

STARS AND STRIPES®

Thursday, January 24, 2019

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

Shutdown affecting Coast Guard recruitment

BY ROSE L. THAYER

Stars and Stripes

Coast Guard recruits are the latest casualties in the ongoing federal government shutdown, retired Vice Adm. Peter Neffenger, former vice commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard, said during a congressional panel discussion Thursday about the impacts of the crisis on Department of Homeland Security personnel.

The partial shutdown, which is about to enter its fifth week, is creating uncertainty with Coast Guard recruits who want to serve the public but also need work that pays, he said.

"We are beginning to lose people who have talent and are capable," said Neffenger, who was also a former administrator of the Transportation Security Administration.

Coast Guard members who began basic training prior to Dec. 31 have received one pay-

check, at least. The rest are training for a job for which they are uncertain when they will be paid.

"There is a point at which you have to take care of yourself," Neffenger said.

The partial government shutdown began Dec. 21 when Congress failed to pass a budget for certain departments, including Homeland Security. Other military branches are unaffected by the shutdown because they are part of the Defense Department, which is fully funded through fiscal year 2019, which ends Sept. 30.

Stretching beyond one month, it is now the longest government shutdown in history as the White House and congressional Democrats cannot work out a compromise.

The Coast Guard was able to pay its members Dec. 31 paychecks, but missed their next payday Jan. 15. If the shutdown continues through next week,

the nearly 42,000 members of the Coast Guard will miss a second round of pay Feb. 1. On that day, roughly 50,000 Coast Guard retirees and their survivors will miss their first check, as they are paid monthly.

At the Coast Guard Training Center at Cape May, N.J., the service is having trouble getting graduates to their next duty station. The center hosts a graduation ceremony on about 42 Fridays out of the year with about 100 graduates at each ceremony, said Chief Warrant Officer John Edwards, a spokesman for the training center.

During the shutdown, graduates whose new units are unable to accept them are either being sent back home for hometown recruiting or are staying behind at Cape May until the shutdown ends. So far, Edwards said no recruits have stayed behind — they've found somewhere for them to go.

On Friday, another 67 recruits are set to graduate and face this dilemma.

Eventually, Neffenger said there will come a breaking point.

"We are in the midst of a security crisis and it is one of our own making, frankly," he said. "The very people we depend on for our security are made to suffer by this shutdown by inflicting stress, hardship, anxiety and anger into their personal lives and the lives of their families."

The damage from the shutdown, former Department of Homeland Security Secretary Jeh C. Johnson warned, could linger for a long time.

"If this shutdown ended tomorrow, I fear that the damage already done to our security will be months, if not years," he said. "As a result through high attrition, lack of re-enlistment, recruitment efforts have all been set back."

Report: Army risks waste with big plans for new systems

BY JOHN VANDIVER

Stars and Stripes

As the Army pushes to modernize it should avoid reliance on unproven technology that has crippled past innovation efforts by the service, which wasted billions on failed weapons systems, a government watchdog warned in a new report.

The Army has embarked on a yearslong effort to upgrade a wide range of weaponry that is intended to better prepare soldiers for battle against well-armed adversaries like China and Russia. But the Army has a poor track record of delivering new equipment on time and on budget, in part because it fails

to follow all best practices for investment, the Government Accountability Office said Wednesday.

"While the Army is following many of our leading practices, one exception is that it intends to move new technologies into weapons systems before testing in a realistic environment," said the GAO, which functions as an investigative arm of Congress. "Moving forward without this testing can delay delivery and increase costs as development continues."

The GAO said its review was prompted by a request from Congress and the Army's past struggles with modernization initiatives, such as the Future Combat Systems program that

was canceled in 2009 after delivering few new capabilities at a cost of \$21 billion. In its review, the GAO determined that the Army still plans to begin weapon systems development "at a lower level of maturity," which continues to put modernization initiatives at risk.

"GAO has raised concerns about this type of practice for almost two decades for other Army acquisitions, because proceeding into weapon systems development at earlier stages of technology maturity raises the risk that the resulting systems could experience cost increases, delivery delays, or failure to deliver desired capabilities," the GAO said.

In October 2018, the Army

laid out six top modernization priorities, with developing long-range precision fires as its top effort. Last week, Army Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Milley said long range precision fires will provide "a decisive advantage" in future fights. The other priorities are development of the next generation combat vehicle, updated manned and unmanned airlift, air and missile defense, an assortment of gear that makes soldiers more lethal and an improved Army communication network.

The aim is to begin fielding new weapons systems by 2028. To better organize, the Army has formed its new Futures Command, which oversees modernization.

Donated food aids Coast Guard in Japan

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — Servicemembers working without pay due to the government shutdown picked up donated groceries from a food pantry Thursday at the home of U.S. Forces Japan in western Tokyo.

Twenty-two Coast Guardsmen, including 15 at Yokota and seven in Singapore, aren't being paid during the shutdown, which started more than a month ago. The impasse stems from House Democrats' refusal to provide President Donald Trump with the billions of dollars he demands to build a wall on the U.S. border with Mexico.

Other military branches have

continued to receive paychecks, but the Coast Guard, a part of the Department of Homeland Security, not the Defense Department, has gone unfunded.

Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Karl Schultz on Wednesday publicly criticized the lack of pay.

