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 FBI News Briefing

**TO: THE DIRECTOR AND SENIOR STAFF**

**DATE: FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2020 6:30 AM EST**

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## LEADING THE NEWS

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### **Agencies, Cybersecurity Experts Say Election Was Most Secure In US History.**

The [AP](#) (11/12, Tucker, Bajak) reports, "A coalition of federal and state officials said Thursday that they have no evidence that votes were compromised or altered in last week's presidential election." Their comments reject "unsubstantiated claims of widespread fraud advanced by President Donald Trump and many of his supporters." A statement distributed by a group led by CISA said, "While we know there are many unfounded claims and opportunities for misinformation about the process of our elections, we can assure you we have the utmost confidence in the security and integrity of our elections, and you should too." The statement added, "When you have questions, turn to elections officials as trusted voices as they administer elections." It "echoed repeated assertions by election experts and state officials over the last week that the election unfolded smoothly without broad irregularities."

[USA Today](#) (11/12, Johnson, 10.31M) reports that the group of agencies, which included the National Association of State Election Directors, "issued what appeared to be a definitive coda to the 2020 vote." The statement "offered a decidedly different message than that

delivered last month" by DNI Ratcliffe, "who abruptly announced that that voter registration information had been obtained by Iran and Russia in an attempt to undermine confidence in the 2020 election." Ratcliffe also "said that Russia has obtained voter information just as the Kremlin had done in when it interfered in the 2016 election."

The [New York Times](#) (11/12, Sanger, Stevens, Perloth, 18.61M) reports that the statement came "directly from one of Mr. Trump's own cabinet agencies." It "also came as a previously unified Republican Party showed signs of cracking on the question of whether to keep backing the president." Senate Republicans have "insisted that Mr. Biden should at least be given access to the President's Daily Brief," their call amounting "to an acknowledgment that Mr. Biden will be declared the victor in the election." Sen. Roy Blunt (R-MO) said, "I think they do need to know some things, and national security would be one of them."

The [Washington Post](#) (11/12, Itkowitz, 14.2M) reports that the statement from security agencies "comes on the heels of reporting earlier in the day by Reuters that Christopher Krebs, the head of the CISA, expected to be fired over his efforts to debunk misinformation about voting fraud." Krebs has "retweeted an election law expert who called out Trump for spreading misinformation." Center for Election Innovation & Research Executive Director David Becker wrote, "Please don't retweet wild and baseless claims about voting machines, even if they're made by the president. These fantasies have been debunked many times."

[Axios](#) (11/12, Chen, 521K) reports that the Election Infrastructure Government Coordinating Council (GCC) Executive Committee wrote, "There is no evidence that any voting system deleted or lost votes, changed votes or was in any way compromised." The statement "acknowledged 'opportunities for misinformation' and urged voters to seek out election officials as 'trusted voices.'"

[Reuters](#) (11/12) reports, "The groups, the Election Infrastructure Government Coordinating Council Executive Committee (GCC) and the Election Infrastructure Sector Coordinating Council (SCC), said the election was the most secure in U.S. history." CISA's "Rumor Control" website "debunks misinformation about the election," and CISA Director Krebs "has told associates he expects to be fired, sources familiar with the matter told Reuters."

The [Washington Times](#) (11/12, Lovelace, 492K) reports that among the parties issuing the statement are "members such as CISA assistant director Bob Kolasky, U.S. Election Assistance Commission chair Benjamin Hovland, and National Association of Secretaries of State president Maggie Toulouse Oliver, among several others." ,

Also reporting are [NBC News](#) (11/12, 6.14M), the [Daily Beast](#) (11/12, 1.39M), the New York Times ([1](#) and [2](#)), [Bloomberg](#) (11/13, Sebenius, 4.73M), [Axios](#) (11/12, 521K), [NPR](#) (11/12, Wise, 3.12M), [Federal Computer Week](#) (11/12, 263K), and [Newsweek](#) (11/12, Grzeszczak, 1.53M).

## PROTESTS

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### **Attorneys Seek Bond Release For Accused In Arbery Case.**

On [ABC World News Tonight](#)<sup>Vi</sup> (11/12, story 7, 1:30, Muir, 6.57M), Adrienne Banker reported, "Tonight, attorneys for two of the men accused of murdering Ahmaud Arbery seeking the release of the father and son on bond." Greg and Travis McMichael were "seen chasing Arbery before Travis fatally shot the 25-year-old after spotting him running in their Brunswick, Georgia neighborhood, in what they told police as an attempted citizen's arrest of a suspected burglar." Travis McMichael's friends testified "that he is remorseful," with attorneys "citing his service in the Coast Guard" and "saying this was no hate crime." Travis McMichael's attorney, Bob Rubin, said, "We have substantial evidence that on the day in question, Mr. Arbery was not a jogger. He was there for nefarious purposes." The attorneys "are asking the judge to reject the indictments' malice murder charge...saying it was written in such a way that it actually charges two crimes in one count." The hearing resumes on Friday morning.

## COUNTER-TERRORISM

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### **Utah Man Pleads Guilty To Impersonating ISIS Leader In Attack Plot.**

The [Salt Lake \(UT\) Tribune](#) (11/12, Pierce, 224K) reports, "A Utah man arrested in August 2019 has pleaded guilty to trying to help the Islamic State terrorist organization carry out bomb attacks." Murat Suljovic, 23, of Salt Lake City, "pleaded guilty in U.S. District Court to one count of attempting to provide material support to a designated foreign terrorist organization. According to court documents, Suljovic admitted that in January 2019, while he was living in Utah, he corresponded with two people he believed were members of the Islamic State, also known as ISIS, and that he believed they were planning to carry out an attack. The two people were members of the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force."

[KUTV-TV](#) Salt Lake City (11/12, Stauffer, 445K) reports, "Suljovic admitted to corresponding with an individual, identified as Person A in court documents, who he believed was a follower of ISIS, according to the plea agreement. The correspondence occurred in January 2019 while Suljovic was living in Utah. He reportedly admitted to believing Person A was interested in performing an attack for ISIS and that he would help another individual, referred to as Person B, who was also interested in performing an attack for ISIS, the plea agreement stated. Suljovic said during his correspondence with Person A, he pretended to be an ISIS leader online and that the two people believed he was an ISIS leader." The plea agreement "states Suljovic provided advice about potential targets for a terrorist attack and planning the attack. He also provided a bomb-making tutorial video to Person A that was meant to be shared with Person B for training and assisting with an attack."

[KTVX-TV](#) Salt Lake City (11/12, Gardiner) reports, "Documents state Suljovic provided advice about potential targets for a terrorist attack on how to plan an attack. He also provided a bomb-making tutorial video to one individual who was then supposed to share it with another person to be trained in carrying out an attack. By providing the bomb-making tutorial video, Suljovic admitted he knowingly attempted to provide material support to ISIS, knowing that ISIS has engaged and does engage in terrorism. Suljovic was charged with providing material support to a designated foreign terrorist organization in a Felony Information filed in May. As part of his plea deal, Suljovic agreed to forfeit computer and electronic equipment used to facilitate his criminal conduct or acquired from his conduct."

### **FBI Analyst: Pittsburgh Is A "Hub" For White Supremacy.**

The [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#) (11/12, Ove, 616K) reports, "Pittsburgh is a focal point for white supremacy and extremists, an FBI analyst said Thursday at a symposium on domestic terrorism. 'Our area has become a hub. It's important to understand that it is here,' said John Pulcastro, a supervisory analyst at the Pittsburgh FBI. In fact, he said the movement is as strong here as any other place in the country he has studied in 20 years, including the Pacific Northwest, a hotbed for supremacists." The Post-Gazette adds, "Extremist groups are active here in holding events and recruiting. As an example, he said 100 members of a neo-Nazi group called the Patriot Front marched down the Boulevard of the Allies on the weekend. Their motto, 'Conquer or Die,' makes their ideology clear, he said. Another catch-phrase, 'Blood and Soil,' is aimed at making America a white country only, with refugees seen as invaders, Mr. Pulcastro said."

### **Massachusetts Man On Trial For Allegedly Trying To Firebomb Jewish Elder Care Facility.**

The [Springfield \(MA\) Republican](#) (11/12, Barry, 395K) reports from Springfield, Massachusetts, "The plan was 'simple, speedy and dangerous,' a federal prosecutor said of John Rathbun's alleged attempt to set off a crudely made firebomb at a Jewish elder care complex." According to the Republican, "Police and fire officials on the morning of April 2 found a partially filled

yellow gas container with a charred Christian church pamphlet in its spout. It was perched near a tree on Converse Street in Longmeadow, just outside the campus, when the Longmeadow Fire Department responded to a call for a 'suspicious package.' A grand jury indicted Rathbun, 36, of East Longmeadow, on two charges connected to placing an explosive device to cause harm and destruction, plus lying to FBI agents. His trial began Thursday in U.S. District Court in Springfield."

### **Accomplice Testifies Against Reputed Militia Leader In Minnesota Mosque Bombing Trial.**

The [Minneapolis Star Tribune](#) (11/12, Mannix, 1.04M) reports, "The three men drove through the night in a rented pickup truck with a bag full of automatic rifles in the back seat, and after 10 hours on the road Michael Hari revealed the objective of their trip. 'We're going to go to Minnesota and we're going to bomb a mosque,' Hari told them, according to Michael McWhorter's testimony in St. Paul's federal courthouse on Thursday morning. It was about 4 a.m. on Aug. 5, 2017, and the three men were an hour away from Dar Al-Farooq Islamic Center in Bloomington." McWhorter, "one of the passengers in the truck, is a star witness for the prosecution in the domestic terrorism trial of Hari, which began Monday. McWhorter pleaded guilty in January 2019 to two federal charges related to the bombing of the mosque."

### **Georgia Man Charged In 9/11 Bomb Threat.**

[WTOC-TV](#) Savannah, GA (11/12, Bauman, 22K) reports from Savannah, Georgia, "A Vidalia man is facing charges after investigators say he called in a bomb threat to a building at the Port of Savannah." Elliot Sherman, 32, "is charged with Explosive Materials-Willfully Making a Threat. The indictment reports that Sherman is accused of calling the California Cartage CFS 2 building on September 11. Sherman was assigned to the facility by his employer. 'Calling in a bomb threat, even as a hoax, wastes resources, disrupts commerce and terrifies potential threatened victims,' said Chris Hacker, Special Agent in Charge of FBI Atlanta. 'That's why the FBI takes them seriously and the penalties are severe.'"

[WTGS-TV](#) Savannah, GA (11/12, Papadimas) reports from Savannah, "U.S Attorney for the Southern District of Georgia, Bobby Christine, said the charge carries a possible penalty of up to 10 years in prison, substantial penalties and a supervised release period. 'Bomb threats, whether real or hoax, are dangerous and disruptive to work environments,' said U.S. Attorney Christine. 'This one was especially inexcusable as it was made on the anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.'" WTGS-TV adds, "According to the indictment, the DOJ said Sherman is accused of calling a bomb threat to the California Cartage CFS 2 building on Sept. 11, 2020. Officials said Sherman is assigned to the building by his employer."

### **IS Claims Responsibility For Attack At Saudi WWI Ceremony.**

The [AP](#) (11/12) reports, "The Islamic State group claimed responsibility on Thursday for the explosion the previous day at a cemetery in Saudi Arabia." IS "primarily targeted French diplomats attending the ceremony in remembrance of the end of World War I." The attack in Jiddah "wounded three people, leaving them with light to minor injuries." The terrorist group "primarily targeted the French consul attending the ceremony because of his country's publication of caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad." IS's news agency, Amaq, "said other European countries at the ceremony were also considered targets because they are part of the international coalition fighting Islamic State militants."

### **Iran Arrests Arab Separatist Leader Suspected To Be Behind 2018 Attack.**

[Reuters](#) (11/12) reports, "Iran's intelligence ministry has arrested an Iranian ethnic Arab separatist leader suspected of involvement" in a 2018 terrorist attack, according to state television. The Ahvaz National Resistance "claimed responsibility for the attack that killed 25 people, almost half of them members of Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards." Iranian state TV

said, "Farajollah Chaab, the leader of the separatist group, has been arrested by Iran's intelligence ministry agents." The report added, "Chaab has planned several other major attacks in Tehran and Khuzestan province in recent years...he has recently been planning to launch a new terrorist operation that failed with the efforts of the intelligence ministry agents."

### **Gunman Opens Fire On Saudi Embassy In The Netherlands.**

The [New York Times](#) (11/12, Erdbrink, 18.61M) reports that according to local police officials, at least one gunman opened fire at the Saudi Embassy in The Hague, Netherlands at 6 a.m. on Thursday. No injuries were sustained in the "rare attack...and it was not immediately clear whether the shooting was related to" the attack on a World War I commemoration attended by European officials in Saudi Arabia the day prior. The Times says that Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte "has voiced strong support for France in the aftermath of the beheading of a teacher by an Islamist extremist," setting the two countries "apart from the United States and other Western democracies" and stoking "anger in Muslim countries."

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (11/12, Abdulaziz, Subscription Publication, 7.57M) reports that Dutch police announced the arrest of a 40-year-old man from Zoetermeer in connection with the incident. Riyadh called the attack "cowardly," and has encouraged its citizens in the Netherlands to practice caution.

## **COUNTER-INTELLIGENCE**

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### **"Growing Number" Of GOP Senators Call For Biden To Receive PDB.**

On [ABC World News Tonight](#)<sup>Vi</sup> (11/12, story 3, 2:55, Muir, 6.57M), Muir said a "growing number of Republican senators...say it's time to start giving [Biden] the intelligence briefings incoming presidents get to keep this country safe." ABC's Jonathan Karl: "There are signs tonight Republican support for the President's give-no-ground posture is crumbling. While most Republican senators have yet to acknowledge have yet to concede Joe Biden won the election, a growing number are now saying it's time for Biden to receive the classified intelligence briefings normally given to a president-elect." Sen. James Lankford (R-OK): "If that's not occurring by Friday, I will step in as well to be able to push and to say this needs to occur so that regardless of the outcome of the election, whichever way that it goes, people can be ready for that actual task." Karl: "All told, at least 10 Republican senators, including Trump loyalist Lindsey Graham, said it's time for Biden to get those intel briefings."

Tracy reported on the [CBS Evening News](#)<sup>Vi</sup> (11/12, story 5, 2:20, O'Donnell, 4.06M), "The President's firewall of Republican support is starting to crack. ... Several Republican senators, including Ted Cruz, now say Biden should have access to the presidential daily intelligence briefings, something the White House has not provided." Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX): "For the sake of protecting the country, you want whoever is going to assume that office to be aware of the significant threats, because the first responsibility of any president is to keep the American people safe." On [NBC Nightly News](#)<sup>Vi</sup> (11/12, story 4, 0:25, Holt, 4.9M), Jackson similarly said Trump's "red wall of Republican support is showing some cracks. More GOP lawmakers now say [Biden] should get access to classified information, briefings being blocked right now by the Trump Administration."

