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Pentagon, Trump differ on climate change

McClatchy Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — An amendment to the annual defense policy bill requiring the Pentagon to submit a report on the national security threats posed by climate change was approved by members of the Republican-led House Armed Services Committee on Wednesday.

The text, co-sponsored by every Democratic member of the committee, calls climate change “a direct threat to the national security of the United States,” and cites similar statements made by Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis and other top military brass, highlighting the rift between President Donald Trump and the Pentagon when it comes to global warming.

“By talking about it in terms of national security, it makes it difficult, if not impossible, to ignore the fact that climate change is here, it’s real, it’s happening,” Rep. Jim Langevin, D-R.I., who proposed the amendment, told McClatchy.

The Pentagon would have a year to submit an assessment of the 10 military bases within each service most threatened by rising sea levels, drought and thawing perma-

frost. It also asks for the costs of mitigating those effects.

Only one lawmaker, Rep. Liz Cheney, R-Wyo., spoke against the amendment, saying “there is no evidence that climate change causes war.”

Some Republicans backed the measure, saying it was a small, common-sense step.

“We are talking about a report,” said Rep. Jim Bridenstine, R-Okla. “It is just a report.”

Ultimately, most Republicans on the GOP-controlled committee sided with the Pentagon’s long-held view that the effects of climate change pose an increasingly urgent security threat. The final bill still has to be approved by the full House.

Military leaders have consistently warned that extreme weather patterns, drought and floods are aggravating social tensions, destabilizing regions and feeding the rise of extremist groups like al-Qaida and Islamic State.

At his confirmation hearing, Mattis called climate change a “driver of instability” that requires a “whole-of-government response” to address. The chairman of the Joint Chiefs

of Staff, Gen. Joseph Dunford, has said climate change and rising sea levels pose the most serious long-term security threat to the country. In a letter supporting the amendment, retired Adm. James Stavridis, the former supreme allied commander for NATO, urged Congress to support incorporating climate science into strategic planning to take “concrete action” to mitigate the “pressing national security issue.”

In stark contrast, Trump has frequently and openly questioned climate change, calling it “a hoax” and saying that global warming was a concept “created by and for the Chinese” to hurt U.S. manufacturing. In June, he withdrew the United States from the Paris climate agreement.

“In our overseas strategy and military operations, we have to get better at forecasting and predicting where natural-resource issues multiply the threat in different conflicts,” said Sherri Goodman, who served as the Pentagon’s first deputy undersecretary of defense for environmental security under President Bill Clinton. “We don’t really know it now until after the fact, which isn’t really good enough for our troops.”

Mattis allows more time for transgender review

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Defense Secretary Jim Mattis is giving the military chiefs another six months to conduct a review to determine if allowing transgender individuals to enlist in the armed services will affect the “readiness or lethality” of the force.

Pentagon spokeswoman Dana White said Mattis made the decision Friday. The delay in allowing the enlistment of new recruits does not affect transgender troops who are already serving openly in the military.

“After consulting with the service chiefs and secretaries, I have determined that it is necessary to defer the start

of accessions for six months,” Mattis said in a memo that was sent Friday to the service chiefs and secretaries and was obtained by The Associated Press. “We will use this additional time to evaluate more carefully the impact of such accessions on readiness and lethality.”

In the memo, Mattis said he believes the department must measure “each policy decision against one standard” — whether it affects the ability of the military to defend the nation.

Mattis’ decision formally endorses an agreement hammered out last week by the leaders of the four military services, which rejected Army and Air Force requests for a

two-year wait. And it reflects the broader worry that a longer delay would trigger criticism on Capitol Hill, officials familiar with the talks told the AP.

The request for a delay was sent to Mattis for a final decision last week.

Mattis said the review by the services must be completed by Dec. 1, and he noted that his approval of a delay “does not presuppose the outcome of the review.” He said the additional time will ensure he has “the benefit of the views of the military leadership and of the senior civilian officials who are now arriving in the department.”

Transgender service members have been able to serve openly in the military since

last year, when then-Defense Secretary Ash Carter ended the ban, declaring it the right thing to do. Since Oct. 1, transgender troops have been able to receive medical care and start formally changing their gender identifications in the Pentagon’s personnel system.

But Carter also gave the services until July 1 to develop policies to allow people already identifying as transgender to newly join the military if they meet physical, medical and other standards and have been stable in their identified genders for 18 months.

The military chiefs have argued they need more time to study the issue and its effects on the readiness of the force before taking that step.

DOD study: Global missile threats surging

Bloomberg

Technology for ballistic and cruise missiles is advancing in countries from North Korea and Iran to Russia and China, increasing potential threats to the U.S. even if they don't carry nuclear warheads, according to a new Pentagon report.

