for their first substantive talks on police reform." On Thursday, Gov. Tim Walz (D) signed "a bill ushering in some of the most substantial changes to law enforcement and police accountability in a generation, sweeping legislation that cleared both chambers with broad bipartisan support." The new law, which takes effect Aug. 1, includes

"bans on chokeholds and warrior-style trainings, a duty for officers to intervene in misconduct, and changes to provide more data and independent oversight on police matters."

Cuomo: Trump's "Concerns About New York City Were Well-Founded."

The [Washington Times](#) (7/23, Chasmar, 492K) reports New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo (D) "acknowledged Wednesday that President Trump's concerns about skyrocketing violence in New York City were 'well-founded,' though he rejected the president's proposal to send federal law enforcement officers into the city." Cuomo told MSNBC's Andrea Mitchell he told Trump during a call Tuesday, "I said to the President that I understand the issues in New York City. And there are issues in New York City, as there are in many cities across the country. And if there was a need, the state would step in, which is the normal protocol, governmental protocol. And I was ready, willing and able to step in. But I think the federal involvement – there's no justification for it, and it would be counter-productive."

NYPD Chief Tells Officers: "We Can't Be Afraid." The [New York Post](#) (7/23, Moore, Golding, 4.57M) reports NYPD Chief Terence Monahan "exploded in anger during a CompStat meeting Thursday," telling police brass: "We can't be afraid of doing what we do!" in video obtained by The Post shows. Monahan "erupted when a deputy told him that cops were worried about a controversial new city law that in part makes it a crime to kneel on a suspect's chest or back while making an arrest." Monahan is quoted as saying, "We can't be afraid."

NY16 Candidate Bowman: "The Police Literally Beat The Crap Out Of Me." [CQ Roll Call](#) (7/23, McGrady, 154K) reports that when Jamaal Bowman, the Democratic nominee in NY16, "says he wants to end police brutality and overhaul law enforcement procedures in America, it's not just an abstract policy position." Bowman "has a long history with police officers treating him roughly," which he says began when he was just 11 years old. Bowman recalls, "The police literally beat the crap out of me just because I was playing with my friends, loud and boisterous, and didn't acquiesce to what they were asking us to do."

As Cuts Begin, LAPD Chief Tells Troops To "Show Your Relevance."

The [Los Angeles Times](#) (7/23, Chang, 4.64M) reports that "during a recent meeting with officers from the elite but troubled Metropolitan Division, Los Angeles Police Chief Michel Moore offered support for their crime-fighting mission, but also a warning he'd previously shared with command staff." With "significant reductions in the force looming, every unit is under a microscope – and must prove its worth." Moore told staff, "Show your relevance." In an interview with the Times, Moore said, "We need to look at how we police the city with the scant resources that we have, and determine how we can find alternatives if our current practices aren't going to continue to work."

Charlamagne Tha God Criticizes Biden For Labeling Trump First Racist President.

[Fox News](#) (7/23, Wulfsohn, 27.59M) reports on its website that radio host Charlamagne Tha God "blasted" Joe Biden on Thursday for calling President Trump the "first" racist president to be elected. Said Charlamagne, "Old white male leadership has failed America and there is nothing worse than an old white male [who] can't recognize the faults and flaws of other old white males. Racism is the American way. Donald Trump is not the first. And sadly, he won't be the last, right? He's just more overt with his racism than most presidents in recent times."

PolitiFact Silent After Planned Parenthood Repudiates Founder's Racism.

The [Washington Free Beacon](#) (7/23, Piro, 78K) reports, "PolitiFact is not saying whether its 'fact-check' claiming Planned Parenthood founder Margaret Sanger was not racist still holds up in light of the organization's largest affiliate admitting Sanger had racist views." The fact-check, published on Oct. 5, 2015, stated, "While Sanger indeed supported the eugenics movement, substantial evidence shows that she was not racist and in fact worked closely with black leaders

and health care professionals." PolitiFact "did not respond to requests for comment on updating the fact-check."

Kristan Hawkins, President of Students for Life of America, argues in a [USA Today](#) (7/23, 10.31M) op-ed that "for those identifying historical figures with racist roots who should be removed from public view because of their evil histories...Sanger must join that list." Noting that Sanger "is honored in the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery," at Margaret Sanger Square in Manhattan, and "a Margaret Sanger statue stands in the Old South Meeting House in Boston," Hawkins calls for them to be taken down.

DC's NFL Team To Temporarily Rebrand As "Washington Football Team."

[Axios](#) (7/23, Rummier, 521K) reports Washington's NFL team will temporarily rebrand as the "Washington Football Team" for the 2020 season until a new name is agreed upon.

WSJournal: Leaked Letter By Employees Will Not Diminish Editorial Page's Independence.

On its editorial page, the [Wall Street Journal](#) (7/23, Subscription Publication, 7.57M) thanks readers who expressed their support after a letter signed by 280 Wall Street Journal employees to its publisher criticizing the opinion pages was leaked. The Journal also reassures its readers that the editorial page writers' independence will not be impacted.

COUNTER-TERRORISM

Georgia Man Sentenced For Planning White House Attack.

The [Gainesville \(GA\) Times](#) (7/23, 81K) reports Hasher Jallal Taheb, who "pleaded guilty to attempted destruction of government property by fire or explosive," was "sentenced Thursday in U.S. District Court" to 15 years in prison. He was "arrested on Jan. 16, 2019, during a meeting with undercover FBI special agents at a store in Buford where he expected to obtain semi-automatic assault rifles, explosive devices and an anti-tank weapon."

The [AP](#) (7/23) reports that, according to federal prosecutors, Taheb "had made clear that his 'goal in acquiring numerous weapons and explosives to attack the White House was to 'do as much damage as possible,' to become a 'martyr,' to fight to the end and make a big bang, to enter the White House and take down as many people as possible."

The [Forsyth \(GA\) News](#) (7/23, 40K) reports that the FBI investigation "found that Taheb had applied for a U.S. passport three months later, in June 2018, and that he wanted to participate in 'jihad' by attacking prominent U.S. monuments, first the White House and Statue of Liberty and later others in the Washington area, including the Washington Monument, Lincoln Memorial and a synagogue."

9/11 Families Ask Barr For Access To Saudi Lawsuit Records.

[Florida Bulldog](#) (7/23, Christensen) reports, "Thousands of 9/11 family members sent a letter to U.S. Attorney General William Barr on Tuesday demanding access to up to 25,000 pages of government documents kept from them in their lawsuit against Saudi Arabia but turned over to attorneys defending accused 9/11 terrorists being held at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba." The letter "contends those documents identify 'multiple witnesses who transported two of the hijackers to Los Angeles International Airport, information about the terrorist support cell in California during the time of the plot and pictures identifying members of this support cell.'" Also on Tuesday, "Florida Bulldog and The New Yorker reporter Dexter Filkins sent a letter to presiding Judge George B. Daniels asking that he unseal court records filed this month by lawyers for the plaintiffs."

ISIS Group Claims Responsibility For Killing Five Aid Workers In Nigeria.

The [AP](#) (7/23, Larson) reports "militants from an Islamic State affiliate claimed responsibility Thursday for killing five aid workers who were kidnapped last month in northeastern Nigeria." The Islamic State West Africa Province, "which broke away from Boko Haram several years ago, warned in June that it would target Nigerians working for international aid agencies along with those who helped the military. Nigeria's president already had blamed the extremists for the slayings."

In Interview, British ISIS Members Admit To Holding Americans Captive.

On [NBC Nightly News](#) (7/23, story 10, 2:30, Holt, 5.52M), Richard Engel reported, "It's been nearly six years since the kidnapping and savage murders by ISIS of American aid workers Kayla Mueller and Peter Kosik, and journalists Stephen Sotoloff and James Foley." In an exclusive interview, "new details about their captivity from two of the ISIS members who held them and other hostages." The two men, "now in US custody in Iraq, were part of the ISIS terror cell nicknamed the Beatles for their British accents. They claim they didn't participate in torture and executions, but do admit abuse." Engel said the case against the two "has been held up with a British court ruling the US won't get crucial evidence from British investigators unless the death penalty is off the table. ... American officials tell NBC News, the US is determined to arrange for the two men to face charges in an American courtroom."

[NBC News](#) (7/23, 6.14M) reports the two men "for the first time admitted their involvement in the captivity of Kayla, an aid worker who was tortured and sexually abused before her death in 2015." Elsheikh "got into more detail, saying, 'I took an email from her myself,' meaning he got an email address the Islamic State militant group could use to demand ransom from the family. 'She was in a large room, it was dark, and she was alone, and ... she was very scared.'" In one email reviewed by NBC News, ISIS "demanded the Muellers pay 5 million euros and threatened that if the demands weren't met, they would send the family 'a picture of Kayla's dead body.'"

UN Report Warns ISIS Exploiting Coronavirus Security Gaps To Relaunch Insurgency.

[CNN](#) (7/23, Cruickshank, Analyst, 83.16M) reports that, according to a report submitted to the UN Security Council that was made public on Thursday, there has been "a significant rise in ISIS attacks in Iraq and Syria, with the group exploiting security gaps in Iraq caused by the coronavirus pandemic to relaunch and invigorate its rural insurgency in the country." The wide-ranging report, "put together by the UN monitoring team that tracks the global jihadi terror threat, states that the group is consolidating in Iraq and Syria and 'showing confidence in its ability to increasingly operate in a brazen manner in its former core area.'" It states that the "number of ISIS attacks in Iraq and Syria 'increased significantly in early 2020 as compared with the same period in 2019.'"

IS Prisoner Issue A Ticking Time Bomb For The West.

[BBC News Online \(UK\)](#) (7/24, 1.02M) reports the latent danger "posed by thousands of defeated and captured fighters who joined the Islamic State (IS) group is festering and growing in the squalid, overcrowded prison camps of north-east Syria, where riots and attempted breakouts are becoming commonplace." IS has "vowed to liberate them, along with their wives and dependents, while a people-smuggling network is reportedly being put together using bribery to secure covert releases." When IS lost the "last of its self-declared caliphate at Baghuz in Syria in March 2019 thousands of its surviving members were rounded up and interned indefinitely in camps run by the Syrian Kurds who had fought them."

COUNTER-INTELLIGENCE

DNI Declassifies Document Showing FBI Used Trump's Candidate Briefing To Advance Russia Probe.

[Politico](#) (7/23, Cheney, Desiderio, 4.29M) reports that, according to a newly declassified document obtained by POLITICO, President Trump's first intelligence briefing "as a candidate in August 2016 was led by FBI agents who had just opened an investigation into his team's ties to Russia." The document, "a seven-page summary of Trump's intelligence briefing by the agent who helped lead it, was filed as part of the so-called Crossfire Hurricane probe, the codename for the bureau's broader Russia investigation." DNI Ratcliffe "declassified the document, along with two others, on Thursday and sent them to Sens. Ron Johnson (R-WI) and Chuck Grassley (R-IA), who have been investigating the origins of the probe." The documents are the "latest in a series of disclosures by Ratcliffe to congressional Republicans seeking to support claims by Trump and his allies that the FBI investigation of Trump was politically motivated and corrupt." The [Washington Times](#) (7/23, Scarborough, 492K) reports a Republican congressional source said, "Every part of this FBI investigation stunk to high heaven, and it turns out even the defensive briefing of Trump was part of that investigation." President Trump told Fox News host Sean Hannity, "They spied on the campaign ... never been done before. They spied on the other campaign using intelligence."

[Fox News](#) (7/23, Singman, 27.59M) reports the document "reflects type-written notes by FBI agent Joe Pientka after an August 17, 2016 briefing to then-candidate Donald Trump, Michael Flynn and Chris Christie, 'in support of ODNI briefings provided to US Presidential candidates and two of their advisors.'" The [Daily Caller](#) (7/23, Ross, 716K) reports Joseph Pientka, an FBI supervisory special agent, "conducted the briefing." The Justice Department's inspector general "criticized the FBI for sending an agent into the briefing, saying that it could erode trust that presidential candidates have in future dealings with the FBI." Pientka, "who was one of the top agents on Crossfire Hurricane, developed the briefing materials in coordination with Peter Strzok, the lead investigator on the Trump-Russia probe." Kevin Clinesmith, an FBI lawyer "found to have altered an email related to Carter Page, also worked on the plan to use Pientka in the briefing," according to the memo.

The [Washington Examiner](#) (7/23, Dunleavy, 448K) reports Pientka quotes himself as telling Trump, Flynn, and Christie, "I will provide you with a counterintelligence and security brief that will give you a baseline on the methodology used by Foreign Intelligence Services to the detriment of U.S. National Security. In addition, this brief will advise you that if you are not already a target of a Foreign Intelligence Service, due to the fact that you are receiving this classified briefing, you will be." DOJ Inspector General Michael Horowitz "previously testified that this briefing was a 'pretext' to gather evidence on the candidate and his foreign policy adviser to help in their counterintelligence investigation." Pientka's notes "were categorized under 'Foreign Agents Registration Act - Russia, Sensitive Investigative Matter.'"

CNN, BuzzFeed Call Government's Withholding Of Information From Mueller Report "Misconduct."

[Law360](#) (7/23, Subscription Publication, 8K) reports an attorney for CNN and BuzzFeed "claimed during a DC federal court hearing Thursday the federal government's withholding of certain details in witness interview memos produced by special counsel Robert Mueller's probe into Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election was part of its effort to 'paint a one-sided picture' that would discredit the investigation." Charles D. Tobin of Ballard Spahr LLP, counsel for BuzzFeed Inc. and Cable News Network "in their FOIA lawsuits against the US Department of Justice and the FBI, claimed the government redacted certain information from the memos."

Democrats Denounce Packets On Biden Sent To Trump Allies By Ukrainian Lawmaker.

[Politico](#) (7/23, Bertrand, Desiderio, Cheney, 4.29M) reports "top congressional Democrats are sounding the alarm about a series of packets mailed to prominent allies of President Donald Trump - material they say is part of a foreign disinformation plot to damage" Joe Biden, according to "new details from a letter the lawmakers delivered to the FBI last week." These

"packets, described to Politico by two people who have seen the classified portion of the Democrats' letter, were sent late last year" to Sens. Lindsey Graham (R-SC) and Charles Grassley (R-IA), Rep. Devin Nunes (R-CA), and then-White House Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney. Adds Politico, "The packets, the sources said, were sent by Andrii Derkach, a Ukrainian lawmaker who met with Trump's personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani in Kyiv last December to discuss investigating the Biden family."

Trump's Peru Ambassador Nominee Calls Giuliani's Outreach To Pompeo "Deeply Disturbing." [Politico](#) (7/23, Cheney, 4.29M) reports that on Thursday, Lisa Kenna, Secretary of State Pompeo's executive secretary, and "gatekeeper of sorts to his office," told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that "2019 contacts between Pompeo and...Rudy Giuliani - which ultimately led to the ouster of U.S. ambassador to Ukraine Marie Yovanovitch --" were "deeply disturbing." Kenna testified that "she was unaware of the substance of Giuliani's outreach at the time, but now knows it was an effort to discredit Yovanovitch." Kenna, who has been nominated to serve as the US Ambassador to Peru, is quoted as saying, "At the time, I did not know what the documents were about. It's deeply disturbing."