The [AP](#) (11/11, Riechmann) reports Trump is not allowing Biden access to the President's Daily Brief, the "ultra-secret daily brief of the nation's most sensitive intelligence," and "national security and intelligence experts hope Trump changes his mind, citing the need for an incoming president to be fully prepared to confront any national security issues on Day One." [Politico](#) (11/12, Levine, Desiderio, 4.29M) reports Lankford "noted that in 2000, then-President Bill Clinton allowed George W. Bush to begin receiving presidential-level intelligence briefings during the recount in Florida." According to Politico, Lankford "added that he plans to question the government agency responsible for jump-starting the transition process if a certification is

not made by Friday." The [New York Daily News](#) (11/12, McAuliff, Sommerfeldt, 2.52M) reports Sen. John Cornyn (R-TX) "echoed Lankford in saying that the president should break the logjam and allow Biden access to national security briefings since he might 'win in the end.'"

[USA Today](#) (11/12, King, 10.31M) reports "prominent and powerful Republicans are signaling that Joe Biden should be treated as the next president," with senators saying "they see no issue with Biden receiving the same daily intelligence briefings Trump is getting." Sen. Charles Grassley (R-IA) "said he had 'no problem' letting Biden have access to the briefings," and several others, "including some of the president's most ardent allies" like Graham and Sen. Josh Hawley (R-MO), "quickly followed suit." [CNN](#) (11/12, Raju, Barrett, 83.16M) reports Acting SSCI Chair Marco Rubio (R-FL) said, "You don't lose any of your rights in court by making available to a potential successor the information they would need if in fact it goes in that direction. In all those domestic issues, you might have a few weeks or months. But on national security, our adversaries don't wait for presidents to catch up." The [New York Times](#) (11/12, Sanger, Stevens, Perloth, 18.61M) quotes Sen. Roy Blunt (R-MO) as saying, "I don't think they need to know everything. I think they do need to know some things, and national security would be one of them." [The Hill](#) (11/12, Carney, 2.98M) reports that Sen. Mitt Romney (R-UT) said, "I think it is very much in our national interest to have the president-elect receiving information."

The [Washington Post](#) (11/12, Sonmez, DeBonis, 14.2M) also reports that "an increasing number of Senate Republicans" say Biden "should be granted access to classified briefings during the presidential transition, an acknowledgment of the election results despite President Trump's insistence that he will win." Senate Majority Whip Thune told CNN. "I think that it probably makes sense to prepare for all contingencies. And as these election challenges play out in court, I don't have a problem with, and I think it's important from a national security standpoint, continuity."

Asked on [Fox News' Fox and Friends First](#) (11/12, 483K) about whether the Administration is considering giving Biden access to the President's Daily Brief, McEnany said, "All laws are being followed with regard to an expected transition, though we expect to continue on as the Trump Administration. We will see how our litigation goes."

[CBS News](#) (11/12, Quinn, 3.68M) reports that ODNI "said earlier this week it would not have contact with Mr. Biden's transition team until notified by the head of the GSA, who ascertains the likely successful candidate in the election. But the administrator of the GSA, Emily Murphy, has not yet determined Mr. Biden as the apparent next president, leaving in limbo millions of federal dollars to support the transition, government resources and Mr. Biden's access to high-level intelligence briefings." Still, Biden "has received lower-level intelligence briefings since formally becoming the Democratic nominee in August."

However, [ABC News](#) (11/12, Bruggeman, 2.97M) reports that "experts said the intelligence community is not beholden to the GSA 'ascertainment.' David Priess, a former intelligence briefer and author of 'The President's Book of Secrets: The Untold Story of Intelligence Briefings to America's Presidents,' said briefings could begin 'independent of the GSA decision' at the direction of the Director of National intelligence or, of course, the president." Priess added, "The Presidential Transition Act of 1963 and its updates do not mention the President's Daily Brief (PDB) or intelligence briefings for the president-elect. The custom of allowing the president-elect to see the PDB is just that— a custom — and it's something the president can do, or refuse to do, at his discretion."

Meanwhile, [Politico](#) (11/12, Bertrand, 4.29M) reports that "a group of more than 150 former national security officials who served under [Trump] and other Republican and Democratic administrations is warning that the government's delay in recognizing" Biden's victory "poses a 'serious risk to national security.'"

Also reporting on the PDB issue are [Axios](#) (11/12, Arias, 521K), the [Wall Street Journal](#) (11/12, Peterson, Wise, Subscription Publication, 7.57M), [Bloomberg](#) (11/12, Dennis, 4.73M),

[Reuters](#) (11/12, Cornwell, Chiacu, Lewis), the [Washington Times](#) (11/12, Sherfinski, Meier, 492K), and [NPR](#) (11/12, Grisales, 3.12M), among others.

Meanwhile, according to the [New York Times](#) (11/12, Sanger, Stevens, Perloth, 18.61M), "Deprived of access to secure government communications by the Trump administration, Mr. Biden's team of more than 500 former officials and outside experts has embraced workarounds, talking over encrypted apps like Signal to shield their conversations from the Chinese, meeting in outdoor coffee shops with government officials they once worked alongside." The Times adds, "The conversations are circumspect, both because of rules on both sides limiting how much information Mr. Biden's team can seek and how much executive branch officials are allowed to say."

### **In Recording, Facebook CEO Defends Decision Not To Suspend Bannon.**

[Reuters](#) (11/12, Paul) reports Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg "told an all-staff meeting on Thursday that former Trump White House adviser Steve Bannon had not violated enough of the company's policies to justify his suspension when he urged beheading" Fauci and FBI Director Wray, "according to a recording heard by Reuters." Zuckerberg said, "We have specific rules around how many times you need to violate certain policies before we will deactivate your account completely. ... While the offenses here, I think, came close to crossing that line, they clearly did not cross the line." Facebook "removed the video but left up Bannon's page," while Twitter "banned Bannon last week over the same content."

[BuzzFeed News](#) (11/12, Mac, Silverman) reports, "Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg told employees on Thursday that the Democratic nominee 'is going to be our next president.'" Zuckerberg added, "It's important that people have confidence that the election was fundamentally fair, and that goes for the tens of millions of people that voted for Trump." The CEO's comments "signify that he believes in the legitimacy of the result," and criticized "people claiming that a Biden victory would be overturned." Zuckerberg said "it's...quite unhelpful that people out there are raising expectations that there is going to be a different outcome than from what was projected."

### **Opinion: "Stolen Election" Rhetoric Could Unleash Wave Of Violence.**

Albert Hunt, former executive editor of Bloomberg News, writes in an op-ed in [The Hill](#) (11/12, 2.98M) that white power expert Kathleen Belew "fears Donald Trump's refusal to accept the election results may be inciting violence." The claim "that the presidential election was 'stolen' will likely become a rallying cry for the Trump base." Belew, a history professor at the University of Chicago, "dismisses the notion that this often is a 'lone wolf' problem." She told Hunt, "These militant fringe groups are much more directly connected than is appreciated. ... They share a lot of ideas." FBI Director Wray "has said these white power groups are a greater danger than the left-wing anarchists oft cited by President Trump and Attorney General William Barr." Hunt concludes the claims of a "stolen election" not only undermine "confidence in our Democratic system, but...could also threaten to unleash a dangerous wave of violence."

### **Wisconsin Official Says There Still Isn't Evidence Of Election Fraud.**

The [Washington Post](#) (11/12, Bauer, 14.2M) reports, "There remained no evidence of any wrongdoing, fraud or irregularity in Wisconsin's presidential election on Thursday," according to officials. Counties in the state are working "to wrap up the certification of their votes and their estimates of how much it would cost to recount them." Wisconsin's top elections official, Meagan Wolfe, said, "It's rare to see any sort of significant changes." She added, "There's always minor errors. ... We're certainly not seeing anything unusual." Discussing why the process may look different this year, Wolfe cited the "counting of provisional ballots that came in after Election Day."

### **Former Ohio State Researcher Pleads Guilty To Lying About Chinese Ties.**

[Ohio State University – The Lantern](#) (11/12) reports, “A former Ohio State researcher and professor pleaded guilty in federal court Thursday for making false claims to federal authorities as part of an investigation into his ties to China.” Song Guo Zheng “was charged in July for using more than \$4.1 million in federal grants to funnel research back to China to help the country develop expertise in rheumatology and immunology. He was also charged with making false statements about being employed in China at the same time as he was employed at U.S. universities, including Ohio State, according to a press release from the U.S. Southern District of Ohio Attorney General’s Office.”

### **Cleveland Clinic Physician Charged With Taking Research To China.**

[WEWS-TV](#) Cleveland (11/12) reports, “An FBI investigation into a former Cleveland Clinic doctor’s ties to China includes a Chinese government program that allegedly recruits professionals with access to foreign technology and intellectual property. ‘We’re opening up a brand-new investigation every day,’ says Cleveland FBI Special Agent in Charge Eric Smith.” Dr. Qing Wang “was arrested last May after the FBI filed a probable cause affidavit charging him with false claims and wire fraud related to \$3 million in compensation from a Chinese university that the FBI alleges Wang failed to disclose while receiving \$3.6 million in taxpayer-funded grants at the same time. A federal grand jury investigation into Wang remains on hold while the COVID-19 outbreak has delayed the case from being presented.”

### **Chinese Professor Accused Of Stealing Trade Secrets For Huawei To Plead Guilty.**

The [Bloomberg](#) (11/12, 4.73M) reports, “A Chinese professor accused of stealing trade secrets for Huawei Technologies Co. will plead guilty to a reduced charge and be allowed to return to China, lawyers told a US judge on Thursday.” Bo Mao, “a computer science professor at Xiamen University in China and a visiting professor at the University of Texas, will admit to a single count of making a false statement. US prosecutors will dismiss more serious counts of conspiracy and trade-secrets theft, they said at a hearing Thursday in federal court in Brooklyn, New York. The case, initiated last year, was part of a series of moves against Huawei by the Trump administration, which has portrayed the Chinese telecoms giant as a national security threat. Mao was initially held without bail in a federal lock-up. The plea is a setback in the federal government’s battle against what it alleges is trade-secret theft by Chinese technology companies.”

### **House And Senate Poised To Extend Trump-Era Investigations.**

[Politico](#) (11/12, Cheney, Desiderio, 4.29M) says President Trump “will be a private citizen in January. But Republicans and Democrats on Capitol Hill are poised to carry on the investigations and legal battles that helped define his presidency.” Politico says that in the House, Democrats are “still in court fighting to obtain Trump’s financial records and testimony from his first White House counsel Don McGahn, a key figure in the obstruction of justice case against Trump.” Meanwhile, in the Senate, Republicans are “plotting ways to expand and intensify their investigations targeting the former Obama administration” and Joe and Hunter Biden, “with Senate Republicans saying they will use the lame duck period to ramp up their probes.”

**Opinion: Prosecutors May Accelerate Hunter Biden Probe During Lame Duck Period.** Jonathan Turley, the Shapiro Professor of Public Interest Law at George Washington University, writes in an op-ed in [The Hill](#) (11/12, 2.98M) that prosecutors involved in the Russia and Hunter Biden probes “may now face pressure to move faster in the final two months of the administration.” Former Vice President Biden has “dismissed the probe as an ‘investigation of the investigators.’” The Russia investigation “could result in new evidence,” and could “shed light on how the initial Russia investigation started and was sustained.” Investigations “could set the investigations into the amber of the lame duck as insurance against interference from the next administration.”

### **CNN: Internal White House Debate Over Fate Of Haspel.**

[CNN](#) (11/12, Cohen, Collins, Salama, 83.16M) reports that while some GOP lawmakers have “publicly defended” CIA Director Haspel, “outside of Capitol Hill, there are conflicting views about whether Trump should follow through with his threat to oust Haspel, and competing factions within the administration are lobbying the President accordingly.” National Security Adviser Robert O’Brien, among others, has urged the President not to dismiss Haspel, but “several people inside the White House are pushing for her removal.” A person “familiar with the situation” says that some Trump advisers “believe Haspel has been ‘insubordinate’ to both the President and” DNI Ratcliffe, “arguing she routinely circumvents the chain of command to further her own agenda and that of the CIA.”

### **Independent Investigation Finds Bonanza Media Is A Russian Disinformation Project.**

A [Bellingcat \(UK\)](#) (11/12) investigation “has discovered evidence that Bonanza Media” is a “disinformation project working in coordination with Russia’s military intelligence.” Bellingcat has not yet “established conclusively whether” the GRU “was behind the initial launch and funding of the Bonanza Media project.” However, the investigative platform “established that shortly after it was launched, senior members of the GRU entered into direct and regular communication with the project leader.” The significance of the findings is the “potential role of Bonanza Media as a source of evidence in the ongoing criminal trial over the downing of flight MH17 in 2014.” The outlets authenticated “emails from the mailboxes of two senior GRU officers obtained by a Russian hacktivist group.” It also reviewed “phone call logs of these two GRU officers independently obtained by us from whistle-blowers with access to Russian telecoms data.”

### **UC Global Spied On Assange For Ecuadorian Intelligence, Says Ex Manager.**

[Computer Weekly](#) (11/12, Goodwin) reports that UC Global, “the company accused of spying on WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange in the Embassy of Ecuador,” acted “on the orders of Ecuador’s intelligence services.” Michel Wallemacq, the firm’s former head of operations, gave “evidence to a Spanish court investigating claims the UC Global’s founder David Morales ordered video and audio surveillance of meetings between Julian Assange and visitors, including lawyers, doctors and journalists.” Two former UC Global staff members “have claimed in anonymous witness statements that the company’s founder supplied surveillance footage and audio recordings to ‘American friends’, which were passed on to the CIA.”

## **CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS**

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### **US Charges South Carolina Inmate With Trying To Hire Hitman To Kill Prosecutor.**

The [Columbia \(SC\) State](#) (11/12, Monk, 390K) reports from Columbia, South Carolina, “A plot by an inmate at the Edgefield County federal prison to hire a hit man to kill a federal prosecutor has been foiled, a complaint made public Thursday charged.” Richard Gilbert, 49, “an inmate who was incarcerated at the Edgefield Federal Correctional Institute, a medium security facility, tried to hire a contract killer to do away with a federal prosecutor and the key witness in a Kentucky drug case in which Gilbert was convicted, the complaint said. Gilbert is charged with retaliating against an informant, murder for hire and money laundering, the complaint said. Unknown to Gilbert, the ‘hit man’ he was talking with was an undercover FBI agent, the complaint said.”

The [Greenwood \(SC\) Index-Journal](#) (11/12, 35K) reports, “Gilbert, who is currently confined in Edgefield Federal Correctional Institution, was indicted on counts of murder for hire, retaliation against an informant and money laundering. Gilbert, 51, was arrested in 2017 after selling methamphetamine to two undercover officers in Kentucky. Last year, he was sentenced to 130 months in prison.” The Index-Journal adds, “Last month, a confidential informant in the

prison told authorities Gilbert planned to have the informant associated with his 2017 arrest killed. Afterward, the affidavit said, Gilbert was hoping to have someone kill an assistant U.S. attorney and perhaps a Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives agent who worked his case. The informant's notes included names of the individuals. At the Federal Bureau of Investigation's direction, the informant arranged a number of phone conversations between Gilbert and an undercover agent that included discussion of how to kill the target and how Gilbert would compensate him. He even told the agent how to drive to the target's house while avoiding cameras."