"Many countries view ballistic and cruise missile systems as cost-effective weapons and symbols of national power," defense intelligence agencies said in the report, which was obtained by Bloomberg News in advance of its release. "Many ballistic and cruise missiles are armed with weapons of mass destruction. However, numer-

ous types of ballistic and cruise missiles have achieved dramatic improvements in accuracy that allow them to be used effectively with conventional warheads."

The report comes as President Donald Trump's administration seeks a way to stop North Korea's drive to develop a nuclear-armed intercontinental ballistic missile that could hit the U.S. mainland. While citing the ballistic missile programs being pursued by Kim Jong Un's regime in Pyongyang and by Iran, the study describes a broader proliferation of missiles, advanced technology and launch options.

"Ballistic missiles can be deployed in silos, on submarines, surface ships, road- and rail-mobile launchers and aircraft," the report said. "Mobile missiles can provide greater pre-launch survivability. The last decade has seen a dramatic increase in ballistic missile capabilities to include accuracy, post-boost maneuverability and combat effectiveness."

Among the new technologies are hypersonic glide vehicles being developed by Russia and China.

"HGVS are maneuverable vehicles that travel at hypersonic (greater than Mach 5) speed and spend most of their flight at

much lower altitudes than a typical ballistic missile," according to the report. "The combination of high speed, maneuverability and relatively low altitude makes them challenging targets for missile defense systems."

Another finding in the report by the National Air and Space Intelligence Center and the Defense Intelligence Ballistic Missile Analysis Committee: "Tehran's desire to have a strategic counter to the United States could drive it to field an ICBM. Iran has modified its medium-range Shahab 3 ballistic missile ... to extend its range and effectiveness."

US warns of friendly fire in Mosul

Associated Press

MOSUL, Iraq — U.S. Army Col. Pat Work and a small team of about a dozen soldiers drove through western Mosul in two unmarked armored vehicles. Iraq's Prime Minister had just declared the end of Islamic State's caliphate the day before, but the fighting still raging on as Iraqi forces prepared for another big push Saturday morning.

Work had a series of urgent calls to make: to talk face-to-face with generals from the Iraqi army, the federal police and the Iraqi special forces. While the gains in the Old City are bringing Iraqi troops closer to victory against ISIS in Mosul, they also mean three branches of the country's security forces are now fighting in closer quarters than ever before. The new battle space and lingering communication shortcomings mean Iraqi ground troops are at increased risk of being hit by non-precision weapons like mortars and artillery fired by their partner Iraqi forces, he explained.

Throughout the course of the day, Work shuttled between bases and command centers inside the city to meet with Iraqi commanders deep inside Mosul, underscoring the increasingly

prominent U.S. role in the offensive as it enters its final days.

"It's a very violent, close fight," said Work, the commander of the 82nd Airborne's 2nd Brigade Combat Team, who deployed to Iraq in January. "When the bullets aren't enough, the commanders want to turn to high explosives, which might be mortars or artillery ... so understanding where the other guy is all the time is kind of rule number one, so the lethal effect is directed at the target and not accidentally at another player that's on your team."

The various forces that make up Iraq's military have long struggled with coordination. While the Mosul operation is overseen by a joint operations command and the Prime Minister, forces on the ground maintain independent command structures, standards and cultures. The Mosul fight is the first time all three forces have had to cooperate in an urban environment and throughout the operation, the army, federal police and special forces have faced deadly setbacks when they acted independently, allowing ISIS fighters to concentrate their defenses on a single front.

"We're helping (Iraqi forces)

see across the boundaries between their different units ... just helping them understand where they are and how rapidly things might be changing," Work said.

One of Work's stops was at a modest house in a western Mosul neighborhood. About a dozen U.S. troops and Iraqi soldiers were hunched over computers, identifying ISIS targets just a few hundred yards away, ahead of the next day's operation. The presence of U.S. forces at the small patrol base deep inside Mosul is a level of support that had not been authorized when the Mosul fight first began.

Under the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump, Defense Secretary Jim Mattis moved U.S. combat advisers closer to the fight by authorizing U.S. troops to partner with Iraqi forces at the battalion level.

The U.S.-led coalition's fight against ISIS in Iraq has expanded slowly during the past three years from a campaign of airstrikes carried out by coalition forces — who largely stayed within heavily fortified bases — to an operation with some 6,000 American troops on the ground, many operating close to front-line fighting.

Base, town celebrate 75 years together

Corpus Christi (Texas)
Caller-Times

CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas — There's a tattered billboard sign on Highway 77 in Kingsville, Texas, that says, "We (heart) our jet noise."

After 75 years, the love affair continues. Naval Air Station Kingsville planned to mark its 75th anniversary with weekend activities including fireworks and a parade.

"We wanted to go all out to make this something special," said Leo Alarcon, director of tourism for the city of Kingsville.