Ex-Flynn Deputy KT McFarland Says Durham Will Issue Indictments In Coming Months.

The [Washington Examiner](#) (7/23, Chaitin, 448K) reports "expect indictments in US Attorney John Durham's criminal inquiry into the Russia investigation by summer's end." That's what K.T. McFarland, a onetime deputy to former White House national security adviser Michael Flynn, "said this week on Fox News, referring to the emergence of 'cold hard evidence' in the form of documentation." McFarland said on Monday, "Now, there is cold, hard evidence. It turns out that these senior officials in the IC and the FBI, they all took notes. They all texted each other. They all had handwritten notes of meetings. And from what I'm hearing, the Durham investigation and the Justice Department is getting to the point where I think we can expect some indictments before the end of the summer."

DOJ: FBI Interviewing Chinese Visa Holders About Possible Military Ties.

[Reuters](#) (7/23, Lambert) reports the Justice Department said Thursday that the FBI "has interviewed visa holders it believes to secretly be members of the Chinese military in more than two dozen U.S. cities." In a statement, John Brown, executive assistant director of the FBI's national security branch, said, "In interviews with members of the Chinese People's Liberation Army in over 25 cities across the U.S., the FBI uncovered a concerted effort to hide their true affiliation to take advantage of the United States and the American people."

[USA Today](#) (7/23, Hjelmgaard, 10.31M) reports the Bureau also said it "believes that a Chinese scientist with links to Beijing's military is hiding out in China's consulate in San Francisco in order to evade arrest after she was accused of visa fraud." According to court filings, Tang Juan, "a biology researcher at the University of California, Davis, was questioned by the FBI on June 20 and charged with visa fraud six days later." After being questioned by the FBI, Tang fled to China's San Francisco consulate, "where the FBI assesses she has remained," US prosecutors allege. The [Washington Times](#) (7/23, Tucker, 492K), among other news outlets, also reports the story.

Asked about the possibility of closing the Chinese Consulate in San Francisco on [Fox Business' Varney & Co.](#) (7/23, 10:17 a.m. ET, 1.59M), State Department spokesperson Morgan Ortagus said, "Today, we're just focused on closing of the Houston consulate. ... No further policy actions to announce there."

WTimes Analysis: Chinese Aggression Opening Doors For US. The [Washington Times](#) (7/23, Glenn, 492K) reports that a March port call by the USS Theodore Roosevelt in to Da Nang, Vietnam "may be remembered in the long run as a milestone in a major power shift in Asia." The Roosevelt, "only the second U.S. aircraft carrier to make a port call in Vietnam since the fall of Saigon in 1975, marked 25 years since the two countries normalized diplomatic

relations.” Pentagon officials and “private analysts say the openness about military cooperation between the former enemies is part of a larger reaction by Asian countries to China’s increasingly assertive polices.”

Researchers Find Security Weakness In Popular Chinese Drone App. The [New York Times](#) (7/23, Mozur, Barnes, Krolik, 18.61M) reports, “Cybersecurity researchers revealed on Thursday a newfound vulnerability in an app that controls the world’s most popular consumer drones, threatening to intensify the growing tensions” between China and the US. The researchers “contended that an app on Google’s Android operating system that powers drones made by China-based Da Jiang Innovations, or DJI, collects large amounts of personal information that could be exploited” by Beijing. According to the Times, “hundreds of thousands of customers across the world use the app to pilot” their drones.

NGOs Urge Clothing Companies To Cut Ties With Chinese Suppliers Using Forced Labor. The [New York Times](#) (7/23, Paton, Ramzy, 18.61M) reports that on Thursday, “more than 190 organizations spanning 36 countries issued a call to action, seeking formal commitments from clothing brands to cut all ties with suppliers implicated in Uighur forced labor and to end all sourcing from the Xinjiang region of China in the next twelve months.” [Politico](#) (7/23, Leali, 4.29M) reports that “nearly the whole apparel industry – including brands such as Adidas, H&M, Lacoste, Nike, Ralph Lauren and Zara – is linked to specific cases of forced labor in the region, the NGOs wrote, referring to investigation and reports by governmental agencies, news outlets, think tanks and associations.”

WSJournal Analysis: China Seeking To Expand Hong Kong’s Role As Financial Hub. The [Wall Street Journal](#) (7/23, Yang, Webb, Yoon, Subscription Publication, 7.57M) reports China is hoping to expand Hong Kong’s role as a global financial center.

China Expected To Close A US Consulate In Retaliation For Houston Move. The [AP](#) (7/23) reports on Thursday, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin maintained “that ‘malicious slander’ is behind an order by the U.S. government to close its consulate in Houston.” Said Wang, “This is breaking down the bridge of friendship between the Chinese and American people.”

According to [Reuters](#) (7/23, Wu, Brunnstrom), the South China Morning Post “reported that China may close the U.S. consulate in the southwestern city of Chengdu, while a source told Reuters on Wednesday that China was considering shutting the consulate in Wuhan, where the United States withdrew staff at the start of the coronavirus outbreak.” Hu Xijin, editor of China’s Global Times tabloid, tweeted: “Based on what I know, China will announce countermeasure on Friday Beijing time. One U.S. consulate in China will be asked to close.”

A [New York Times](#) (7/23, Bradsher, Myers, 18.61M) analysis says the Administration’s “broad assault on China has left its leadership with few options that would not threaten a complete breach in relations,” which “could also hurt the Chinese economy when it is already reeling from the coronavirus pandemic and the global fallout.”

Ortagus: Chinese Consulate Was “Epicenter” Of Research Theft. In an appearance on [Fox News’ Fox & Friends](#) (7/23, 7:31 a.m. ET, 1.42M), State Department spokesperson Morgan Ortagus was asked about the decision to order the Chinese consulate in Houston to close. Ortagus said, “They have to close the consulate by 4:00 pm on Friday as ordered by the State Department. And I think it’s important for your viewers to know the reason why we took this action of closing the Houston consulate. We uncovered through our partnership with the FBI and DOJ that Houston was the epicenter of research theft in the United States by the Chinese Communist Party. There things going on like what Chinese call the Thousand Talents Program. This program was specifically designed to recruit Chinese citizens to come to the United States to steal from our research institutions [and] technology companies in the Houston area.”

[Politico](#) (7/23, Bade, 4.29M), meanwhile, reports that Cai Wei, the Chinese Consul General in Houston, “won’t commit to closing the office – a direct threat of defiance to the State

Department's demand that it be shut down by Friday." Said Cai, "Today we are still operating normally, so we will see what will happen tomorrow."

Appearing on [Fox News The Story](#) (7/23, 7:13 p.m. ET, 1.65M), Pompeo was asked about China's refusal to vacate its consulate in Houston. Said Pompeo, "Everyone knows the rules for diplomats, you're only permitted to be there in the diplomatic status with the consent of the host nation. I'm confident, we've had private conversations as well, I'm confident we will proceed in a way that makes clear, it's not okay to use diplomats to engage in industrial espionage, it's not okay to engage in those kinds of behaviors. That's the reason we did it, we did it to protect the American people."

US Diplomats Head To China Amid Tensions. [Reuters](#) (7/23, Pamuk) reports that a "flight bound for Shanghai carrying U.S. diplomats has left the United States as Washington presses ahead with its plan to restaff its mission in China a day after a U.S. order to close the Chinese consulate in Houston sharply escalated tensions." A source "told Reuters the flight, carrying an unspecified number of U.S. diplomats, left Washington on Wednesday evening."

Lawfare Files Lawsuit Against ODNI For Internal Studies To Assess If IC Is Being Compromised.

[Lawfare](#) (7/23) reports that concerns about politicization of intelligence agency assessments, particularly "to corroborate a theory that the coronavirus COVID-19 originated with China," has led Lawfare to the "request two specific sets of data from the ODNI under (FOIA): (1) the results of the IC's internal climate survey, which measures morale and work attitudes across the Department; and (2) the results of the IC's Analytical Objectivity and Process Survey ('AOPS'), which specifically looks at whether intelligence officials feel pressured to reach certain conclusions in their analyses." Both are "narrow and discrete requests for specific information that is not only unclassified but already publicly released in part." But two months later, "even our polite inquiries as to the status of our requests have only been met with radio silence." So earlier today, "we – represented by our friends at Protect Democracy – filed a lawsuit in federal court to compel ODNI to provide the information requested."

ODNI Releases Ethics Guide For AI Technologies.

[The Hill](#) (7/23, Miller, 2.98M) reports that the IC on Thursday released "an 'ethics guide' and framework for how intelligence agencies can responsibly develop and use artificial intelligence (AI) technologies." The IC "wrote in the framework, which digs into the details of the ethics guide, that it was intended to ensure that use of AI technologies matches 'the Intelligence Community's unique mission purposes, authorities, and responsibilities for collecting and using data and AI outputs.'" DNI Ratcliffe said in a statement, "These principles and their accompanying framework will help guide our mission leads and data scientists as they implement technology to solve intelligence problems."

[Federal News Network](#) (7/23, Heckman, 220) reports that the documents "include input from IC data scientists as well as privacy and civil liberties officers, and provide guidance on how agency personnel should develop and use AI and machine learning as part of their intelligence-gathering responsibilities."

[FedScoop](#) (7/23, Mitchell) reports that the pair of documents, new principles and a supporting framework, "aim to set a foundation for how and when members of the IC should use, develop and procure AI applications." Both documents "are meant to ensure 'that our use of this technology always complies with all limits on the authorities of the American people have granted to our agencies to conduct our national security mission,' Ben Huebner, head of ODNI's Office of Civil Liberties, Privacy, and Transparency, told reporters Thursday morning." [C4ISR & Networks](#) (7/23, Eversden) reports that asked "how ODNI will verify that AI projects at intelligence agencies under its purview are following the framework and principles, Huebner pointed to the documentation guidance that could then be accessible by legal counsels, inspectors general, and privacy and civil liberties officers."

[Defense One](#) (7/23, Tucker, 2K) reports Dean Souleles, the chief technology advisor to the PDDNI, "identified five or six areas where intelligence community needs overlap with those of the private sector. Among them are cybersecurity, countering foreign influence operations, and identifying entities 'who are the bad actors of the world that want to do us harm...If you're the world's largest e-commerce vendor on the Internet, you have that same problem, people who want to do harm to your networks, and customers...You need to understand who those actors are and how to characterize them.'"

[Breaking Defense](#) (7/23, Atherton) reports that the six principles, "ranging from privacy to transparency to cybersecurity," provide "an explicit complement to the Pentagon's AI principles put forth by Defense Secretary Mark Esper back in February."

[SIGNAL Magazine](#) (7/23, Ackerman) also runs a report.

IC Juggling Telework, Workforce Flexibilities To Accomplish Classified Work.

[Federal News Network](#) (7/23, Thorton, 220) reports that, within the IC, experiences with remote workplaces "have been more varied." La'Naia Jones, acting CIO for the IC within the ODNI, "said there have...been a few remote classified pilots, but those are few and far between." Jones said, "I don't want to paint the picture, or the mirage, that we have people in the IC that are accessing classified data from home. Because that's just not the case. We're looking at it as what can we do? And within that classified information, what makes it classified? And are there elements and parts or pieces or processes that we can do on a lower classified domain that can mitigate that?" Instead, Jones "said agencies within the IC who primarily handle classified work have embraced factors relying less on technology, and geared more toward the human component."

[C4ISR & Networks](#) (7/23, Eversden) reports DOD's IT shop is "weighing what telework infrastructure and policies implemented in response to the coronavirus pandemic could remain in place when the crisis ends." Peter Ranks, deputy chief information officer for information enterprise, said on a webinar hosted by the Intelligence and National Security Alliance, "There's programs in work now to try and make permanent some of what we authorized going forward." It's a question with which the ODNI is also wrestling. La'Naia Jones, acting chief information officer of the intelligence community, "said that for intel agencies, remote access is 'not really a cut and dry question.'" Jones said, "We're looking at it as, what can we do within that classified data and information, what makes it classified. And are there elements, parts, pieces or processes that we can do on a lower classified domain that can mitigate that?"

Pentagon's UFO Unit Will Make Some Findings Public.

The [New York Times](#) (7/23, Blumenthal, Kean, 18.61M) reports that, "despite Pentagon statements that it disbanded a once-covert program to investigate unidentified flying objects, the effort remains underway - renamed and tucked inside the Office of Naval Intelligence." Pentagon officials "will not discuss the program, which is not classified but deals with classified matters." Yet it appeared last month in "a Senate committee report outlining spending on the nation's intelligence agencies for the coming year." The report "said the program, the Unidentified Aerial Phenomenon Task Force, was 'to standardize collection and reporting' on sightings of unexplained aerial vehicles, and was to report at least some of its findings to the public every six months." While retired officials "involved with the effort...hope the program will seek evidence of vehicles from other worlds, its main focus is on discovering whether another nation, especially any potential adversary, is using breakout aviation technology that could threaten the US."

BLM Review Fast Tracked For Nevada Vanadium Mine.

The [AP](#) (7/23, Sonner) reports that, "invoking President Trump's executive order streamlining environmental reviews of projects critical to US security, federal land managers have launched an expedited permitting process for the first US vanadium mine at a high-desert site in

Nevada." The rare metal has been "used as an alloy to strengthen steel, aluminum and titanium in the construction, auto, aerospace and computer industries but must currently be imported – primarily from Austria, Canada and Russia." The Bureau of Land Management "said in announcing plans earlier this month for the mine's expedited review that US dependence on foreign vanadium 'creates a strategic vulnerability for both the economy and military to adverse government action or other events that can disrupt the supply of this key mineral.'" Vanadium has been "extracted in small amounts in the US but only as a minor byproduct of other mining operations, mostly uranium mines in Utah."

Reality Winner Alleges "Dire" Conditions At Prison Facility Where Leaker Contracted Coronavirus.

The [Washington Times](#) (7/23, Blake, 492K) reports government leaker Reality Leigh Winner "sought reprieve Wednesday from 'dangerous' and 'dire' prison conditions that resulted in her recently contracting the novel coronavirus." Winner, an Air Force veteran and former intelligence contractor, "said inmates at the federal medical prison where she is incarcerated are being denied access to over-the-counter medication to try to fight COVID-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus that has infected herself and hundreds of others serving time at the same facility in Fort Worth, Texas." She also "said that mattresses slept on by sick prisoners subsequently removed from the facility, FMC Carswell, are eventually reused without ever being sanitized." Attorneys for Winner "propose the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals consider her COVID-19 diagnosis and the conditions described in her declaration in determining if she has met her burden to show 'extraordinary and compelling' reasons exist to move forward with her request."

CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS

Federal Judges Rule Against Maxwell's Gag-Order, Documents Requests.

The [AP](#) (7/23) reports, "The judge presiding over the criminal sex abuse case against Jeffrey Epstein's ex-girlfriend, Ghislaine Maxwell, refused Thursday to ban prosecutors or lawyers for alleged victims from commenting publicly." US District Judge Alison J. Nathan "said in a written order that she expects anyone involved in the case to exercise 'great care' to comply with rules designed to ensure a fair trial," but "the judge said she 'will not hesitate to take appropriate action' if circumstances change." Maxwell "is in a Brooklyn federal jail, awaiting trial after pleading not guilty to charges that she procured teenage girls, including a 14-year-old, for Epstein to sexually abuse in the 1990s."