"Ultimately, I find it unacceptable that Coast Guard men and women have to rely on food pantries and donations to get through day-to-day life as servicemembers," he said in a video posted to his Twitter account.

Volunteer Susan Spano on Thursday showed Coast Guard members around the Yokota pantry, which is run by the Air Force Sergeants Association. She explained that they could

take as many expired grocery items as they want and up to two bags of other items — one bag more than is usually allowed — each week.

Information Systems Technician 1 Joseph Bruce filled a shopping bag with free items such as bottled water, cans of pineapple, pasta sauce and sugar.

Bruce, whose wife is expecting a baby daughter, said he's getting by so far but will be cutting into his savings if he doesn't get paid next month.

"We're trying to get ready for the baby and buying clothes and things," he said.

"My co-worker just had a baby, so she has been donating a lot of things for us, like a bassinette."

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Nathan Wissmann said the Coast Guard's mission in the Far East involves ship and port security inspections in several countries.

Coast Guard personnel have already missed a paycheck on Jan. 15 and could miss another Feb. 1.

That's affecting people who rely on their pay to top their bank accounts so they can meet automatic payments for recurring bills such as telephone and cable services, Wissmann said.

Military members from other service branches at Yokota have offered help, and Coast Guard personnel have sought access to a mutual assistance fund that servicemembers donate to for emergencies, he said.

Sailor accused of shooting his wife in face during argument

(Newport News, Va.) Daily Press

A woman stabbed her husband in the chest during a heated argument Sunday afternoon in their Hampton home, leaving him with a superficial wound, police say.

Then he picked up a gun and shot her in the face, killing her, according to court documents.

Christian Alexander Neal, 22, a U.S. Navy sailor, is charged with voluntary manslaughter in the killing of his wife, Amber Jacqueline Greenidge, 23. Greenidge was a former Navy sailor who left the service in 2017.

Police got a 911 call at 4:09 p.m. Sunday about a stabbing at the couple's home in the Cambridge Apartments in the 5100 block of Goldsboro Drive, not far from the Newport News city line.

The call was upgraded to a shooting as police were on their way to the scene.

The couple "were involved in a verbal altercation which led to the stabbing and shooting," said a criminal complaint filed by Hampton police Detective Michael Snelgrow.

During the argument, the complaint said, Greenidge stabbed Neal in the left side of his chest with a 2-inch pocket knife, "causing a superficial wound." She then backed away, "causing separation between her and Mr. Neal."

"At that time, Mr. Neal also turned to obtain a firearm from the dresser," the complaint said.

When he turned to face his wife, the complaint said, Neal "raised the firearm and fired one round, striking Ms. Greenidge in the face."

When police and medics arrived, Neal was taken to the hospital with a stab wound that wasn't deemed life-threatening. Greenidge was pronounced dead at the scene by the Hampton Division of Fire and Rescue.

It wasn't immediately clear what the couple was arguing about. "The exact motive and circumstance are still unknown as the investigation continues," Police Sgt. Matt Bond wrote in a news release Sunday.

Neal was arrested Monday and charged with voluntary manslaughter and shooting a gun in an occupied building. Neal, who court documents say has been in Hampton Roads for about a year, is being held without bond at the Hampton City Jail awaiting arraignment.

The Navy said Neal is a Washington native who enlisted in December 2015. He's currently stationed on the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower, a Norfolk-based aircraft carrier, as an aviation support equipment technician, 3rd class, Cmdr. Dave Hecht, a spokesman for Naval Air Force Atlantic, wrote in an email.

Greenidge, a New York native, also enlisted in December 2015, and became an airman apprentice, Hecht wrote. She was also assigned to the Eisenhower, but left the service in August 2017.

Recruiter charged with sexual assault

WAUKEGAN, Ill. — A U.S. Marine Corps recruiter working in suburban Chicago has been charged with sexually assaulting a teenage girl.

Alexander Louis, 27, of North Chicago, on Wednesday was ordered held in lieu of \$50,000 on felony sexual assault charges. Louis is accused of assaulting a Lake Villa Township juvenile.

According to the Lake County Sheriff's Department, the girl became acquainted with Louis as she considered enlisting in the Marines.

Louis, who worked as a recruiter in Waukegan since 2016, did not serve as the teen's recruiter.

Authorities say Louis drove several times to the girl's home while her parents were away. They say that during at least one visit, Louis engaged in a sexual act with the girl.

It wasn't immediately known if Louis, who is being held in the Lake County jail, has legal representation.

He was scheduled to return to court Friday.

From The Associated Press

Bill seeks military spouse deportation relief

BY NIKKI WENTLING

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A measure was reintroduced in the House on Wednesday to provide relief to military spouses facing deportation, with particular attention paid to one spouse — Alejandra Juarez, the wife of an Iraq War veteran who was deported to Mexico last year.

Rep. Darren Soto, D-Fla., introduced the Protect Patriot Spouses Act to give military spouses priority when applying for a Green Card, which would allow them to live permanently in the United States. Soto said the bill would also provide more leniency to military spouses who violated certain laws — acts that would typically lead to deportation.

The bill stalled in the House last year. With the lower chamber now controlled by Demo-

crats, Soto is more hopeful about its chances. He described the bill as more “generous” than the measure that he introduced last year.

