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Trump immigration orders mark policy shift

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump's wide-ranging executive actions tightening border security — and the prospect of additional measures restricting refugee flows — mark a sharp shift away from Washington's fruitless efforts to forge comprehensive immigration legislation.

"We do not need new laws," Trump said Wednesday during remarks at the Department of Homeland Security. "We will work within the existing system and framework."

The centerpiece of the measures Trump signed was an order to jump-start construction of his promised U.S.-Mexico border wall.

He also ordered cuts in federal grants for immigrant-protecting "sanctuary cities" and a boost in the number of border patrol agents and immigration officers, pending congressional funding.

This week, Trump is expected to pause the flow of all refugees to the U.S. and to bar indefinitely those fleeing war-torn Syria.

The president's upcoming order also is expected to suspend issuing visas for people from several predominantly Muslim

countries — Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen — for at least 30 days, according to a draft order obtained by The Associated Press.

The actions, less than a week into Trump's presidency, would fulfill pledges that animated his candidacy and represent a dramatic redirection of U.S. immigration policy. They were cheered by Republican allies in Congress, were condemned by immigration advocates and triggered new tension with the Mexican government.

Trump was expected to turn back to the economy Thursday, signing a notice to Congress that he plans to start bilateral trade negotiations with most of the countries in the Trans-Pacific Partnership pact, according to a White House official.

On Monday, Trump moved to pull the U.S. out of the 12-nation Pacific Rim agreement, which he said would be damaging for American workers. Instead, he said he wanted to negotiate with countries individually.

The official insisted on anonymity in order to confirm the executive action ahead of Trump's announcement.

For years, lawmakers in both parties have worked to pass immigration legisla-

tion that would provide some form of legal status for people living in the U.S. illegally, most recently in 2013. Given the growing political power of Hispanic voters, Republicans had feared the opposition from some in the party would deeply damage their prospects of winning back the White House. But Trump's ability to win on a hard-line immigration message has recalibrated the party's view.

Trump is unveiling his immigration plans at a time when detentions at the nation's southern border are down significantly from levels seen in the late 1990s and early 2000s. The arrest tally last year was the fifth-lowest since 1972. Deportations of people living in the U.S. illegally also increased under President Barack Obama, though Republicans criticized him for setting prosecution guidelines that spared some groups from the threat of deportation, including those brought to the U.S. illegally as children.

As a candidate, Trump tapped into the immigration concerns of some Americans who worry both about a loss of economic opportunities and the threat of criminals and terrorists entering the country.

Former Army officer nominated for Navy secretary

BY COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A former Army officer-turned-international businessman is President Donald Trump's choice for Navy secretary, the White House has announced.

Trump tapped Philip Bilden to serve as the Navy's top civilian, who will be charged with overseeing the president's stated goals of expanding and modernizing the Navy's fleet. If confirmed by the Senate, Bilden will become the 76th secretary of the Navy, who oversees the Navy and the Marine Corps, replacing Ray Mabus, who served in that role throughout President Barack Obama's administration.

"As Secretary of the Navy, Philip Bilden will apply his terrific judgement and top-notch management skills to the task of rebuilding our unparalleled Navy," Trump

said Wednesday in a prepared statement. "Our number of ships is at the lowest point that it has been in decades. Philip Bilden is the right choice to help us expand and modernize our fleet, including surface ships, submarines and aircraft, and ensure America's naval supremacy for decades to come."

Bilden served 10 years in the Army Reserves as a military intelligence officer, attaining the rank of captain before he resigned his commission in 1996 to lead the Hong Kong branch of HarbourVest Partners, an international private equity firm that he co-founded in 1991. Bilden recently retired from the firm.

He is a 1986 graduate of Georgetown University and he received a master's of business administration from Harvard Business School in 1991.

In the White House announcement of Bilden's selection, he was touted for his

commitment to the military, which includes serving on the boards of the United States Naval Academy Foundation and the Naval War College Foundation. He has "long-standing trusted relationships with senior military leaders, particularly in the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps, through his years of national security engagement," according to the White House news release.

Bilden has two sons serving in the Navy. Throughout his campaign and since being sworn in as president last week, Trump has criticized the state of the Navy and has vowed to grow it from 274 ships to 350.

"Maintaining the strength, readiness, and capabilities of our maritime force is critical to our national security," Bilden said in a statement. "If confirmed, I will ensure that our sailors and Marines have the resources they need to defend our interests around the globe and support our allies with commitment and capability."

Sailor in sub photo case seeks pardon

By LINDSEY BEVER
The Washington Post

While on the campaign trail, President Donald Trump talked about a Navy man who was sentenced to federal prison for taking photographs inside a nuclear attack submarine.

Trump was comparing the sailor's crime to Hillary Clinton's email scandal, arguing that others have been prosecuted for doing "nothing by comparison to what she's done."

"They took the kid who wanted some pictures of the submarine," Trump said in one of his campaign speeches, *The Washington Post* reported at the time. "That's an old submarine; they've got plenty of pictures, if the enemy wants them, they've got plenty of them. He wanted to take a couple of pictures. They put him in jail for a year."

Now that enlisted sailor, Kristian Saucier, 30, is asking the president to commute his prison sentence and to pardon him of his crime. His attorneys say they want to show that not only is it a double standard that Americans such as Saucier are prosecuted when Clinton was not, but also that Saucier was used as an example during a time when the U.S. government was cracking down on people mishandling classified information — to show that it does take such cases seriously.