[Reuters](#) (7/23, Stempel) reports that Maxwell "suffered dual setbacks in a U.S. court on Thursday, as a judge authorized the release of new materials related to her, while another judge refused to block prosecutors and lawyers from publicly discussing her criminal case." US District Judge Loretta Preska in Manhattan "directed the release of large portions of more than 80 documents from a 2015 civil lawsuit against Maxwell, the British socialite now facing criminal charges that she lured girls for Epstein, the late financier, to sexually abuse. These documents included flight logs from Epstein's private jets, deposition testimony in 2016 in which Maxwell's lawyers said she was asked about her sex life, and police reports from Palm Beach, Florida, where Epstein had a home."

Former Pennsylvania Congressman Indicted For Voting Fraud.

The [Inquirer \(PA\)](#) (7/23, Roebuck, 347K) reports former Pennsylvania Representative Michael Myers "was charged Thursday with new allegations that he bribed a poll worker to stuff ballot boxes in local elections." The indictment "alleged U.S. Rep. Michael 'Ozzie' Myers, now working as a campaign consultant, paid a South Philadelphia judge of elections to fraudulently add votes to candidates who had hired him to represent him in their races between 2014 and 2016."

[Reuters](#) (7/23, Hosenball) reports Myers "was also charged with bribery of an election official, falsifying records, voting more than once in federal elections and obstruction of justice."

The [AP](#) (7/23) reports Myers "gave cash to elections judge Domenick J. DeMuro, who awaits sentencing after pleading guilty earlier this year to conspiracy to deprive voters of their civil rights and other violations."

The [Washington Post](#) (7/23, Barrett, 14.2M) reports Myers "was one of the most high-profile politicians ensnared in the Abscam investigation, a sting launched by the FBI in which a man pretending to be a wealthy foreign sheikh bribed U.S. politicians in secretly recorded meetings."

[Politico](#) (7/23, Forgey, 4.29M) reports that Myers "was indicted earlier this week on charges of 'conspiring to violate voting rights by fraudulently stuffing the ballot boxes for specific candidates in the 2014, 2015, and 2016 primary elections, bribery of an election official, falsification of records, voting more than once in federal elections, and obstruction of justice,' according to a Justice Department statement." Politico adds that the "indictment comes amid a national debate over mail-in voting and voter fraud ahead of November's general election, which has become complicated significantly by the ongoing coronavirus pandemic."

[CNN](#) (7/23, Kaufman, CNN, 83.16M) also reports.

Continuing Coverage: FBI Increases Reward For Information On Missing Iowa Girl.

[NBC News](#) (7/23, 6.14M) reports that the FBI announced Wednesday an increase in its reward money for information on Breasia Terrell, who "was reported missing on July 10." She "was last seen at a home in Davenport earlier that morning." The FBI is now offering \$10,000 for information that "helps authorities locate Breasia or that leads to the arrest of anyone involved in her disappearance."

[Radio Iowa](#) (7/23) reports FBI Special Agent in Charge Kristi Johnson "says the bureau has assembled agents in Davenport from Waterloo, Des Moines, Omaha and Lincoln, and well as from Washington D.C. and elsewhere."

California Men Indicted For Illegal Possession Of Firearms.

The [Vacaville \(CA\) Reporter](#) (7/23, 50K) reports Michael James White "was charged Thursday with being a felon in possession of a firearm," and Carlos Biviescas "was charged on July 9 with one count of being a felon in possession of ammunition." The defendants "face a maximum statutory penalty of 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine."

Montana Police Investigating Fires At Glacier National Park.

[KRTV-TV](#) Great Falls, MT (7/23, 7K) reports that Glacier National Park officials "are investigating several fire starts in the North Fork area." They "received a report of several wildland fires early Thursday morning which led to a multi-agency response from local county, state, and federal agencies consisting of wildland fire crews, hotshot crews, engine crews, and law enforcement." FBI agents are supporting the investigation.

Missouri Man Sentenced For Sending Digital Threats.

[KSDK-TV](#) St. Louis (7/23, 493K) reports Jeremy Cawthon, who "pleaded guilty to sending numerous threats to Missouri Senator Josh Hawley over Facebook," was "sentenced to 16 months of time already served for making the threats in March and April of 2019." The FBI investigated the case.

Florida Man Arrested For Solicitation Of Minor.

[WFTV-TV](#) Orlando, FL (7/23, Deal, Wilson, 49K) reports Brandon Planas, who is "accused of using Instagram to exchange sexually explicit images with an 11-year-old boy, eventually asking the child to meet for sex," was arrested by FBI agents. The FBI "said records show

Planas convinced the boy to share nude photos and videos of himself and messaged him about meeting for sex.”

Montana Man Pleads Guilty To Child Pornography Production.

[KPAX-TV](#) Missoula, MT (7/23, 1K) reports Billy Dean Smith, who is “accused of making child pornography videos and sending an image to an undercover agent,” pleaded guilty Thursday to the charges. He “faces a minimum mandatory 15-30 years in prison, a \$250,000 fine and five years to life of supervised release.”

Louisiana Man Accused Of Child Pornography Production.

[WBRZ-TV](#) Baton Rouge, LA (7/23, 44K) reports Kristopher Uhrbach was “charged with 450 counts of possession of pornography involving juveniles under the age of 13 and 60 counts of sexual abuse of an animal.” The arrest “was a result of a joint investigation with the Louisiana Bureau of Investigation Cyber Crime Unit, Ascension Parish Sheriff’s Office, Louisiana State Police, Homeland Security Investigations, and Federal Bureau of Investigation.”

FBI Investigating 2019 Murders In New Mexico.

The [Taos \(NM\) News](#) (7/23, 30K) reports that the FBI is continuing its investigation into the murders of Antonio “Tony” Romero and his son, Buck Romero, who were “found murdered at a Taos Pueblo residence on June 1, 2019.” The FBI “is offering a reward of up to \$5,000 for information ‘that leads to the arrest and conviction of the person or persons responsible’ for the homicides.”

Federal Agent Facing Charges In Illegal Prescription Painkiller Distribution Case.

The [AP](#) (7/23) (7/23) reports federal prosecutors are alleging that a “federal agent used his position to help” Jorge Diaz Gutierrez run an illegal prescription painkiller distribution operation in Florida. The illegal activity allegedly occurred when Special Agent Alberico Ahas Crespo “served on a healthcare fraud task force while working for the Office of Inspector General with the Department of Health and Human Services.” Crespo and Diaz Gutierrez “were charged this week with conspiring to distribute Oxycodone, obstructing justice and making false statements to the FBI.” The [WFOR-TV](#) Miami (7/23) Miami (7/23) website publishes a similar article.

Defendant Gets Five Years In Prison For Participating In Cocaine Trafficking Conspiracy.

In online coverage, [WENY-TV](#) Elmira, NY (7/23, Jaquith, 1K) Elmira, NY (7/23, Jaquith, 1K) reports Ithaca resident Robert Payne “will serve five years in prison after officials found he participated in a cocaine trafficking conspiracy.” Rayne, who received that sentence this week, “must also serve four years supervised release and forfeit to the government \$112,500 in proceeds from his drug trafficking activity.” The Payne “case was investigated by the US Drug Enforcement Administration, the FBI, New York State Police, the Onondaga County Sheriff’s Office, and the Onondaga County District Attorney’s Office.” The [Ithaca \(NY\) Voice](#) (7/23) (7/23), the [Ithaca \(NY\) Journal](#) (7/23, 15K) (7/23, 15K), and the [WHCU-AM](#) Ithaca, NY (7/23, 751) Ithaca, NY (7/23, 751) website also cover this story.

Washington State Man Indicted For Murders.

[Indian Country Today](#) (7/23) reports U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Washington William D. Hyslop “announced that a federal grand jury returned an indictment Tuesday, charging Edward Charles Robinson Jr. with two counts of first degree murder, and one count of assault with a dangerous weapon.” FBI agents “arrested Robinson [Wednesday] and the United States will seek his detention pending a trial.”

Michigan Man Sentenced Over Lying To The FBI.

[MLive \(MI\)](#) (7/23, 925K) reports Michael Bourquin, who "was convicted after he admitted to telling the FBI that a motorcycle gang had targeted former Detroit U.S. Attorney Barbara McQuade in 2017," successfully appealed his sentence after the court "ruled last week the sentence – which exceed guidelines because of the cost to the federal government – could not exceed those guidelines because the government failed to provide detailed proof of the costs."

FBI Takes Over Michigan Murder Investigation.

[MLive \(MI\)](#) (7/23, 925K) reports that the FBI "is now investigating the death of a woman whose burned body was found at a state recreation area in Oakland County last week." Susie Zhou "was found dead and burned near a parking area at Pontiac State Recreation Area near Waterford on July 13," and she "was last seen by her parents on July 12."

[New York Post](#) (7/23, Lapin, 4.57M) also reports.

Former Army Scout Indicted For Creating IED In Texas.

[Army Times](#) (7/23, Rempfer, 346K) reports former US Army cavalry scout Joshua Colin Honigberg "was charged with one count of unlawful possession of a destructive device found by FBI agents and local police officers when they executed a search warrant on his Austin apartment on May 29." The IED "was comprised of a plastic hard case locked in the closed position by a padlock," and it "contained multiple explosive charges with fusing systems and multiple pieces of metal fragmentation."

[KXAN-TV](#) Austin, TX (7/23, 495K) reports Honigberg "is charged with one count of unlawful possession of a destructive device," and he "could face up to 10 years in federal prison."

Michigan Man Charged With Robbing Casino Patrons.

The [Detroit News](#) (7/23, 825K) reports John Christopher Colletti has been indicted over his alleged role in a \$100,000 robbery at the MGM Grand on May 23, 2019. The indictment says Colletti "used a prosthetic face mask and other disguises to pose as an elderly gambler," and he "targeted casino patrons enrolled in a VIP program that lets gamblers obtain cash advances from kiosks installed inside casinos." He is being held in Kansas until his extradition is approved.

[Fox News](#) (7/23, McFall, 27.59M) reports that the investigation "led investigators to a shortage unit that contained 48 falsified driver's licenses, mannequin heads used to prop up prosthetic masks and hundreds of receipts to the MGM Grand casino."

Continuing Coverage: Colorado Man Charged With Hate Crime Over Attack On Sikh Man.

The [Colorado Public Radio](#) (7/23, Ortega, 3K) reports Eric Breemen, who is "accused of running over a Sikh man outside a Lakewood liquor store in April," has "been charged with a hate crime and is set to go to court on Friday."

Continuing Coverage: California Police Searching For Missing Toddler.

The [Daily Beast](#) (7/23, 1.39M) reports that California police "continued their desperate search for a special needs toddler who has been missing for over a week--a feat more difficult now that his parents have 'stopped cooperating' with investigators." Thaddeus Sran "was reported missing on July 15 after his parents said he vanished from their home in Madera, about 30 minutes outside Fresno."

FBI Arrests 10 Texans Following Undercover Sting Operation.

[KTSM-TV](#) El Paso, TX (7/23) reports that the Federal Bureau of Investigation El Paso Division "said it has arrested 10 people for allegedly trying to engage in sexual activity with minors in

separate incidents." The arrests were part of Operation Cerberus, which was an undercover sting operation that "occurred from July 17- 19, 2020."

Continuing Coverage: FBI Investigating Colorado Bank Robberies.

The [Denver Post](#) (7/23, 720K) reports that the FBI "is asking for help identifying the so-called 'Double Dipper Bandit,' who is responsible for at least five bank robberies in Aurora, two at already-robbed banks." The suspect "is described as a thin white man between 30 and 40 years old and about 6-foot-0."

FINANCIAL CRIME & CORPORATE SCANDALS

Cohen Released From Prison, Judge Says He Was Retaliated Against.

[ABC World News Tonight](#)^{Vi} (7/23, story 9, 0:15, Muir, 6.89M) reported that "the President's former fixer, Michael Cohen, is moving from prison back to home confinement" after a judge's finding that "the Justice Department abruptly sent Cohen back to prison as retaliation for writing a book about President Trump due out this fall." Cohen, said [NBC Nightly News](#)^{Vi} (7/23, story 7, 0:20, Holt, 5.52M), "will serve the rest of his sentence for campaign finance violations at home." The [Los Angeles Times](#) (7/23, Megerian, 4.64M) indicates that "the startling accusation by the judge, who ordered officials to release Cohen on Friday, provided the latest accusation that government lawyers have been serving the president's personal interests, and it raised concerns that the administration was attempting to silence an adversary in an election year."

The [AP](#) (7/23, Neumeister) reports that on Thursday, US District Judge Alvin K. Hellerstein ruled that Cohen's First Amendment rights "were violated when he was ordered back to prison on July 9 after probation authorities said he refused to sign a form banning him from publishing the book or communicating publicly in other manners. ... 'How can I take any other inference than that it's retaliatory?' Hellerstein asked prosecutors, who insisted in court papers and again Thursday that Probation Department officers did not know about the book when they wrote a provision of home confinement that severely restricted Cohen's public communications."

On its website, [CNBC](#) (7/23, Mangan, 3.62M) quotes Hellerstein as saying, "I've never seen such a clause, in 21 years in being a judge and sentencing people." According to CNBC, "At one point, when another prosecutor tried to come to the aid of the prosecutor who was answering the judge's questions, Hellerstein angrily cut him off, reminding him of the rule that only one lawyer argued for each side in a case." Hellerstein said "the purpose of transferring Mr. Cohen from furlough and home confinement to jail is retaliatory, and it's retaliatory because of his desire to exercise his First Amendment rights to publish a book and discuss anything about the book or anything else he wants on social media and others."

The [New York Times](#) (7/23, Weiser, 18.61M) reports that Hellerstein "ordered that Mr. Cohen be released from prison on Friday to serve the rest of his sentence in home confinement at his Manhattan apartment." According to the Times, "In his suit, Mr. Cohen claimed that he never hid the fact that he was writing a book about Mr. Trump. He noted that he spent his mornings working on the manuscript 'in plain sight' in the prison's law library, and said he also discussed the project openly with prison officials, staff members and even other inmates." Cohen's lawsuit reads, "The narrative describes pointedly certain anti-Semitic remarks against prominent Jewish people and virulently racist remarks against such Black leaders as President Barack Obama and Nelson Mandela." The [Washington Post](#) (7/23, Jacobs, 14.2M), [Politico](#) (7/23, Gerstein, 4.29M), [Bloomberg](#) (7/23, 4.73M), [Reuters](#) (7/23, Freifeld), [Axios](#) (7/23, Rummler, 521K), [USA Today](#) (7/23, Phillips, 10.31M), the [Wall Street Journal](#) (7/23, O'Brien, Subscription Publication, 7.57M), and [Breitbart](#) (7/23, Bleau, 673K), among other news outlets, have more on the ruling returning Cohen to home confinement.

Key Source In Ohio Corruption Probe Identified.