The base is home to Training Air Wing Two. It's one of two military facilities that offer jet training for Navy and Marine Corps pilots. The base was commissioned July 4, 1942.

"It's an economic driver. As the base goes, so goes this community and the county," said Thomas Krueger, a finance professor from the business college at Texas A&M University-Kingsville. "We've been so lucky to have been blessed by a successful base. It benefits the whole region."

McConnell to stick with repeal, replace

Associated Press

ELIZABETHTOWN, Ky. — Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has rejected President Donald Trump's advice to nix the GOP's complex health care proposal in favor of a bill that would simply get rid of "Obamacare" once and for all.

McConnell told reporters Friday that the Republican health care bill remains challenging, but "we are going to stick with that path" in response to a question about the president's tweet.

Earlier in the day, Trump tweeted that if Republicans could not reach a consensus they "should immediately REPEAL, and then REPLACE at a later date!" Several Republican senators have signed on to

Trump's strategy.

McConnell has struggled to unite an unruly Republican caucus on the details of replacing the overhaul championed by former President Barack Obama. While that health care law has brought insurance to millions, it also has increased costs for states and some individual health insurance plans.

On Friday, Kentucky regulators announced rates for plans sold on the state's exchange could increase as much as 34 percent next year. State officials in Republican Gov. Matt Bevin's administration blamed the increase on the "failure of Obamacare." But insurance carriers have struggled to predict the market next year with

so much uncertainty surrounding the Republican health care plan in Congress.

For Eli Whitlock, 30, the Affordable Care Act was working just fine. Whitlock was one of about 85 people who showed up to protest McConnell's speech Friday to the Republican Party in Kentucky's Hardin County.

Whitlock said he was 21 when he was diagnosed with testicular cancer. He dropped out of college to pick up more hours at work to help pay for his medical bills. But that kicked him off of his parents' insurance policy, leaving him languishing on the individual market with the "pre-existing condition."

He spent two years without health insurance, until the Af-

fordable Care Act went into effect, and he purchased an individual plan on Kentucky's health insurance exchange.

But inside the local GOP dinner, McConnell was greeted with applause for his commitment to replacing "this awful 'Obamacare' law."

For Ken Randall, 61, the Affordable Care Act cost him money. Randall has been a one-man insurance agency for 29 years in Elizabethtown. He primarily sells property and casualty policies, but he had a side business of selling individual insurance plans. He said he had to stop selling those plans after the Affordable Care Act passed because he couldn't make money any more.

25 shot at Ark. nightclub

Associated Press

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. — Police said 25 people were shot after gunfire rang out Saturday at a rap show in a downtown Little Rock, Ark., nightclub.

Police said the shooting at Power Ultra Lounge was the result of a dispute among club-goers and not an active shooter or terrorism-related incident. Little Rock police said Saturday that 25 people were shot and three others suffered unrelated injuries. All were expected to survive, police said.

Arkansas Alcohol Beverage Control officials suspended the club's alcohol license Saturday and set a hearing for July 10. The alcohol agency said in a statement that potential violations stemming from the shooting include allowing possession of weapons on the premises, disorderly conduct and failure to be a good neighbor.

Little Rock police Chief Kenton Buckner told reporters that "some sort of dispute broke out between people inside" the club and that there are "probably multiple shooting suspects."

A video posted online by a club patron, Darryl Rankin, showed a packed house for

Finese 2Tymes, a performer from Memphis, Tenn. About a half-minute into a break in the raucous concert over 24 shots in an 11-second period rang out.

Rankin told The Associated Press he was recording the show on Facebook Live when gunfire erupted, and one of his friends is now at a hospital with a bullet "stuck in his spine."

The shooting follows a week in which there have been about a dozen drive-by shootings in Little Rock, though there's no indication the events are linked.

Early Saturday, Raida Bunche waited outside the club after she had heard from a friend that her son had been at the club. Later Saturday morning, she said she found out her son ran out once the shooting began and was unharmed.

"I'm sick of all the killing and I'm tired of all the shooting, the kids getting hurt," Bunche said.

The club's Facebook page promoted Friday night's show with a poster depicting a man pointing what appears to be a gun at the camera. A call to a number listed for Finese 2Tymes' booking agent wasn't immediately returned Saturday.

Doctor who shot 7 at hospital made threats

Associated Press

NEW YORK — It took two years, but Dr. Henry Bello made good on his threats.

After he was forced to resign as a family doctor amid sexual harassment allegations, he told colleagues he would kill them.

On Friday, Bello returned to Bronx Lebanon Hospital in New York with an AM-15 assault rifle tucked under his white lab coat and opened fire in his old department, killing one doctor and critically wounding six others, officials said.

Bello then shot himself.

Bello's former co-workers described a man who was aggressive, loud and threatening.