"I just see such a clear injustice," his mother, Kathleen Saucier, told *The Washington Post*. "It breaks my heart because I know he's not the only one who feels that they've been thrown away by their country."

"If anything comes out of this — we're going to raise awareness about double standards."

"I never said he wasn't guilty," she added, "but what I'm saying is, how can this be justice?"

Jeffrey Addicott, Saucier's attorney, who recently filed petitions for Saucier's clemency as well as a pardon under the Obama administration, called the handling of Saucier's misconduct case a "gross miscarriage of justice."

"Justice means you get what you deserve; he didn't get what he deserved," said Addicott, director of the Center for Terrorism Law at St. Mary's University School of Law in San Antonio. He is handling the case pro bono.

Addicott added that other sailors who took photos about the same time on the same submarine were not held to the same standard as Saucier.

"None were discharged; none were jailed. So why was Kristian? There's only one reason," Addicott said, referring to Clinton's email controversy.

A representative for the White House said she was looking into the pardon petition.

Saucier, who was a machinist's mate aboard the USS Alexandria, snapped six photos on his cellphone in 2009, showing his work areas on the submarine, according to court records.

His attorneys had said in a filing that he did it "out of the misguided desire to keep these pictures in order to one day show his family and future children what he did while he was in the Navy."

But the Justice Department said Saucier, who had secret clearance, revealed "major technical components of the submarine's propulsion system." In 2012, someone found Saucier's cellphone — with the photos still on it — at a waste transfer station, according to the Justice Department.

After Saucier was questioned by federal agents, prosecutors said, he destroyed his laptop.

In 2015, Saucier was indicted on a charge of unauthorized retention of defense information, which carries a maximum 10-year prison sentence, and was given an "other-than-honorable" discharge from the Navy, according to Fox News. The Navy did not immediately respond to a request concerning Saucier.

Saucier pleaded guilty and was sentenced last year to one year in federal prison. He started his term in October at Fort Devens, Mass.

The Clinton argument came up last year in a court filing from Saucier's attorneys, who said that the former secretary of state had engaged in similar acts, according to Politico, which first reported the story.

"In our case, Mr. Saucier possessed six (6) photographs classified as 'confidential/restricted,' far less than Clinton's 110 emails," the attorneys wrote in an August 2016 sentencing memorandum, adding: "It will be unjust and unfair for Mr. Saucier to receive any sentence other than probation for a crime those more powerful than him will likely avoid."

As *The Post* previously reported, Trump also made the comparison between Clinton and Saucier's cases — to try to show that people indeed have been punished for mishandling classified material in the past.

The article stated:

"But Saucier's case is not exactly comparable, either. The Navy sailor was sentenced to prison after taking photos in classified areas of a nuclear submarine. He then destroyed the evidence after learning that he was under investigation. In fact, Saucier's lawyers even acknowledged that the two cases were different: Saucier admitted knowing that what he was doing was illegal, unlike Clinton."

Enterprise to be decommissioned next week

The Virginian-Pilot

NEWPORT NEWS, Va. — The world's first nuclear-powered aircraft carrier will be decommissioned next week in what will be the final farewell to a warship that has played a role in major world events from the 1962 Cuban missile crisis to the recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The USS Enterprise has

spent the past several years being defueled and dismantled at Newport News Shipbuilding, the shipyard where it was built and refueled.

The "Big E," as it was affectionately called by its crew, was inactivated in 2012 in front of about 12,000 people in a ceremony at Norfolk Naval Station after completing its 25th deployment.

The decommissioning ceremony

is a naval tradition that retires a ship from service through a variety of ceremonial services, including lowering the ship's commissioning pennant.

The Feb. 3 ceremony is closed to the public, but the Navy said Wednesday the entire event will be posted on its Facebook page.

The carrier was the eighth Navy ship to bear the name

Enterprise, which dates to the Revolutionary War. The Navy has said a future Gerald R. Ford-class aircraft carrier also will be called Enterprise.

Sailors from the carrier's final crew built a time capsule from parts of the ship and allowed former sailors to fill it with notes and mementos. The time capsule will be opened by the commanding officer of the next Enterprise.

DOD: Civilian retention now most reliant on job performance

BY COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Defense Department will now prioritize employee performance over all other factors if they are forced to lay off civilian workers, the Pentagon announced Thursday.

The Pentagon, like all other federal agencies, had considered an employee's tenure and veteran status ahead of on-the-job performance evaluations when making workforce cuts. But a new policy was quietly implemented Jan. 19 and announced to the Defense Department's 755,000-person civilian workforce in a memorandum released Thursday.

The policy change was mandated by Congress in the 2016 National Defense Authorization Act. It is also not related to the hiring freeze implemented this week by President Donald Trump, which halted the Defense Department and other federal agencies from filling most open positions for 90 days while the White House determines how it will shrink the federal workforce.

Layoffs are always the "last resort" for the Defense Department to reduce its civilian workforce, said a DOD official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity. The department attempts to shrink its size through attrition and buyouts.

The new policy applies only to the Defense Department, the senior defense official said.

Under the new system, department officials must first consider an employee's performance rating when deciding whom to lay off. Performance rating is defined as the average of a worker's two most recent evaluation ratings, rounded to a whole number.