The [Toledo \(OH\) Blade](#) (7/23, Provance, 88K) reports from Columbus, Ohio, "Tyler Fehrman was a leader in the effort to give voters a chance to repeal Ohio's \$1 billion nuclear power plant bailout when he was approached by players in what authorities say was a \$60 million bribery scheme designed to keep the law alive." According to the Blade, "The deal that prosecutors believe was floated by Matt Borges, former chairman of the Ohio Republican Party, boiled down to this: work to undercut the ballot effort in exchange for cash. Now Mr. Fehrman has joined a list of other Ohio political operatives and lobbyists wrapped into a bribery and racketeering scheme surrounding Ohio House Speaker Larry Householder. But unlike Mr. Householder, Mr. Borges, and other key players, Mr. Fehrman isn't a defendant. He's the man who gave to the FBI a recording of the would-be bribe that kicked off what's been described as the biggest political scandal in Ohio history."

The [Daily Beast](#) (7/23, Markay, 1.39M) reports, "In September 2019, Matt Borges, an Ohio lobbyist and former chairman of the state Republican Party, reached out to a canvasser working to collect petition signatures to roll back a massive bailout of Ohio's nuclear energy industry. According to federal prosecutors, he offered the canvasser \$15,000 to be a double agent and provide the opposition with inside information. The canvasser initially recoiled at the prospect, and immediately after the meeting contacted the FBI. The FBI wired him up and told him to circle back with Borges and accept the offer. According to criminal complaints handed down this week, the canvasser – referred to as Confidential Human Source 1 – reconnected with Borges, got that \$15,000 payment, and proceeded to provide extensive, damning details to investigators about what the U.S. attorney in Ohio's Southern District called 'likely the largest bribery [and] money-laundering scheme ever perpetrated against the people of the state of Ohio.'"

The [Cleveland Plain Dealer](#) (7/23, Caniglia, 895K) reports from Cleveland, "In the hours following the arrest of one of the most powerful political leaders in the Ohio Statehouse, the whispers began filtering across the state. They gained momentum after residents heard how Speaker of the House Larry Householder and four members of his inner circle were accused of engineering the \$60 million bribery scheme involving FirstEnergy Corp. and its billion-dollar bailout that Householder guided past lawmakers." The Plain Dealer adds, "Authorities called the investigation time-consuming, and an FBI affidavit filed in U.S. District Court in Cincinnati hinted that the agency had heard Householder's recorded voice in January 2018. And the day before the vote, an agent interviewed an unidentified state legislator about Householder. That led some to raise a fundamental question: If authorities were examining how the democratic process was about to be trampled, did the FBI and federal prosecutors have an obligation or a duty to stop the vote in the House?"

The [Cleveland Plain Dealer](#) (7/23, Richardson, 895K) reports that Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine (R) on Thursday "urged the legislature to swiftly begin the process to replace GOP Ohio House Speaker Larry Householder, who was arrested Tuesday on a federal charge of racketeering." Federal prosecutors have charged Householder in what they "described as a scheme by Householder to take \$60 million in bribes to help pass a billion-dollar taxpayer funded bailout of two struggling nuclear power plants owned by FirstEnergy. DeWine and others around the state called for Householder's resignation. Householder has said he has no intention of resigning. In lieu of that, DeWine at his Thursday coronavirus briefing urged the Republican-controlled Ohio House of Representatives to being the process for picking a new speaker."

Former SCANA Executive Pleads Guilty In Utility Fraud.

The [AP](#) (7/23, Collins, Liu) reports on Thursday, nearly three years after South Carolina's VC Summer nuclear project was abandoned, former SCANA EVP Stephen Byrne pleaded guilty to "taking more than \$1 billion from the pockets of ratepayers and investors." Byrne "agreed to tell investigators everything he knows about the lies and deception SCANA and its subsidiary South Carolina Electric & Gas used to keep regulators approving rate increases and investors to

keep supporting the reactors." The SCANA executives "didn't want anyone outside the company to discover the reactors at the V.C. Summer Plant north of Columbia would not be finished by the end of 2020, missing a deadline for \$1.4 billion in federal tax credits needed to keep the \$10 billion project from swamping the utility." Following the project's demise, SCANA was bought out in 2019 by Dominion Energy, which has "cooperated with all investigations and given money back to investors and ratepayers through reduced power rates and rebates."

[Bloomberg Law](#) (7/23, Roth, Subscription Publication, 4K) reports Dominion Energy said in a statement on the matter, "Dominion Energy continues to cooperate fully with state and federal authorities in this ongoing investigation, pursuant to the terms of the cooperation agreement."

The [Charleston \(SC\) Post and Courier](#) (7/23, Brown, Wilks, 290K) reports that during the plea hearing, Byrne "admitted to falsely telling regulators, investors and the public that the project was on track in order to win rate hikes on customers and keep the venture going, failing to raise alarms about critical flaws that were dooming the expansion effort."

The [Columbia \(SC\) State](#) (7/23, Monk, 390K) reports that so far, Byrne is "the only former SCANA official to be formally charged in the case," but more charges are "expected against other former SCANA officials."

[FITSNews](#) (7/23) News Director Mandy Matney says that as part of Byrne's plea agreement, the former executive "must cooperate with law enforcement officials and work with Dominion Energy on an agreement that 'will provide at least four billion dollars of South Carolina ratepayer relief.'"

Additional coverage is carried by the [Lexington County \(SC\) Chronicle](#) (7/23, 20K), [WOLO-TV](#) Columbia, SC (7/23), and [WIS-TV](#) Columbia, SC (7/23, Raven, 70K), the [Lexington County \(SC\) Chronicle](#) (7/23, 20K), [Law360](#) (7/23, Subscription Publication, 8K), and [WLTX-TV](#) Columbia, SC (7/23, 87K).

Arkansas Highway Agency Recoups Most Of Money In \$2.4M Fraud Case.

The [Arkansas Democrat Gazette](#) (7/23, Oman, 307K) reports, "The Arkansas Department of Transportation has recovered all but \$316,000 in a fraud that almost cost the agency \$2.4 million, a top department official said Wednesday." According to the Democrat Gazette, "The department also has changed its fiscal office's protocols for handling financial arrangements with contractors to prevent such an occurrence from happening again, said Randy Ort, the agency's deputy director and chief operating officer." Ort "briefed the Arkansas Highway Commission on the fallout from a nearly seven-week period in 2016 that began when someone purporting to be an employee of a contractor asked to change the bank accounts where money that the department owed the contractor was sent. Ort attributed the ability to recover the money to the swift action of an agency fiscal official once the fraud was discovered."

Indiana Man Sentenced For Check Fraud.

The [Indianapolis Star](#) (7/23, 633K) reports Frank Powell, who "ran a fake check scam and stole more than \$300,000 from Kroger stores in at least 12 states," was "sentenced to 11 years and two months in federal prison." The case "was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Fishers Police Department, Hamilton County Prosecutor's Office, Carmel Police Department, Johnson County Sheriff's Department, Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department, U.S. Postal Inspection Service and Kroger's Organized Retail Crime Investigators."

Former Maryland Delegate To Be Sentenced For Bribery.

The [Annapolis \(MD\) Capital Gazette](#) (7/23, Richman, 98K) reports former Maryland House of Delegates member Cheryl Glenn, who "admitted in a January plea agreement that she solicited and accepted \$33,750 in bribes to carry out political favors," is scheduled to be sentenced on July 29.

Former Louisiana Public Officials Charged With Credit Card, Identity Fraud.

The [Shreveport \(LA\) Times](#) (7/23, 128K) reports former City of Shreveport Public Works employee Tory Deshawn Jackson and Jawaski L. Johnson "were indicted Wednesday for credit card fraud and aggravated identity theft." The indictment alleges that the men "engaged in a scheme to fraudulently purchase fuel using three Fuelman credit cards stolen from the City of Shreveport."

Utah Man Pleads Guilty To \$10M Day-Trading Fraud Scheme.

[Deseret \(UT\) News](#) (7/23, Romboy, 308K) reports from Salt Lake City, Utah, "A Heber City man convicted of investment fraud almost a decade ago has admitted in federal court to a new day trading scheme that took investors for more than \$10.3 million." Thomas Robbins, 65, "pleaded guilty to securities fraud and money laundering in U.S. District Court on Wednesday, admitting he induced people to invest in a fraudulent foreign currency day trading business. Robbins told investors he had achieved high returns, but had in fact lost millions of dollars and diverted investor money for his personal use and benefit, according to court documents. About 66 people lost money." Robbins "did not learn his lesson from his past crimes, said Special Agent in Charge Paul Haertel of the Salt Lake City FBI. 'Unfortunately, that's often the reality in cases like these. Fraudsters are master manipulators and have high rates of recidivism,' he said."

Cotton Urges Barr To Launch Google Antitrust Probe.

[Breitbart](#) (7/23, Boyle, 673K) reports Sen. Tom Cotton (R-AR) is pushing the Justice Department "to probe whether search giant Google is in violation of antitrust laws on a number of fronts." In a letter to Attorney General Barr, Cotton wrote, "In recent weeks, news outlets have reported that the Department of Justice is nearing a decision about whether to take enforcement action against Google for anticompetitive behavior that violates U.S. antitrust law. ... I ask that the Department also investigate whether Google's dominance of online searches violates antitrust law."

Google Taking New Steps To Compete With Amazon In Ecommerce. The [New York Times](#) (7/23, Wakabayashi, 18.61M) reports Google has tried to compete more effectively with Amazon in the ecommerce space for the past several years, and with the coronavirus pandemic continuing, "the push to create an online shopping marketplace to compete with Amazon has taken on new urgency as consumers are avoiding stores and turning to the internet to fill more of their shopping needs."

Startups Say Amazon Used Information From Talks To Launch Competing Products.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (7/23, A1, Mattioli, Lombardo, Subscription Publication, 7.57M) reports on its front page that it conducted interviews with more than two dozen entrepreneurs, investors, and investment advisors who had participated in investment negotiations with Amazon and alleged that the company used proprietary information disclosed during the dealmaking process to develop its own competing products.

Taro Pharmaceuticals To Pay \$205.7M Criminal Penalty To Settle Price-Fixing Allegations.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (7/23, Chin, Subscription Publication, 7.57M) reports that Taro Pharmaceuticals has agreed to pay a \$205.7 million criminal penalty over allegations it was part of a conspiracy to fix the prices of generic drugs, the Justice Department said on Thursday. Under the deferred-prosecution agreement, Taro also agreed to cooperate with the probe.

[Bloomberg Law](#) (7/23, Skillman, Subscription Publication, 4K) also reports.

CYBER DIVISION

Twitter Says Hackers Likely Accessed Direct Messages Of 36 Users.

[The Hill](#) (7/23, Axelrod, 2.98M) reports, "Twitter said that hackers who broke into its system last week were likely able to read the direct messages of 36 accounts, including those of one elected official in the Netherlands. 'We believe that for up to 36 of the 130 targeted accounts, the attackers accessed the DM inbox, including 1 elected official in the Netherlands. To date, we have no indication that any other former or current elected official had their DMs accessed,' the social media giant said in an updated press release Wednesday night. 'We are actively working on communicating directly with the account-holders that were impacted.'" The Hill adds, "The FBI is currently investigating to try to identify the hackers."

[Reuters](#) (7/23, Menn, Paul, Satter) reports, "Twitter Inc and the FBI are investigating the breach that allowed hackers to repeatedly tweet from verified accounts of the likes of Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden, billionaire philanthropist Bill Gates, Tesla Chief Executive Elon Musk and former New York Mayor Mike Bloomberg. Twitter said on Saturday that the perpetrators 'manipulated a small number of employees and used their credentials' to log into tools and turn over access to 45 accounts. here On Wednesday, it said that the hackers could have read direct messages to and from 36 accounts but did not identify the affected users. The former employees familiar with Twitter security practices said that too many people could have done the same thing, more than 1,000 as of earlier in 2020, including some at contractors like Cognizant."

FBI Bulletin: ELDs Did Not Follow Cybersecurity Guidelines.

[Land Line Magazine](#) (7/23, Berg, 607K) reports, "Industry and academic research into a selection of self-certified electronic logging devices found those in the sample did little to nothing to follow cybersecurity best practices and were vulnerable to compromise. That's the takeaway from a cybersecurity bulletin issued by the FBI's Cyber Division earlier this week. The sample included ELDs that could be purchased off the shelf at superstores and ELDs supplied by well-known companies." The FBI "warns that cyber criminals could exploit vulnerabilities in ELDs, which became required equipment in most commercial trucking operations in December 2017. Last December was the deadline for companies using an AOBDR to switch to e-logs. 'Although the mandate seeks to provide safety and efficiency benefits, it does not contain cybersecurity requirements for manufacturers or suppliers of ELDs, and there is no requirement for third-party validation or testing prior to the ELD self-certification process,' the bulletin states."

NSA, DHS Warn Foreign Hackers Are Targeting Critical Infrastructure.

[The Hill](#) (7/23, Miller, 2.98M) reports NSA and DHS' Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) on Thursday "warned that foreign hackers are attempting to target US critical infrastructure." The agencies specifically "warned that Internet-connected operational technology (OT) assets, used throughout US defense systems, were often the targets of malicious cyber actors attempting to hit critical infrastructure, such as systems providing water, gas and electricity." As a result, the agencies "recommended that critical infrastructure operators and owners take 'immediate action' to secure their systems." The agencies wrote in a joint alert, "Due to the increase in adversary capabilities and activity, the criticality to US national security and way of life, and the vulnerability of OT systems, civilian infrastructure makes attractive targets for foreign powers attempting to do harm to US interests or retaliate for perceived US aggression."

Instacart Denies Data Breach Involving Customer Information.

Multiple outlets including [Fox Business](#) (7/23, Schmidt, 1.73M) report on allegations that the personal data of Instacart customers was hacked and is being sold, which the online shopping platform denies.

[USA Today](#) (7/23, Brown, 10.31M) reports, "Instacart said it has not found evidence of a cybersecurity breach after customers' private data was reportedly unearthed on the dark web." Instacart responded to a BuzzFeed News story on the possible data breach Wednesday. "BuzzFeed says it confirmed with two Instacart users that the info included in the cache matched their recent purchases," but "Instacart told USA TODAY on Thursday that it initiated an investigation and found no evidence that its hub of user data has been breached."

UK Universities Lose Data To Ransomware Attack.

[BBC News Online \(UK\)](#) (7/23, 1.02M) reports at least six universities "in the UK and Canada have had student data stolen after hackers attacked a cloud computing provider." Human Rights Watch and the children's mental health charity, Young Minds, "have also confirmed they were affected." The hack targeted Blackbaud, "one of the world's largest providers of education administration, fundraising, and financial management software." The US-based company's systems "were hacked in May." It has been criticized "for not disclosing this externally until July and for having paid the hackers an undisclosed ransom."

5G Spectrum Issues On Senate Agenda.

[Politico](#) (7/23, Levine, 4.29M) reports in its Morning Tech column that wireless spectrum will take "center stage across a number of fronts today." The Senate Commerce telecom subcommittee today "will hear from a slate of industry and analyst witnesses about how the FCC and Administration have managed the airwaves in the wake of a series of high-profile 5G spats." Tom Power, general counsel for wireless trade group CTIA, "plans to warn of global implications surrounding limited availability of prime mid-band spectrum." Power will testify, "Other nations are beating us to the punch." He'll recommend "the lower 3 MHz band, currently held by the Pentagon, as the next best target."