"We fired him because he was kind of crazy," Dr. Maureen Kwankam told the Daily News. "He promised to come back and kill us then."

People described a chaotic scene as gunfire erupted, spreading terror throughout the medical facility as employees locked themselves inside rooms and patients feared for their lives after hearing an announcement warning of someone in the building with a weapon.

Shortly after receiving a 911 call about a shooter, police officers went floor by floor, their guns drawn, looking for the gunman. Fifteen minutes later, they confirmed he was dead.

Bello might have doused himself with an accelerant and tried to set himself on fire before his suicide, officials said.

The officials were not authorized to discuss the still-unfolding investigation and spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

Bello had a history of aggressive behavior. In unrelated cases, the doctor pleaded guilty to unlawful imprisonment, a misdemeanor, in 2004 after a 23-year-old woman told police Bello grabbed her, lifted her up and carried her off, saying, "You're coming with me." He was arrested again in 2009 on a charge of unlawful surveillance, after two different women reported he was trying to look up their skirts with a mirror. That case was eventually sealed.

Two surgeons at the hospital told the AP that all six victims were in critical condition, but they were expected to survive.

Mich. legal bills for Flint water crisis above \$14M

Associated Press

LANSING, Mich. — Michigan's legal bills for the man-made water crisis in Flint are piling up.

At least \$14 million has been spent hiring lawyers, according to an Associated Press analysis of state records. Costs are only expected to balloon as Attorney General Bill Schuette's team of two dozen attorneys and investigators turns toward prosecuting a dozen current or former state employees or appointees whose criminal defenses are being covered by taxpayers.

Schuette has spent \$4.4 million of the \$5.1 million authorized so far for a 17-month probe led by special counsel Todd Flood. The GOP-led Legislature has authorized \$2 million for the next fiscal year — \$600,000 less than in the current budget.

The agency deemed most responsible for the crisis — the Department of Environmental Quality, whose regulators advised Flint to not treat for corrosion after a water switch while the city was under state management — has spent nearly \$3.8 million on outside lawyers, mostly for seven current and former workers named in

lawsuits filed by residents of the city. The tab also includes more than \$1.1 million for criminal defense, including at least \$463,000 to represent two officials who resigned in late 2015 but who have not been charged: Dan Wyant and Brad Wurfel, the department's former director and communications director, respectively.

A firm representing department District Supervisor Stephen Busch has billed the most for any single worker — \$910,000, primarily for civil defense work.

A state board this past week authorized the department to spend another \$4 million on legal fees, nearly double the previous cap.

Another state agency, the Health and Human Services Department, has spent \$1.1 million, mostly for defense services involving 18 current or ex-employees. Four, including Director Nick Lyon and Chief Medical Executive Eden Wells, face charges on suspicion of not alerting the public about Legionnaires' disease that may be linked to the crisis or covering up a spike in Flint children's lead levels.

Recreational pot now selling in Nev.

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Nevada became the fifth state in the U.S. with stores selling marijuana for recreational purposes, opening a market early Saturday that eventually is expected to outpace any other in the nation thanks to the millions of tourists who flock to Las Vegas.

People began purchasing marijuana shortly after midnight, just months after voters approved legalization in November and marking the fastest turnaround from the ballot box to retail sales in the country.

Hundreds of people lined up at Essence Cannabis Dispensary on the Las Vegas Strip. People were excited and well-behaved as a lone security guard looked on. A valet was available to park the cars of customers.

A cheer erupted when the doors opened.

Those 21 and older with valid ID can buy up to an ounce of pot. Tourists are expected to make nearly two of every three recreational pot purchases in Nevada, but people can only use the drug in private homes.

It remains illegal to light up in public areas, including the Las Vegas Strip, casinos, bars, restaurants, parks, convention centers and concert halls — places frequently visited by tourists. Violators face a \$600 fine.

And driving under the influence of marijuana is still illegal.

Despite the limits on where people can get high and restrictions on where the industry can advertise, dispensaries worked furiously to prepare for the launch. They stamped labels onto pot products, stocked up their shelves, added security and checkout stations, and announced specials.

Desert Grown Farms hired about 60 additional employees. Workers in scrubs, hair nets and surgical masks slapped stickers onto sealed jars this week as others checked on marijuana plants or carefully weighed buds.

"It would be a good problem to have if I couldn't meet my demand," said CEO Armen Yemenidjian, whose Desert Grown Farms owns the only dispensary that is selling recreational pot on the Las Vegas Strip.

Pilot calls in 'mayday,' then crashes on Calif. freeway

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — The pilot of a small, twin-engine plane that dropped out of the sky and exploded in flames on a busy freeway near a Southern California airport Friday morning, injuring the two people aboard, declared a mayday and told air traffic controllers he had lost an engine before the crash.