The [Spartanburg \(SC\) Herald-Journal](#) (11/12, Boyd, 134K) reports, "Following multiple recorded phone calls, Gilbert sent the undercover officer a \$2,000 check from his prison canteen account as a down payment for the retaliatory murder-for-hire, investigators say. Masking the true purpose of this payment, Gilbert attempted to mislead prison officials by saying the payment was for an 'investment firm,' investigators say. Gilbert drew maps of where he believed the witness from Kentucky lived, and he provided directions on how to avoid detection by nearby surveillance cameras, investigators say. Gilbert planned to use the income from two rental properties in Kentucky to facilitate the attempted murder-for-hire and retaliation plot, according to investigators." Also reporting are [WSPA-TV](#) Greenville, SC (11/12, Coburn, 30K), [WYFF-TV](#) Greenville, SC (11/12, 398K), [WOLO-TV](#) Columbia, SC (11/12, Olson), and [WHNS-TV](#) Greenville, SC (11/12, Ablon, 157K).

### **Documents Show Alleged Whitmer Kidnapping Plot Ringleader Planned To Take Hostages At Capitol Building.**

[WXYZ-TV](#) Detroit (11/12, 236K) reports, "According to newly released court documents, the alleged plot to kidnap and kill Governor Gretchen Whitmer included everyone watching it on TV, that it would take about a week and that no one was coming out alive." According to WXYZ-TV, "The plot was allegedly made by Adam Fox who state and federal officials have called the alleged ringleader. The documents spell out a Plan A that included recruiting 200 men, taking over the entire state Capitol building, taking hostages, executing 'tyrants' and have it televised. A secondary plan was to lock the door and set the building on fire. Fourteen men have been charged by the state and the feds in related cases. These documents were filed in Jackson County Court last month where Pete Musico was in tears while a judge considered lowering bond from \$1 million to \$100,000."

The [Detroit News](#) (11/12, Dickson, 825K) reports, "The eight-page brief, filed in October in a bid to block a bond reduction for defendant Pete Musico, 42, of Munith was obtained Thursday by The Detroit News. The document sheds light on two plots the Wolverine Watchmen allegedly formed in June, and how, according to authorities, the group's focus shifted from storming the Capitol building in Lansing to kidnapping the state's chief executive. Plan A was revealed only after alleged participant Adam Fox checked the backs and chests of Musico, Joe Morrison, Ty Garbin, Paul Bellar, Daniel Harris and Amanda Keller for wires. The plan: Storm the Capitol building in Lansing, 'take hostages, execute tyrants and have it televised.' Then there was Plan B: Storm the Capitol while the Legislature was in session, lock every door, and burn down the building with everyone inside." The [Detroit Free Press](#) (11/12, 1.52M) also reports.

### **FBI Arrests California Man For Hate Crime Attack On Restaurant.**

The [Canyon \(CA\) News](#) (11/12) reports from Beverly Hills, California, "William Stepanyan, 22, of Glendale was arrested on Thursday, November 12, for attacking a restaurant in Beverly Hills in what authorities described as a 'hate crime.' The incident transpired on November 4 at around 8:30 p.m." The FBI, "along with the Los Angeles County Probation Department, conducted an investigation into the case, which resulted in Stepanyan's arrest in Glendale, the Beverly Hills Police Department noted in a news release. A probation violation hold has been issued for Stepanyan, who is currently being held without bail at the Beverly Hills Police Department. Authorities classified Stepanyan as one of the 'primary suspects' responsible for

the incident. On November 4, a group of between 6 and 8 suspects destroyed property and physically attacked the employees inside the Turkish Café Istanbul restaurant on South Beverly Drive. 'The victims stated that the suspects made derogatory comments during the incident,' according to police."

### **Alaska Man Arrested With Large Amounts Of Drugs.**

[Alaska Native News](#) (11/12) reports, "On Wednesday, Alaska State Troopers announced that the Nome Office of the Western Alaska Alcohol and Narcotics Team, the Anchorage Airport Interdiction Task Force, and the FBI Safe Streets Task Force, made another arrest in their continuing investigation into drugs in the Nome area that seized approximately 54.2 grams (2 ounces) of methamphetamine and approximately 452.6 grams (1 lbs) of marijuana bud." According to ANN, "The task force stopped 59-year-old Robert Cahoon, who was traveling to Nome from Anchorage and found the drugs in his possession. The value of the methamphetamine is estimated at \$54,200 and the Marijuana at \$11,350."

### **Another Defendant Pleads Guilty In New Jersey Drug Trafficking Case.**

[Tap Into New Jersey](#) (11/12, Rodas) reports Jose Agron, who on Thursday pleaded guilty "to conspiring to distribute heroin," is the 15th defendant to admit to being part of a drug trafficking organization that was based in Camden, New Jersey. Tap Into News Jersey highlights that those 15 guilty pleas are the result of an FBI-led investigation.

### **US Charges Four In Missouri Murder-For-Hire Plot.**

[KSDK-TV](#) St. Louis (11/12, Cole, 493K) reports from St. Louis, "A federal grand jury indicted four people in connection with the 2016 murder of Andre Montgomery." Montgomery "is the grandson of Sweetie Pie's owner Robbie Montgomery. Montgomery was killed by gunfire at 3964 Natural Bridge Avenue in the City of St. Louis on March 14, 2016 around 8 p.m. On Thursday, James Timothy Norman, Terica Taneisha Ellis, Waiel Rebhi Yaghnam and Travell Anthony Hill were indicted." Norman, Ellis and Hill "are charged with conspiracy to commit murder-for-hire and murder-for hire resulting in the death of Montgomery. Norman and Yaghnam are charged with conspiracy to commit wire and mail fraud and Yaghnam is charged with five counts of aggravated identity theft all in connection with Montgomery's murder-for-hire."

### **Pennsylvania Woman Gets 13 Months In Prison For Drug Trafficking.**

The [Pocono \(PA\) Record](#) (11/12, McDonald, 51K) reports a federal judge has sentenced Pennsylvania resident Jennifer Annette Bush to 13 months in prison "and a three-year term of supervised release for drug trafficking." The case against Bush "was investigated by the FBI," the Pennsylvania State Police, and the Stroud Area Regional Police Department.

### **Marijuana-Related Search Warrant Operation Conducted In Arizona.**

The [Navajo Times \(AZ\)](#) (11/12, Becenti, 66K) reports the DEA and the FBI were involved with an investigation that led to a recent search warrant operation in Shiprock, Arizona. Operation Navajo Gold targeted "suspected illegal marijuana farming on the Navajo Nation."

### **FBI Arrests Woman In Connection To Bank Robberies In Utah, Arizona.**

[Gephardt Daily \(UT\)](#) (11/12) reports that the FBI Salt Lake Field Office announced Thursday the arrest of Maria Azevedo, who was "wanted by the FBI in connection with multiple bank robberies" throughout Utah and Arizona. The FBI's Violent Crimes Task Force "wanted to thank the Arizona agencies involved in the arrest."

### **FBI Investigating Minnesota Robbery.**

The [Brainerd \(MN\) Daily Dispatch](#) (11/12) reports that the FBI Headwaters Safe Trail Task Force is investigating an armed robbery in Minnesota, where an armed suspect "made off with an

undetermined amount of cash" from the M&W Convenience Store on Wednesday.

### **North Carolina Jury Convicts Foreign National Of Sexual Abuse.**

[WLOS-TV](#) Asheville, NC (11/12, Whitehead, 103K) reports Siva K. Durbesula was sentenced Thursday to two years in prison after he was convicted of abusive sexual contact. Court documents said that he "was a passenger aboard Spirit Airlines Flight NK843 from Chicago O'Hare to Myrtle Beach International Airport on June 23, 2019, when he sexually assaulted the 22-year-old woman seated next to him." He "was originally indicted in the District of S.C. but the case was transferred to the Western District of N.C. for trial after he agreed that the plane traveled over N.C. and venue was appropriate in that state."

### **Continuing Coverage: FBI Investigating Disappearance Of Missing Colorado Woman.**

[Fox News](#) (11/12, Wallace, 27.59M) reports that the FBI and local police have "renewed their appeal for information about missing Colorado mom Suzanne Morpew on Tuesday, which marked the six-month anniversary of her disappearance on Mother's Day earlier this year." Chaffee County Sheriff John A. Spezze "called on anyone who may have engaged with Morpew on Facebook, Instagram, Voxer, FaceTime or WhatsApp to come forward if they haven't already been interviewed, 'regardless of how insignificant you think the information may be, or whether you think investigators are already aware of it.'"

### **FBI Search Colorado Home In Connection To 2016 Disappearance.**

The [Denver Post](#) (11/12, 720K) reports that FBI agents and Aurora police officers searched Thursday a home in connection to the disappearance of Lashaya Stine, who "went missing from the area in 2016 when she was 16 years old."

### **New York Sex Offender Charged With Child Pornography Possession.**

[WWNY-TV](#) Watertown, NY (11/12, 6K) reports convicted sex offender Randell Adsit was arrested Wednesday by the FBI on charges of possessing child pornography. The FBI says that he "used multiple usernames on the social media app Kik Messenger to trade child pornography with other people over the internet."

### **Iowa Man Sentenced For Child Pornography.**

[KWQC-TV](#) Davenport, IA (11/12, 79K) reports from Des Moines, Iowa, "A man has been sentenced to 20 years in prison on child pornography charges in Des Moines." KWQC-TV adds, "Officials say on Tuesday, Nov. 10, 33-year-old Robert Joe Hennings, of Des Moines, was sentenced by the United States District Court to 240 months in federal prison. Following this, he was sentenced to 20 years of federal court supervision. This is for the receipt of child pornography. Additionally, Hennings was ordered to forfeit electronic media used in the offense, pay \$15,000 in restitution to victims and pay \$100 to the Crime Victims' Fund." KWQC-TV adds, "According to the record made at sentencing, officials say Hennings collected in excess of 550,000 images of child pornography over the span of three years. This included material involving sexual assault on prepubescent minors, including an infant according to officials."

## **FINANCIAL CRIME & CORPORATE SCANDALS**

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### **Attorney For Cincinnati Councilman Charged In Bribery Scheme To Hold Press Conference Today.**

The [Cincinnati Enquirer](#) (11/12, Coolidge, 223K) reports, "Councilman Jeff Pastor has hired well-known attorney Ben Dusing to represent him against federal charges of bribery, money laundering, attempted extortion and conspiracy in a pay-to-play scheme." According to the Enquirer, "Pastor has not spoken since his arrest Tuesday; he skipped City Council Thursday.

Dusing has scheduled an 11:30 a.m. press conference at his Fort Wright office." The Enquirer adds, "The call for Pastor, a Republican, to resign has been swift, both inside his party and from Democrats. Ohio Republican Party Chairwoman Jane Timken and Hamilton County Republican Party Chairman Alex Triantafilou have called for Pastor to resign. Mayor John Cranley, a Democrat and two mayoral hopefuls, Democrats David Mann and P.G. Sittenfeld also are seeking Pastor's resignation. FBI agents arrested Pastor early Tuesday for leading what authorities describe as a brazen bribery scheme involving payoffs for help with city development projects."

***Cincinnati Blight Helped FBI Crack Bribery Case.*** [WCPO-TV](#) Cincinnati (11/12, 139K) reports from Cincinnati, "Federal prosecutors described this week's arrest of Councilman Jeff Pastor as 'indicative of a culture of corruption' at City Hall. But the case also sheds new light on one of Cincinnati's most stubborn symbols of blight." According to WCPO-TV, "Convention Place Mall, an eight-story office and retail complex that brought squatters, drug users, mold and garbage to the corner of Fifth and Elm streets, has defied more than a decade of effort by city officials to revive a key corner that's literally at the front door of the Tri-State's convention industry. Prosecutors allege Pastor accepted bribes to help a former Cincinnati Bengal gain control of the site so he could redevelop it. Chinedum Ndukwe, who became a real estate developer after leaving the NFL, worked as a 'cooperating witness' for the FBI, US Attorney David DeVillers told reporters."

### **US Arrests Nine Californians On Money Laundering Charges.**

[My News LA \(CA\)](#) (11/12) reports, "Federal authorities Thursday arrested nine defendants from the Los Angeles area, most of whom were allegedly involved in a sophisticated money laundering scheme that moved tens of millions of dollars derived from tax fraud and health care fraud schemes." According to My News LA, "Two indictments unsealed in Los Angeles federal court allege that a total of 10 defendants participated in a large operation that laundered more than \$30 million in tax refunds that had been obtained from 7,000 fraudulent tax returns filed using identities stolen from thousands of American taxpayers. Seven of the 10 defendants named in these two indictments were arrested Thursday, and three were still being sought by authorities, according to the U.S. Attorney's Office."

### **US Charges California Man With Wire Fraud, Identity Theft.**

[KGET-TV](#) Bakersfield, CA (11/12) reports, "Federal prosecutors say a grand jury has indicted a Bakersfield man on multiple counts of fraud and identity theft that funneled nearly \$1 million from banks and credit card companies." According to KGET-TV, "The federal grand jury in Fresno indicted Nahed Mishmish, 46, on an 11-count indictment. Prosecutors say Mishmish used stolen identification information to open numerous credit card accounts to pay for a car and rent over five years between January 2015 and January 2020. He is alleged to have used the phony credit accounts to purchase a large amount of cigarettes from Rite Aid stores, prosecutors say. According to U.S. District Attorney in Fresno, a criminal complaint showed the FBI was tipped off to the scheme after Mishmish allegedly purchased large amounts of cigarettes from a Rite Aid in McFarland. Federal agents identified Mishmish and searched his home where they found 60 cellphones marked with names and other personal identifying information."

### **Former Philadelphia Officials, Contractor's Employee Charged With Embezzlement.**

[WHYY-TV](#) Philadelphia (11/12, 24K) reports, "Two former Philadelphia officials, and one former employee of a city contractor, have been charged with fraud and embezzlement after joint investigations by the city's Office of the Inspector General and the FBI." Leo Dignam, 61, of Philadelphia, "who once served as director of the Mummers Parade and as assistant city managing director, is accused of wire fraud and embezzling from a program that received federal funds. His brother, Paul Dignam, 58, also of Philadelphia, is facing charges of mail fraud

and similar embezzlement charges. Barbara Conway, 61, of Drexel Hill, has been charged with alleged theft of funds from a federally funded program."

### **Plea Hearing For Ex-Michigan Prosecutor Moved Again Due To Coronavirus.**

The [Detroit News](#) (11/12, Hicks, 825K) reports, "A plea hearing in former Macomb County Prosecutor Eric Smith's corruption case has been rescheduled a second time after he was diagnosed with COVID-19, officials said Thursday." Smith "had been set to appear late last month but was forced into quarantine after his family was in contact with people who tested positive for the coronavirus. The former prosecutor has agreed to plead guilty to obstructing a federal investigation into whether he stole campaign funds." Smith "was expected to plead guilty at a new hearing Friday. However, U.S. District Judge Linda Parker issued a order Thursday to move the date to Dec. 17 after Smith was diagnosed and hospitalized this week. 'Defendant continues to exhibit severe symptoms of the virus,' Parker wrote. 'Defendant is in quarantine at his home pursuant to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's guidelines.'"

### **New Hampshire Attorney Pleads Guilty To Money Laundering, Wire Fraud.**

[Manchester Ink Link \(NH\)](#) (11/12, Fisher) reports from Concord, New Hampshire, "Former Manchester attorney John Allen pleaded guilty Thursday to charges of money laundering and wire fraud for taking \$2.4 million from several clients." Allen, 63, of Bedford, "appeared in the United States District Court in Concord on Thursday for the plea hearing. He allegedly took the money clients gave him for real estate transactions of other uses, trusting him to dispose of it in the way they wanted. 'John Allen betrayed that trust, took advantage of his clients, and stole their money,' said United States Attorney Scott Murry. 'These are the actions of a white-collar criminal rather than a dedicated counselor at law.'" Allen "was arraigned last week on the charges, the culmination of an investigation that started when the New Hampshire Attorney Discipline Office found red flags in the way he dealt with client monies."