“It’s more generous than last year’s bill because it’s a new Congress, and because we believe strongly in second chances,” Soto said during a news conference outside the Capitol. He was joined by Reps. Mark Takano, D-Calif., and Ruben Gallego, D-Ariz.

At the same time Wednesday, Soto reintroduced another bill on behalf of Juarez.

Last year, Juarez, who had lived in the United States for 22 years, took on a very public and dramatic fight against President Donald Trump to remain in the country under increasingly stringent immigration policies.

After pursuing every legal and political avenue to petition

against her deportation, Juarez left for Mexico in August. She now lives there with her younger daughter, Estela.

Her older daughter, Pamela Juarez, remained in Florida with her father, Cuauhtemoc “Temo” Juarez.

Pamela Juarez, 16, a junior in high school, was present at the news conference Wednesday. Her father, who has been described as a Trump supporter, wasn’t there.

“Since the day I watched my mom board that flight to Mexico, I felt a deep hole in my heart. When my sister followed her a couple of weeks later, that hole got bigger,” Pamela Juarez said.

“I haven’t slept well in months ... I can’t remember the last time when I wasn’t anxious or nervous, because every day I’m just worrying about what’s going to happen to my mom, or

how my sister’s doing.”

She went on to say her family was “forced apart” by the Trump administration’s zero tolerance policy for illegal immigrants. Advocates contend the policy has meant that there is no longer an order of priority in enforcing immigration law.

Soto said he, along with other members of Congress, had filed bills, sent letters and had personal conversations — done everything in their power to sway the authorities in Juarez’ case. The bill that he introduced Wednesday would afford Juarez legal permanent residence status.

The legislation will likely have a better chance of being considered under the new chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, Jerrold Nadler, D-N.Y., Soto said.

Bill on troop burn-pit exposure introduced

The Columbus (Ohio) Dispatch

WASHINGTON — Sen. Sherrod Brown is co-sponsoring a bill introduced last week that would require the Pentagon to examine U.S. soldiers who may have been exposed to toxic smoke generated by open burn pits in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The bill, which failed to win congressional approval last year, attracted renewed interest last week when the U.S. Supreme Court declined to hear an appeal from U.S. soldiers who claimed the smoke from burning tires and medical waste made them sick. They had brought a class-action lawsuit against KBR Inc., the company contracted by the military to dispose of waste on many U.S. bases.

The day after last week’s court ruling, Democratic Sen. Amy Klobuchar, of Minnesota, and Republican Sen. Dan Sullivan, of Alaska, reintroduced the bill, which calls on the Pen-

tagon to examine soldiers for the toxic exposure during regular medical exams and find out if the soldiers were stationed near one of the open-air pits.

Brown, D-Ohio, said Wednesday he would co-sponsor the bill, saying in a statement “we have a responsibility to ensure our veterans have the care they need to address the dangers they face while serving this country.”

Last year, Susan Zeier, of Sandusky, appeared on Capitol Hill to tell lawmakers about her son-in-law, a central Ohio resident who served in Iraq in 2006 and was diagnosed in March 2017 with Stage 4 non-small-cell adenocarcinoma, a type of lung cancer that is extremely difficult to treat.

She said his job in Iraq put him near a burn pit used to dispose of everything from everyday trash to chemicals to medical waste to pesticides to asbestos to human remains.

USS America assault vessel to replace Wasp as flagship

BY JAMES BOLINGER

Stars and Stripes

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION IWAKUNI, Japan — The Navy’s newest flat-deck amphibious assault ship will replace the USS Wasp as the flagship for Task Force 76 at Sasebo Naval Base, Japan, according to a recent report by the U.S. Naval Institute.

The USS America will arrive in Sasebo around May, according to a report by the Military Times.

The Wasp, an 844-foot flat-deck amphibious assault ship, which came to Japan in January 2018 to replace the USS Bonhomme Richard, is slated to return to Norfolk, Va., at an unspecified date for scheduled maintenance.

Like the Wasp, the America can host the Marine Corps’ F-35B Lightning II stealth fighter, which is capable of short takeoffs and vertical landings.

Commissioned in 2014, the America has no well deck from

which to launch hovercraft that Marines use to get from ship to shore. Instead, the America has an area dedicated to the multitude of aircraft used by a Marine expeditionary unit. Those include the F-35B, tilt-rotor CV-22 Osprey, CH-53K King Stallion heavy transport helicopter and the Navy’s MH-60S Seahawk used for air-sea rescue.

“[The Wasp] is coming around because of maintenance — her time in [the forward-deployed naval force] is over out in Japan; America’s going out there,” Vice Adm. Richard Brown, commander of Naval Surface Forces and Naval Surface Force Pacific, told USNI News Jan. 11. She’s coming back because of maintenance and dock loading and stuff like that.”

The America is the first of the America-class amphibious assault ships. The second, the USS Tripoli, is scheduled to be commissioned in the fall.

Venezuela, US locked in tense standoff

The Washington Post

CARACAS, Venezuela — The United States and Venezuela were locked in a tense international standoff Thursday as the Trump administration kept its embassy staff in the country despite an official order to eject them and Russia demanded that the Americans cease “intervention” in the teetering, oil-rich nation.