A TikTok Ban In The US May Depend On Who Owns It.

[NPR](#) (7/23, Allyn, 3.12M) reports TikTok is "contemplating ways to distance itself from its Chinese parent company as threats from Washington grow louder." The Trump Administration is "considering ways to push the video-sharing app, beloved by teens and 20-somethings, out of the US altogether." Leading technology policy and national security experts "say, if President Trump is determined to run TikTok out of the US, he is most likely to issue an executive order declaring it a national security threat under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, an authority that branched out from the century-old Trading with the Enemy Act." Stewart Baker, the former general counsel at NSA, said, "When we talk about sanctions against Russian oligarchs and kleptocrats, well, the sanctions are that no American can do business with them. And now that same sanction might be used against TikTok." There are "murmurs about a possible American-based spinoff, or a small group of US investors buying the app."

LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICES

FBI Data Show Increase In Blocked Gun Sales.

[Politico](#) (7/23, Swan, 4.29M) reports, "Internal FBI data reveal a jarring new stat: The number of people trying to buy guns who can't legally own them has skyrocketed. That came as part of a surge in gun purchases in the first three months of 2020, compared to the same time period in 2019. And the change has raised concerns about gun safety." Politico adds, "In March 2019, the FBI's National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) ran background checks on 823,273 attempted gun buys (the system immediately greenlights the vast majority of transactions). This past March, however, NICS processed more than 1.4 million background checks—a massive spike. The most dramatic shift, though, might be in how many people the system blocked from buying guns. In March 2019 and February 2020, the NICS system blocked

about 9,500 and 9,700, respectively. But in March 2020, it blocked more than double that amount: a whopping 23,692 gun sales.”

The [New York Daily News](#) (7/23, Theisen, 2.52M) reports, “The agency’s figures, which were revealed after a Freedom of Information Act request by the advocacy group Everytown for Gun Safety, showed that 23,692 attempted gun sales were blocked by background checks in March 2020 alone. That is a dramatic increase from the previous month, which featured just 9,700 blocks, and from March 2019, which had 9,500 blocks. The National Instant Criminal Background Check System, or NICS, can block Americans from buying guns for a few different reasons, including if they’re subject to a restraining order or have been involuntarily committed to a mental institution,” but “gun-control advocates are concerned about this huge spike in background checks because, with the NICS facing a significantly increased workload, more people can slip through the cracks in the law to buy guns when they’re not supposed to.”

However, in a piece for the [National Review](#) (7/23, 731K) , David Harsanyi writes, “Reporters who lard up their pieces with adjectives such as ‘jarring,’ ‘massive,’ ‘whopping,’ and ‘raised concerns’ are usually trying to convince readers of something that isn’t true. And so it is here. Indeed, all this Politico piece tells us is that the National Instant Criminal Background Check System is working exactly as intended.”

LAWFUL ACCESS

DOJ Official Explains Law Enforcement’s Worries About 5G.

[NextGov](#) (7/23, Baksh) reports, “The advent of fifth generation networking architecture is going to make it a lot harder for law enforcement to serve and process wiretapping warrants, a senior Justice official said, also expressing concern about the main U.S. policy approach for competing with China in the space.” NextGov adds, “Beyond faster connections with reduced latency, 5G is expected to greatly enable machine to machine communication, making for a more distributed system of connectivity. This promises huge potential for economic advancement, but also to exacerbate challenges the FBI and other law enforcement entities experience trying to overcome encrypted communication between devices. ‘The big challenge as 5G gets increasingly deployed across the country,’ said Associate Deputy Attorney General Sujit Raman, is ‘let’s say you serve a search warrant or a wiretap order. Where physically is that going to happen? Because right now, you just send the wiretap order to Verizon or T-Mobile or whoever. They’ve got a centralized server, they serve it, they create an interface and they produce the data. If there isn’t that centralized architecture going forward, it’s an engineering question, how do you actually make that happen?’”

Ninth Circuit Rules Against Bid For Access To Judge’s Encryption Opinion.

The [Washington Post](#) (7/23, Nakashima, 14.2M) reports that a three-judge panel of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals “this week denied The Washington Post and two civil liberties groups access to a lower court opinion blocking the government from forcing a tech company to break its encryption to help law enforcement.” According to the Post, “At issue is a September 2018 sealed opinion by a federal judge denying the government’s request to compel Facebook under the Wiretap Act to break the encryption on its popular Messenger app so that authorities could monitor the calls of members of the MS-13 criminal gang.” In February 2019, US District Judge Lawrence J. O’Neill in the Eastern District of California “denied a motion by The Post, the American Civil Liberties Union and the Electronic Frontier Foundation to unseal the opinion,” and on Wednesday, the appeals panel “affirmed O’Neill’s denial.”

OTHER FBI NEWS

FBI Kept Documents Related To Former Kentucky Governor’s Pardons.

The [Louisville \(KY\) Courier-Journal](#) (7/23, Sonka, 368K) reports, "The FBI kept more than 700 pages of documents related to pardons and commutations issued by former Gov. Matt Bevin for about six months this year." The FBI "took possession of the documents in January, but recently returned them to the administration of current Gov. Andy Beshear. Obtained by The Courier Journal, the pardon review forms include handwritten notes from the governor's attorneys and Bevin himself, discussing the strengths and weaknesses of applicants and sometimes weighing in on their religious beliefs and the political optics of a pardon. On one form, Bevin even appears to have fully pardoned Mark Taylor – a Lexington man convicted in 2016 of murdering Alex Johnson in a high-profile case – though a clemency order was never filed with the secretary of state's office."

Connecticut Supreme Court Upholds Alex Jones Sanctions In Sandy Hook Case.

The [AP](#) (7/23, Collins) reports from Hartford, Connecticut, "The Connecticut Supreme Court on Thursday upheld a sanction against Infowars host Alex Jones over an angry outburst on his web show against an attorney for relatives of some of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting victims, who are suing him for defamation." The court "issued a 7-0 decision rejecting Jones' claims that his comments aimed at attorney Christopher Mattei were protected by free speech rights, and upholding a lower court's ruling that Jones violated numerous orders to turn over documents to the families' lawyers. The lower court judge barred Jones from filing a motion to dismiss the lawsuit, as a penalty for his actions." The AP adds, "The families of eight victims of the 2012 shooting in Newtown, Connecticut, and an FBI agent who responded to the massacre are suing Jones, Infowars and others for promoting a theory that the shooting was a hoax."

Houston Police Officer Relieved Of Duty Amid Probe.

The [Houston Chronicle](#) (7/23, Barned-Smith, 730K) reports, "A Houston Police narcotics officer is under investigation and has been relieved of duty, officials said." According to the Chronicle, "The officer, Juan Martinez, joined the department in 2005. He is assigned to the narcotics division and was relieved July 16, spokesman Kese Smith said. Several law enforcement sources said Martinez is being investigated for inappropriate conduct related to undercover operations and confidential informants, but officials have not yet provided additional details." The Chronicle adds, "The action is the latest to hit the narcotics division, which has come under scrutiny over the past 18 months after a January 2019 drug raid that led to the deaths of two homeowners and to the shooting of four officers. The officer who led the raid, Gerald Goines, was later accused of lying about buying drugs from the home, and Harris County District Attorney Kim Ogg subsequently announced prosecutors would be reviewing more than 14,000 cases Goines and his former squadmates had handled."

Bulger's Girlfriend Completes Prison Sentence.

The [AP](#) (7/23) reports from Boston, "The longtime girlfriend of late Boston gangster James 'Whitey' Bulger has completed her federal prison sentence and moved in with her twin sister." According to the AP, "Federal agents removed Catherine Greig's electronic monitoring bracelet Thursday, WBZ-TV reported. Greig, 69, spent the last year of her sentence living under home confinement with Bulger's relatives in the affluent Boston suburb of Hingham. She's moving back to her hometown of South Boston." Greig "joined Bulger on the run in 1995 shortly after he fled Boston to evade a federal racketeering indictment. The couple was captured in 2011 in Santa Monica, California."

OTHER WASHINGTON NEWS

Trump Cancels GOP Convention Events In Jacksonville: "Just Not The Right Time."

President Trump announced Thursday that he has decided to cancel the Republican National Convention in Jacksonville due to the recent spike in COVID-19 infections in Florida. Media coverage remained unfavorable toward Trump, with reports casting his decision as both a surprising reversal and an acknowledgment that his original plans were never tenable. [NBC Nightly News](#)Vi (7/23, story 2, 1:05, Holt, 5.52M) referred to "a rare retreat from...Trump" and the [CNBC](#) (7/23, Dzhanova, 3.62M) website as a "staggering turnaround," while Jonathan Karl of [ABC World News Tonight](#)Vi (7/23, story 2, 0:40, Muir, 6.89M) described him as "recognizing a reality he had tried to avoid," and showed him saying, "So, I told my team, it's time to cancel the Jacksonville, Florida component of the GOP convention. And I'll still do a convention speech in a different form, but we won't do a big crowded convention, per se. Just not the right time for that."

Weijia Jiang of the [CBS Evening News](#)Vi (7/23, story 3, 1:00, O'Donnell, 3.92M) recounted that "as cases continue to surge, so did a list of Republican leaders who said they would not attend the event due to safety concerns," and "earlier this week, the city sheriff doubted he could provide enough security for the convention." [CNN](#) (7/23, Liptak, Bradner, 83.16M), in an online report, says it was "a striking turnaround for Trump," who "has now upended convention plans in two key swing states he must win to have a shot at reelection."

Trump said on [Fox News' Hannity](#) (7/23, 535K) last night, "We are setting an example and we don't want people so close together. We have such enthusiasm, and you know we went to North Carolina we wanted to do it there. It was all set. We would build a beautiful facility. They got hit hard, and then the governor really, he could have treated us better. The Democrat governor, but we are actually opening up there. Then we will make our way. It won't be your typical convention, I will tell you that."

To the [Palm Beach Post](#) (7/23, Fins, 223K), "the decision to back away from even a more limited gathering in Florida is a mixture of reality and defeat for Trump," which came "as doubts about the safety of holding the event in Jacksonville continued to grow." Along those lines, [Reuters](#) (7/23, Holland, Holland, Lewis) points out that according to its tally, "Florida is now among the states with the highest number of new coronavirus cases and has seen more nearly 390,000 cases of the virus and more than 5,600 deaths."

[Politico](#) (7/23, Oprysko, 4.29M) reports that "still, Republicans insisted the event would be safe, and as recently as Tuesday the Trump campaign's communications director was expressing confidence that the convention 'will be a great...series of events over the course of four days and it will be safe.'" The [New York Times](#) (7/23, Haberman, Mazzei, Karni, 18.61M) indicates, meanwhile, that "the convention efforts in both Jacksonville and Charlotte, NC, which have preoccupied some GOP officials and donors for months, now stand as an object lesson in chaotic planning for a party that prizes its ability to raise money and execute splashy displays."

The [Fox News](#) (7/23, O'Reilly, 27.59M) website reports, on the other hand, that Republican National Committee Chair Ronna McDaniel on Thursday [tweeted](#) that "she supported the president's announcement, calling it a 'difficult decision,'" while "Bill Stepien, Trump's re-election campaign manager, said in a statement: 'Leading by example, President Trump has put the health and safety of the American people first with his decision on the Jacksonville convention.'" Meanwhile, "the Republican Party of Florida [tweeted](#) that Trump 'made a selfless decision by cancelling the FL component of @GOP Convention.'" Reporting on Trump's "major turnabout," meanwhile, the [Washington Times](#) (7/23, Howell, 492K) also notes Stepien's statement.

[Florida Politics](#) (7/23, Gankarski) similarly reports Trump "said he 'had to protect the American people,' which led him to cancel the event," and quotes him as saying, "It's hard for us to say we want to have a lot of people packed in a room and tell people not to do it," and "there's nothing more important in our country than keeping our people safe, whether it's the China virus or the radical left mob." The [Florida Times-Union](#) (7/23, Pantazi, 203K) points out the President "praised Mayor Lenny Curry, who had been boosting the event even as a majority of Jacksonville residents polled said they didn't want the event here," and "said he would still

give a speech, but that the event will convert to 'telerallies.'" Said Trump, "I just felt it was wrong. ... We didn't want to take any chances."

[Politico](#) (7/23, Oprysko, 4.29M) reports Curry and Sheriff Mike Williams "reacted to the cancellation on Thursday with a clear sigh of relief," saying in a joint statement, "We appreciate President Donald Trump considering our public health and safety concerns in making this incredibly difficult decision," and adding that the President had "once again reaffirmed his commitment to the safety of Jacksonville Florida and the people of the United States of America."

[USA Today](#) (7/23, Fritze, Subramanian, 10.31M) recounts that "Trump addressed reporters for the third time in as many days after announcing he would restart daily briefings on the virus that were suspended in April." The President "has used the high-profile sessions to tout efforts to spur vaccine production, encourage the wearing of face masks and warn that the pandemic is getting worse."

The [Washington Post](#) (7/23, Itkowitz, 14.2M) refers to "the latest in a series of head-snapping reversals" by Trump "in the face of a nationwide pandemic that continues to spread out of control," and adds that "the convention retreat came as polls continue to show public disapproval of Trump's handling of the pandemic," with Joe Biden "expanding leads in key battleground states and advisers pressing Trump to try to shift gears." [Bloomberg](#) (7/23, Egkolfopoulou, Korte, 4.73M), the [Wall Street Journal](#) (7/23, Restuccia, Lucey, Subscription Publication, 7.57M), the [Washington Examiner](#) (7/23, Lim, 448K), the [New York Post](#) (7/23, Bowden, 4.57M), the [Daily Caller](#) (7/23, Hagstrom, 716K), [Breitbart](#) (7/23, Spiering, 673K), and [Townhall](#) (7/23, Pavlich, 177K), among other news outlets, also cover the President's announcement.

US COVID Case Count Surpasses 4M.

All three broadcast networks opened their Thursday evening newscasts with the news that the US coronavirus case count has passed 4 million. On [ABC World News Tonight](#)^{Vi} (7/23, lead story, 5:00, 6.89M), David Muir marked the "difficult milestone," and said, "We had just hit 3 million 15 days ago. ... More than 143,000 lives have been lost in this country. Tonight, the CDC now predicts there could be 175,000 deaths by August 15. Florida setting a record number of deaths in the past 24 hours, and more than 10,000 new cases."

Norah O'Donnell said on the [CBS Evening News](#)^{Vi} (7/23, lead story, 4:00, 3.92M), "The US has now surpassed 4 million cases of coronavirus. That is a drastic increase of infections in just a few weeks that illustrates how rapidly the virus is spreading. To give you a sense of how fast cases are growing, it took about five months to reach 2 million cases in the US but only six weeks to double that number, and tonight for the second night in a row more than 1,000 people have been killed by the virus nationwide in just 24 hours. The CDC said today that death toll will only keep growing, projecting as many as 30,000 more deaths in the next three weeks."

Lester Holt said on [NBC Nightly News](#)^{Vi} (7/23, lead story, 3:05, 5.52M), "It's becoming more and more likely that you or someone you know personally has been affected with coronavirus." NBC's Miguel Almaguer: "The new milestone reached today as a top health official sounds the alarm for 11 American cities in trouble after testing results came back from metro areas like Cleveland, Columbus, Minneapolis, and New Orleans. Dr. Deborah Birx warned local leaders they need to take aggressive steps to mitigate their outbreak." Birx: "We're tracking this very closely. We're working with our state officials to make sure we're responding together."