## **CYBER DIVISION**

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### **Two DHS Officials Reportedly "Forced To Resign"; Krebs "Expects To Be Fired."**

[CNN](#) (11/12, Marquardt, Sands, 83.16M) reports on its website that DHS Assistant Secretary for International Affairs Valerie Boyd and DHS Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency Assistant Director for Cybersecurity Bryan Ware "have been forced to resign by the White House, according to sources familiar with the resignations." CNN says Ware's "farewell letter to staff indicates that he did not want to step down."

[Reuters](#) (11/12, Bing, Menn) reports that Christopher Krebs, who heads the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, "has told associates he expects to be fired by the White House." Krebs "drew the ire of the Trump White House over a website run by CISA dubbed 'Rumor Control' which debunks misinformation about the election, according to the three people familiar with the matter." One CISA post rejected "a conspiracy theory that falsely claims an intelligence agency supercomputer and program, purportedly named Hammer and Scorecard, could have flipped votes nationally." Sen. Mark Warner (D-VA) tweeted, "Chris Krebs has done a great job protecting our elections. He is one of the few people in this Administration respected by everyone on both sides of the aisle. There is no possible justification to remove him from office."

[Bloomberg](#) (11/12, Courtney, Sebenius, 4.73M) reports that House Homeland Security Committee Chairperson Bennie Thompson (D-MS) said, "There are rumors the president may be cleaning house at CISA, with one high-level official reportedly asked to resign already. This is dangerous." Sen. Angus King (I-ME), co-chair of the US Cyberspace Solarium Commission, "called Krebs' work with states on election security 'amazing' in a recent press briefing with

reporters." King said, "The state infrastructure, the registration rolls, the election rolls, voting machines, all of that, is much better, much stronger, much more resilient than it was four years ago."

[The Hill](#) (11/12, Chalfant, 2.98M) reports, "Krebs's potential ouster would leave a tremendous leadership vacuum at DHS and would leave the top government cybersecurity role vacant at a critical moment." If he is "forced to step down, his role would likely be filled by CISA Deputy Director Matthew Travis, who has served in the deputy director position since 2018." Ware, as well as Valerie Boyd, another DHS official, "were forced to resign due to pressure from the White House," according to reporting by CNN.

[Politico](#) (11/12, Geller, Bertrand, 4.29M) reports that CISA "has been at the forefront of federal efforts to protect U.S. elections from foreign hacking and interference, and his efforts have drawn praise from people in both parties." Krebs' ouster "could make him the latest national security leader to lose his job amid a post-election purge that has already forced out Defense Secretary Mark Esper and other top Pentagon officials." An unnamed official said the White House "has wanted to fire Krebs for a while. ... From what I've heard from the [White House], they've considered removing him before."

Also reporting are [CyberScoop](#) (11/12, Lyngaas), [The Hill](#) (11/12, Miller, 2.98M), the [Washington Times](#) (11/12, Blake, 492K), and [Federal News Network](#) (11/12, Miller, 220).

### **Commerce Department Will Delay Enforcement Of TikTok Shutdown Order.**

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (11/12, Maher, Subscription Publication, 7.57M) reports the Commerce Department said Thursday it will not enforce an order that would have effectively shut down TikTok by prohibiting US companies from offering it as a mobile app and offering web-hosting service for the company. Citing a preliminary injunction against the shutdown last month from US District Judge Wendy Beetlestone in Philadelphia, the Department said the order will not take effect "pending further legal developments."

The [New York Times](#) (11/12, McCabe, 18.61M) reports that the restrictions were announced "in September under an executive order signed by President Trump targeting TikTok and WeChat." App stores "would not have been able to offer TikTok, and American companies would have been forbidden from hosting data for the service." The Commerce Department "had indicated that it would apply the restrictions only to the app if ByteDance, TikTok's Chinese owner, were unable to sell its interest in the product." On Tuesday, the agency "said that the order 'has been enjoined, and will not go into effect, pending further legal developments.'"

The [Washington Post](#) (11/12, Riley, 14.2M) reports that TikTok is "waiting on a federal judge to grant a 30-day extension on the sale as it awaits a government green light on the deal it proposed to set up a new company with investment from Oracle and Walmart." If a ruling is not issued, the "presidential election results could leave the company with more options."

[CNBC](#) (11/12, Sherman, 3.62M) reports, "The Commerce Department order doesn't address the CFIUS mandate demanding TikTok sell its U.S. assets," but "reaffirms TikTok can continue to operate in the U.S." The company "continues to wait for more government guidance about how to proceed with its minority stake sale." President Trump agreed to the sale of 20% of TikTok Global to Walmart and Oracle in August, but "the transaction never got the approval of the Chinese government, and Trump administration officials have gone silent on their demands in the weeks leading up to the election."

The [Daily Caller](#) (11/12, Lancaster, 716K) reports that TikTok would be "barred from using the web-hosting services of any U.S. based company, like Amazon and Alphabet, making the app essentially useless." The company is "asking for an injunction from U.S. District Judge Carl Nichols because they say different plaintiffs who have different interests are involved in the Philadelphia case." If the preliminary junction "were lifted, it would be 'leaving Tik Tok's entire business in jeopardy.'"

Also reporting is [Bloomberg](#) (11/12, Yaffe-Bellany, McLaughlin, 4.73M).

### **Israeli Cybersecurity Firm Finds New Type Of Iranian Ransomware.**

[Fox News](#) (11/12, Friling, 27.59M) reports, "Check Point revealed Thursday a new type of ransomware that is traced back to Iran." The "Pay2Key" strain "targeted more than a dozen Israeli companies a few weeks ago," using the "Remote Desktop Protocol (RDP) of employees who worked from home." According to the Israeli cybersecurity company's investigation, "four Israeli victims of the attacks have decided to pay the ransom, which enabled its experts to track the payment transfers between crypto wallets." Check Point's manager of threat intelligence, Lotem Finkelstein, said, "Pay2Key is sophisticated and far more rapid compared to other ransomware strains. ... The recent Pay2Key ransomware attacks indicate a new threat actor has joined the trend of targeted ransomware attacks."

### **Finland Prepares Change To Code Law After Hacking Case.**

The [AP](#) (11/12, Tanner) reports, "Finland said Thursday it was preparing legislation that would allow citizens to change their personal identity codes in cases of gross data breaches that carry a high risk of identity theft." The government's proposal "was designed primarily to assist thousands of people whose personal information was stolen during a hacking of patient records at a private Finnish psychotherapy center." Citizens "receive a personal identity code at birth to allow them to access most public and many private services," and the "criteria for changing one's code are strict." The government is drafting legislation that "would make the process slightly easier."

### **NSA Grant To Help Two Indiana Campuses Expand Cybersecurity Programs.**

The [Northwest Indiana Post-Tribune](#) (11/13, Kiesling, 1.8M) reports, thanks to a \$5.9 million NSA grant, "two local campuses of Ivy Tech Community College plan to expand their cybersecurity training partnerships in Northwest Indiana." The Lake County and Valparaiso campuses "are included in a consortium of four higher ed institutions that has been awarded a two-year, \$5.9 million NSA grant to expand the pipeline for cybersecurity jobs both locally and nationally." Matthew Cloud, Information Technology chair for Ivy Tech's Lake County campus, said, "The NSA grant will help us build and expand our existing training program partnerships with the governor's office, financial institutions and law enforcement agencies in Northwest Indiana to fill their needs." Cloud added, "The grant will help more than 425 law enforcement personnel, military veterans, transitioning military, and other first responders obtain basic to advanced cybersecurity training for free."

## **LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICES**

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### **Springfield, Massachusetts Police Department Assigns Officer To FBI Gun Violence Task Force.**

[WWLP-TV](#) Springfield, MA (11/12, Lannan, 81K) reports from Springfield, Massachusetts, "A member of the Springfield Police Department has been assigned to the FBI's Western Massachusetts Task Force to help combat gun violence." Springfield Police Department Commissioner "said on Thursday that she and Mayor Domenic Sarno met with U.S. Attorney Andrew E. Lelling and the Special Agent in charge of the FBI Boston Division, Joseph Bonavolonta, in the city on Tuesday to discuss and agree on the officer's new assignment which will begin Monday, November 16, 2020. The FBI and Commissioner Clapprood agreed that assigning a Springfield Police officer to their Task Force will improve intelligence sharing between the two agencies. The goal is to crack down on illegal gun crimes and gun violence in the Springfield area."

### **WPost: Voters Usher In "New Phase Of Drug Policy."**

In an editorial, the [Washington Post](#) (11/12, 14.2M) says that Election Day votes to legalize recreational marijuana in New Jersey, Arizona, South Dakota, and Montana, medical marijuana in Mississippi, and decriminalize "small quantities" of hard drugs in Oregon "mark a welcome shift in decades of destructive drug policy" beginning with "the Reagan-era escalation of the war on drugs." The Post says "severe criminal penalties have fueled a huge growth in the prison population" with an outsized impact on many Black communities, while soaring opioid overdose deaths have underscored "just how cruel and counterproductive it is to criminalize addiction." With new state legislation, The Post argues, researchers will now "be able to closely observe these laboratories of democracy, hopefully ushering in a new phase of drug policy based on evidence and the principles of public health."

## OTHER FBI NEWS

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### **DOJ Report: Acosta Engaged In No Misconduct When He Agreed To Epstein Plea Deal.**

The [CBS Evening News](#)<sup>Vi</sup> (11/12, story 10, 0:25, O'Donnell, 4.06M) reported, "This news today: The Justice Department said the prosecutor who handled a 2008 case against Jeffrey Epstein showed poor judgment but did not engage in professional misconduct. Alex Acosta, who later became President Trump's labor secretary, was under fire for the generous plea deal that he entered into with Epstein, who was accused of abusing dozens of teenage girls. Well, today, a lawyer for Epstein's victims called the DOJ report a cover-up."

The [AP](#) (11/12, Balsamo, Tucker) says a report from the Justice Department's Office of Professional Responsibility has found Acosta "exercised 'poor judgment' in handling an investigation into wealthy financier Jeffrey Epstein when he was a top federal prosecutor in Florida." The report details Acosta's "handling of a secret plea deal with Epstein, who had been accused of sexually abusing dozens of underage girls." According to the AP, the report "concludes that none of the prosecutors committed misconduct in their interactions with the victims," which the AP says is "likely to disappoint the victims, who have long hoped this would hold the Justice Department officials accountable for actions they say allowed Epstein to escape justice."

[Reuters](#) (11/12) reports, "In a statement released on Thursday, the Justice Department said that when Acosta let Epstein enter the non-prosecution agreement in 2008 that spared him from federal sex trafficking charges, he 'failed to make certain that the state of Florida intended to and would notify victims identified through the federal investigation about the state plea hearing.'" Reuters also reports that Sen. Ben Sasse (R-NE) denounced the report's conclusions, saying, "Letting a well-connected billionaire get away with child rape and international sex trafficking isn't 'poor judgment' – it is a disgusting failure."

The [New York Times](#) (11/12, Goldstein, Benner, 18.61M) says that "the review was an attempt to close the door on an embarrassing episode for the Justice Department that critics have said allowed Mr. Epstein to largely go unscrutinized in the face of years of allegations that he sexually abused dozens of teenage girls." The Times says despite the department's insistence "in its summary that it found no wrongdoing, it is clear from the full, nearly 350-page report that Mr. Epstein and his defense lawyers were in control of the negotiations from June 2007."

The [Washington Post](#) (11/12, Zapotosky, Reinhard, 14.2M) reports that "lawyers for the victims criticized the report," as Adam Horowitz saying, "The mountain of mistakes was not just poor judgment. It was reckless." Sasse also "called on the department to release its entire report," saying, "We have an obligation to make sure this never happens again." A Justice Department spokesperson "said the department could not release the entire report publicly, citing privacy law, but noted it was being turned over to lawmakers."

Among the outlets also reporting on the review are the [Wall Street Journal](#) (11/12, Gurman, Subscription Publication, 7.57M), the [CNN](#) (11/12, Scannell, 83.16M) website, and

[Axios](#) (11/12, Chen, 521K).

### **Ramsey Tapped As New Portland, Oregon SAC.**

[Oregon Public Broadcasting](#) (11/12, Wilson, 13K) reports, "The FBI confirmed Thursday it has named a new head of its Portland field office. Section Chief Kieran Ramsey will take over for Special Agent In Charge Renn Cannon, who is set to retire early next year after overseeing the office since January 2017." Ramsey, "who was officially named to the post Nov. 4, spent time in Portland earlier this year during large, nightly racial justice protests that at times turned violent. The protests in Portland were a particular focus for the Trump administration, as the president and U.S. Attorney William Barr called for a harsher crackdown on demonstrators."

## **OTHER WASHINGTON NEWS**

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### **Media Analyses: Trump Silent On Pandemic, "Largely Out Of Sight," As Election Challenges Continue.**

While coverage of President Trump's challenges to vote counts in several states continues, media attention shifted Thursday and early Friday to the President's near-total absence over the past week and his silence on pressing matters. David Muir said on [ABC World News Tonight](#)<sup>Vi</sup> (11/12, story 3, 2:55, 6.57M) that Trump "has remained largely out of sight. He's not addressed the country's worsening coronavirus situation, his tweets still largely on the election." Lester Holt said on [NBC Nightly News](#)<sup>Vi</sup> (11/12, story 3, 0:35, 4.9M), "As the COVID crisis deepens across the country, President Trump has said nothing about it publicly since the election." NBC's Hallie Jackson: "The White House says the President is getting regular updates and making sure local officials have what they need. The COVID task force did meet Monday, but it was for only the second time in the last three and a half weeks. The President has not addressed the public in person in a week." On [ABC World News Tonight](#)<sup>Vi</sup> (11/12, story 4, 0:40, Muir, 6.57M), Jonathan Karl said, "The President has been nowhere on this. He hasn't spoken about the alarming increase in infections. He has not met with the coronavirus task force for months. He hasn't even tweeted about it."

The [AP](#) (11/12, Madhani, Miller) says the President "has publicly disengaged from the battle against the coronavirus at a moment when the disease is tearing across the United States at an alarming pace." The AP says Trump "remains angry that an announcement about progress in developing a vaccine for the disease came after Election Day. And aides say the president has shown little interest in the growing crisis." The [Los Angeles Times](#) (11/12, Megerian, 4.64M) writes, "More than a week after his stinging electoral defeat, President Trump spent another day secluded in the White House on Thursday feverishly tweeting, watching television and telephoning allies – focused more on his own future than governing the nation as it struggles with a worsening pandemic."

The [Washington Post](#) (11/12, A1, Nakamura, 14.2M) writes, "On Thursday, six American service members were killed in a helicopter crash during a peacekeeping mission in Egypt. Tropical Storm Eta made landfall in North Florida, contributing to severe flooding. The number of Americans infected with the novel coronavirus continued at a record-setting pace, sending the stock market tumbling." But Trump "spent the day as he has most others this week – sequestered from public view, tweeting grievances, falsehoods and misinformation about the election results and about Fox News's coverage of him. Neither he nor his aides briefed reporters on the news of the day."