Moscow and Beijing have propped up the socialist South American state for years, investing billions through loans and energy deals and setting up what is now a dramatic global power play over Venezuela’s future. On Wednesday, Washington recognized Juan Guaido, head of the U.S.-backed opposition, as the rightful leader of Venezuela, describing President Nicolas Maduro — a former union leader and bus driver accused of turning Venezuela into a narco-state — as a usurper.

The move prompted Maduro on Wednesday to break ties with Washington and order U.S. diplomats out of the country by this weekend. Arguing that Maduro had won re-election last year through fraud and is no longer Venezuela’s rightful ruler, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo rejected Maduro’s order and indicated that U.S. personnel would not budge.

On Thursday, the scene outside the U.S. Embassy in Caracas, normally abuzz with visa applicants, was eerily quiet, with embassy guards firmly preventing most access.

Yet the decision by Washington to defy Maduro and keep U.S. Embassy staff in Caracas effectively turned them into pawns in what is now an unpredictable international crisis. It is happening at a time when Guaido, the new leader of the opposition-controlled National Assembly, is challenging the government’s deadly security apparatus by declaring himself interim president.

Votes on Senate bills are seen as progress even if they fail

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Senate is taking a new approach to ending the partial government shutdown by actually taking votes.

But competing bills appear likely to fail Thursday, caught in a poisonous Washington impasse.

Either measure would reopen federal agencies and pay 800,000 federal workers who are days from missing yet another paycheck. Republicans would couple ending the 34-day shutdown with \$5.7 billion for President Donald Trump’s border wall and revamping immigration laws. Democrats would reopen agency doors for three weeks while bargainers seek a budget accord.

Twin defeats might spur the

two sides into a more serious effort to strike a compromise. Almost every proposal needs 60 votes to advance in the Senate, which is under 53-47 Republican control.

“It’s hard to imagine 60 votes developing for either one,” said Sen. Roy Blunt, R-Mo. GOP moderates such as Lisa Murkowski, of Alaska, and Susan Collins, of Maine, are expected to vote for the Democratic plan, as is Cory Gardner, of Colorado, one of the few Republicans representing a state carried by Hillary Clinton in 2016.

With the impacts of the shutdown becoming increasingly painful, however, lawmakers on both sides were trumpeting their willingness to compromise in the battle over border security and immigration is-

sues such as protection against deportation for so-called Dreamer immigrants brought to the country illegally as children.

“It’s clear what the president wants. It’s clear what we want. If you have a negotiation, both parties are going to put on the table what they want,” said House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, D-Md. “By definition a successful negotiation gets to a place where both sides feel they got something, right?”

But just starting negotiations is a tripping point. Democrats insist on opening the government first rather than reward Trump’s tactics, while Republicans warn that immediately reopening the government would give Democrats too much leverage in any talks.

Trump relents, postpones annual address

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump said he is postponing his State of the Union address until the partial government shutdown ends, yielding after a weeklong showdown with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

Following a high-stakes game of dare and double-dare, Trump conceded Wednesday night that “no venue that can compete with the history, tradition and importance of the House Chamber.” He said he was not looking for an alternate option after Pelosi served notice earlier in the day that he wouldn’t be allowed to deliver the address to a joint session of Congress next week.

Pelosi had taken the step after Trump said he planned to show up in spite of Democratic objections to the speech taking place with large swaths of the government shut down.

Denied that grand venue,

Trump promised to come up with some sort of alternative event. The White House scrambled to find a site matching the gravitas of the traditional address from the rostrum of the House to lawmakers from both parties, Supreme Court justices, invited guests and a television audience of millions.

“As the Shutdown was going on, Nancy Pelosi asked me to give the State of the Union Address. I agreed,” Trump tweeted shortly after 11 p.m. EST. “She then changed her mind because of the Shutdown, suggesting a later date. This is her prerogative - I will do the Address when the Shutdown is over.”

Fireworks over the speech shot back and forth between the Capitol and the White House as the monthlong partial government shutdown showed no signs of ending and about 800,000 federal workers faced the prospect of going without

their second paycheck in a row come Friday.

Pelosi told Trump the House wouldn’t approve a resolution allowing him to address Congress until the shutdown ended. Trump shot back that Pelosi was afraid of hearing the truth.

“I think that’s a great blotch on the incredible country that we all love,” Trump said earlier Wednesday. “It’s a great, great horrible mark.”

The drama surrounding the State of the Union address began last week when Pelosi asked Trump to make other plans but stopped short of denying him the chamber for his address. Trump called her bluff Wednesday in a letter, saying he intended to come anyway.

“It would be so very sad for our Country if the State of the Union were not delivered on time, on schedule, and very importantly, on location,” he wrote.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Orangutan detaches volunteer's thumb

OH TOLEDO — A zoo in Ohio said one of its orangutans reached through a barrier, grabbed a volunteer's thumb and bit down on her forearm.

The Toledo zoo said the volunteer's thumb became detached and the volunteer was treated at a hospital.

The incident took place Saturday in an area not accessible to visitors while the orangutans were being fed. Zoo officials said all its great apes attempt to sneak their fingers through to grab things and that it's a known behavior staff must watch for while they're near the enclosure.

Firefighter charged with DUI at call scene

WV EAST BANK — A firefighter was charged with drunken driving after responding to a call in his personal car and hitting a police cruiser.

WCHS-TV reported David McGuire, 28, of East Bank, was charged Tuesday morning.