[Reuters](#) (7/23, Shumaker) reports that on Thursday, "the total number of coronavirus cases reported in the United States passed 4 million...reflecting a rapid acceleration of infections detected in the country since the first case was recorded on Jan. 21." Reuters points out that "it took the country 98 days to reach 1 million cases, but just 16 days to go from 3 million to 4 million," and "the average number of new U.S. cases is now rising by more than 2,600 every hour, the highest rate in the world."

The [New York Times](#) (7/23, 18.61M) reports that "cases are trending upward in 39 states, as well as Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, and are decreasing in only two." The Times adds that "more than 143,000 people have died of the virus in the United States, and experts say that the trend in hospitalizations and deaths often lags weeks behind the trend in cases. Even so, the number of people hospitalized in the country on Wednesday very nearly exceeded the previous high of nearly 60,000, set on April 15 when the outbreak was largely concentrated in New York."

According to the [Washington Post](#) (7/23, Farzan, Armus, 14.2M), "Positivity rates are at alarming levels in numerous states, hospitalizations are soaring, and more than 1,100 new coronavirus deaths were reported across the United States on Wednesday, marking the first time since May 29 that the daily count exceeded that number, according to Washington Post tracking. Texas alone reported a state-record 197 new fatalities, and the U.S. death toll now exceeds 140,000." [USA Today](#) (7/23, Pineda, 10.31M) also reports.

Poll Shows Most Agree With Trump That Increased Testing Is Causing Case Count Increase. The [Washington Examiner](#) (7/23, Drucker, 448K) reports "a strong plurality agrees" with President Trump that the coronavirus spike "is due to more testing," according to a YouGov survey. Asked if they believe "the increase in reported cases of COVID-19 in the community where you live is due to increased testing for COVID-19," 47% said yes, 36% no, and 18% said they were not sure.

Politico Analysis: Trump Hopes COVID Vaccine Can Improve Reelection Odds.

[Politico](#) (7/23, Cancryn, 4.29M) writes that President Trump's gamble that the development of a proven-effective COVID-19 vaccine can improve his odds of a second term is looking increasingly unlikely, "but that doesn't mean he won't find just enough reason to declare victory anyway." Trump is "banking heavily on finding a vaccine to quell both the pandemic and mounting unhappiness over his handling of the coronavirus response." The Administration continues to lay "the groundwork for a high-profile rollout of initial coronavirus vaccines in as little as three months." While the Administration "has insisted that it won't cut corners on safety," it has "left the door open to short-circuiting the process before those trials are complete."

Trump Now Says All Schools May Not Be Able To Reopen In Fall.

Weijia Jiang reported on the [CBS Evening News](#)^{Vi} (7/23, story 4, 0:20, O'Donnell, 3.92M) that on Thursday, "President Trump stopped insisting that all schools across the country must reopen in the fall. Instead, he said school districts located in current hot spots may have to delay reopening for weeks, adding it should not be a political decision." Kristen Welker reported on [NBC Nightly News](#)^{Vi} (7/23, story 3, 0:30, Holt, 5.52M), "On schools reopening in the fall, the President said the CDC will soon provide more guidance, and for the first time, acknowledged some schools may need to delay." Trump: "In cities or states that are current hot spots, and you'll see that on the map behind me, districts may need to delay reopening for a few weeks, and that's possible. That will be up to governors."

WPost Analysis: Trump Sees Reopening Schools, School Choice Policies As Key To Reelection. The [Washington Post](#) (7/23, Meckler, Scherer, Dawsey, 14.2M) reports that Trump "sees two school issues as key to reelection, and after paying almost no attention to education for most of his presidency, he's pushing both in negotiations over the next pandemic relief bill." Trump's "first priority is getting schools to reopen this fall, which he sees as central to economic recovery and getting parents back to work." The President "is also newly focused on school choice policies, which let families use tax dollars for private school tuition. Aides see both as political winners with suburban women and, in the case of school choice, black voters, too."

Barron Trump's School Will Not Fully Reopen In September. The [New York Times](#) (7/23, Baker, 18.61M) reports that the school attended by President Trump's son, Barron Trump, "will not fully reopen in September out of concern over the coronavirus pandemic

despite the president's insistence that students across the country be brought back to classrooms in the fall." St. Andrew's Episcopal School "said in a letter to parents that it was still deciding whether to adopt a hybrid model for the fall that would allow limited in-person education or to resume holding all classes completely online as was done in the spring." Randi Weingarten, the president of the American Federation of Teachers, said, "The President now has to face what every other parent in America and every other teacher in America is grappling with right now, which is: In the midst of a pandemic, how do schools keep their kids and their faculty safe?"

NIH's Collins Optimistic About Upcoming Phase 3 Vaccine Trial.

In an interview with the [CBS Evening News](#)^{Vi} (7/23, story 8, 2:30, O'Donnell, 3.92M), NIH Director Collins said, "Next Monday, if all goes well we expect to see the launch of a Phase 3 [vaccine trial], that is a trial which is a joint effort of NIH and a company called Moderna. ... I have been at NIH for 27 years, I have never seen anything come together this way as we have tried to do and are now doing for the development of vaccines."

WPost Urges Caution In Use Of Human Challenge Trials. The [Washington Post](#) (7/23, 14.2M) editorializes, "The novel coronavirus is inflicting global suffering that is likely to persist until scientists produce an effective vaccine. With so much hinging on a vaccine, some are calling for a little-known epidemiological tool to speed testing: human challenge trials." The Post says "the wisdom of using human challenge trials to speed vaccine development will depend on a series of risk calculations, many of which remain shrouded in uncertainty. ... The risks of deploying challenge trials may well end up outweighing the benefits, but with so much uncertainty – and the devastation that will persist until a vaccine arrives – it makes sense to build the regulatory, medical and ethical infrastructure to support challenge trials now, regardless of whether we feel confident we will use them."

Verma: White House Task Force Is Focused On Protecting Nursing Homes.

Appearing on [Fox News' Fox & Friends](#) (7/23, 831K), CMS Administrator Verma said, "There is just agreement across the task force...that we need to double down on the nursing homes. As we see increasing community spread across the south, we know the spread has the potential to get into the nursing homes – and we're starting to see an uptick in cases in nursing homes. So what the President announced is that doubling down of efforts." [WJW-TV](#)^{Vi} Cleveland (7/23, 6:35 p.m. ET, 114K) reports that Verma met with local officials about efforts to help hospitals and nursing homes. Verma said, "We've provided a lot of flexibility to states around enrollment because we know that we're seeing a surge. There's people that need health insurance or need healthcare coverage."

Cuomo Faces Bipartisan Criticism Over Nearly 6,500 New York Nursing Home Deaths. The [New York Times](#) (7/23, McKinley, Ferré-Sadurní, 18.61M) says, "As New York moves from coronavirus crisis to sustained recovery, there remains a heartbreaking fact that some are trying to explore and others seem to be trying to exploit: Nearly 6,500 people have died of the virus in nursing homes and other long-term facilities in the state." According to the Times, "Republicans in Washington and elsewhere have attacked" Gov. Andrew Cuomo (D) "for his role in, and response to, those deaths; Mr. Cuomo has returned fire, accusing his foes of politicizing a human tragedy and arguing that the blame for the number of deaths lay with infected health care workers, not his own policies."

Giroir Discusses Efforts To Reduce COVID-19 Testing Turnaround Times.

Appearing on [Fox News](#) (7/23, 11:43 a.m. ET, 1.59M), HHS Assistant Secretary for Health Adm. Brett Giroir was asked about delayed COVID-19 testing results. Giroir said, "We need to do everything we can to reduce the turnaround time, but let me put it in a little bit of context. About half the tests in the country are done either at the point of care, meaning either you get the results in 15 minutes or done in a local hospital, which is generally a turnaround time of

less than 24 hours. We have been talking about the turnaround time of the major commercial laboratories that do about half the testing. It is too long, but the average time is 4.27 days, so it's not the seven or 10 or 12 or 14 days although certainly, certain people can wind up waiting that long on the outliers."

On [MSNBC's Andrea Mitchell Reports](#)^{Vi} (7/23, 12:00 p.m. ET, 1.09M), Giroir said, "The sorts of things you heard about early in the outbreak like swabs and tubes of media, we've got that pretty much under control. The states literally tell us what they want every month and we provide that every week to the states in the quantities that they need. ... We cannot test our way out of this. We're going to have to do those measures like wearing a mask, avoiding indoor crowding spaces, hand hygiene. That's the way to get this under control, and we need everybody's cooperation to do that."

Giroir Issues Warning About Adolescents, Virus Transmission.

The [CBS Evening News](#)^{Vi} (7/23, story 2, 1:35, O'Donnell, 3.92M) reported HHS Assistant Secretary for Health Adm. Brett Giroir has "raised a warning about kids ten and over" and coronavirus. Giroir said, "As you get older and as an adolescent, you can transmit almost the equivalent of an adult." Phil Huong, Director of Dallas County Health and Human Services, said, "Our data certainly shows about 10% thus far have been in kids under the age of 18." But, "scientists believe the illness is generally not as debilitating in younger patients because they have stronger immune systems." Jeffrey Kahn, Professor of Pediatrics, UT Southwestern, said: "The public health data is quite compelling, that children can get infected and even have mild systems but can still transmit the virus."

Gaynor: Administration Working To Establish Domestic PPE Production.

In an appearance on [ABC's Good Morning America](#)^{Vi} (7/23, 7:09 a.m. ET, 2.99M), FEMA Administrator Gaynor was asked about persistent "shortages" of personal protective equipment for "frontline workers." Gaynor said, "We are in a much better place with PPE today than we were back in March and April. There's no doubt about it. But the fact is, we don't make PPE in the United States. The majority of PPE is made overseas in places like Asia. We're trying to bring the production of PPE back to the United States, asking those producers like 3M to produce more, new producers to change and expand lines from some other item to PPE."

FDA Issues Warning About Contaminated Hand Sanitizer.

The [CBS Evening News](#)^{Vi} (7/23, story 7, 1:15, O'Donnell, 3.92M) reported that the FDA "is recalling 75 brands of hand sanitizer, warning that the products many are using to ward off infection may be making users sick or even causing death if ingested." CBS said "at least 11 are dead and more than 30 hospitalized after using contaminated hand sanitizer, many drinking it in the hopes of getting a buzz." The FDA is "investigating 75 products from Mexico claiming to contain ethanol, but instead have tested positive for methanol or wood alcohol."

[ABC World News Tonight](#)^{Vi} (7/23, story 10, 0:20, Muir, 6.89M) reported that its toxic "if absorbed through the skin and possibly fatal if ingested." The products were sold at Walmart and Costco.

Shortage Of Pipette Tips, Other Lab Supplies Hampering Efforts To Track, Curb Coronavirus Spread.

The [New York Times](#) (7/23, Wu, 18.61M) reports, "Labs across the country are facing backlogs in coronavirus testing thanks in part to a shortage of" pipette tips. As the tally "of known coronavirus cases in the United States fast approaches 4 million, these new shortages of pipette tips and other lab supplies are once again stymieing efforts to track and curb the spread of disease." Some individuals "are waiting days or even weeks for results, and labs are vying for crucial materials."

Some Health Authorities Throughout US Narrowing COVID Testing Recommendations.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (7/23, Abbott, Lovett, Subscription Publication, 7.57M) reports some US health authorities are narrowing their recommendations for coronavirus testing as testing materials run short, and results are delayed. For example, California's health departments are focusing on the testing of hospitalized patients, individuals with certain symptoms, high risk people, and those with close contacts.

Study Concludes Lockdowns, Testing Do Not Reduce Death Rates.

The [Washington Times](#) (7/23, Scarborough, 492K) reports a study published in the Lancet concludes that "lockdowns and wide testing do not reduce [COVID-19] death rates." The study's authors write, "Government actions such as border closures, full lockdowns, and a high rate of COVID-19 testing were not associated with statistically significant reductions in the number of critical cases or overall mortality."

Poll Finds 75% Of Americans Favor Face Mask Requirements.

The [AP](#) (7/23, Blood, Swanson) reports, "Three out of four Americans, including a majority of Republicans, favor requiring people to wear face coverings while outside their homes, a new poll finds, reflecting fresh alarm over spiking coronavirus cases and a growing embrace of government advice intended to safeguard public health." The AP-NORC survey found that "support for requiring masks is overwhelming among Democrats, at 89%, but 58% of Republicans are in favor as well." To note, "the poll was conducted before [President] Trump, who for months was dismissive of masks, said this week that it's patriotic to wear one."

California Now Leads US In Confirmed Coronavirus Cases.

The [Los Angeles Times](#) (7/23, Rainey, 4.64M) reports California now has "more confirmed coronavirus cases than any other state. California passed New York for that record Wednesday morning, reaching more than 409,000 cases and eclipsing New York's 408,886, according to the Coronavirus Resource Center at Johns Hopkins University."

Mask Regulations Exacerbate GOP Intraparty Rift In Texas.

The [New York Times](#) (7/23, Fernandez, Goodman, 18.61M) reports, "Texas Republicans have long sparred with one another" over a variety of "culture-war issues," and this month, "Republican groups in eight counties censured the Republican governor after he issued a statewide mask order, saying that it infringed on their rights and followed the lead of Houston, San Antonio and other Democratic-led cities and counties that already required masks in businesses." In the state, "the virus has heightened long-simmering friction in the largest Republican-led state in the country, and for the first time," Gov. Greg Abbott (R) "has come under serious attack from within his own party."

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (7/23, Subscription Publication, 7.57M) says in an editorial that though politicians are not to blame for every coronavirus death, officials in Hidalgo County, Texas have been lax in oversight and need to do more.

Thirteen Nuns At Michigan Convent Have Died Of COVID.

The [New York Times](#) (7/23, Waller, Hauser, 18.61M) reports, "From April 10 to May 10, a dozen Felician sisters at the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary convent" in Michigan died of COVID-19. A 13th died on June 27. The virus "may have posed a particular danger to the sisters, who live communally."

Marine Assigned To Trump Helicopter Squadron Tested Positive For COVID.

[Politico](#) (7/23, Seligman, Lippman, Caputo, 4.29M) reports the Marine Corps confirmed that "a Marine assigned to the military helicopter squadron responsible for transporting the president

has tested positive" for coronavirus. Marine Helicopter Squadron 1 "was informed of the positive test on Thursday, ahead of the president's planned travel to Bedminster, N.J. ... A White House official confirmed that the Marine 'had no contact with the president or any administration personnel.'"

White House, Senate GOP Fail To Reach Agreement On COVID Stimulus Package.