[Politico](#) (11/12, Forgey, 4.29M) reports that on Thursday, White House Press Secretary Kayleigh McEnany declined to say when Trump "might end his conspicuous pause of post-election public appearances, telling Fox News that Americans will 'be hearing from him at the right moment.'" Politico says the President "has not appeared or spoken publicly since a White

House news conference last Thursday, when he repeated his attacks on the country's electoral system and his baseless claims of widespread voter fraud."

[Politico](#) (11/12, Cook, Orr, 4.29M) additionally reports that Chief of Staff Meadows "gathered senior aides on a call" on Monday "to plot the conservative policy moves they could push through in their final 10 weeks on immigration, trade, health care, China and school choice." Staffers "have compiled a list of roughly 15 moves they could make through executive orders, executive actions or finalizing agency rules that they plan to pursue in the coming days, according to interviews with three administration officials," and aides say Trump "intends to start issuing the orders as soon as possible." However, White House officials told the [Wall Street Journal](#) (11/12, Ballhaus, Restuccia, Subscription Publication, 7.57M) that Trump has not discussed what he wants to achieve over the next two months, and one official said little formal planning is taking place.

The [Washington Post](#) (11/12, 14.2M) editorializes, "The pandemic has reached runaway speed in the United States, and the president has vanished. ... On Wednesday, 1,549 people died from the virus in the United States. Would the leadership of the nation be on high alert if, say, that many people were killed in three jumbo jet crashes? If a terrorist group or foreign attacker drew such an awful toll on a single day? Yet there was not a word from President Trump, so self-absorbed with his election defeat and the mirage of voter fraud that he seems unable and unwilling to deal with a supreme national crisis."

***Trump Campaign Continues To File Legal Challenges.*** Ben Tracy reported on the [CBS Evening News](#)<sup>vi</sup> (11/12, story 5, 2:20, O'Donnell, 4.06M), "The Trump campaign continues to file legal challenges, even as senior advisers tell CBS News there is no viable path to overturning the election results. Sources say President Trump knows this, but likes to be seen as a fighter." The [New York Times](#) (11/12, Haberman, 18.61M) writes, "There is no grand strategy at play, according to interviews with a half-dozen advisers and people close to the president." Trump is "simply trying to survive from one news cycle to the next, seeing how far he can push his case against his defeat and ensure the continued support of his Republican base. By dominating the story of his exit from the White House, he hopes to keep his millions of supporters energized and engaged for whatever comes next."

The [AP](#) (11/12, Swenson, Seitz) reports the President on Thursday "falsely claimed on Twitter that an election technology firm 'deleted' large numbers of his votes or 'switched' them to count for Joe Biden." [USA Today](#) (11/12, Jackson, 10.31M) writes, "Intentionally or not," Trump also "re-tweeted several items Thursday warning about the prospect of a Democratic-controlled U.S. Senate – something that can only happen if Biden becomes president and Kamala Harris becomes vice president." [CNN](#) (11/12, Bash, Borger, Klein, 83.16M) reports on its website that while Donald Trump Jr. and Eric Trump "are gung-ho, leading the charge for the President to stay in the fight," Ivanka Trump "has emerged as someone looking for a way for the President to save face as he considers his next steps."

The [New York Times](#) (11/12, Feuer, 18.61M) reports, "Almost from the moment the election ended, President Trump and his allies have relentlessly attacked the integrity of both the voting and vote counting, a narrative they have sought to advance in nearly 20 lawsuits filed in the past eight days. While these suits have alleged systemic fraud in at least five states, the evidence they have offered has been different. At least so far, it has been limited, narrow and, according to several judges and experts, unlikely to affect – let alone to overturn – the outcome of the race." The [Wall Street Journal](#) (11/12, Ramey, Randazzo, Subscription Publication, 7.57M) reports the Trump campaign is pressing ahead with legal action in Georgia, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin, and on Friday, a Pennsylvania judge is set to hear a challenge to more than 8,000 Philadelphia ballots with minor errors.

White House Press Secretary Kayleigh McEnany said on [Fox News' The Story](#) (11/12), "Let's get to the bottom of this in an effectual way, in a truthful way, and be very careful on the information we are putting forward, which is what we've done." McEnany said on [Fox News' Hannity](#) that new affidavits from Pennsylvania show "one system for Democrat counties" and

"another system for Republican counties," amounting "to tens of thousands of ballots that were counted improperly."

The [New York Post](#) (11/12, Bowden, 4.57M) reports the Trump campaign "was handed a minor legal victory on Thursday when a Pennsylvania judge ruled that a small number of ballots be tossed, from people who did not provide ID by a Monday deadline." The state appellate court ruling "bars counties from including in their final tally mail-in ballots from people who failed to validate their identification against state records by Nov. 9." The [Daily Caller](#) (11/12, 716K) says "ballots for which proof of identity had been provided between November 10 and 12 had been separated while the court decided what to do with them." The ruling "means that the segregated ballots will not be counted."

The [Philadelphia Inquirer](#) (11/12, 347K) says "tens of thousands of Pennsylvanians are still waiting to see if their vote will be counted as officials continue the tedious process of verifying what is likely to be a record-breaking number of provisional ballots." And [Reuters](#) (11/12, Spiezio) reports that Jones Day, "the go-to law firm" for the Trump campaign, is "under fire for representing Republicans in a lawsuit over Pennsylvania's extended deadline to receive mail-in ballots, with law students threatening to boycott the firm and a prominent anti-Trump group targeting it online."

In Arizona, the [Arizona Republic](#) (11/12, 869K) reports, "all counties that have conducted required hand-count audits of a sample of their ballots found no or minor discrepancies, county audit reports submitted to the state show." In Georgia, the [AP](#) (11/12, Brumback) reports, counties are preparing "for a hand tally of the presidential race." The [New York Times](#) (11/12, Hakim, Fausset, 18.61M) reports Georgia's "159 counties were poised on Thursday to begin recounting nearly five million ballots in the presidential election." The [Atlanta Journal-Constitution](#) (11/12, 895K) reports that "the recount is open to the public. Anyone can watch from an observation area. Official monitors appointed by political parties will be able to get closer, but they're not allowed to talk to audit teams or touch ballots." In Michigan, [Townhall](#) (11/12, McCarthy, 177K) reports, GOP state senators "are requesting a full audit of the 2020 general election after allegations of election improprieties and irregularities."

[USA Today](#) (11/12, 10.31M) editorializes, "Two days after the election, [Trump] stood in the White House claiming he was cheated out of victory. 'It's a corrupt system,' he told the nation. 'We have so much evidence.' A week later, it's reasonable for Americans to ask: Where is it? The increasingly obvious answer is that the evidence does not exist. There is no proof of any widespread voter fraud, and surely not enough to overturn the results in a single state, much less the three or more states Trump would need to reverse the outcome."

The [Washington Post](#) (11/12, 14.2M) editorializes, "Trump is attempting to overturn the lawful results of a free election by spreading lies and suborning local officials to abet his conspiracy. He is not likely to succeed, but the toxic effects on U.S. democracy will not soon dissipate. ... Though conducted by partisan officials, the mechanisms of vote-counting and election-certifying have until now been understood to be formalities based on actual vote counts. Vote counting cannot depend on which party can more effectively manipulate the machinery of government."

#### ***Obama Says He Is "Troubled" By Republicans "Who Clearly Know Better"***

***Supporting Trump's Claims.*** The [CBS Evening News](#)<sup>vi</sup> (11/12, story 4, 1:05, O'Donnell, 4.06M), previewing a 60 Minutes interview with former President Barack Obama, showed Obama saying, "The President doesn't like to lose, and never admits loss. I'm more troubled by the fact that other Republican officials who clearly know better are going along with this, are humoring him in this fashion. It is one more step in delegitimizing not just the incoming Biden Administration, but democracy generally. And that's a dangerous path."

***Adelson-Owned Newspaper Urges Trump To Cooperate With Biden Team.*** The [Washington Post](#) (11/12, Izadi, 14.2M) reports, "In October 2016, the Las Vegas Review-Journal was the first major newspaper to endorse then-candidate Donald Trump for president. ... Four years later, the Review-Journal – owned by Trump supporter and Republican megadonor

Sheldon Adelson – is advising Trump that he did indeed lose the 2020 presidential race and that he should start cooperating with the Biden transition team.” In [a Thursday editorial](#), the newspaper wrote, “It is too fitting that the Trump presidency concludes amid a babel of bluster and bravado. But the president does a disservice to his more rabid supporters by insisting that he would have won the Nov. 3 election absent voter fraud. That’s simply false.” [Politico](#) (11/12, Niedzwiedek, 4.29M) and [The Hill](#) (11/12, Budryk, 2.98M) also cover the editorial, while in her [Washington Post](#) (11/12, 14.2M) column, Margaret Sullivan looks at the challenges media organizations are facing in covering the post-election machinations.

### **Agreement Reached With Pharmacies To Provide Free COVID Vaccinations.**

The [AP](#) (11/12, Alonso-Zaldivar) reports that “federal health officials have reached an agreement with pharmacies across the U.S. to distribute free coronavirus vaccines after they are approved and become available to the public.” According to the AP, “Thursday’s agreement with major chain drug stores, grocery market pharmacies and other chains and networks covers about 3 in 5 pharmacies,” and “looks ahead to a time next spring when yet-to-be-approved vaccines will start to become available beyond priority groups.” HHS Secretary Azar is quoted as saying, “The vast majority of Americans live within five miles of a pharmacy,” and the deal is “a critical step toward making sure all Americans have access to safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines when they are available.”

#### ***State Health Officials Prepare For Vaccination Distribution Logistical***

**Complexities.** The [AP](#) (11/12, Choi, Smith) says, “With a COVID-19 vaccine drawing closer, public health officials across the country are gearing up for the biggest vaccination effort in U.S. history – a monumental undertaking that must distribute hundreds of millions of doses, prioritize who’s first in line and ensure that people who get the initial shot return for the necessary second one.” According to the AP, “The push could begin as early as next month, when federal officials say the first vaccine may be authorized for emergency use and immediately deployed to high-risk groups, such as health care workers.” The AP says state officials are “planning for the likelihood that the first shipments will not be enough to cover everyone in high-priority groups.”

***Vaccination Distribution Requires Cooperation Between Governments, Drug Makers, Suppliers, Employees.*** The [New York Times](#) (11/12, Gelles, Robins, 18.61M) reports Pfizer, the US government, and “the public health community face a new challenge: quickly making millions of doses of the vaccine and getting them to the hospitals, clinics and pharmacies where they will be injected, two separate times, into people’s arms.” Before shipment, “federal and state governments must tell it where to send how many doses,” and medical supplier McKesson “will have to provide hospitals and other distribution sites with the syringes, needles and other supplies necessary to administer the vaccine.” Employees “will need to be trained to store and administer the vaccine” and “ensure that, four weeks after people get the vaccine, they return for a second dose.” In addition, “millions of Americans must be persuaded to get the shots in the first place.”

***Work On COVID Vaccine Began When Virus Was Spreading In Wuhan.*** On [NBC Nightly News](#)<sup>Vi</sup> (11/12, story 11, 1:45, Holt, 4.9M), Richard Engel said that when the novel coronavirus began to spread in Wuhan, China in December 2019, “the Chinese government swooped in with all its authoritarian might, but China did something else few noticed. It made a call for help, written in genetic code. ... Chinese researchers quickly cracked the code and published it” online. Imperial College London COVID-19 Vaccination Lead Robin Shattock “fed it into a computer and came up with a prototype vaccine within weeks. Nearly all the work since then has been testing.”

***Eli Lilly Antibody Treatment Aims To Speed Recovery Time For Vulnerable COVID Patients.*** [ABC World News Tonight](#)<sup>Vi</sup> (11/12, story 2, 2:45, Muir, 6.57M) reported, “Ely Lilly’s antibody treatment receiving FDA emergency use authorization just this week, working to speed up the recovery in some of the most vulnerable patients.” Correspondent Alex Perez said

researchers took “the most powerful antibody from one of the first survivors and [are] using a synthetically-made version to fight the virus.” However, “only certain patients are eligible. They must be 12 years or older with mild to moderate symptoms and likely to develop severe illness, including many with pre-existing conditions like diabetes and obesity. It’s not for people already in the hospital. Availability is limited. 88,000 doses ready now. 212,000 more expected by the end of the year.”

### **Fauci Says Working With Administration Has Been “Stressful.”**

The [Australian Broadcasting Corporation](#) (11/12, 99K) reports on its website that in an interview, NIAID Director Fauci “said controlling America’s worsening coronavirus outbreak was not impossible but becoming more and more difficult.” Fauci also said “working with the Trump administration on the coronavirus pandemic had ‘obviously been very stressful.’” Fauci said, “When you have public figures like [former Trump advisor Stephen] Bannon calling for your beheading, that’s really kind of unusual. That’s not the kind of thing you think about when you’re going through medical school to become a physician.”

***In Recording, Facebook CEO Defends Decision Not To Suspend Bannon.*** [Reuters](#) (11/12, Paul) reports Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg “told an all-staff meeting on Thursday that [Bannon] had not violated enough of the company’s policies to justify his suspension when he urged beheading” Fauci and FBI Director Wray, “according to a recording heard by Reuters.” Zuckerberg said, “We have specific rules around how many times you need to violate certain policies before we will deactivate your account completely. ... While the offenses here, I think, came close to crossing that line, they clearly did not cross the line.”

### **Fauci: Lockdown Can Be Avoided.**

The [New York Times](#) (11/12, Zraick, Pérez-Peña, Grady, 18.61M) reports that on Thursday, NIAID Director Fauci “urged Americans...to ‘double down’ on basic precautions as coronavirus cases soared across the country and more Covid-19 patients were hospitalized than ever before.” However, in an appearance on ABC’s Good Morning America, Fauci “reiterated that a nationwide lockdown was unlikely, saying there was ‘no appetite for locking down in the American public.’ But he expressed confidence that virus cases could be reduced without such drastic measures – if Americans ‘double down’ on basic preventive steps, like social distancing and masks.” Fauci is quoted as saying, “I believe that we can do it without a lockdown, I really do.”

***Azar: Facts “Do Not Support” Lockdown Of Country.*** HHS Secretary Azar said on [Fox News’ The Story](#) (11/12), “We should be driven by science and data and the facts here, and they simply do not support the notion of locking down the country, sheltering in place. You know, it’s important the American people know the facts, and the simple facts are that our colleges,” K-12 schools, workplaces, air travel, and healthcare settings “are not mechanisms for major spread of the disease.” Azar added that lack of protection during “indoor gatherings” is “what’s driving this” second wave.

### **Birx Urges Tighter Restrictions, Guidance Adherence.**

[WISC-TV<sup>Vi</sup>](#) Madison, WI (11/12, 2.66M) reported that White House Coronavirus Task Force Coordinator Deborah Birx visited Wisconsin and “said that what we are doing right now here in the state is not enough,” urging the Badger State to take cues from other states’ efforts to flatten the curve. Birx said, “Your absolute case number’s extraordinarily high, your rate of hospitalization is extraordinarily high, and we know what follows that is a high rate of fatalities. ... We’re really asking people in this moment to do everything they can to save their own life and the lives of those that they love.”