According to a criminal complaint, Kanawha County Sheriff's Cpl. Stephanie Adams was responding to a call when a car driven by McGuire backed down the street and struck her parked cruiser. Deputies said McGuire, who lives on the street and is an East Bank volunteer firefighter, had come to offer help.

Adams said she detected alcohol on McGuire's breath and his speech was slurred. McGuire's blood-alcohol level was 0.163 percent, which is double the legal limit for motorists.

Police: Man fired at man during car sale

MA RANDOLPH — Police in Randolph said

an argument over a car sale escalated to the point that one man took out a gun and fired two shots at another man.

Randolph police said the victim was not hit but suffered some scrapes when he fell down trying to run away from the gunman.

The Patriot Ledger reported Erlow Pope-Foster, 25, was facing charges of armed assault to murder and other offenses.

Police said Pope-Foster met with the other man after communicating online about a potential car sale. Police said the men argued about the price, and Pope-Foster pulled out a gun and shot at the victim.

City police officer impaled on baton

KS LAWRENCE — Lawrence police said an officer was impaled on his baton while struggling with a suspect.

Police Sgt. Amy Rhoads said the officer was hospitalized after the confrontation but didn't appear to have life-threatening injuries.

Rhoads said that when officers responded to a car crash early Tuesday the car's driver, a 22-year-old Topeka man, fled on foot. One officer caught him and used his expandable baton during a struggle in which the officer fell to the ground and landed on his baton, which penetrated his body.

Hospital investigated after woman's death

MO HARRISONVILLE — Inspectors have found that staff at hospital south of Kansas City failed to properly respond to a woman who showed distress after a routine colonoscopy and died the next day from internal bleeding.

The Kansas City Star reported that inspectors went to

Cass Regional Medical Center in late November after receiving a complaint about the Aug. 3 death of Martha Wright, 83, of Pleasant Hill.

The inspectors passed their findings to the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid, which classified the situation as an "immediate jeopardy" that "placed all patients at the facility at risk."

Man charged with DUI after using ATV to tow

MS MONTICELLO — A man was charged with drunken driving after using his all-terrain vehicle to try to pull his pickup truck off a highway.

The Daily Leader reported Trenton Blackmon, 21, of Natchez, was driving his pickup Saturday night when it ran out of gas on U.S. Highway 84 near Monticello.

Cpl. Brandon Fortenberry, of the Mississippi Highway Patrol, said Blackmon's truck was hauling an all-terrain vehicle on a trailer. When the truck stopped running, Blackmon used the ATV to try to pull the truck.

While he was doing that, another vehicle crashed into the empty trailer, pushing it under the truck and causing the truck to hit the ATV.

Police capture pair of runaway emus

TX GALVESTON — Police in coastal Texas captured a pair of runaway emus that had been on the lam for a day after escaping their owner's backyard.

Emus aren't permitted in Galveston, but police say a man recently brought the large, flightless birds to the island after the death of his mother, who had owned them at her home near Houston.

The Galveston County Daily

News reported the emus escaped the backyard sometime Monday and were recaptured Tuesday morning near an elementary school.

Man takes wrong Lyft to wrong home

ME CAPE ELIZABETH — Police in Maine said a drunken man had to sober up at a police station after he took a wrong Lyft and tried to get into a house he mistakenly thought was his home.

Cape Elizabeth police said the Falmouth man mistakenly got into a Lyft summoned by a man who lived next door. The man was dropped off early Saturday and staggered toward a nearby home, believing it to be his. Police said he caused a commotion trying to get in, prompting the homeowner to call the police.

Cape Elizabeth Police Chief Paul Fenton said the man was taken back to the police station to sober up.

Fenton said the homeowner didn't want to press charges.

Bill exempts horse, bike riders from DUI

ND BISMARCK — North Dakota's House has endorsed legislation that exempts riders of horses and bicycles from drunken driving laws.

The House voted 91-1 Wednesday to allow intoxicated people who either pedal or saddle up to ride without fear of criminal prosecution.

The legislation still allows riders on horses and bicycles to be charged with noncriminal offenses such as speeding or other traffic violations.

The measure now goes to the Senate for consideration.

From wire reports

STARS AND STRIPES®

Single source convenience, reliably independent. Visit www.stripes.com.

Reporting
World, National
and Military News

Gardner Minshew looks for an NFL home

Associated Press

MOBILE, Ala. — Gardner Minshew carved his own meandering path from walk-on to NFL prospect.

He began as a walk-on at Troy, took a sharp left to junior college, bounced over to East Carolina, made a beeline toward Alabama and finally ended with one terrific final season at Washington State.

"I kind of took the long way around," Minshew said Tuesday.

Whatever the route, the nomadic Minshew has landed in the Senior Bowl, along with quarterbacks like Duke's Daniel Jones, West Virginia's Will Grier and Missouri's Drew Lock.

His goal remains the same: a chance to be a starting quarterback.

He got another shot after enrolling as a graduate transfer at Washington State in June, some six months after graduating from East Carolina.

Minshew made the most of his time in the Northwest. He won the 2018 Johnny Unitas Golden Arm Award as the nation's top senior or fourth-year junior quarterback.

Minshew led the nation in passing yards per game (367.6) while also finishing in the top 5 with 38 touchdowns and a 70.7 percent completion rate.