The second criteria to be considered is the employee's tenure. Temporary workers will always be the first group of employees eliminated, the official said. Tenure Group 2 employees, ones with less than three years of service, would be the next to be dismissed. Group 1 employees, ones with more than three years of service, would be the last group laid off.

If decisions about which employee to lay off cannot be decided based on the top two criteria, the third criteria that officials must consider is average performance rating scores. The final criteria is veteran status.

Trump: Manning a 'traitor'

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump on Thursday criticized the decision to commute the sentence of military leaker Chelsea Manning, calling her a "traitor" who should remain in prison.

In a tweet, Trump claimed Manning had called former President Barack Obama a "weak leader" even after Obama commuted her 35-year sentence in the last days of his administration.

Trump appeared to refer to a column Manning wrote in *The Guardian* newspaper, in which she argued Obama's legacy will leave "few permanent accomplishments" because he often sought compromise.

The use of the word "traitor" is often tossed around by political leaders and others to describe alleged acts that threaten national security. Trump's use of the word raised questions of whether Trump could try to bring further action against Manning, who is scheduled to be released in

May.

"Ungrateful TRAITOR Chelsea Manning, who should never have been released from prison, is now calling President Obama a weak leader. Terrible!" Trump wrote.

Last week, days before being named White House spokesman, Sean Spicer said Trump was "troubled" by Obama's commutation of the sentence of Manning, an Army private convicted of taking troves of secret diplomatic and military documents and disclosing them to WikiLeaks.

"It's disappointing, and it sends a very troubling message when it comes to the handling of classified information and to the consequences of those who leak information that threatens the security of our nation," Spicer said.

Spicer called Manning "someone who has given away this country's secrets" and did not directly answer a question about whether Trump would take any steps to reverse or delay Obama's decision.

US strikes al-Qaida in Yemen on 1st 3 days of Trump presidency

BY COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The U.S. conducted airstrikes against al-Qaida members in Yemen on the first three days of President Donald Trump's administration, the Pentagon announced Wednesday.

The drone strikes occurred Jan. 20, 21 and 22 in the Bayda province of southwestern Yemen and killed five suspected terrorists with al-Qaida's affiliate in the Arabian Peninsula region, according to a U.S. Central Command statement. Al-Qaida has taken advantage of civil war across Yemen since 2015 to gain territory where they've plotted terrorist attacks on Western targets, according to Pentagon officials.

"Strikes against al-Qaida operatives in Yemen put consistent pressure on the terrorist network and prevent them from plotting and executing attacks against the [U.S.] and our allies," said Army Maj. Josh T. Jacques, a U.S. Central Command spokesman. "Al-Qaida remains a significant threat to the region, the United States, and beyond."

Under President Barack Obama, the U.S. military regularly carried out drone strikes against al-Qaida targets in Yemen. In 2016, the U.S. dropped 34 bombs onto targets in that country. In 2015, it dropped

58, according to Pentagon data.

The drone strikes in Yemen in the early days of Trump's administration could signal that he will continue to target al-Qaida's network there with unmanned aircraft.

The U.S. has launched at least four drone strikes in Yemen in 2017. A drone that struck Jan. 8 in Bayda province killed Abd al-Ghani al-Rasas, who was described by the Pentagon as an al-Qaida "terrorist leader and facilitator."

The civil war in Yemen between the U.N.-recognized government, which is backed by U.S. allies including Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, and Iran-backed Houthi rebels continues to rage, with the rebel group controlling the capital city of Sanaa.

Government forces this week gained control of the strategic port city of Mokha, according to *The Associated Press*, and are seeking to gain control of Yemen's western coast, which would cut off the Houthis' access to the outside world.

The U.S. military has at times provided some support to the Yemeni government, including deploying a small group of special operators there last year to provide medical and intelligence support to United Arab Emirates forces fighting the Houthis.

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Draft order would halt processing of Syrian refugees

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A draft executive order obtained by The Associated Press shows that President Donald Trump intends to stop accepting Syrian refugees and suspend the United States' broader refugee program for 120 days.

The president also plans to suspend issuing visas for people from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria or Yemen for at least 30 days, according to the draft. All are predominantly Muslim countries.

Trump is expected to sign the order this week. It was not clear if the draft will be revised before then.

The actions would continue Trump's rapid-fire attempts in his first week as president to move forward on signature issues of his campaign: cracking down on illegal immigration and blocking the entry of people from countries where terrorist organizations have a significant presence. On Wednesday, Trump issued orders aimed at moving ahead with a wall on the Mexican border and blocking federal funds from "sanctuary cities" that protect immigrants.

Trump's draft shows that he will order Homeland Security and State Department officials, along with the director of national intelligence, to review what information the government needs to fully vet would-be visitors and to come up with a list of countries that don't provide it. The order says the government will give countries 60 days to start providing the information or citizens from those countries will be barred from traveling to the U.S.

Exceptions would be made for diplomats, NATO visas or those people traveling to work at the United Nations.

Trump's signals on torture likely to set up disputes

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump's renewed embrace of torture in the fight against Islamic extremism sets up a heated dispute with a long line of opponents both at home and abroad of Bush-era interrogation policies and CIA-run "black site" prisons.