The Cessna 310 crashed on Interstate 405, just short of a runway at John Wayne Airport in Costa Mesa, about 9:30 a.m., said Ian Gregor, a spokesman for the Federal Aviation Administration. The pilot declared an emergency shortly after taking off from the airport and was trying to return when the crash occurred, Gregor said.

"Hey, we got a mayday!" the pilot told air traffic controllers before the crash. "Mayday! Mayday! ... I'm trying to make it back to the airport."

The exchange was captured on a recording of air traffic controller communications, posted on the website LiveATC.net.

After an air traffic controller tells the pilot a gear of the plane appears to be up, the pilot says he's trying to gain altitude. "I lost my right engine," he said.

The two people who were aboard the plane, a man and a woman in their 50s and 60s, were alive when they were pulled from the fiery wreckage and were taken to a hospital with traumatic injuries, said Orange County fire Capt.

Larry Kurtz.

The plane clipped a blue pickup as it crashed on the freeway, but the driver suffered only a bruised elbow, Kurtz said.

"The fact that a plane was able to land and only strike a single vehicle is extraordinary," he said.

Video posted on social media showed the plane engulfed in flames and plumes of black smoke billowing into the sky. Traffic was backed up for miles on the major route between Los Angeles and San Diego as fire crews worked to extinguish the blaze.

"The plane collided, spun across the freeway and burst into flames," Kurtz said. The wreckage was strewn across

several lanes of the freeway, he said.

An off-duty fire captain, John Meffert, said he saw the plane flying low before it came crashing down on the freeway and was immediately engulfed in flames. Meffert, who has been a firefighter in Avalon for 17 years, said part of the wing hit his car, but he was able to pull over and went running toward the blaze.

Through the flames and smoke, he saw a woman's head pop up inside the plane and made his way into the aircraft from the tail. Fire officials said Meffert pulled the woman and the male pilot from the burning wreckage.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Cops comb for bald man who swiped Rogaine

MI DEARBORN — Police in suburban Detroit can skip barbershops as they search for a man who stole a hair growth product.

This guy is bald.

Dearborn police have security video of a bald man who is suspected of stealing Rogaine from a Walgreens store on June 22. Investigators said the man put seven boxes in a bag and dashed. He was wearing a shirt that said, "Air Force Dad."

Police Chief Ron Haddad said it's "not the most hair-raising crime," but he wants the public's help. Police said the bald man could strike again because it takes many months of consistent use to grow hair.

Coca-Cola museum free to public opens

MS CORINTH — A new Coca-Cola museum free to the public recently opened in Mississippi.

Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal reported that Coke floats from an old-fashioned soda fountain were served to the crowd at the museum's grand opening on Monday in Corinth. It houses memorabilia that is from beyond roughly 100 years ago.

Corinth Coke Chairman Sandy Williams says the museum, located downtown, has more than 1,000 items. It's adjacent to the Coke plant in a building that dates back to 1972.

Corinth Coke was started in 1905 by A. Kenneth Weaver, the grandfather of Williams and Corinth Coke President Kenneth Williams.

A flood in 2010 vacated a building that was home to a Coke museum that had opened

during the company's 100th anniversary.

Driver ticketed for piling items on roof

NH CONCORD — You can't take it with you, the old saying goes. One New Hampshire driver should've taken the advice literally.

WMUR-TV reported a car that was pulled over Wednesday had furniture, bicycles and boxes strapped to the roof and a wheeled basket dangling over the back window. There was also a furniture dolly hanging against a driver's side window.

State police posted a picture of the vehicle on Facebook.

New Hampshire State Police are warning drivers to avoid driving with too many items strapped to the tops of cars in the wake of the incident. They said the amount of items constituted a hazard. Police issued the driver a ticket for negligent driving and having an uninspected vehicle.

5-foot boa constrictor found resting on porch

ME BIDDEFORD — Police in a Maine city say a five-foot boa constrictor that appeared to be an escaped pet was found curled up on someone's porch.

A person called police on Tuesday afternoon to report the snake, which is not native to Maine. The Portland Press Herald reported an animal control officer captured the snake in a pillowcase and took it to the Animal Welfare Society in Kennebunk.

The animal was a red-tailed boa constrictor, which is a kind of snake that is often kept and bred in captivity. They can grow to be 6 to 10 feet long.

Activist, 98, defiant after court date

MA GREAT BAR-RINGTON — A 98-year-old Massachusetts woman in a wheelchair who was arrested last weekend for blocking construction of a natural gas pipeline remained defiant at her arraignment.

Frances Crowe and seven co-defendants had their criminal trespass charges reduced to civil infractions Thursday, and were released pending a July 18 hearing.

The Berkshire Eagle reported that on the steps of the courthouse the Northampton woman said her actions are about "the future of life on the planet."

Crowe, a well-known peace and environmental activist, was arrested Saturday at Otis State Forest in Sandisfield.