His 4,779 yards set a Pac-12 Conference record. Minshew managed to fit in well with his new teammates at Washington State despite that late arrival, left tackle Andre Dillard said.

"There's something special about that guy, for sure," said Dillard, who's also playing in the Senior Bowl. "He just has this energy and vibe about him that make others around him want to be better people in general and football players."

Minshew is sporting a full beard at the Senior Bowl but previously his facial hair earned him the nickname the Mississippi Mustache.

Minshew enrolled at Troy in January 2015 as a walk-on, saying a scholarship offer had been withdrawn after a coaching change. He left for Northwest Mississippi Community College after spring practices, with Brandon Silvers holding down the starting job.

He then spent two seasons at East Carolina, where he started two games as a sophomore and passed for 2,140 yards and 16 touchdowns as a junior.

Senior Bowl executive director Jim Nagy puts a positive spin on Minshew's moves.

"This guy is constantly betting on himself," said Nagy, a former NFL scout.

Nagy said Minshew approached him at

breakfast Monday morning looking for phone numbers of the South centers and quarterbacks. He rounded up some footballs and got them together for some extra work on snaps.

Minshew didn't head directly toward his final college destination. He planned to enroll at Alabama, if Jalen Hurts decided to transfer. Hurts stayed despite losing the starting job to Tua Tagovailoa.

"At the time it looked like one of those two guys was leaving and I was walking in as No. 2 and splitting reps 50-50," Minshew said.

"I'll take my shot with anybody when I get into a competition setting. Then it looked like both of them were staying and it was time for me to look elsewhere."

Now, Minshew is auditioning for NFL teams and figures they'll all ask about his circuitous journey. The explanation, he said, takes five or 10 minutes.

"It was different, that's for sure," Minshew said. "Definitely not how most people do it. You just learn so much as you go through all these different experiences, all the different guys you meet."

"I feel like it's really prepared for me now."

MLB seeks to increase disabled list and option times

BY RONALD BLUM

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Major League Baseball has proposed going back to a 15-day disabled list and increasing the time optioned players usually must spend in the minor leagues, a person familiar with the negotiations told The Associated Press, moves aimed at reducing the use of relief pitchers and reviving offense.

The person spoke on condition of anonymity Wednesday because the plans were not publicly announced.

The minimum length of time an injured player spends on the disabled list was cut from 15 days to 10 in 2016 as part of baseball's new labor contract. As a result, DL placements rose from 563 in 2016 to 702 in 2017 and then again to 737 last year, the commissioner's office said.

Advanced analytics have

shown team executives that starting pitchers are less successful the third time through the batting order. Increased DL and minor league option use has led to a strategy of teams rotating their middle relievers with their minor league affiliates in order to have more available pitchers each day. Teams even began using relievers as "openers" to start games last season, a trend sparked by the Tampa Bay Rays.

As part of the plan, a player optioned would have to spend at least 15 days in the minor leagues, up from 10. That limit has been waived when a player is recalled to replace someone going on the DL, gets suspended under the drug or domestic violence agreements, or goes on a paternity or bereavement list.

MLB included the proposals in a wider plan given to the players' association, which also

is considering management's proposal from last offseason to institute pitch clocks.

An agreement with the players' association is necessary for playing rules changes. While management can make changes with one year advance notice, Commissioner Rob Manfred repeatedly has said he is reluctant to take that step.

Changes in off-the-field rules may be governed by a requirement in federal labor law that unions agree to alterations in terms and conditions of employment. Talks are ongoing and are expected to extend to the eve of spring training, if not beyond.

Teams averaged 3.4 relievers per game last year, up from 3.2 in 2016 and 2017 and 3.0 in 2012, according to Sports Info Solutions. The total number of relief pitchers used was 16,339 last season, up from 15,657 in 2017.

Average innings per start dropped from 5.89 in 2012 to 5.65 in 2016, the last year of the old labor contract. The average sunk to 5.51 in 2017 and 5.36 last season.

Average pitches per start has fallen, too, from 95 in 2012 to 93 in 2016, 92 in 2017 and 88 last year.

The proposals were made after the big league batting average dropped seven points last year to .248, its lowest level since 1972. Strikeouts set a record for the 11th straight year, increasing by 1,103 to 41,207, and topped hits (41,019) for the first time in major league history. Hits led by 2,111 in 2017 and by 13,418 in 2006.

Nine-inning games averaged 3 hours, 44 seconds last year, down from 3:05:11 in 2017, and mound visits without pitching changes fell to an average of 4.01 from 7.41.

Nadal ousts Tsitsipas in Aussie Open

Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia — Rafael Nadal is certainly not treating tennis' next generation well at the Australian Open.

Add 20-year-old Stefanos Tsitsipas to the list of youngsters Nadal has bullied on his way to his fifth final at Melbourne Park and 25th at all Grand Slam tournaments.

Nadal needed all of 11 minutes Thursday to show Tsitsipas — and everyone else — that the kid's upset of Roger Federer was not going to be replicated on this night. Not even close. Breaking Tsitsipas in the match's third game and then another five times Thursday, while never facing a single break point himself until the very last game, Nadal won 6-2, 6-4, 6-0.

"It felt like a different di-

mension of tennis completely," said the 14th-seeded Tsitsipas, a blank expression on his face. "He gives you no rhythm. He plays just a different game style than the rest of the players. He has this, I don't know, talent that no other player has. I've never seen a player have this. He makes you play bad."