"We have to fight fire with fire," Trump told ABC in an interview aired Wednesday after The Associated Press and other news organizations obtained a copy of a draft executive order that signals sweeping changes to U.S. interrogation and detention policy.

The draft order, which the White House said was not official, would reverse President Barack Obama's order to close the military detention center at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba — a place Trump has said he wants to fill up "with bad dudes."

It orders up recommendations on whether the U.S. should reopen CIA detention facilities outside the U.S. Critics said the clandestine sites marred America's image on the world stage.

The draft directive also orders a review of interrogation methods used on terrorism suspects and calls for suggested modifications that would not violate the U.S. legal ban on torture.

Trump, who has pushed for tougher interrogation techniques, said he would consult with new Defense Secretary James Mattis and CIA Director Mike Pompeo before authorizing any new policy. But he said he had asked top intelligence officials: "Does torture work? And the answer was

'Yes, absolutely.'"

Mattis and Pompeo did not know about the draft executive order, according to a congressional aide who was not allowed to discuss the matter publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

When asked specifically about waterboarding, an interrogation method that simulates drowning, Trump cited the extremist group's atrocities against Christians and others and said he wanted to do "everything within the bounds of what you're allowed to do legally."

However, many intelligence and military officials, human rights groups and both Democratic and Republican lawmakers have widely disputed Trump's claim that harsh interrogation methods are effective.

The AP obtained the draft order from a U.S. official, who said it had been distributed by the White House for consultations before Trump signs it. The official wasn't authorized to speak publicly on the matter and spoke on condition of anonymity.

White House press secretary Sean Spicer said Wednesday that the draft order was "not a White House document." On Thursday he said it was not a "White House-originated" document and that it was his understanding that Trump has not seen it.

Besides scrapping Obama's order to close Guantanamo, the draft order would revoke other Obama directives that closed the CIA detention facilities, gave the International Red Cross timely access to all detainees and prohibited the U.S. from using any interrogation technique not listed in the Army Field Manual.

White House proposes cut in US funding for UN

The Washington Post

The Trump administration is proposing a 40 percent reduction in voluntary U.S. support for the United Nations and other global bodies and an end to "wasteful and counterproductive" spending that does not serve U.S. interests, according to a draft of a forthcoming order.

If adopted, the proposed directive would represent a broad attack on the value and priorities of the U.N., which Trump recently has called an ineffectual talk shop. A separate order would limit U.S. participation in some treaties.

Trump's new U.N. ambassador, Nikki

Haley, has pledged to put U.S. interests first and to use the leverage of disproportionate U.S. funding of the body. But the draft order would go much further, and with an apparent goal of slashing U.S. participation across a swath of U.N. agencies and activities to which the Trump administration objects on fiscal or ideological grounds.

The draft order could reverse or roll back funding for priorities championed by former President Barack Obama, including international peacekeeping missions and U.S. support for development work under the U.N. umbrella.

A White House spokesman declined to

comment Wednesday.

The White House directive would launch a one-year review of U.S. support for international organizations including the U.N. and its related agencies, would describe how U.S. money is used and would offer recommendations for ways to reduce mandated U.S. contributions.

The review panel would include the State Department, the Pentagon, the Justice Department, the office of the Director of National Intelligence, the Office of Management and Budget and the White House national security adviser.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

'Tepee Man' aided by citizen, newspaper

NH PORTSMOUTH — Portsmouth's "Tepee Man" spent two nights in a motel thanks to the generosity of another man and a newspaper as he waits for a cash advance on some of the \$550,000 the city agreed to pay him for his property.

Wayne Elliott, who lived in a tepee next to his home for more than two years to honor his late wife, said a neighboring development caused his property to flood.

Elliott signed a purchase-and-sale agreement with the city in October to transfer ownership of his property. The check hasn't arrived.

The Portsmouth Herald reported Elliott was sick on Monday and his home had no heat or hot water. The newspaper put him up in a motel that night. A second man did the same the following night.

Elevated uranium levels found in spring at park

AZ GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK — A federal agency says elevated levels of uranium found in a spring on the northern edge of Grand Canyon National Park is likely due to a natural source of the radioactive element and not related to an inactive mine.

The U.S. Geological Survey says Pigeon Spring had elevated levels in samples taken from 2012 to 2014 compared with similar springs in the area.

The Grand Canyon is the location of part of the Colorado River, a primary water source for millions of people in the United States and Mexico.

The area also is believed to host high-grade uranium ore, and the Geological Survey says understanding the potential im-

pact that uranium mining could have on water resources is important for managing interests of the mining industry, water managers and others.

Polar plunge canceled because ice is too thin

MI HANCOCK — You know it's an unusual winter when a polar bear plunge is canceled — in the Upper Peninsula.

Police told The Daily Mining Gazette that the ice is too thin for the dip Saturday on Portage Lake in Hancock. The plunge typically attracts hundreds of people as part of an annual Finnish-American winter festival.

There will be a parade in downtown Hancock, followed by a wife-carrying contest, sled races and other community events.

Drugs found in boater after fatal crash

NY LAKE GEORGE — Authorities say a New York man had traces of marijuana, cocaine and Ecstasy in his system hours after his boat was involved in a fatal crash on an Adirondack lake.

The Post-Star of Glens Falls reported court filings by the Warren County District Attorney's Office say witnesses told police they saw Alexander West snort cocaine and smoke pot during the annual Log Bay Day party on Lake George on July 25.