The [Washington Post](#) (7/23, A1, Werner, Kim, Stein, 14.2M) reports, "The White House and Senate Republicans on Thursday failed to reach agreement on a broad coronavirus legislative package to offer Democrats as part of negotiations, stumbling over numerous provisions as factions in the GOP bickered over the path forward." The [AP](#) (7/23, Taylor, Mascaro) reports President Trump "reluctantly dropped his bid to cut Social Security payroll taxes as Republicans stumbled anew in efforts to unite around a \$1 trillion COVID-19 rescue package to begin negotiations with Democrats who are seeking far more." [USA Today](#) (7/23, Collins, 10.31M) reports Trump "said on Twitter that Republicans abandoned the payroll tax cut because of objections from Democrats." [Bloomberg](#) (7/23, Litvan, Wasson, Mohsin, 4.73M) says, "Abandoning the payroll tax holiday that Trump sought was an about-face by the administration." Bloomberg notes that "as recently as Sunday, Trump said he would reject any stimulus legislation if it didn't include the tax holiday."

On [NBC Nightly News](#)^{Vi} (7/23, story 4, 0:55, Holt, 5.52M), Kristen Welker called it "a setback for Senate Republicans, who have been struggling to reach an agreement on a trillion-dollar relief package." Senate Minority Leader Schumer: "The Republican disarray and dithering has serious potentially deadly consequences for tens of millions of Americans." The [New York Times](#) (7/23, Cochrane, Tankersley, Rappeport, 18.61M) reports, "The snag in negotiations delayed until Monday the rollout of what will effectively be Republicans' opening bid in negotiations with congressional Democrats over a new stimulus package. Republicans have said they would support a package of around \$1 trillion for this round of stimulus, while Democrats are demanding \$3 trillion."

[Politico](#) (7/23, Levine, Bresnahan, 4.29M) says, "Senate Republicans and the White House wasted a week at the worst possible time. Amid a series of crises – with 30 million Americans unemployed and coronavirus cases spiking nationally – White House officials and Senate GOP leaders couldn't even come to an agreement among themselves on a starting point for a new relief package, let alone begin bipartisan talks with Democrats." The [Washington Post](#) (7/23, Rosenberg, 14.2M) reports, "Layoffs are beginning to spike again across the country – the number of new unemployment claims rose last week for the first time since March – as coronavirus cases soar, spurring cities and states to backtrack on reopenings only a month after appearing to turn the corner."

Earlier on [CNBC's Squawk Box](#)^{Vi} (7/23, 180K), Treasury Secretary Mnuchin said, "Let me just be clear on the President's priority in the bill. ... We are on the same page with the Republicans. The President's priority is about kids and jobs. We need to get kids back to school safely. The Democrats had \$100 billion in their HEROES Act. We increased that to \$105 billion. Some of that money will be dependent on schools reopening." The [AP](#) (7/23, Taylor, Mascaro) reports Mnuchin told CNBC, "The President is very focused on getting money quickly to workers right now, and the payroll tax takes time."

The [Washington Post](#) (7/23, A1, Werner, Kim, Stein, 14.2M) reports that Mnuchin, "sensing the potential economic calamity of pulling back these benefits for up to 30 million people all at once...suggested Congress should consider a smaller bill to keep these benefits in place while other details are negotiated on Capitol Hill." However, according to the Post, both "Democrats and Republicans roundly dismissed that idea immediately."

The [Washington Times](#) (7/23, Muñoz, 492K) reports House Speaker Pelosi and Schumer "said Thursday they would not accept any partial extensions or attempt to break coronavirus relief into smaller packages." In a [Wall Street Journal](#) (7/23, Subscription Publication, 7.57M) op-ed, Sen. Ron Johnson (R-WI) says the GOP will no longer permit blank checks for

coronavirus-related stimulus measures, writing that the House wants to rush through at least \$1 trillion in new spending without any accountability. The [Wall Street Journal](#) (7/23, Subscription Publication, 7.57M) similarly says in an editorial that the economy is strong and additional stimulus will harm, not hurt, further recovery. [Bloomberg](#) (7/23, Davison, Litvan, 4.73M), the [Wall Street Journal](#) (7/23, Restuccia, Duehren, Subscription Publication, 7.57M), [The Hill](#) (7/23, Carney, 2.98M), and [CQ Roll Call](#) (7/23, Krawzak, 154K), among other sources, also have reports.

Meatpacking Workers Sue OSHA For Allegedly Failing To Keep Them Safe.

The [Washington Post](#) (7/23, Rosenberg, 14.2M) reports a lawsuit filed Thursday by three meatpacking workers says OSHA "is failing to do its job properly." The plaintiffs accuse OSHA "of leaving the workers in imminent danger due to what they say are hazardous working conditions at the factory they work at, run by Maid-Rite Specialty Foods in Pennsylvania, in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic."

Officials Acknowledge DHS Made False Statements In Fight With New York.

The [New York Times](#) (7/23, Shanahan, 18.61M) reports DHS officials "made false statements in a bid to justify expelling New York residents from programs that let United States travelers speed through borders and airport lines, federal government lawyers admitted on Thursday." The "surprise" admission, contained in a court filing, said the inaccuracies "undermine a central argument" in the Trump Administration's case "for barring New Yorkers from the programs after the state passed a law enabling undocumented immigrants to get driver's licenses."

DACA Recipient Accused Of Killing Three In DUI.

The [Washington Times](#) (7/23, Dinan, 492K) reports that an undocumented immigrant "who stands accused of killing three motorcyclists in a drunken-driving crash last week in Texas was once a 'Dreamer,' approved for the Obama-era DACA deportation amnesty in 2013, and protected from removal in 2016 despite another drunken-driving arrest." Ivan Robles Navejas was awarded DACA status in 2013, "about the same time he was charged with resisting arrest, but his status lapsed two years later," according to ICE.

Delay Sought In Release Of Documentary Film Examining Trump's Immigration Crackdown.

The [New York Times](#) (7/23, A1, Dickerson, 18.61M) reports on a new documentary that "peers inside the secretive world of immigration enforcement." The filmmakers, however, have "faced demands to delete scenes and delay broadcast until after the election." According to the Times, "some of the contentious scenes include ICE officers lying to immigrants to gain access to their homes and mocking them after taking them into custody." Another "shows an officer illegally picking the lock to an apartment building during a raid."

Senate Passes Defense Bill With Veto-Proof Majority.

[Axios](#) (7/23, Ayes, 521K) reports the Senate on Thursday "passed the National Defense Authorization Act on Thursday on an [86-14](#) vote," including an amendment that "calls for 10 military bases honoring the Confederacy to be renamed, which President Trump greatly opposes." The [Washington Post](#) (7/23, Demirjian, 14.2M) calls the vote "the latest sign that Congress is undeterred by...Trump's" veto threat, and [USA Today](#) (7/23, Wu, 10.31M) and [Politico](#) (7/23, O'Brien, 4.29M) describe lawmakers as "defying" Trump. [The Hill](#) (7/23, Carney, 2.98M) cautions, however, that "senators could flip their votes on a potential override."

[Fox News](#) (7/23, O'Reilly, 27.59M) recounts on its website that "the House earlier this week passed its own version of the defense bill earlier this week – also by a veto-proof margin," and now "both chambers of Congress must...hash out a unified version of the bill and pass it again, which most likely will not occur until the fall." [Reuters](#) (7/23, Zengerle) also says the

vote paves "the way for a fight later this year with the White House if the base name provision remains in the legislation."

The [Washington Times](#) (7/23, Meier, 492K) points out "the House's version of the bill would mandate the names of 12 military bases including North Carolina's Fort Bragg and Virginia's Fort Lee," whereas "the Senate's version of the bill includes similar language but would mandate the change over a period of three years." The [Wall Street Journal](#) (7/23, Wise, Subscription Publication, 7.57M) and the [Washington Examiner](#) (7/23, Smith, 448K), among other news outlets, also report the story.

Trump Expected To Sign Executive Order On Drug Prices Friday.

[The Hill](#) (7/23, Sullivan, 2.98M) reports "President Trump is likely to sign executive orders on Friday aimed at lowering drug prices, elevating a key issue for voters in an election year." The Hill adds that "while the plans could shift at the last minute, some GOP lawmakers have been invited to a presidential event on drug pricing on Friday at 3 p.m. at the White House in the South Court Auditorium to make the announcement, according to an invitation obtained by The Hill." The Hill also reports that "sources say one order is likely to include a version of a proposal to reduce some US drug prices by tying them to the lower prices paid in other countries."

White House Task Force Recommends Reforms To Indian Health Service.

The [Washington Times](#) (7/23, Boyer, 492K) reports that "a White House task force on Thursday called for extensive changes in the Indian Health Service to protect children from abuse at the agency that oversees care for 2.6 million Native Americans in 37 states." Task force members "told first lady Melania Trump in a meeting that IHS employees are frustrated by institutional inefficiencies, red tape and a lack of reporting of chronic child abuse." IHS Director Rear Adm. Michael Weahkee "said that the agency had cooperated fully with the task force's investigation, and that the agency acknowledges 'there is always room for improvement.'" Melania Trump praised the task force's efforts, saying, "I know that this work will help to keep children safe."

State Department IG To Probe Allegations Against US Ambassador To UK.

The [AP](#) (7/23, Lee, Kirka) reports, "Allegations that President Donald Trump's envoy to Britain made inappropriate remarks about women and minorities and may have violated federal ethics rules are roiling the US Embassy in London." The AP adds "current and former U.S. officials say the charges" against Ambassador Robert "Woody" Johnson "surfaced during a routine inspection of operations at the embassy and are to be addressed in a report by the State Department's inspector general." According to "those officials," Johnson "is accused of making insensitive remarks that contravene department personnel guidelines. But, perhaps more seriously, Johnson's former deputy has alleged the ambassador tried to intervene with British government officials at the president's request to steer the British Open golf tournament to Trump's Turnberry resort in Scotland."

Politico Profile: Pompeo's Wife Often Uses Her "Unofficial Authority."

[Politico](#) (7/23, Lippman, Toosi, 4.29M) profiles Susan Pompeo, Secretary of State Pompeo's wife, who it says has "wield[ed] her unofficial authority in ways that have carried through from the CIA's Langley, Va., headquarters all the way to Foggy Bottom – with fastidious attention to detail, demanding standards and a head-turning level of engagement for the spouse of a powerful political figure." Adds Politico, "In recent months, Susan Pompeo's involvement in State Department business has drawn public attention in ways that have been uncomfortable for the Pompeos." Politico goes on to say that "in a vast Cabinet department with extensive resources, tightly bound by protocol and with close oversight, Mike and Susan Pompeo have imported a model more familiar to smaller, less scrutinized congressional offices on Capitol Hill: a blurry line between the appointed secretary and unappointed spouse, and among official, political and personal agendas."

Fauci Throws First Pitch At Nationals Opener.

The [Washington Times](#) (7/23, Zielonka, 492K) reports NIAID Director Fauci – “the country’s leading expert on infectious diseases, a White House coronavirus task force member and a big Washington Nationals fan – was the guest of honor Thursday night at Nationals Park and tossed out the first pitch of the Major League Baseball season opener.” The [New York Post](#) (7/23, Lapin, 4.57M) says “choosing a career as an infectious disease expert was probably the right call,” as “Fauci fumbled the first pitch.”

US Unveils Plans To Build Quantum Internet.

The [Washington Post](#) (7/23, Whalen, 14.2M) reports that US officials and scientists “unveiled a plan Thursday to pursue what they called one of the most important technological frontiers of the 21st century: building a quantum Internet.” The Energy Department didn’t “announce a funding figure for the project Thursday.” Paul Dabbar, the Energy Department’s Under Secretary for Science, “said the federal government invests about \$500 to \$700 million a year in quantum information technology, suggesting some of that money would fund the new Internet.” He “said there would likely be further funding announcements for the project in the future.” Panagiotis Spentzouris, head of quantum science at Fermilab, “said in an interview that more resources, and a clearer project structure, will be needed to carry out the blueprint published Thursday.”

Lewis To Lie In State At US Capitol.

[USA Today](#) (7/23, Wu, 10.31M) reports “the late Rep. John Lewis will lie in state at the US Capitol next week,” House Speaker Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader McConnell announced Thursday. Lewis “will lie in state outdoors for the public visitation on the East Front Steps of the Capitol because of COVID-19 precautions,” and “in accordance with Washington’s mask mandate, all visitors will be required to wear a mask, and social-distancing protocols will be enforced.” [Fox News](#) (7/23, Phillips, 27.59M) recounts on its website that “the casket will arrive Monday and be taken in a procession around the city, with stops at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial near the National Mall.”

The [AP](#) (7/23) reports from Atlanta, meanwhile, that Lewis’ funeral “will be held Thursday at Atlanta’s historic Ebenezer Baptist Church, which the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. once led.” The [Atlanta Journal-Constitution](#) (7/23, Mitchell, 895K) says “later that evening there will be a service at Brown Chapel A.M.E. Church in Selma, which is the church where Lewis and other activists received attention after being beaten during a 1965 voting rights protest that came to be known as ‘Bloody Sunday.’” The [Montgomery \(AL\) Advertiser](#) (7/23, Harper, 62K) also reports that “civil rights hero John Lewis will make the journey from Selma to Montgomery one last time.”

Fairfax County’s “Robert E. Lee High School” To Be Renamed After Lewis.

[Reuters](#) (7/23, Beech) reports, meanwhile, that “the public school district in Fairfax County, Virginia, a suburb of Washington, said on Thursday it had voted to rename the Robert E. Lee High School after Lewis.”

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Director-General Rejects Pompeo’s Claim That China “Bought” WHO.

The [AP](#) (7/23, Keaten) reports that on Thursday, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus “upbraided” Secretary of State Pompeo “for ‘untrue and unacceptable’ allegations during the coronavirus pandemic after British media reported that Pompeo made a comment about the health agency chief having been ‘bought by China.’” The AP adds that “in one of his most defensive and full-throated replies yet to months of criticism from Washington,” Tedros “said WHO was focused on ‘saving lives’ as he condemned the reported comments by Pompeo

at a closed-door event this week in London.” Tedros is quoted as saying, “The comments are untrue and unacceptable, and without any foundation for that matter.”

[CNBC](#) (7/23, Feuer, Macias, 3.62M) reports on its website that Pompeo “has previously accused China of working with the WHO to downplay the growing coronavirus crisis.” On Tuesday, Pompeo said of China, “You can’t engage in cover-ups and co-opt international institutions like the World Health Organization.” [Reuters](#) (7/23, Nebehay) and [Politico](#) (7/23, Furlong, 4.29M), among other news outlets, also cover the story.

Brazil Continues To Report Record Numbers Of Increases In Coronavirus.

The [Washington Post](#) (7/23, McCoy, 14.2M) reports Brazil continues to register record numbers of infections as coronavirus spreads to all regions of the country. The growth “is being driven by the outbreak in São Paulo, long Brazil’s coronavirus epicenter, but also new and sharply ascendant outbreaks that span the country.” Over 80% of Brazilian municipalities have reported cases of coronavirus.

Dubious COVID Remedies Promoted By Latin American Governments.

The [New York Times](#) (7/23, Trigo, Kurmanaev, Cabrera, 18.61M) reports that in interest in dubious medicines to combat COVID-19 “has been especially high recently in Latin America, where the virus is raging uncontrolled and many political leaders on the right and left are promoting them, whether out of genuine faith or a desire to offer hope and deflect blame.” President Trump “has repeatedly touted the anti-malaria drug hydroxychloroquine,” but in the US the drug “does not have nearly the official imprimatur that it does in parts of Latin America.” In Brazil, “President Jair Bolsonaro has relentlessly promoted the drug.” Meanwhile, “governments in El Salvador, Peru and Paraguay have bought hydroxychloroquine to treat coronavirus.”