It was the same straight-set, no-contest treatment Nadal gave to 19-year-old Alex de Minaur in the third round and 21-year-old Frances Tiafoe in the quarterfinals.

Asked if he was trying to make a statement with the way he soundly defeated these up-and-coming talents, Nadal said: "They don't need any message, no. They are good. They're improving every month. So it's always a big challenge to play against them."

Sure hasn't seemed like it.

Tsitsipas' run to the first

major semifinal of his nascent career was most notable for the way he beat 20-time major champion Federer in the fourth round, saving 12 of 12 break points across four sets and 3 hours, 45 minutes.

But the left-handed Nadal was a much more difficult puzzle to solve.

On Sunday, the 32-year-old Spaniard will try to earn his second Australian Open title — he won the hard-court event in 2009 — and his 18th Slam trophy.

That final will come against either top-seeded Novak Djokovic or Lucas Pouille, who meet Friday.

A title would make Nadal only the third man in the sport's history to win each Grand Slam title at least twice, joining retired Australian greats Rod Laver — a front-row spectator Thursday night in an arena

named for him — and Roy Emerson.

After a series of health issues, Nadal is once again the relentless forehand-whipping force that can dominate anyone.

He quit during his quarterfinal match at Melbourne Park a year ago because of a right leg problem, then stopped again during his semifinal at the U.S. Open in September because of a painful right knee. That was followed by offseason surgery on his right ankle.

Even though he is wearing a strip of tape over an abdominal muscle that troubled him in the past, Nadal has been terrific in Australia, winning all 18 sets he has played.

"I'm really disappointed today," Tsitsipas said, adding that he hoped to "prove myself a little bit more, not let him dominate the entire match. Just felt wrong."

College basketball roundup

Williams helps No. 1 Tennessee escape Vanderbilt

Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Grant Williams scored a career-high 43 points and finished off a three-point play with 31.6 seconds left in overtime to put top-ranked Tennessee ahead to stay, and the Volunteers barely avoided a repeat of their last trip to Memorial Gym freshly minted as the nation's No. 1 team by holding off Vanderbilt 88-83 on Wednesday night.

The Volunteers (17-1, 6-0 Southeastern Conference) won their 13th straight game and first since moving to No. 1 in the AP Top 25 on Monday for the second time in program history. They also have won five of the last six against their in-state rival.

Vanderbilt (9-9, 0-6) came in hoping to pull off its seventh upset of a No. 1 team in Memorial Gym, but were undone by Williams' remarkable night.

Williams went a career-best

23-for-23 at the free throw line, the most free throws without a miss in the NCAA since Arlen Clark was 24-for-24 for Oklahoma State on March 7, 1959.

No. 7 Nevada 100, Colorado St. 60: Jordan Caroline scored 26 points and the host Wolf Pack cruised past the Rams to give Eric Musselman his 100th win as a college coach.

Cody Martin added 19 points and brother Caleb Martin had 18 for Nevada (19-1, 6-1 Mountain West Conference), which shot 56 percent from the floor and 48 percent beyond the arc.

J.D. Paige led Colorado State (7-12, 2-4) with 18 points. Nico Carvacho had 11 points and 14 rebounds.

No. 12 Marquette 79, DePaul 69: Markus Howard scored 13 of his 23 points in the final six minutes and Sam Hauser added 19 as the Golden Eagles held off the Blue Demons to remain unbeaten at home.

Marquette (17-3, 6-1 Big East) scored 17 of their final 23 points from the free throw line to improve to 14-0 at the new Fiserv Forum.

Howard, who entered first in the Big East and fifth in the nation in scoring at 24.4 points per game, was 4-for-10 from the field and made all 15 free throw attempts.

Theo John scored a career-high 16 points for Marquette, and Joey Hauser had 14.

Paul Reed had 18 points for the Blue Demons (11-7, 3-4).

No. 17 Houston 94, East Carolina 50: Armoni Brooks scored 17 points, Corey Davis Jr. added 12 and the host Cougars hit 16 three-pointers against the Pirates.

Brooks and Davis combined to hit nine threes as Houston (19-1, 6-1 American Athletic Conference) finished 16-for-24 from behind the arc. The Cougars, who won their fourth

straight, shot 52 percent from the field while extending their home winning streak to 30 games.

Seth Leday had 12 points for ECU (8-10, 1-5). Jayden Gardner, who entered leading the conference in scoring with 19.8 points per game, finished with eight. ECU shot 32 percent and has lost four straight.

No. 25 LSU 92, Georgia 82: Tremont Waters scored a season-high 26 points and the Tigers beat the visiting Bulldogs for their eighth straight victory.

Waters, who added four assists and four steals, had a hand in 13 straight points by LSU late in the game.

The Tigers have won their first five SEC games for just the third time in the past 50 seasons. On the other two occasions, LSU won the conference championship and advanced to the Final Four.

NBA roundup

Harden scores career-high 61 points

Associated Press

NEW YORK — James Harden inched past Wilt Chamberlain and didn't stop his latest one-man show until he'd tied Kobe Bryant.

On another spectacular night for the NBA's most sensational scorer, Harden not only notched his career high with 61 points, but tied Bryant's record for a visiting player at the current Madison Square Garden.