Authorities said he was impaired when his motorboat broadsided another boat that night, killing a 9-year-old California girl vacationing with her family.

Prosecutors said blood samples given by West nearly 18 hours after the crash tested

positive for marijuana, cocaine and Ecstasy.

He pleaded not guilty to charges that include manslaughter, boating while ability impaired and leaving the scene of an accident.

Fundraising activist struck, killed by SUV

FL WALTON COUNTY — A Rhode Island environmental activist died after being struck by an SUV on a Florida highway.

Police said Mark Baumer, 33, was walking along the shoulder of U.S. Highway 90 in Walton County when a driver lost control and hit him Sunday. Baumer was pronounced dead at the scene.

The Maine native was trying to walk barefoot across the U.S. to raise awareness about climate change. Baumer also was raising money for a nonprofit group called the FANG Collective that opposes the natural gas industry.

Police identified Sonja Siglar as the driver of the SUV and said she will face charges.

Robberies with machete thought to be related

PA ALLENTOWN — Police say two convenience store robberies in eastern Pennsylvania involved a machete to threaten clerks.

Allentown police said the first robbery targeted a 7-Eleven about 3:45 a.m. Saturday. That incident involved a single suspect whose face was covered when he ran away with an unspecified amount of cash.

At almost the same time Sunday, two men with their faces covered robbed a Speedway store. One of those suspects also had a machete. Assistant Police Chief Gail Struss said the simi-

lar weapon and time frame of both robberies make investigators think they may be related.

Homeless help rebuild camp after storm hits

HI HONOLULU — Residents of a homeless encampment on Oahu are working to rebuild after severe weather last weekend damaged their shelters.

Wind gusts reached up to 67 mph on Saturday night in Puuhonua O Waianae Village on the western part of the island. The winds brought down trees, fencing and several plastic tarp shelters at the encampment, Hawaii News Now reported.

The Waianae village is home to roughly 200 adults and children and about 150 animals.

Members of the nearby community have been helping the camp's residents clean up the damage and put their homes back together.

Man pleads guilty in murder-for-hire plot

TX WICHITA FALLS — A North Texas father pleaded guilty in a 2015 murder-for-hire plot that targeted his daughter's boyfriend.

The Wichita Falls Times Record News reported Jeffrey Bryan Peyton, 59, is expected to be sentenced to 22 years in prison March 3. Peyton named his wife, Christina, as his accomplice.

According to court documents, a witness told police he was approached by Peyton and his wife for help in finding someone to "take out" their daughter's boyfriend.

An officer later posed as someone who could find a hit man for the couple.

From wire reports

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Williams sisters to meet in Aussie final

Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia — Serena Williams is one win away from a record 23rd Grand Slam title after setting up an all-Williams final at the Australian Open. Now the only person standing in her way is her older sister, Venus.

No. 2-ranked Serena Williams, a six-time Australian Open winner, overwhelmed Mirjana Lucic-Baroni 6-2, 6-1 in just 50 minutes in the second of the women's semifinals on Thursday after Venus Williams beat fellow American Coco Vandeweghe 6-7 (3), 6-2, 6-3.

"She's my toughest opponent — nobody has ever beaten me as much as Venus has," Serena Williams said. "I just feel like no matter what happens, we've won."

"She's been through a lot, I've been through a lot. To see her do so well it's great. I look forward to it — a Williams is going to win this tournament."

Venus Williams, 36, is back in a Grand Slam final for the first time since Wimbledon in 2009 and her first in Australia since 2003, when she lost the only previous all-Williams final at Melbourne Park and described it as a "battle royale."

She tossed her racket after clinching the 2-hour, 26-minute semifinal on her fourth match point and put her hands up to her face, almost in disbelief, before crossing her arms over her heart. She then did a stylish pirouette on the court, smiling broadly, as the crowd gave her a standing ovation.

Venus Williams has overcome an energy-sapping illness and is playing her best ten-

nis since being diagnosed with Sjogren's syndrome in 2011.

"Everyone has their moment in the sun," she said. "Maybe mine has gone on a while. I'd like to keep that going. I've got nothing else to do so let's keep it going."

Serena Williams' celebration was more subdued after her lopsided win over Lucic-Baroni, 34, who was playing her first semifinal at a major since Wimbledon in 1999. Of all the comeback stories in the tournament — and there's plenty, including Roger Federer's return from six months on the sidelines to set up a semifinal against Stan Wawrinka — Lucic-Baroni's return to the top level after so much time struggling out of the game has captured the most heartfelt attention.

Even Serena Williams, who last played the Croatian in 1998, said Lucic-Baroni was an inspiration.

Serena didn't get to watch much of her sister's match, but knew the result before she went out to play.

"Obviously I was really proud of Venus — a total inspiration, my big sister," Serena said. "She's basically my world and my life. She means everything to me. I was so happy for her. For us both to be in the final is the biggest dream come true for us."

Venus Williams has won seven major titles, but none since Wimbledon in 2008. Her gap between major finals is the longest for any player in the Open era. She's also lost six of the eight Grand Slam finals she's played against her younger sister, and is 11-16 in their career meeting at tour-level.

Asked what it will take to win the final, Venus Williams said: "Honestly, I probably just need to continue playing like I'm play-

ing. I haven't played badly."