She was protesting an easement that allows the Tennessee Gas Pipeline Co. to widen its right of way through the forest.

Car towed twice due to DMV website error

CT BERLIN — A Connecticut woman has had her car towed twice due to a glitch in the Department of Motor Vehicles website.

Peggy Levesque told WFSB-TV her registration, taxes and car payments are all up to date. Still, she has woken up to her car being towed from her Bristol apartment complex twice.

Her apartment complex has a partnership with a local auto body shop which may use information from the DMV website to tow cars.

The first time her car was towed, Levesque said the website showed her registration as "canceled or void."

Six months later, her car was towed again after the

website showed her car as unregistered.

The DMV says the error should not happen again.

Driver takes joyride onto basketball court

MO COLUMBIA — A 23-year-old man has been arrested after smashing through two gates and driving onto the basketball court at the University of Missouri over the weekend, causing an estimated \$100,000 in damage.

Police were called last week after a Volkswagen Passat was driven through a closed gate on the south side of Mizzou Arena. Maj. Brian Weimer said the driver then went through a garage door in the back dock area and damaged several golf carts before heading onto the court, where the tires left skid marks in places.

Police: Would-be robber apologizes to clerk

SC MYRTLE BEACH — Police in South Carolina are seeking a man who apologized after attempting to rob a convenience store.

The Sun News reported that Horry County police said they responded June 18 to a Circle K in Little River after the man walked inside and demanded money while holding a knife.

A police report said a night clerk told them the man entered the store around 1 a.m. and approached the counter.

Police say the "unfazed" clerk didn't give the man money and told him to leave.

The man realized his efforts were going nowhere and apologized, put the knife back in his pocket and left.

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NBA free agency begins with big deals

Associated Press

Gordon Hayward started his free agency tour in Miami on Saturday, potentially on the verge of moving into the Eastern Conference for the first time in his career.

The East could use some more star power.

Stephen Curry and Blake Griffin are staying in the West. Paul George is heading to the West as well, teaming up with reigning NBA MVP Russell Westbrook after a surprising deal saw Indiana send him to Oklahoma City. Before daybreak in some parts of the NBA world, roughly \$750 million in new deals were hammered out and merely awaiting signatures next week when the NBA's off-season moratorium ends.

The frenzy is underway, and there's still plenty of moves left.

Curry is now off the board and staying with the champion Golden State Warriors on a five-year, \$201 million deal — that's \$170.22 for every second of every regular-season game the Warriors will play in that span, overtimes not included. Kevin Durant will likely soon make it official that he's staying with the champs as well.

So with those two basically sealed, many eyes will be on Hayward's meeting with Miami. It's the first of three meetings Hayward is expected to take in the coming days, others coming with Boston and then Utah — the team that he has been with throughout his NBA career. But if Heat President Pat Riley can pull off another free-agent coup, Miami could find itself again contending in the East.

But the first night of free agency — the NBA says talks couldn't begin until 12:01 a.m. Eastern on July 1, though that seemed an even grayer area than usual this year — was all about the West.

Griffin canceled some meetings he had with other teams, Phoenix included, and struck a deal to stay with the Clippers on a five-year contract worth about \$175 million. That agreement represented the richest contract (in terms of total value) in NBA history, topping the \$153 million deal that Mike Conley struck with the Memphis Grizzlies last summer.

By sunrise, Griffin's contract was No. 1 no more.

Curry got the first "Supermax" in NBA history, striking

that deal shortly after the free-agent shopping spree around the league was getting underway. Curry, by NBA standards, was an absolute bargain in his first seven seasons, winning two MVP awards, two championships, setting three-point records and doing all that while making an average of \$6.5 million a year.

He'll now average about \$40 million over the next five.

"Congrats @StephenCurry," Cleveland star LeBron James tweeted.

It was a run on point guards all over the league:

Not only did the Warriors keep Curry, but also agreed to keep Shaun Livingston for three more years. Jrue Holiday got \$126 million in a five-year deal with New Orleans, with incentives possibly pushing that one to \$150 million. Patty Mills is returning to San Antonio for the next four years at \$50 million, and Jeff Teague agreed with Minnesota on a three-year, \$57 million deal. John Wall was offered a four-year extension worth \$168 million by the Wizards, also falling into that so-called Supermax category.

The Supermax is a part of the new Collective Bargaining

Agreement, which also went into effect Saturday after being ratified by the league and the National Basketball Players Association earlier this year.

Teague replaces Ricky Rubio, traded earlier Friday to Utah in a move that could have some impact on what Hayward does. It also doesn't hurt Minnesota's new place as a popular pick for big-time improvement out West, with the newly acquired Jimmy Butler — another All-Star leaving the East for the West — already joining Andrew Wiggins and Karl-Anthony Towns.