"In the Garden, I'll take it," Harden said.

The Rockets sure needed it.

Harden made the clinching layup with 3.8 seconds remaining after the Knicks turned it over, and the Rockets edged the New York Knicks 114-110 on Wednesday night.

With his final basket, Harden capped his fifth 50-point game this season and a wild stretch of back-and-forth basketball across the final minutes.

"The way we played in the last six minutes, maybe four

minutes, we set basketball back at least 10 years," Rockets coach Mike D'Antoni said. "It was mind-boggling the things we just did. We got the win."

Eric Gordon made the go-ahead three-pointer with 9.8 seconds left when Houston couldn't get the ball to Harden, the NBA's leading scorer who earlier had passed Chamberlain into fourth place in NBA history with his 21st consecutive 30-point game.

A day after saying he hadn't yet experienced his Madison Square Garden moment, Harden finished 17-for-38 from the floor. He was only 5-for-20 on three-pointers but was 22-for-25 from the line and grabbed 15 rebounds in front of a crowd that cheered some of his long jumpers but then booed after he drew foul after foul.

Pacers 110, Raptors 106: Victor Oladipo suffered a serious right knee injury that could alter the season for host Indiana.

The All-Star guard crumpled to the ground with 4:05 left in the second quarter as he tried to defend an outlet pass to Toronto's Pascal Siakam. The magnitude of the injury was apparent almost immediately. Trainers draped a towel over the leg, and players from both teams surrounded Oladipo as he remained down.

Nets 114, Magic 110: D'Angelo Russell had a double-double with 25 points and 10 rebounds, Spencer Dinwiddie scored 29 points, and host Brooklyn edged the Orlando Magic for its fifth straight victory.

Celtics 123, Cavaliers 103: Terry Rozier scored 22 of his 26 points in the first half and host Boston coasted to its fifth straight victory with a win over struggling Cleveland.

Clippers 111, Heat 99: Tobias Harris scored 22 of his 31 points in the first half, and Los Angeles clamped down on defense after intermission to beat host Miami.

Hawks 121, Bulls 101: John Collins scored a career-high 35 points, Trae Young had 12 assists for visiting Atlanta.

Hornets 118, Grizzlies 107: Kemba Walker had 22 points and seven assists, Nicolas Batum scored 18 points, and visiting Charlotte beat Memphis for its fourth win in five games.

Pistons 98, Pelicans 94: Blake Griffin scored 20 of his game-high 37 points in the first quarter, and Reggie Bullock grabbed a loose ball and slammed home a dunk with 14.5 seconds left to lift visiting Detroit over New Orleans.

76ers 122, Spurs 120: Joel Embiid had 33 points and 19 rebounds, and host Philadelphia used a pair of four-point plays in the fourth quarter to beat San Antonio.

Jazz 114, Nuggets 108: Donovan Mitchell scored 35 points while making a season-high six three-pointers to lead host Utah past Denver.

NHL roundup

Kadri's hat trick gives Caps 7th straight loss

Associated Press

TORONTO — Nazem Kadri recorded the fifth hat trick of his career and added an assist as the Toronto Maple Leafs defeated Washington 6-3 on Wednesday night and dealt the defending Stanley Cup champion Capitals their seventh straight loss.

Auston Matthews, Nikita Zaitsev and Mitch Marner also scored for Toronto. William Nylander added three assists, while Morgan Rielly and Connor Brown had two each. Frederik Andersen stopped 41 shots for the win.

The Leafs came in having lost two straight, four in a row and five of six at Scotiabank Arena, and seven of their last 10 overall.

Nicklas Backstrom had a goal and an assist, and Alex Ovechkin and Matt Niskanen scored for Washington, which was playing for the third time in four nights.

Braden Holtby, who had allowed 11

goals on his last 54 shots against going into Wednesday's game, finished with 31 saves. T.J. Oshie added two assists for the Capitals, who have allowed 30 goals in their last five games.

With his second-period goal, Ovechkin tied Sergei Fedorov for the top spot among Russian-born players with 1,179 career points.

Canadiens 2, Coyotes 1: Mike Reilly scored in the third period, Carey Price made 30 saves and host Montreal beat Arizona in Alex Galchenyuk's return to his old city.

Jonathan Drouin also scored for the Canadiens, who have won five of six.

Wild 5, Avalanche 2: Eric Staal had two goals, including the tiebreaker on a second-period power play, Devan Dubnyk made 20 saves and Minnesota rolled into the All-Star break by winning at slumping Colorado.

Blues 5, Ducks 1: Zach Sanford and Tyler Bozak scored goals in their first games back from injured reserve, and St. Louis beat won at Anaheim.

Predators 2, Golden Knights 1: Juuse Saros made a career-high 47 saves, Nick Bonino scored his first game-winning goal of the season and Nashville won at Las Vegas.

Max Pacioretty scored for Las Vegas, and Marc-Andre Fleury made 25 saves.

Hurricanes 5, Canucks 2: Teuvo Teravainen had a goal and two assists, Nino Niederreiter scored twice and Carolina won at Vancouver.

Alex Nedeljkovic made 24 saves for the Hurricanes in his first NHL start. Greg McKegg and Dougie Hamilton each added a goal and an assist as Carolina's snapped the Canucks' five-game point streak in the final game for both teams before the All-Star break and their bye weeks.