Against her sister, she said, "I will try to do the same."

Venus Williams is the oldest player to reach a women's major final since Martina Navratilova, then 37 and 258 days, at Wimbledon in 1994.

The 25-year-old Vandeweghe was playing in the last four at a major for the first time and was the only semifinalist younger than 34. She'd advanced with back-to-back wins over top-ranked Angelique Kerber and French Open champion Garbine Murguruza and took charge against Venus Williams in the first-set tiebreaker.

But Venus Williams rallied after dropping a set for the first time in the tournament, breaking Vandeweghe four times over the final two sets and putting pressure back on her fellow American.

Vandeweghe said earlier in the tournament she'd admired the Williams sisters as an up-and-coming player, and once asked for Venus Williams' autograph. Venus Williams said one of the best things about her longevity in the game was having an influence on other players.

"Growing up, all I wanted was to have an opportunity to play these tournaments. But then you get here and then you have an opportunity to inspire other people," she said. "It's more than a cherry on top. It's more than I dreamed of."

Earlier, Bob and Mike Bryan earned a shot at a seventh Australian Open doubles title after a rain-interrupted 7-6 (7-1) 6-3 semifinal win Friday over Pablo Carreno Busta and Guillermo Garcia-Lopez.

Fit again, Federer has chance at 18th title

Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia — Back in October, Roger Federer joined his rival, Rafael Nadal, to inaugurate the new tennis academy on the Spaniard's home island of Mallorca.

Both of them were injured — Federer was recovering from knee surgery, Nadal had an ailing wrist. And neither knew when they'd return to top form and perhaps contend for Grand Slam titles again.

It turns out the wait wasn't long. Federer beat Stan Wawrinka on Thursday to reach his first Australian Open final since 2010, and Nadal could join him with a victory in his semifinal match with Grig-

or Dimitrov on Friday.

"I was on one leg. He had the wrist injury. And we were playing some mini-tennis with some juniors and we're like, 'This is the best we can do right now,'" the 35-year-old Federer said of their time together in Mallorca.

"We would have never thought that we were going to be here, potentially playing in a final."

Few people would have given either player much of a chance to get this far.

Federer's 2016 season was marred by an injury he sustained following the Australian Open when he twisted his knee while drawing a bath for one of

his four children. He returned swiftly after surgery, but fell on the knee during his semifinal loss at Wimbledon and was sidelined the rest of the year.

Coming into this year's Australian Open with a low seeding of 17th, Federer didn't expect he'd win more than a few rounds. Particularly when he saw a draw that included potential match-ups with top-10 players Tomas Berdych, Kei Nishikori, Andy Murray and Stan Wawrinka.

But the 17-time major winner swept past Berdych and Nishikori, and Murray was upset by Mischa Zverev.

Then, with the crowd urging him on against Wawrinka,

Federer fended off two break points in the pivotal fifth set to beat his countryman 7-5, 6-3, 1-6, 4-6, 6-3 and reach the 29th major final of his career.

Suddenly, the aging veteran hobbling around "on one leg" has a chance to capture Grand Slam title No. 18.

And he's winning energy-sapping, lengthy matches, too. With his five-set wins over Nishikori and Wawrinka, it's the first time since the 2009 French Open that Federer has won two five-setters in the same tournament.

"I'll leave it all out here in Australia and if I can't walk for another five months, that's OK," he said.

Georgia Tech upsets No. 6 Florida St.

Associated Press

ATLANTA — Josh Okogie loves how Georgia Tech is building momentum this season.

More talented teams with deeper rosters keep falling to a group of Yellow Jackets who nobody predicted would win more than a couple of conference games.

No. 6 Florida State is the latest victim.

"We had tremendous energy, and then I don't think they had the energy to match us," Okogie said. "We were just feeding off that."

Okogie scored 35 points, Ben Lammers added 18 and Georgia Tech pulled its second home upset of a Top 10 opponent with a 78-56 victory Wednesday night.

Georgia Tech (12-8, 4-4 Atlantic Coast Conference) led 41-15 at halftime and 70-47 with 6:52 remaining on Lammers' dunk. Florida State never got closer than 18 points in the second half.

It was the first time the Yellow Jackets

beat two Top 10 teams in the regular season since 2003-04.

Few signs pointed to a meltdown for the Seminoles (18-3, 6-2). They were tied for first place in the ACC and had gone 5-1 in their last six games, all against ranked opponents.

Florida State never trailed in a five-point win over Louisville last Saturday, but it fell behind so quickly that coach Leonard Hamilton cleared his bench early in the first half, using all 13 players. The starting lineup of Dwayne Bacon, Jonathan Isaac, Xavier Rathan-Mayes, Terance Mann and Michael Ojo averaged just 8.6 minutes before intermission.

Bacon, the ACC's eighth-leading scorer, finished with 12 points on 4-for-15 shooting. Nobody else scored in double figures for the Seminoles.

"We couldn't make anything to save our lives," Rathan-Mayes said. "Nothing would go in for us from layups to dunks to free throws."

Quinton Stephens scored 13 points and hit three three-pointers for the Yellow Jackets. Okogie and Lammers combined for 25 rebounds.

Georgia Tech, which had lost 10 of 11 to Florida State, enjoyed its second home victory over a Top 10 opponent under first-year coach Josh Pastner.