Virus Cases Rise Among Young People In Spain.

The [New York Times](#) (7/23, Minder, 18.61M) reports that “Spain lifted a nationwide state of emergency on June 21 as it emerged from a strict three-month lockdown.” But, “since then, new coronavirus cases have quadrupled – now concentrated among young people – as the left-wing coalition government of Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez returned responsibility for a safe reopening to Spain’s regions.” Spain’s Health Minister Salvador Illa told Parliament Wednesday that nation is dealing with 224 local outbreaks.

Iranian Civilian Jet In Near-Miss With American Warplane Over Syria.

The [New York Times](#) (7/23, Yee, Fassihi, Schmitt, 18.61M) reports that an Iranian passenger plane en route from Iran to Beirut “swerved and dropped abruptly on Thursday to avoid a nearby American fighter jet, injuring several passengers before landing in Beirut.” Videos broadcast by “Iranian and pro-Iran Lebanese media, which said the footage was taken by passengers, showed a fighter jet flying alongside the passenger plane, operated by Mahan Air.” CENTCOM spokesman Capt. Bill Urban said in a statement later Thursday that an Air Force F-15 on “a routine air mission” in southern Syria had conducted “a standard visual inspection of a Mahan Air passenger airliner.”

WSJournal: Biden Will Have Leverage With Iran If Elected.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (7/23, Subscription Publication, 7.57M) editorializes that if elected, Joe Biden will have leverage with Iran, if he chooses to use it.

NYTimes Analysis: Civilian Toll In Afghanistan Unclear As Fighting Increases.

The [New York Times](#) (7/23, Timory, Mashal, 18.61M) reports that with the start of peace talks between the Taliban and Afghan government “delayed by months, the Afghan war has spiraled into a deadlier phase, even as the United States continues to withdraw its forces.” Car bombs,

roadside bombs and airstrikes kill “dozens of Afghans everyday,” but “as the war has spread, the exact nature of the attacks and their toll, particularly on civilians, has increasingly grown opaque.”

Pompeo Urges Chinese People To Change Communist Party.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (7/23, O’Keeffe, Mauldin, Subscription Publication, 7.57M) reports Secretary of State Pompeo on Thursday called on the Chinese people to change the ruling Communist Party’s direction. In a speech, Pompeo stopped short of calling for regime change, instead urging the Chinese people to work with the US to change the Communist Party’s behavior.

The [Washington Times](#) (7/23, Gertz, 492K) quotes Pompeo as saying, “We, the free nations of the world, must induce change in the CCP’s behavior in more creative and assertive ways, because Beijing’s actions threaten our people and our prosperity. Securing our freedoms from the Chinese Communist Party is the mission of our time, and America is perfectly positioned to lead it because of our founding principles.”

The [Washington Post](#) (7/23, Nakamura, Morello, 14.2M) reports Pompeo’s address Thursday at the Nixon Presidential Library comes as the Administration is “moving to expand on [President Trump’s] rhetorical blasts and marshal a broader campaign to punish Beijing on a host of unrelated issues.”

The [Washington Post](#) (7/23, 14.2M) editorializes that “President Trump is pursuing a reckless, incoherent and unilateral offensive against Beijing that appears designed to boost his reelection campaign, not manage the complicated challenge posed by the regime of Xi Jinping.” The Post argues that “Trump’s crusade...would be more plausible if it did not represent an abrupt, election-season U-turn. Until March, Mr. Trump was publicly praising Mr. Xi as a great leader, including in his response to the coronavirus.”

Trump And Putin Discuss Coronavirus, Arms Control.

[Axios](#) (7/23, Rummler, 521K) reports President Trump spoke with Russian President Vladimir Putin “about the coronavirus pandemic and arms control on Thursday, the Kremlin announced and the White House later confirmed.” Trump “reiterated his hope of avoiding an expensive three-way arms race between China, Russia, and the United States and looked forward to progress on upcoming arms control negotiations in Vienna,” White House spokesperson Judd Deere said.

US Accuses Russia Of Testing Anti-Satellite Weapon In Space.

The [AP](#) (7/23, Burns) reports the US on Thursday accused Russia of “conducting a test of an anti-satellite weapon in space, asserting that it exposed Moscow’s intent to deploy weapons that threaten U.S. and allied satellites.” In Moscow, the Defense Ministry said the July 15 test involved “a small space vehicle” that “inspected one of the national satellites from a close distance using special equipment.” The US, however, “said the Russian actions were inconsistent with the stated mission of an inspector satellite.”

The [Washington Times](#) (7/23, Gertz, 492K) reports Air Force Gen. John W. “Jay” Raymond, commander of US Space Command, said the test is “further evidence of Russia’s continuing efforts to develop and test space-based systems, and consistent with the Kremlin’s published military doctrine to employ weapons that hold U.S. and allied space assets at risk.”

US, Baltic States Oppose Russian “Rewriting Of History.”

[Reuters](#) (7/23, Sytas) reports the US on Thursday joined Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia “in opposing any Russian attempts to rewrite history after President Vladimir Putin said the Baltic states had consented to their 1940 annexation by the Soviet Union.” In a joint statement with the foreign ministers of the three Baltic countries, Secretary of State Pompeo said, “We stand

firmly against any attempts by Russia to rewrite history in order to justify the 1940 occupation and annexation of the Baltic states by the Soviet Union."

The [AP](#) (7/23, Tanner) reports the statement and Pompeo's separate [video message](#) posted on the Twitter page of the US Embassy in Tbilisi, Georgia, "marked the 80th anniversary of the Welles Declaration," which "condemned the occupation and annexation of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania by Soviet leader Josef Stalin."

Greece Vows To Do "Whatever Necessary" In Dispute With Turkey.

The [AP](#) (7/23, Gatopoulos, Fraser) reports Greece warned Thursday it "will do 'whatever is necessary' to defend its sovereign rights in response to plans by neighboring Turkey to proceed with an oil-and-gas research mission south of Greek islands." French President Emmanuel Macron, meanwhile, "said sanctions now appeared necessary." Said Macron, "It is not acceptable for the maritime space of a Union member state to be violated or threatened. Those responsible must be sanctioned."

South Sudanese Dissent Claims Kiir Ordered His Death.

Peter Biar Ajak, Chairman of the South Sudan Young Leaders Forum, recounts in the [Wall Street Journal](#) (7/23, Subscription Publication, 7.57M) his escape from Nairobi after he claims President Salva Kiir had ordered the National Security Service, led by Gen. Akol Koor Kuc, either to abduct him from Kenya or murder him.

THE BIG PICTURE

Headlines From Today's Front Pages.

Wall Street Journal:

[Mike Pompeo Urges Chinese People To Change Communist Party](#)

[Rise in Weekly Unemployment Claims Points To Faltering Jobs Recovery](#)

[Amazon Met With Startups About Investing, Then Launched Competing Products](#)

[China Fortifies Hong Kong's Role As Financial Powerhouse](#)

[Face Masks And A Mohel: Parents Figure Out How To Host A Bris During Coronavirus](#)

[Southwest And American Trim More Flying](#)

New York Times:

[Rise In Unemployment Claims Signals An Economic Reversal](#)

[Trump Abruptly Cancels Republican Convention In Florida: 'It's Not The Right Time'](#)

[Judge Orders Cohen Released, Citing 'Retaliation' Over Tell-All Book](#)

[A Rare Look Inside Trump's Immigration Crackdown Draws Legal Threats](#)

[Testing Bottlenecks Threaten NYC's Ability To Contain Virus](#)

[AOC Unleashes A Viral Condemnation Of Sexism In Congress](#)

Washington Post:

[Trump Uses Fear To Tout Repeal Of Housing Rule](#)

[Republicans' Impasse Stalls Coronavirus Relief Package](#)

['Operation Legend' Seen As Driven By Politics](#)

[Baseball's Return Is Nothing Short Of A Miracle](#)

[Beijing's Summer Is More Oppressive Than Usual, But Most Prefer The Heat Over The Virus](#)

[Trump Cancels RNC's Big Event](#)

Financial Times:

[Hamburg Court Convicts Former Concentration Camp Guard](#)

[US Labour Market Recovery Appears To Stall Amid Stimulus Talks](#)

[Hong Kongers Eye UK Property As They Weigh Escape Routes](#)
[EY Prepared Unqualified Audit For Wirecard In Early June](#)

Washington Times:

['Nightmare Scenario' Confronts China As Asian Aggression Opens Doors For US](#)
[FBI Disguised Its Intentions In Candidate Trump 'Briefing,' Declassified Documents Show](#)
[Trump Turmoil Overshadows Looming Biden Tax Tsunami: 'Never Has There Been A Clearer Contrast'](#)

['Dreamer' Once Protected By Obama Amnesty Accused Of Killing Three In DUI](#)
[Trump Cancels RNC Convention In Jacksonville Over Coronavirus Spat](#)
[McConnell Announces 'In Principle' Agreement With Trump On New Virus Relief](#)

Story Lineup From Last Night's Network News:

ABC: Coronavirus-Rising Cases; Trump-GOP Convention; Biden/Obama Video; Trump-Yankee Stadium; Unemployment; Portland-Protests; AOC-Yoho; Severe Weather; Michael Cohen; FDA-Hand Sanitizer Warning; MLB-Opening Day; Sneakers for Soldiers.

CBS: Coronavirus-Rising Cases; Coronavirus-Children; Trump-GOP Convention; Trump-Schools; Unemployment; AOC-Yoho; FDA-Hand Sanitizer Warning; NIH Director Interview; Severe Weather; MLB-Opening Day; Twins Teach Kids To Swim.

NBC: Coronavirus-Rising Cases; Trump-GOP Convention; Trump-Schools; GOP-Relief Bill; Unemployment; Portland-Protests; Michael Cohen; AOC-Yoho; Severe Weather; ISIS Members Interview; Coronavirus-Schools; MLB-Opening Day; Nightly News Kids Edition.

Network TV At A Glance:

Coronavirus – 15 minutes, 50 seconds

Unemployment – 6 minutes, 35 seconds

AOC-Yoho – 6 minutes, 10 seconds

Trump-GOP Convention – 2 minutes, 45 seconds

Story Lineup From This Morning's Radio News Broadcasts:

ABC: Trump-GOP Convention; Coronavirus-Rising Cases; Coronavirus-Arizona Schools; GOP-Relief Bill; Tropical Storm Warning.

CBS: GOP-Relief Bill; Trump-GOP Convention; Trump-Schools; MLB-Opening Day; Minnesota-Police Reforms; Trump-Chicago; Wall Street.

FOX: GOP-Relief Bill; Trump-GOP Convention; Trump-Schools; Manson Accomplice.

NPR: Trump-GOP Convention; Coronavirus-Rising Cases; GOP-Relief Bill; AOC-Yoho.

WASHINGTON'S SCHEDULE

Today's Events In Washington.

White House:

- President Trump — Presents the Presidential Medal of Freedom to Jim Ryun; delivers remarks and signs executive orders on lowering drug prices
- Vice President Pence — And Second Lady Karen visit Indianapolis, meeting higher education leaders on safely reopening schools

US Senate:

- [No public schedule released](#)

US House:

- [House meets for legislative business](#) – House of Representatives meets for legislative business, with agenda for today and tomorrow including 'H.R. 7608 – State, Foreign

Operations, Agriculture, Rural Development, Interior, Environment, Military Construction, and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act, 2021'

Location: U.S. Capitol, Washington, DC; 9:00 AM

- [FEMA Administrator Gaynor testifies to House Oversight subcommittee on natural disaster response amid coronavirus](#) – Environment Subcommittee hybrid hearing on 'FEMA's Natural Disaster Preparedness and Response Efforts During the Coronavirus Pandemic', with testimony from Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator Peter Gaynor * Held remotely and in-person in Rm 2154, Rayburn House Office Building; *9:00 AM*
- [House Foreign Affairs and Oversight Committees hold joint deposition in probe of firing of State Department IG](#) – House Committee on Foreign Affairs and House Committee on Oversight and Reform conduct joint deposition of former Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Legislative Affairs Charles Faulkner, as part of their investigation into President Donald Trump's 15 May firing of State Department Inspector General Steve Linick, and whether President Trump removed Linick in order to stop his office's work looking into Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's conduct; *10:00 AM*

Cabinet Officers:

- [No public schedules released](#)

Visitors:

- [No visitors scheduled](#)

This Town:

- [USIP online discussion on Afghanistan](#) – 'Afghanistan's Peaceful Future: Support from Central Asia' online discussion hosted by U.S. Institute of Peace, with featured speakers including Afghanistan Ambassador to the U.S. Amb. Roya Rahmani, Uzbekistan Ambassador to the U.S. Amb. Javlon Vakhobov, Kazakhstan Ambassador to the U.S. Amb. Erzhan Kazykhanov, and USIP Asia Center's Andrew Wilder; *10:00 AM*
- [Washington Post Live event with NIAID Director Fauci](#) – 'Coronavirus: Leadership During Crisis' Washington Post Live event with NIH National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Dr Anthony Fauci, who discusses how to overcome the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and prepare for what's next while states and local communities decide whether to reopen for the new school year; *11:30 AM*
- [NIAID Director Fauci speaks on CSIS online discussion](#) – NIH National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases Director Dr Anthony Fauci speaks on Center for Strategic and International Studies Global Health Policy Center online event, discussing the strategy for ensuring the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic does not spiral out of control in the U.S., how the country can build basic health capacities to slow the spread, what federal, state, and local actions may be necessary to protect the American people and safely reopen businesses, schools, and sporting events, and the development of a safe and effective vaccine, including the status and promise of Operation Warp Speed; *1:30 PM*
- [Darfur Women Action Group webinar on women's security and coronavirus](#) – 'The Women's Peace and Security Agenda and the Impact of COVID-19 on Women' online discussion hosted by Darfur Women Action Group, with featured speakers including U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues Amb. Kelley Currie, Canadian senator Mobina Jaffer, and DWAG founder Niemat Ahmadi; *1:30 PM*
- [NDN Talks hosts Democratic Rep. Haley Stevens](#); *1:30 PM*
- [Court hearing in House GOP lawsuit challenging proxy voting](#) – [Preliminary injunction hearing in 'McCarthy et al v. Pelosi et al'](#) – a lawsuit filed by House Republicans over the use of voting by proxy in the House of Representatives, which they say is unconstitutional. The system, which required a rule change, allows absent lawmakers to instruct those present to vote on their behalf, and was introduced to help lawmakers avoid the risks of travel to Washington, DC, during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic * It was used for the first

time 27 May for a vote on the Uighur Human Rights Policy Act of 2020, with over 70 Democrats taking advantage of the system * When announcing the lawsuit, House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy described the rule change as 'a brazen violation of the Constitution' and 'a dereliction of our duty as elected officials' that would 'silence the American people's voice during a crisis'. In response, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi called the lawsuit a 'sad stunt' * Case no. 1:20-cv-01395 * Before Judge Rudolph Contreras

Location: U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, 333 Constitution Ave NW, Washington, DC; 2:00 PM

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