Asked on [WISN-TV<sup>Vi</sup>](#) Milwaukee (11/12, 87K) about potential restrictions on bars and restaurants, Birx said, “We know that anytime people take their mask off indoors, that it can create a spreading event...and it’s very difficult to eat and drink with a mask on, and so

Wisconsin really needs to consider additional tightening, at least either close early, decrease capacity, and really, I don't know of a situation where at this point in Wisconsin that bars are safe."

In an appearance on [WFRV-TV](#) Green Bay, WI (11/12, 28K), Birx cited superspreader events and a number of asymptomatic cases as major drivers of the state's spike. Birx said, "It's no one's fault. They don't know they're infected. I know it's difficult to comprehend that there's a virus out there that can cause no symptoms in some and hospitalizations and deaths in others, and long-term consequences in others." She "says to flatten the curve, Wisconsin has to stop superspreader events and...stay home."

### **US COVID Infections Topped 150K Thursday; States See Surge In Hospitalizations.**

The [CBS Evening News](#) (11/12, lead story, 4:00, O'Donnell, 4.06M) reported, "America will soon be facing a coronavirus emergency more severe and potentially more deadly than when the pandemic first began. The country isn't just breaking records. It's blowing through them, reaching new highs again tonight in cases and hospitalizations. ... There are few words to describe the staggering size or depressing depth of the crisis. In just three weeks, the number of new infections recorded each day in the US has doubled," and "Americans are now dying each day at levels not seen since the worst months of the pandemic." [ABC World News Tonight](#) (11/12, lead story, 4:50, Muir, 6.57M) reported hospitalizations also nearly doubled "in just two weeks."

On [NBC Nightly News](#) (11/12, lead story, 2:30, Holt, 4.9M), Miguel Almaguer said, "As the US skyrockets above yet another astonishing single day record for new COVID cases, doctors tracking the pandemic since March are equally alarmed by the steady and seemingly unstoppable waves of infections, now surging off the charts. With 46 states seeing a rise in cases," on Thursday "the Chicago mayor issued a stay-at-home advisory," and "governors across the nation are also pleading for the public to take precautions." The [Wall Street Journal](#) (11/12, A1, Levitz, Ansari, Subscription Publication, 7.57M) reports the governors of New York, Utah, Maryland, Iowa, and Minnesota, among other states, are imposing new measures aimed at curbing rising COVID infection numbers.

[CNBC](#) (11/12, Feuer, 3.62M) reports on its website that "average daily new cases are up by at least 5% over the last week in at least 47 states and DC as of Wednesday, according to a CNBC analysis of data compiled by Johns Hopkins University."

The [New York Times](#) (11/12, Smith, 18.61M) reports, "Eight days after 100,000 US cases" of COVID infections "were found in a day for the first time, the number topped 150,000 on Thursday." The pandemic "has risen to crisis levels in much of the nation, especially the Midwest, as hospital executives warn of dwindling bed space and as coroners deploy mobile morgues." Over "100,000 coronavirus cases have been announced nationwide every day since Nov. 4, and six of the last nine days have broken the previous record." Hospitalizations "also set a record on Thursday, climbing to 67,096, according to the Covid Tracking Project. It was the third straight day of record numbers, and the figure has doubled in just five weeks."

**Study Finds COVID Death Rate Down 30% Since April.** The [AP](#) (11/12, Murphy) reports, "Deaths per day in the US have soared more than 40 percent over the past two weeks, from an average of about 790 to more than 1,100 as of Wednesday, the highest level in three months." This is "still well below the peak of about 2,200 deaths per day in late April, in what may reflect the availability of better treatments and the increased share of cases among young people, who are more likely than older ones to survive a bout with COVID-19."

[Reuters](#) (11/12, Beasley) reports, "The likelihood that a coronavirus infection will prove fatal has dropped by nearly a third since April due to improved treatment, researchers at the University of Washington's Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) said on Thursday." In the US, COVID-19 "now kills about 0.6% of people infected with the virus, compared with around 0.9% early in the pandemic, IHME Director Dr. Christopher Murray told Reuters." He "said statistics reflect that doctors have figured out better ways to care for patients, including

the use of blood thinners and oxygen support. Effective treatments, such as the generic steroid dexamethasone, have also been identified.”

**Redfield: 1M New Cases Per Week Not “Unlikely.”** CDC Director Redfield said on [WXYZ-TV/Vi](#) Detroit (11/12, 151K), “It’s really important not to underestimate this virus. The threat is really real. A number of us were saying back in September that we were on a course to get up from 30,000, 40,000 to 100,000, 150,000, maybe even 200,000 cases a day, and then see the increased hospitalizations a couple weeks later and then, unfortunately, increased deaths. This is a very serious threat. I don’t think it’s unlikely in the next week or two that we won’t be having one million cases a week in this country. Clearly, we’re likely to see significantly more deaths.”

**Experts Warn About Trajectory Of COVID Infections In US.** The [Washington Post](#) (11/12, Iati, 14.2M) reports, “Public health experts are sounding the alarm about the trajectory of the pandemic in the United States as the coronavirus spreads through the country largely unabated and officials muse aloud about the possibility of fresh lockdowns.” The warnings “come amid widespread fatigue with restrictions, even as the virus is nowhere near finished rampaging across the country. Although several states implemented new mitigation measures this week, many people have been letting down their guards or, in some cases, vowing outright to ignore the rules.”

### **California Cities Reimpose Restrictions As State Reaches Millionth COVID Case.**

The [AP](#) (11/12, Melley, Taxin) reports California recorded its millionth known case of COVID-19 case on Thursday, following Texas as the second state to reach the “grim milestone.”

The [New York Times](#) (11/12, Fuller, Arango, Hubler, 18.61M) reports, “Citing an alarming increase in cases, San Francisco this week banned indoor dining at restaurants and paused a plan to reopen schools.” In Los Angeles, “thousands of residents have flocked in recent weeks to the parking lot of Dodger Stadium, one of the largest testing sites in the nation.” In Sacramento, “the number of people hospitalized with the virus has doubled to 158 in the past two weeks.” In San Diego, “where rising cases pushed the city to the most restrictive level of the state’s guidelines, indoor activities will be banned as of Saturday in churches, gyms, yoga studios and movie theaters.”

The [San Francisco Chronicle](#) (11/12, Allday, 2.67M) says the “upward trend is especially concerning with multiple threats on the horizon. People will naturally want to come together for the holidays, and the cold weather will draw them indoors. Plus the flu season could further complicate the COVID-19 pandemic.” The [Los Angeles Times](#) (11/12, Money, 4.64M) reports Los Angeles Public Health Director Barbara Ferrer, during a briefing on Thursday, “emphasized that LA County remains on a knife’s edge and that everyone needs to do their part to keep conditions from worsening.” She said, “We all need to act now. ... The actions we take today, tomorrow and next week have tremendous impact on the health and well-being of many, many people across the county. If, collectively, we fail to stop the acceleration of new cases, we will have no choice but to look at additional actions.”

### **Upper Midwest, Plains States See COVID Cases Rising.**

The [Washington Post](#) (11/12, A1, Gowen, Bailey, 14.2M) reports, “Covid’s long, dark winter has already arrived in the Upper Midwest, as cases and deaths surge, snatching lives, overwhelming hospitals, exhausting health-care providers and raising fears that the region’s medical system will be completely overwhelmed in the coming days.” Experts “say that cases are surging in the region as the weather has turned colder and more people are forced inside – into more poorly ventilated indoor spaces where transmission thrives – with the virus arriving even in remote areas in largely conservative states where Republican leaders have resisted mask mandates or business closures, asking their residents to rely instead on personal responsibility.” In Minnesota, Gov. Tim Walz (D) “has warned of more ‘nightmare’ numbers to come, even as the state has instituted new restrictions on bars, restaurants and social gatherings in an attempt to

stop the spread." [NBC Nightly News](#) (11/12, story 2, 1:40, Holt, 4.9M) reported that in Michigan, "officials warn the state's healthcare system could soon capsize amid a nearly five fold surge in COVID hospitalizations since just last month. ... Hospitals throughout the state are understaffed and overwhelmed, with cases and hospitalizations doubling every two weeks."

**North Dakota Nurses Association Reject Policy Allowing COVID-Positive Employees To Continue Working.** [The Hill](#) (11/12, Weixel, 2.98M) reports that in a statement on Wednesday, the North Dakota Nurses Association rejected "a policy that would allow COVID-positive nurses to continue treating patients at coronavirus units of hospitals and nursing homes if they are not symptomatic." The association "said the policy does not address the root of the problem and called for a statewide mask mandate and other public health measures to be implemented first." On Monday, Gov. Doug Burgum (R) announced the policy "as a way to ease pressure on hospitals that are short-staffed and nearing capacity, as COVID-19 cases surge uncontrollably throughout the state." North Dakota "is currently the worst-hit state in the country in terms of coronavirus cases per 100,000 residents, but is one of 15 states without a mask mandate."

### **Chicago Mayor Issues Stay-At-Home Advisory.**

[Reuters](#) (11/12, Caspani, O'Brien) reports Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot (D) "issued a stay-at-home advisory and Detroit stopped in-person schooling on Thursday to staunch the coronavirus outbreak as more than a dozen states reported a doubling of new COVID-19 cases in the last two weeks." Lightfoot "on Thursday issued a 30-day advisory calling upon residents to stay at home and have no visitors, even during Thanksgiving festivities." According to Reuters, Illinois "has emerged as the pandemic's new epicenter in the region as well as across the country."

[Bloomberg](#) (11/12, Singh, 4.73M) reports Lightfoot's advisory urges "residents to avoid leaving home except for work, school and other essentials as new Covid-19 cases and hospitalizations surge." The restrictions "will take effect on Monday and stay in place for 30 days, or until the health commissioner changes it. If the city continues on the current path, at least 1,000 more Chicagoans could die from the virus by the end of the year, Lightfoot said during a press conference on Thursday."

[CNN](#) (11/12, Parks, Jones, Jimenez, Asmelash, 83.16M) reports on its website that Lightfoot said in the release, "The gains we have made this year have been the result of our willingness to work together. Even in this difficult moment, we will continue to unite as we always have for our city in order to halt the rise we're seeing, shake out of the fatigue we've been experiencing, and make the crucial difference in what our future is going to look like."

The [Chicago Tribune](#) (11/12, Munks, Pratt, 2.65M) reports that at a coronavirus briefing on Thursday, Gov. J.B. Pritzker (D) said, "If things don't take a turn in the coming days, we will quickly reach the point when some form of a mandatory stay-at-home order is all that will be left. ... With every fiber of my being, I do not want us to get there. But right now, that seems like where we are heading."

The [Chicago Sun-Times](#) (11/12, 875K) says "more people have contracted the virus in Illinois over the past 15 days – nearly 140,000 – than during all of summer." Of "all 536,542 people who have tested positive in Illinois so far during the eight-month pandemic, almost half of them have been diagnosed just since the beginning of October alone."

### **NYC Schools Seen As Likely To Close Again Amid Resurgence Of COVID.**

The [New York Times](#) (11/12, Shapiro, 18.61M) reports New York City's school system – despite having coronavirus transmission being "strikingly low, with a positive-test rate of just .17 percent according to the most recent data, prompting one of the city's top health officials to declare that the public schools are among the safest public places around" – is expected to shut down by Thanksgiving, if not earlier. The move "would be perhaps the most significant setback yet for the city's recovery since the bleak days of spring, when it was a global center of the pandemic and all the schools were shuttered."

Meg Oliver of the [CBS Evening News](#)<sup>Vi</sup> (11/12, story 2, 1:30, O'Donnell, 4.06M) said New York City's COVID positivity rate was at 2.6% on Thursday, "closing in on the 3% threshold that would trigger a move to remote learning in all public schools."

### **Health Officials Encouraging Extra COVID Precautions For Holidays.**

The [Washington Post](#) (11/12, Brulliard, 14.2M) reports the "record-breaking surge in US coronavirus cases is being driven to a significant degree by casual occasions that may feel deceptively safe, officials and scientists warn – dinner parties, game nights, sleepovers and carpools." The White House coronavirus task force "has been urging states that are virus hot spots to curtail maskless get-togethers of family and friends, saying in reports that asymptomatic attendees 'cause ongoing transmission, frequently infecting multiple people in a single gathering.'"

On [NBC Nightly News](#)<sup>Vi</sup> (11/12, story 14, 1:30, Holt, 4.9M), Stephanie Gosk said, "The safest thing to do this Thanksgiving, health officials say, is stay home. The reality is a lot of people aren't going to stay home." NBC's John Torres said, "By far the safest thing is to not to travel, but if you do travel, take those steps you need to take to stay safe. That means wearing a mask, social distancing, washing your hands."

Asked on [Fox News' The Story](#) (11/12) about New York City's Thanksgiving restrictions, HHS Secretary **Azar** said, "We've got real practical suggestions" for managing the risks, including opening "your window if you can to increase ventilation," turning on ceiling fans, and using "single-serving" utensils for food. **Azar** said, "The most important thing is, even if we sacrifice this year for Thanksgiving and Christmas, we want to make sure that everyone in your family is available next year for Thanksgiving and Christmas so you can celebrate fully."

**Birx Encourages Mask Wearing To Stem Fall Surge.** [WFRV-TV](#)<sup>Vi</sup> Green Bay, WI (11/12, 16K) reported that White House Coronavirus Task Force Coordinator Deborah Birx touted the effectiveness of mask mandates and "said other countries have already had success in stemming the tide of the virus when they get aggressive with prevention." **Birx** said, "Even though this fall surge is more rapid, resulting in more hospitalizations, we already have countries that are successful in flattening the curve, because they put in a mask mandate, they told you not to gather and take your mask off, and they closed bars and restaurants." Birx "is asking Americans to hang on for another four to six weeks when it comes to limiting contact."

### **Clinical Laboratories Warn COVID Testing May Be Delayed.**

[Politico](#) (11/12, Lim, 4.29M) reports the American Clinical Laboratory Association, which "represents private labs, including LabCorp and Quest," warned that labs may soon be facing processing delays for COVID tests amid the surge of infections nationwide. Quest Diagnostics "this week said its average turnaround time for PCR testing is two days, but private labs say results will take longer to process once the number of new samples begins to exceed testing capacity." Association of Public Health Laboratories CEO Scott Becker said, "Labs are doing everything they can to eke out whatever additional capacity they can, but they are limited by supplies and in some cases test kits."

### **Lewandowski Tests Positive For COVID.**

[USA Today](#) (11/12, Fritze, Santucci, 10.31M) reports Trump campaign adviser Corey Lewandowski "has tested positive for COVID-19, the latest member of the president's inner circle to contract the illness in recent weeks." Lewandowski "was present on election night at the White House for a gathering after initial results showed Trump ahead in several states." Chief of Staff Meadows and HUD Secretary Carson, "who were also present at the gathering, also tested positive in recent days." [The Hill](#) (11/12, Samuels, 2.98M) says the "White House election night party has emerged as the latest super-spreader event inside the building."

[CNN](#) (11/12, Acosta, Collins, Vazquez, 83.16M) reports on its website that Lewandowski "said he is feeling fine and will stay home as a precaution." He "joins a growing list of

individuals close to the President to have tested positive for the virus this week after attending campaign events in the lead-up to and days after the election." In addition to Lewandowski, Meadows, and Carson, Trump adviser David Bossie and White House Political Affairs Director Brian Jack "all tested positive for the coronavirus this week." The [New York Times](#) (11/12, Haberman, 18.61M) reports similarly on this story.