The Yellow Jackets upset then-No. 9 North Carolina on Dec. 31, three days after barely escaping with a home win over North Carolina A&T. They also played then-No. 9 Louisville at home before losing, but returned with a win over a veteran Clemson team.

Last week, Georgia Tech lost by one point at Virginia Tech and by 13 at then-No. 16 Virginia.

"In year one of a major rebuild job, this is great for us and for people to see what we're trying to do and the vision of what we're trying to accomplish here in the long term," Pastner said.

Aaron leads Southern Cal over No. 8 UCLA

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — There's another good college basketball team in Los Angeles, and No. 8 UCLA found out the hard way.

Shaquan Aaron scored a career-high 23 points off the bench, and Southern California matched its season best with 14 three-pointers in an 84-76 upset of the Bruins on Wednesday night.

Elijah Stewart added 15 points for the Trojans (18-4, 5-4 Pac-12). They beat their crosstown rival for the fourth straight time, having swept all three meetings last season including in the conference tournament.

"It's important for our season and what we're trying to do," USC coach Andy Enfield said.

Isaac Hamilton scored 20 points and Lonzo Ball had 15 points and 10 rebounds for the Bruins (19-3, 6-3), who have lost two in a row for the first time this season. They were beaten 96-85 by then-No. 7 Arizona at home last week.

"I hate losing," Ball said. "We've got to turn things around."

Ball committed a season-

worst seven of UCLA's 17 turnovers, one off its season high.

"We gave up too many things off our own mistakes," UCLA coach Steve Alford said.

Aaron, in his first season after transferring from Louisville, and Stewart had four three-pointers apiece for USC. The Bruins were just 6-for-20 from long range.

"You just have a little more energy when you play them," Aaron said. "It helps when shots start falling early."

After trailing by 15 points early in the second half, UCLA rallied to get within four twice.

The first time, USC answered with consecutive three-pointers by Aaron and Jordan McLaughlin.

"We stayed composed," Aaron said. "Some games we have let some teams come back. Tonight we got stops. They hit some shots but we stayed in the game."

No. 5 Baylor 65, Texas Tech 61: Johnathan Motley scored 25 points and the Bears held on to beat the Red Raiders and earn their 13th straight home victory.

A week after getting a ca-

reer-high 32 points against Texas, Motley was 15-for-16 on free throws as the Bears (19-1, 7-1 Big 12) pulled even with second-ranked Kansas atop the conference standings with a 26-9 advantage at the free-throw line. Baylor attempted 28 free throws to 10 for the Red Raiders.

No. 11 Butler 61, Seton Hall 54: Kethan Savage had 15 points, 10 rebounds and hit a go-ahead jumper with 4:00 to play for the visiting Bulldogs, which blew a 13-point second-half lead.

Andrew Chrabascz added 16 points for Butler (18-3, 7-2 Big East).

Georgetown 71, No. 16 Creighton 51: L.J. Peak scored 20 points and the host Hoyas held the Bluejays to their lowest scoring game of the season.

Georgetown (11-10, 2-6 Big East) held Creighton to 1-for-18 from three-point range and 34.5 percent shooting overall. Creighton (18-3, 5-3) entered the game second in the country at 52.8 percent.

The Bluejays lost their second straight game since point guard Maurice Watson Jr. suf-

fered a season-ending knee injury on Jan. 16.

No. 25 Florida 106, LSU 71: Devin Robinson scored a career-high 24 points and the visiting Gators made a school-record 19 three-pointers.

Florida (15-5, 6-2 Southeastern Conference) had little problem in handing the Tigers their worst home defeat in 54 seasons.

Boston University 90, Army 88: Eric Fanning scored 32 points to lead the host Terriers to an overtime victory over the Black Knights.

Fanning sank a three-pointer in overtime to put Boston up 85-81 with 1:09 to play. Justin Alston's dunk stretched it to 87-83 with 23 seconds left and the Terriers (11-10, 6-3 Patriot League) held on for the win.

Thomas Funk had 16 points and five assists for Army (8-13, 2-7), which has lost four of the last five.

Navy 71, American 53: Bryce Dulin scored 15 points as the Midshipmen cruised to a victory over the host Eagles.

Dulin was 5-for-7 from the floor for Navy (11-10, 6-3 Patriot League).

Gasol's 42 points lift Grizzlies over Raptors

Associated Press

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — Marc Gasol scored a career-best 42 points, and the Memphis Grizzlies needed every last one of them.

Gasol's night was capped by the deciding two free throws with 36 seconds left, as the Grizzlies sent Toronto to its fifth straight loss with a 101-99 victory over the Raptors on Wednesday night.

Gasol's final free throws ended a 12-0 run by the Raptors that tied the game at 99. Kyle Lowry's fadeaway 28-footer from the left wing bounced off the rim as time expired, saving Memphis from wasting Gasol's effort.

"The ball went in early, and the rim got a little bigger," the 7-foot-1 center from Spain said.

"And I just kept shooting."

The performance started with Gasol collecting Memphis' first 16 points. Then, he closed out the scoring with the deciding free throws.

Zach Randolph finished with 16 points for Memphis, while Tony Allen had 15 points and 11 rebounds. Gasol converted 14 of 25 shots, including going 5 of 10 from three-point range.