Utah getting Rubio essentially means George Hill's time with the Jazz is over. It's unknown how much, if any, effect that will have on Hayward and his decision between joining the Heat, the Celtics or remaining in Salt Lake City.

In other highlights from the first night of free agency:

■ Tony Snell agreed on a four-year deal that could be worth up to \$46 million to stay with the Milwaukee Bucks. The fourth year is at Snell's option.

■ Houston kept Nene on a four-year, \$15 million deal that would seem like an absolute bargain in today's league.

Sources: Pacers deal George to Thunder for 2 players

Associated Press

Paul George has a new home, and Russell Westbrook has a new star teammate.

The Indiana Pacers have agreed to trade George to the Oklahoma City Thunder for Victor Oladipo and Domantas Sabonis, said two people with knowledge of the details. The stunning deal gives Westbrook, the newly crowned NBA MVP, some serious help next season and makes the already rugged Western Conference even more daunting.

The two teams came together on the trade Friday just hours before the free agent market was set to open, said the people who spoke to The Associated

Press on condition of anonymity because the trade was not official. It is not expected to be finalized until the moratorium ends, but that didn't stop the rest of the league from reacting about the newest dynamic duo to form.

The entire league expected George to be on the move after he informed the Pacers of his plans to leave as a free agent next summer. That forced Kevin Pritchard, who was recently elevated to take over basketball operations after Larry Bird's abrupt resignation, to find a trade before losing him for nothing. Pritchard called George's decision "a gut punch," but didn't panic. He

resisted offers on draft night, when many analysts said he would get the best package, and waited until just before the free agent market's opening bell.

Paul George traded? No surprise.

To the Thunder to team up with Westbrook? That was a stunner.

George could have been in line for the so-called "Supermax" extension — a five-year pact worth about \$205 million — with Indiana this summer, had he been voted onto the All-NBA team this offseason.

He wasn't, though if he is an All-NBA player next season — which is certainly possible with the numbers he could post

playing alongside Westbrook — George would be eligible for a huge payday again. And the irony there is that if he is set on joining the Los Angeles Lakers in 2018, as has been reported for some time, George would miss out on that massive extra windfall.

George is the second Eastern Conference All-Star from this past season to join the already-loaded Western Conference in the last few days. Jimmy Butler was traded by Chicago to Minnesota on draft night.

"Playoffs spots are opening up," Philadelphia's Joel Embiid noted on his Twitter account Friday night.

Battling to beat the 'Big 4' at Wimbledon

Associated Press

LONDON — Roger Federer, Novak Djokovic, Rafael Nadal and Andy Murray have ruled Wimbledon for the past 14 years, combining to win the tournament every time in that span.

No real surprise, given the way that Big 4 dominates tennis.

"Because they've been so good compared to every other player the last 10, 15 years," fifth-seeded Stan Wawrinka said Saturday at the All England Club, two days before play begins, "they've been winning here every year."

Somewhere, of course, there is a man who one day will win Wimbledon — and other Grand Slam titles, too.

Asked about the quartet's reign at the grass-court major, Federer said: "It's like that, but (things) can change tomorrow, very quickly."

John McEnroe recalls knowing early on in the careers of players such as Nadal or Djokovic that they would break through. Lately, though, the seven-time major champion said, "I don't see that person right now that's got it all, where you're like, 'OK.'"

McEnroe's brother, Patrick, agreed the most likely winner will again be a member of the usual group. And he went a step further.

"We're going to be likely talking about two of those four guys on 'championship Sunday,'" said Patrick, who joins John as an ESPN analyst during the fortnight.

If someone else is going to take home the title, here is a look at some candidates:

Stan Wawrinka, 32, Switzerland

Why he could do it: He's won each of the other three major tournaments, so knows how to grind through seven best-of-five-set

matches. He also owns a superb one-handed backhand that can control a match.

Why he might not: He's never had much success at Wimbledon, going 18-12 with two quarterfinal appearances. His footwork on grass needs help; he could go to the net more.

What a championship would mean: Completing a career Grand Slam, something only eight other men have done (including Federer, Djokovic and Nadal).

Alexander Zverev, 20, Germany

Why he should be taken seriously: He is 6-foot-6, with booming shots and plenty of tennis smarts. He recently beat Djokovic in the Italian Open final to become the youngest champion at a Masters event since — wait for it — Djokovic.

Why it's too soon to take him seriously: He's only 20, and despite a reputation for incredible fitness, has never advanced past the third round at a major. Here is how John McEnroe put it: "I'm pretty sure he's going to win multiple majors. He's about as close to (that) guy as I get. But ... he's a little frail."

What a championship would mean: The true arrival of a member of the next generation.