### **Ivanka Trump, Kushner Withdrew Children From School After White House Outbreak.**

The [New York Daily News](#) (11/12, Crane-Newman, 2.52M) reports Ivanka Trump and Jared Kushner withdrew their children from school "after fellow parents complained about the president's top aide and his daughter failing to follow pandemic protocols amid a COVID-19 outbreak in the White House." They "withdrew their three children from Milton Gottesman Jewish Day School in Washington, DC, three weeks after a coronavirus outbreak in the Oval Office and two weeks before Election Day," and enrolled them at a Maryland school.

### **Alaska Congressman Tests Positive For COVID.**

The [AP](#) (11/12, Thiessen) reports Rep. Don Young (R-AK) "announced Thursday that he has tested positive for COVID-19, a day after the 87-year-old won his 25th term in the US House." On Twitter, Young wrote, "I am feeling strong, following proper protocols, working from home in Alaska and ask for privacy at this time." The AP says Young's "positive test came after he was campaigning for re-election in Alaska, which is experiencing a surge of cases."

The [Washington Post](#) (11/12, Itkowitz, 14.2M) reports Young "downplayed the coronavirus in its early days, calling it the 'beer virus,' a seeming reference to Corona beer." Young said in March, "It attacks us senior citizens. I'm one of you. I still say we have to as a nation and state go forth with everyday activities." [Reuters](#) (11/12) says Young is the latest of the 17 Republican and nine Democratic members of the House and Senate to "have tested positive or are presumed to have had COVID-19."

### **WSJournal: Delaware COVID Settlement Allows Churches To Be Treated Neutrally.**

In an editorial, the [Wall Street Journal](#) (11/12, Subscription Publication, 7.57M) says the decision by Delaware Gov. John Carney (D) to settle with a pastor alleging the state's emergency orders discriminate against churches means Carney has agreed to treat houses of worship neutrally.

### **WSJournal: Biden's COVID Team Would Push For Lockdowns.**

In an editorial, the [Wall Street Journal](#) (11/12, Subscription Publication, 7.57M) says Joe Biden's coronavirus advisory committee members believe lockdowns are beneficial, but in fact they would have negative economic and public health consequences. The Journal advises Biden to diversify by calling the Great Barrington Declaration authors to join his committee.

### **Administration Leaving Stimulus Talks To McConnell As Pelosi, Schumer Signal No Compromise.**

[Bloomberg](#) (11/12, Mohsin, Litvan, Wasson, 4.73M) reports the Trump Administration is "stepping back from negotiations" over a coronavirus stimulus bill and "leaving it to" Senate Majority Leader McConnell to "revive long-stalled talks." According to Bloomberg, "While the White House probably would consult with GOP lawmakers on details of a Covid-19 relief bill, it's now unlikely to take the lead on talks," and "would only take over if negotiations have to be restarted completely."

Meanwhile, the [Washington Post](#) (11/12, Werner, 14.2M) reports that on Thursday, "Congressional Democratic leaders accused Republicans...of refusing to confront the dramatically worsening coronavirus pandemic and instead acquiescing to" President Trump's "false insistence that he won last week's presidential election." Trump "tweeted incessantly about the need for an economic relief bill before the Nov. 3 election, but he has been silent on

the matter ever since, and initial signs that congressional Republicans wanted a deal also have cooled." House Speaker Pelosi and Senate Minority Leader Schumer "said that [Joe] Biden's election win constitutes a mandate for their demands for a new multitrillion-dollar relief bill, particularly given how coronavirus case numbers are jumping."

The [AP](#) (11/12) says Pelosi and Schumer "adopted a combative posture on COVID-19 relief on Thursday, pressing their case for a \$2 trillion bill that's a nonstarter for Republicans and faulting the GOP for dragging its feet on acknowledging Biden's victory." According to the AP, "The message...was that Republicans should concede Biden won and immediately return to negotiations on COVID relief, with the Democrats' \$2.4 trillion 'HEROES Act' as the starting point." Pelosi told reporters: "It's most unfortunate that the Republicans have decided that they will not respect the will of the people. It's like the house is burning down, and they just refuse to throw water on it."

According to [Politico](#) (11/12, Everett, Ferris, 4.29M), "Prospects for a new stimulus bill this year just about hit rock bottom on Thursday" as Pelosi and Schumer "said they have no plans to budge from their position of demanding a \$2 trillion coronavirus relief measure, and no less." Politico adds that McConnell "rejected their approach," and "said that he still believes a bill of about \$500 billion is the way to go, even though Senate Democrats have repeatedly rejected his proposal." [Reuters](#) (11/12, Cornwell) quotes McConnell as saying, "I gather she and the Democratic leader in the Senate still are looking at something dramatically larger. That's not a place I think we're willing to go." Reuters reports that although "a senior official in Trump's administration said it was leaving any negotiations about a coronavirus relief package to McConnell and Pelosi for the time being," there is "no sign such talks were imminent."

The [New York Times](#) (11/12, Smialek, Cochrane, Fandos, Rappeport, 18.61M) says "in holding firm to their respective positions – Democrats demanding \$2.4 trillion as a starting point, with Republicans proposing a fraction of that amount – congressional leaders appeared to be closing the door on the possibility of a year-end compromise."

The [AP](#) (11/12) reports that Biden's transition team announced on Thursday that he has spoken with Pelosi and Schumer "about 'intensifying' the country's coronavirus response and coping with the economic fallout the pandemic has inflicted." According to the AP, "They also discussed the 'urgent need' to use the lame duck congressional session to approve bills on slowing the spread of COVID-19, as well as economic relief for 'working families and small businesses, support for state and local governments trying to keep front-line workers on the payroll,' expanded unemployment insurance and expanded access to affordable health care."

### **Federal Judge Schedules Conference On Trump Defamation Suit.**

[The Hill](#) (11/12, Budryk, 2.98M) reports that Judge Lewis Kaplan "on Thursday signaled columnist E. Jean Carroll's defamation lawsuit against President Trump can move forward, scheduling a telephone conference in the case for Dec. 11." The conference scheduling follows Kaplan's earlier denial of the Justice Department's attempt to "take over the case." Carroll's lawyer, Roberta Kaplan, said in a statement to ABC News, "We look forward to finally moving ahead with discovery in the case, which has been on hold since Trump filed his motion for a stay last February, and look forward to the initial conference in E Jean Carroll's case on Dec. 11, if the parties cannot agree on a schedule."

### **At Least Four Dead As Eta Moves Through Southeast.**

The [CBS Evening News](#)<sup>Vi</sup> (11/12, story 3, 2:00, O'Donnell, 4.06M) reported, "At least four people have died and dozens rescued after Tropical Storm Eta made landfall. Tonight, the devastating storm is dumping heavy rain on the Carolinas and Virginia." On [NBC Nightly News](#)<sup>Vi</sup> (11/12, story 8, 1:05, Holt, 4.9M), Sam Brock said, "A nightmare in North Carolina: a deadly November storm steam rolling through the Southeast, forcing water rescues across the region." The [AP](#) (11/12, Anderson, Frisaro) reports Eta "raced off the Southeast Atlantic seacoast late Thursday, spreading heavy rains and gusty winds around the Carolinas only hours after

blustering across north Florida. ... The storm system triggered flash flooding, multiple water rescues and road closures, and at least one collapsed bridge in South Carolina."

The [Washington Post](#) (11/12, Cappucci, 14.2M) says "after a 3,000-mile journey, an impact on seven countries, four landfalls and two bouts as a hurricane, the two-week rampage of Tropical Storm Eta was progressing through its final destructive act." [ABC World News Tonight](#) (11/12, story 6, 1:05, Muir, 6.57M) and the [New York Times](#) (11/12, Vigdor, Paybarah, 18.61M) also report.

### **Appeals Court Upholds Harvard Affirmative Action Ruling.**

The [New York Times](#) (11/12, Hartocollis, 18.61M) reports, "A federal appeals court on Thursday ruled that Harvard's admissions process did not violate civil rights law, but the victory for the university could be short-lived should the case be taken up by the Supreme Court." The case has "elevated efforts by conservative activists," who have sought "to reach the Supreme Court, where an increasingly conservative tilt because of three justices appointed by President Trump has made it appear more likely that they could prevail despite more than 40 years of precedent."

The [Washington Post](#) (11/12, Anderson, 14.2M) says that "Students for Fair Admissions, a group opposed to the use of race in admissions decisions, sued the university in 2014 in an effort to halt what it alleged was unlawful discrimination" against Asian-American applicants. US District Judge Allison Burroughs "ruled in 2019 for Harvard on all counts" in the case, a decision that appellate Judges Jeffrey Howard and Sandra Lynch upheld. Students for Fair Admissions president Edward Blum said while the group is "disappointed" in the ruling, the suit "is now on track" for a ruling by the Supreme Court.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (11/12, Korn, Subscription Publication, 7.57M) reports that Howard and Lynch said in a 104-page opinion that Harvard has targeted measurable goals in considering race and that variances in admission rates for minority students invalidates arguments that the university used quotas, adding that the school's subjective criteria does not indicate bias toward Asian-American applicants.

#### ***WSJournal: Harvard Ruling Signals Need For Definitive Supreme Court Decision.***

In an editorial, the [Wall Street Journal](#) (11/12, Subscription Publication, 7.57M) argues that cases around affirmative action like the Harvard case continue to surface because the Supreme Court has failed to offer clear definitions of how or how much race should be considered as a factor in admissions. The Journal says that an appeal presents an opportunity for the Supreme Court to offer clarification in accordance with the majority opinion of Americans who reject the consideration of race.

### **Deputy AG Rosen Reportedly Blocked Charges Against Zinke.**

The [Washington Post](#) (11/12, Eilperin, Zapotosky, 14.2M) reports that Deputy Attorney General Jeffrey Rosen "deferred a bid from line prosecutors to move forward with possible criminal charges against former interior secretary Ryan Zinke, saying they needed to gather more evidence and refine the case." According to the Post, "The move late last year by Rosen...angered some career prosecutors in the Justice Department's Public Integrity Section and has delayed for months the release of an Interior Department Office of Inspector General report about Zinke's conduct." At issue is whether Zinke "made false statements to Interior investigators who were looking into his decision not to grant a petition by two Indian tribes to operate a commercial casino off reservation land" in Connecticut.

## **INTERNATIONAL NEWS**

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### **Chinese Government Stopping Taiwan's Participation In WHO Meeting.**

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (11/12, Deng, Subscription Publication, 7.57M) reports that opposition from members of the Chinese Communist Party is stopping Taiwan – which has not recorded locally transmitted infections in approximately seven months – from participating in a World Health Organization meeting to address the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Prime Minister Says Japan Does Not Need To Declare COVID State Of Emergency.**

[Reuters](#) (11/12) reports Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga said Friday that Japan does not need a state-of-emergency declaration over the coronavirus pandemic, “adding that experts backed that view.” Speaking to reporters, “he said the government’s initiative to boost domestic tourism with subsidies also did not need to be revised.”

### **Germany, France See Slowing Of COVID Cases, But Hospitals Remain Crowded.**

The [AP](#) (11/12, Moulson) reports, “The surge of new coronavirus cases appears to be slowing in Germany and France, generating hopes that the two European heavyweights are beginning to regain control over the pandemic.” However, “authorities said Thursday that hospitals are crowded and are likely to face further strain in the coming weeks.” German Minister of Health Jens Spahn “told his compatriots to brace for a long winter, regardless of whether a partial shutdown succeeds in bringing down the caseload,” while Lothar Wieler, head of Germany’s national disease control center, said there are “already more cases in intensive care than in April, and the cases have doubled in the past two weeks.”

***Germans Protesting COVID Restrictions Becoming Increasingly Violent.*** The [Washington Post](#) (11/12, Morris, Beck, 14.2M) reports there is “a growing violent undercurrent at large-scale street demonstrations against coronavirus restrictions” in Germany. The Post says the “developments point to an increasingly radicalized movement of virus skeptics in Germany, embraced by the country’s far-right extremist groups and energized by global conspiracy theories, notably those put forth by the US-born QAnon movement.” Last weekend, “far-right groups marched alongside the demonstrators...stoking concerns among security officials that they will gain recruits and draw more demonstrators to violence, with bomb- and weapon-making material already circulating in coronavirus-skeptic circles online.”

### **South Africa Opens To Foreign Visitors.**

The [AP](#) (11/12, Magome) reports, “In an effort to revive its tourism industry, South Africa has opened up international travel to visitors from all countries, President Cyril Ramaphosa has announced.” South Africa “will now admit foreign visitors providing they produce negative COVID-19 test results, Ramaphosa said in a broadcast address Wednesday night.” According to the AP, the step makes South Africa “one of the world’s countries most open to international travel” and “comes as cases of the disease are slowly increasing in the country. Ramaphosa said his government will closely monitor any signs that international visitors increase transmission rates.”

### **US Allies In Iraq Said To Fear Targeting By Iran.**

The [Washington Post](#) (11/12, Loveluck, Ryan, Salim, 14.2M) reports, “Iraqis who have worked closely with the U.S. military in their country have grown increasingly alarmed that they could be targeted for attack, fearing their personal identifying information has been obtained by Iran-backed militias.” According to Iraqi officials, the US military provides personal information, “including names, addresses and license plate numbers...to secure permission for...translators to move around Iraq.” While a US military spokesperson said the US-led coalition “does not share personally identifiable information about the translators with the Iraqi military or government,” The Post says three documents “show that such information provided by the U.S.-led coalition has been circulated by various elements of the Iraqi security forces over the past year” and Iran-backed militias “have recently been escalating their attacks on American interests in Iraq.”

### **NYTimes Analysis: Syrian Refugees Resist Return Under Current Leadership.**

The [New York Times](#) (11/12, Hubbard, 18.61M) reports that "the Syrian government hosted a lavish conference in the capital, Damascus, this week aimed at trying to get the more than six million refugees who fled the country's civil war to come home," but "many refugees say they are not ready to return" as long as President Bashar al-Assad "and his government remain in power." While al-Assad "appears to be secure and the big battles have subsided" since protests calling for his ouster, "Syria is a shattered country, with Mr. al-Assad ruling only part of its territory" and "on top of material concerns, most of the refugees fled violence committed by Mr. al-Assad's government, and they now fear that going home could mean arrest or forced conscription into his army." al-Assad largely ignored such concerns in this week's conference, blaming "an international conspiracy" for the war and accusing "Arab and Western countries of...preventing [refugees] from returning."

### **NYTimes Analysis: Afghan Officials Do Not Expect Biden To Stop Trump's Troop Withdrawal.**

The [New York Times](#) (11/12, Gibbons-Neff, 18.61M) says, "It is a desperately difficult time for Afghanistan. American troops, honoring President Trump's deal with the Taliban, are still on their way out of the country, despite the stalling of peace talks between the insurgency and the Afghan government, and a wave of intensified Taliban offensives near important cities." The Times adds, "Officials in Kabul are very aware that Americans are tired of the war – a fact made clear by a near absence of the issue in presidential debates, and by [Joe] Biden's seeming agreement with President Trump's desire to get out of Afghanistan." However, according to the Times, "in Mr. Biden, Afghan officials said they hoped to gain a less capricious and more communicative ally, though they know he is unlikely to stop the troop withdrawal."