Kings 116, Cavaliers 112 (OT): Arron Afflalo dropped a three-pointer with 17.3 seconds left in overtime, lifting visiting Sacramento over slumping Cleveland, which lost for the sixth time in eight games amid criticism by LeBron James.

DeMarcus Cousins had 28 points and 10 rebounds for the Kings, who trailed by five in overtime before battling back.

Warriors 113, Hornets 103:

Kevin Durant scored 16 of his 33 points in the fourth quarter, Stephen Curry added 28 points on six three-pointers and visiting Golden State rallied to beat Charlotte.

Thunder 114, Pelicans 105: Russell Westbrook had 27 points, 12 rebounds and 10 assists, passing Larry Bird with his 60th career triple-double, and Oklahoma City beat host New Orleans.

76ers 114, Bucks 109: Despite playing without leading scorer Joel Embiid for the second consecutive game, Philadelphia held off host Milwaukee to win for the fifth time in six games.

Celtics 120, Rockets 109: Isaiah Thomas had 38 points and nine assists, Jae Crowder scored 23 and Boston beat visiting Houston.

Heat 109, Nets 106: Dion Waiters scored 14 of his 24 points in the fourth quarter, including the clinching three with 6.8 seconds left, and visiting Miami overcame an 18-point deficit in the final period to beat beleaguered Brooklyn.

Hawks 119, Bulls 114: Dennis Schroder scored 24 points, Paul Millsap added 21 and Atlanta ended the game on a 19-4 run to beat host Chicago.

Mavericks 103, Knicks 95: Harrison Barnes scored 23 points and Seth Curry had 20 as Dallas beat visiting New York.

Trail Blazers 105, Lakers 98: Damian Lillard scored 24 points and host Portland beat Los Angeles, capping the Trail Blazers' celebration of the 40th anniversary of the team's 1977 NBA championship.

Draisaitl's 2 goals help power Oilers to rout of Ducks

Associated Press

ANAHEIM, Calif. — After years of ineptitude and unrealized potential, the Edmonton Oilers are right in the thick of the Pacific Division race this year.

And Connor McDavid only played a supporting role when the Oilers routed the four-time defending division champions in one of their biggest wins of this breakout season.

Leon Draisaitl scored two goals and Cam Talbot made 26 saves in his 15th career shutout, leading Edmonton to a 4-0 victory over the Anaheim Ducks on Wednesday night.

Draisaitl, Ryan Nugent-Hopkins and Zack Kassian scored during the second period for the Oilers, who pulled within one point of Anaheim for second place in the Pacific with a game in hand. Edmonton has won eight of 11, earning points in seven straight — but none of those games meant as much to this young team's quest to earn league-wide respect.

"It's huge," said Talbot, who posted his fourth shutout of the season. "We're within one point

of them now, and we've got a game in hand, so that's a four-point swing for us. It's a good thing to do right before we go into the break."

The Oilers are closing out the first half of the schedule with back-to-back games against Anaheim and San Jose, the two teams above them in the Pacific standings. Thanks to this blowout, Edmonton could reclaim sole possession of second place with a win at the Shark Tank.

Draisaitl scored early in the second and third periods, giving the German four goals in three games against Anaheim this season. McDavid had only one assist for his NHL-leading 57th point, but it was a clever pass back to Draisaitl for the Oilers' first goal.

"Standings are tight," said Draisaitl, whose 19 goals lead the team. "Teams are trying to make the playoffs. We're very tight with the other two teams up there. Every point we can get is huge for us. To beat them in their own rink is big for us."

John Gibson stopped 19 shots for the Ducks, who stumbled into the All-Star break with

their first shutout loss in 35 games since Nov. 12. They hadn't lost in regulation at Honda Center to the Oilers in over four years.

Maple Leafs 4, Red Wings 0: Auston Matthews scored early in the first period and Frederik Andersen made 22 saves for his third shutout of the season, leading visiting Toronto over Detroit.

Roman Polak scored late in the second period and James van Riemsdyk and Nikita Soshnikov had goals in the third to give Toronto a comfortable cushion.

The Maple Leafs moved a point ahead of Boston in the Atlantic standings and into third place for the division's third guaranteed spot in the playoffs. Toronto has played five fewer games than the Bruins, putting it in a relatively favorable position to make the playoffs for the first time since 2013 and just the second time in 12 seasons.

Petr Mrazek stopped 24 shots for the Red Wings.

Flyers 2, Rangers 0: Steve Mason stopped 34 shots for his 31st career shutout and visiting

Philadelphia beat New York.

Wayne Simmonds and Jakob Voracek scored 2:36 apart in the third period for the Flyers, who had lost five straight to the Rangers.

Henrik Lundqvist finished with 24 saves for the Rangers, who ended a three-game winning streak.

The Flyers took the lead at 6:09 of the third, just 34 seconds after the Rangers' Matt Puempel was sent off for tripping. Voracek fired a shot from the right slot that was stopped by Lundqvist, but Brayden Schenn jabbed at the puck, it went to Simmonds and he backhanded it in for his 20th.

Canucks 3, Avalanche 2: Sven Baertschi got his second goal of the game with 8:14 left, Markus Granlund also had a goal and visiting Vancouver beat Colorado.

Jacob Markstrom stopped 30 shots for the Canucks. Vancouver has 52 points and sits in the second wild card in the Western Conference, one point ahead of Calgary. The Canucks have played two fewer games than the Flames.