### **Five Americans, Two Others Killed In Crash Of Peacekeeping Force Helicopter In Sinai.**

[NBC Nightly News](#)<sup>Vi</sup> (11/12, story 9, 0:15, Holt, 4.9M) reported, "A horrifying helicopter crash has killed five Americans and two others in Egypt. They were part of a peacekeeping force in the region. There's no word yet on the cause of the crash." [ABC World News Tonight](#)<sup>Vi</sup> (11/12, story 5, 0:25, Muir, 6.57M) reported, "Officials say the helicopter went down in the Sinai Peninsula during a routine mission. The Blackhawk [is] believed to have suffered a mechanical failure. One American survived." David Martin said on the [CBS Evening News](#)<sup>Vi</sup> (11/12, story 8, 1:15, O'Donnell, 4.06M) that it is "the single worst loss of American life in the nearly four decades US troops have patrolled the Sinai. About 450 Americans are part of an international force set up to monitor the 1979 peace treaty between Egypt and Israel."

The [New York Times](#) (11/12, Kershner, Schmitt, 18.61M) reports that the Multinational Force and Observers peacekeeping force "consists of 1,154 troops from 13 countries, including Australia, Britain, Fiji, the United States and Uruguay." The [Washington Post](#) (11/12, Raghavan, Hendrix, 14.2M) reports that in a statement, the MFO "suggested there was no indication that the event was terrorism related. 'At this point, there is no information to indicate the crash was anything except an accident,' the force said." The [Wall Street Journal](#) (11/12, Youssef, Malsin, Subscription Publication, 7.57M) also reports.

### **Pompeo To Visit Golan Heights, West Bank Israeli Settlement.**

[Axios](#) (11/12, Ravid, 521K) reports Secretary of State Pompeo "is planning to visit the Golan Heights and an Israeli settlement in the West Bank next week, both firsts for a U.S. secretary of state." Since 1967, "all previous U.S. administrations have treated the West Bank and Golan Heights as occupied territory." Axios says the trip "seems intended to highlight the Trump administration's policy shifts on Israel. For Pompeo, it also has domestic political significance ahead of a possible presidential run in 2024."

### **Wolf Planning To Visit Several Latin American Countries In Early December.**

The [Washington Post](#) (11/12, Miroff, 14.2M) reports Acting DHS Secretary Wolf "is making plans to travel to several countries in Latin America next month, a proposal that has raised concerns about the necessity of such a trip in the middle of the coronavirus pandemic. The trip is tentatively scheduled for the week of Dec. 7, and it could include stops in El Salvador, Panama, Colombia, Brazil and Ecuador, according to three people with knowledge of the plans."

### **Russian Military Operations Off Coast Of Alaska Impact Private US Ships.**

The [New York Times](#) (11/12, 18.61M) reports on Russian military operations "inside the U.S. economic zone off the coast of Alaska" in August, "the latest in a series of escalated encounters across the North Pacific and the Arctic." Private US fishing ships received warnings "in a mixture of Russian and accented English" to leave the area. One captain told the Times, "It was frightening, to say the least. The Coast Guard's response was: Just do what they say."

### **Hong Kong Legislature Opens Without Pro-Democracy Lawmakers.**

The [New York Times](#) (11/12, Wang, May, 18.61M) reports that on Thursday, Hong Kong's legislature opened after lawmakers from the pro-democracy opposition were either ousted by the Chinese Communist Party or resigned to protest the ousters. The Times adds, "Unfazed, the remaining pro-Beijing camp got to work, reviewing a bill on parking spaces and discussing flu vaccines." According to the Times, the opposition "could only stand outside for one final protest, hanging two banners criticizing Hong Kong's chief executive – and then taking them down just a few minutes later before security could do so." The [Wall Street Journal](#) (11/12, Khan, Subscription Publication, 7.57M) reports senior Chinese officials have rejected international criticism of the terminations and the mass resignation.

### **EU Plans Pro-LGBTQ Policies In Response To Hungary And Poland.**

The [New York Times](#) (11/12, Pronczuk, Novak, 18.61M) reports the European Union has "unveiled policies intended to strengthen the rights of L.G.B.T.Q. people, proposals that appear aimed particularly at right-wing governments in Hungary and Poland that have promoted discrimination." The European Commission moves "would classify hate crime, including homophobic speech, on a list of 'E.U. crimes' that also contains offenses such as drug trafficking and money laundering. ... The proposal would also protect same-sex families in all 27 of the bloc's members, and promises more funding for organizations promoting equality."

### **Researchers Conclude World "Already Past A Point Of No Return For Global Warming."**

[USA Today](#) (11/12, Rice, 10.31M) reports, "Even if human-caused greenhouse gas emissions can be reduced to zero, global temperatures may continue to rise for centuries afterward, according to a scientific study" published in the British journal *Scientific Reports* on Thursday. The authors write, "The world is already past a point of no return for global warming." The only way "to stop the warming, they say, is that 'enormous amounts of carbon dioxide have to be extracted from the atmosphere.'"

### **NYTimes Analysis: Nobel Peace Prize Repeatedly Awarded To Dubious Winners.**

The [New York Times](#) (11/12, Gladstone, 18.61M) writes that "at least six times in recent decades," the Nobel Peace Prize has been awarded to "recipients whose actions and behavior – either before or after the honor was given – have been viewed as unworthy or in some cases even absurd." Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, the 2019 laureate, has moved "to violently suppress the Tigray region and risk plunging Africa's second most-populous country into a disastrous civil war"; the peace agreement pushed through by then-Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos, the 2016 winner, largely collapsed; "even [Barack] Obama himself questioned"

his 2009 selection, "given that he had yet to achieve any significant result for the cause of world peace"; then-South Korean President Kim Dae-jung was honored in 2000, and two decades later, "the prospect of peace between the two Koreas seems even more remote"; efforts at peace between Israel and Palestine "have repeatedly faltered" since three statesmen were honored for their work in 1994; and Aung San Suu Kyi, honored in 1991, has rejected evidence that Burma "has systematically and brutally persecuted the country's Rohingya Muslim minority."

## THE BIG PICTURE

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### Headlines From Today's Front Pages.

#### **Wall Street Journal:**

[US Backs Down On TikTok](#)

[As Covid-19 Surges To New Levels Across US, States Impose Flurry Of Measures](#)

[China's President Xi Jinping Personally Scuttled Jack Ma's Ant IPO](#)

[Deposit Interest Rates Are Taking A Pandemic Nosedive](#)

[World's Explorers, Hemmed In By Pandemic, Offer Tips For Coping With Lockdown](#)

#### **New York Times:**

[Election Officials Directly Contradict Trump on Voting System Fraud](#)

[N.Y.C. Schools May Close Again, a Grim Sign of a Global Dilemma](#)

[Wrong Again: How Polls Misread 2020 Voters](#)

[Republicans' Wall of Support For President Begins to Crack](#)

['Are We Getting Invaded?' A 21st-Century Cold War in the Arctic](#)

#### **Washington Post:**

["We're The Ones Who Won": A GOP House Guarantee For 2022](#)

[Democrats Renew Calls For Expanded Virus Relief Bill](#)

[As Trump Tweets, Many Duties Of His Office Languish](#)

[Upper Midwest Faces A Reckoning](#)

[Iraqis Fear Work For US Makes Them Militia Targets](#)

[A Blueprint For Back-To-School](#)

#### **Financial Times:**

[Central Bank Chiefs Upbeat On Vaccine Boost To Global Economy](#)

[Covid Vaccine Presents Pharma With Shot At Redemption And Profits](#)

[Republican Resistance To Biden Victory Starts To Crack](#)

**Washington Times:** [Photos Show China Expanding Nuclear Arms Plants](#)

[First Vaccines Will Go To Select Groups](#)

[Trump Supporters Start To Give Up On Legal Challenges](#)

[Obama-appointed Judges Get Fraud Cases](#)

[Trump Bans Funding For Chinese Military](#)

#### **Story Lineup From Last Night's Network News:**

**ABC:** COVID Surge; Eli Lilly Antibody Treatment; GOP-Election Results; Trump-Pandemic; Egypt-US Troops Killed; Tropical Storm Eta; Ahmaud Arbery Case; California-Small Plane Crash; Minnesota-Vehicle Pile-Up; Biden-Pope Francis; Country Music Awards.

**CBS:** COVID Surge; COVID-New York City; Tropical Storm Eta; Obama-Election Fraud Comments; GOP-Election Results; Biden-Cabinet; Biden-Pope Francis; Egypt-US Troops Killed; California-Small Plane Crash; Alex Acosta-Epstein Case; Thanksgiving Day Parade Changes; National Museum of the US Army.

**NBC:** COVID Surge; COVID-Michigan; Trump-Pandemic; GOP-Election Results; Biden-

Transition; Georgia-Stacey Abrams; Obama-Memoir; Tropical Storm Eta; Egypt-US Troops Killed; California-Small Plane Crash; COVID Vaccines; Grocery Stores Restricting Items; Rockefeller Center Christmas Tree; Holiday Travel; Tribute to Veterans.

**Network TV At A Glance:**

COVID Surge – 14 minutes, 30 seconds  
GOP-Election Results – 5 minutes, 40 seconds  
Tropical Storm Eta – 4 minutes, 10 seconds  
Egypt-US Troops Killed – 1 minute, 55 seconds

**Story Lineup From This Morning's Radio News Broadcasts:**

**ABC:** Georgia-Hand Recount; COVID Surge; Alex Acosta-Epstein Case; UN-Al-Shabab extremists.

**CBS:** COVID Surge; Biden-Pope Francis; Trump-2024; Tropical Storm Eta; Egypt-US Troops Killed;

**FOX:** COVID Surge; Pennsylvania-Absentee Ballots; COVID-Student Athletes.

**NPR:** COVID Surge; Georgia-Hand Recount; Trump Campaign Staff; Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency-No Evidence of Voter Fraud.

## WASHINGTON'S SCHEDULE

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**Today's Events In Washington.**

**White House:**

- President Trump — Receives an update on Operation Warp Speed.
- Vice President Pence — Keynotes Council for National Policy Meeting.

**US Senate:**

- No public schedule released.

**US House:**

- House Speaker Nancy Pelosi holds weekly press conference  
*Location: HVC Studio A, U.S. Capitol Visitor Center, Washington, DC; 10:45 AM*
- House of Representatives on recess from 2 Oct – 16 Nov

**Cabinet Officers:**

- Secretary of State Pompeo begins France / Turkey / Georgia / Israel / UAE / Qatar / Saudi Arabia trip – Secretary of State Mike Pompeo begins trip to France, Turkey, Georgia, Israel, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia, with agenda, respectively, including meeting President Emmanuel Macron, Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian, and other senior officials in Paris; meeting the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, Bartholomew I, in Istanbul; meeting President Salome Zourabichvili, Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia, Foreign Minister David Zalkaliani, and the Patriarch of the Georgian Orthodox Church, Ilia II in Tbilisi; meeting Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Israel; meeting Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayd in the United Arab Emirates; meeting Emir Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani and Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani in Qatar; and meeting Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in Saudi Arabia

**Visitors:**

- No visitors scheduled.

**This Town:**

- OAS Permanent Council High-Level Virtual Dialogue – Organization of American States High-Level Virtual Dialogue: 'Water and Strategic Partnerships for Integration in Central America'. Speakers include Guatemalan Vice President Guillermo Castillo Reyes, Honduran Vice

President Ricardo Antonio Alvarez, El Salvadoran Vice President Felix Ulloa, Central American Integration System Secretary General Marco Vinicio Cerezo Arevalo, Global Environment Facility CEO and Chair Carlos Manuel Rodriguez, World Bank 2030 Water Resources Group Global Program Manager Karin Krchnak, Inter-American Development Bank Water and Sanitation Chief Sergio Campos, and Nestle Chair Paul Bulcke; *10:00 AM*

- CSIS / U.S. Naval Institute online Maritime Security Dialogue – ‘Information Warfare: From A Supporting Role To A Leading Role’ online Maritime Security Dialogue online event hosted by Center for Strategic and International Studies and the U.S. Naval Institute, with Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Information Warfare/Director of Naval Intelligence Vice Adm. Jeffrey Trussler; *10:00 AM*
- CSIS online conversation with U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon – ‘Lebanon’s Challenges’ Center for Strategic and International Studies Commission on Strengthening America’s Health Security online event with U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon Dorothy Shea, who discusses the evolving humanitarian, health, economic, and political crises in Lebanon, the aftermath of the 4 Aug Beirut explosion and evolution of U.S. policy since; *10:00 AM*
- Chilean President Pinera speaks on CFR event – Council on Foreign Relations hosts Chilean President Sebastian Pinera for an online event, to discuss short term and long term economic recovery after coronavirus (COVID-19), Chile’s new constitution, global governance, and the shifting geopolitics of Latin America; *11:00 AM*
- Hudson Institute event on 5G in the U.S. – ‘Creating an American 5G Advantage’ Hudson Institute virtual discussion, with Office of the Director of Defense Research and Engineering Principal Director for 5G Dr Joseph Evans, Oracle Senior Director for Strategic Initiatives Cheryl Davis, AT&T Vice President of Security and Technology Policy Chris Boyer, Parallel Wireless CEO and President Steve Papa, and Hudson Institute’s Bryan Clark, Dr Dan Patt, and Tom Duesterberg; *12:00 PM*
- BPC online discussion on ‘telehealth’ with Independent Sen. Angus King – ‘What’s Next for Telehealth: Sustaining and Expanding Access After COVID-19’ Bipartisan Policy Center online discussion, on the benefits of telehealth during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and what things look like for the future of telehealth in Maine and throughout the country. Featured speakers include Independent Sen. Angus King, Stratis Health President Jennifer Lundblad, Bipartisan Policy Center Associate Director of the Health Project Dena McDonough, Western Maine Health Family Medicine Physician Dr Lisa Miller, and Northern Light Acadia Hospital President Scott Oxley; *12:00 PM*
- Axios hosts virtual event on the future of health care with Dem Sen. Tina Smith – Axios hosts ‘Health Care: 2021’ virtual event on the future of health care in America, including how to expand health insurance access and the path forward to universal coverage following the presidential election and amidst another wave of coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic concerns. Speakers include Democratic Sen. Tina Smith, The Foundation for Research on Equal Opportunity President Avik Roy, and UnitedHealthGroup OptumHealth Services CEO Heather Cianfrocco; *12:30 PM*
- Progressive Caucus Center ‘Meeting the Moment’ summit day two, with Dem Members of Congress – Progressive Caucus Center holds ‘Meeting the Moment: Building a More Resilient Nation’ event, day two, with speakers today including House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and fellow Democratic Reps. Pramila Jayapal, Mark Pocan, Ilhan Omar, Deb Haaland, Jamie Raskin, Chuy Garcia, Veronica Escobar, and Jared Huffman, actor and activist Alyssa Milano, Be a Hero Fund founder Ady Barkan, Poor People’s Campaign’s Rev. Dr William Barber, United We Dream Executive Director Greisa Martinez, Demos President Sabeel Rahman, AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Liz Schuler, Data for Progress Vice President Julian Brave NoiseCat, People’s Action Institute Executive Director George Goehl, home care worker Brenda Williams, and Center for International Policy President and CEO

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