Milos Raonic, 26, Canada

Why last year should not be considered a fluke: His first run to a Grand Slam final, before losing to Murray, was not his only success at a major. He reached the 2014 Wimbledon semifinals, and the 2016 Aussie Open semifinals, and his serve is among the best.

Why last year may have been a fluke: His semifinal win over Federer lost a little luster due to Federer's surgically repaired

left knee. More cause for concern is that Raonic has shown little inclination to take another step forward over the past year.

What a championship would mean: It would be a first for Canada, but more importantly, it could signal that Raonic is ready to really flourish and unveil the promise he's long shown.

Nick Kyrgios, 22, Australia

Why fans and foes should keep an eye on him: He's got as stylish and entertaining a brand of tennis as there is nowadays, full of big serves and forehands, trick shots, athleticism and more. He is capable of beating Nadal — as he already has at Wimbledon — or Federer or anyone, really, when he puts his mind to it.

Why it's OK to look away: He can lose his way suddenly in the course of a match, leaving fans frustrated.

What a championship would mean: A bright new face, a bold character, a brash champion, all rolled into one. He's young and charismatic and could rule the sport if he is able to pull together his game — and his mindset.

Marin Cilic, 28, Croatia

Why he should be included in the conversation: Like Wawrinka, he's an older member of this group who already knows what it takes to win a major (2014 U.S. Open). Unlike Wawrinka, he seems to have a style suited to grass.

Why perhaps he shouldn't: He's never been past the quarterfinals at Wimbledon, losing at that stage each of the last three years.

What a championship would mean: A second major and validation as no one-hit wonder.

Sharp returns to Blackhawks, agrees to 1-year deal

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Patrick Sharp, a high-scoring winger who helped the Blackhawks win three Stanley Cup championships before getting traded, is returning to Chicago for a second stint.

The 35-year-old veteran agreed to a one-year contract that guarantees \$800,000. He could earn an additional \$200,000 in incentives.

Sharp spent 10 seasons with the Blackhawks from 2005 to

2015 and had 511 points (239 goals). He scored more than 30 goals four times in that span and helped transform Chicago into one of the most successful franchises along with Jonathan Toews and Patrick Kane.

Sharp got dealt to Dallas in a salary cap move after the Blackhawks beat Tampa Bay for the championship in 2015.

He has 277 goals and 322 assists in 14 years with Philadelphia, Chicago and the Stars. But he had season-ending hip

surgery in March after missing most of December because of a concussion and finished with just eight goals and 10 assists.

In other NHL news:

■ A person with direct knowledge of the deal says the New York Rangers have signed goaltender Ondrej Pavelec to a one-year deal worth \$1.3 million.

The person spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity Saturday because

the contract had not been announced.

Pavelec will be the backup to Henrik Lundqvist after Antti Raanta was traded to Arizona last week.

Pavelec has played his entire career with the Atlanta Thrashers/Winnipeg Jets franchise. He had a 3.55 goals-against average last season with a .888 save percentage in eight games in the NHL, and a 2.78 GAA and .917 save percentage in 18 games in the AHL.

Jon Gray helps Rockies halt 8-game slide

Associated Press

PHOENIX — The return of Jon Gray from the disabled list couldn't have come at a better time for the Colorado Rockies.

Gray struck out 10 over six innings in his first start since April and rookie Raimel Tapia hit his first career home run, helping the Rockies end an eight-game skid with a 6-3 win over the Arizona Diamondbacks on Friday night.

Gray, making his first start since April 13, allowed two runs on seven hits for his first victory of the season. Colorado's opening day starter, Gray broke a bone in his left foot in the fourth inning of his third start of the season and went on the disabled list.

"I did a really good job slowing things down," Gray said. "I knew it would be a little awkward coming back into a big

league situation but I just wanted to make it slow as possible and make good pitches."

Gray said his slider was working well and that he followed a game plan, not worried about rust from a long time away from the majors.

"What I saw today was a repeatable delivery that he maintained," Rockies manager Bud Black said. "The key tonight was a nice tight slider ... and he made some good pitches with the fastball down and away when he needed to."

Diamondbacks starter Robbie Ray (8-4) lasted six innings and threw a career high 122 pitches. He allowed four runs on five hits with nine strikeouts and walked five, tying a season high.

Chris Owings hit a pair of solo home runs for Arizona, which lost a season high third

consecutive game at home.

"They just kind of chipped away at things and tacked on, threw up six runs and unfortunately it was too much for us to overcome," Diamondbacks manager Torey Lovullo said.

Charlie Blackmon led off the game with a solo home run to right field, his 17th, and third leadoff homer of the season.

Jake Lamb's two-out double in the bottom of the first drove in Gregor Blanco to tie it at 1. Gray struck out the side in that inning.

The Rockies plated two runs in the third off Ray, who threw 75 pitches through his first three innings. Ray walked Mark Reynolds and Trevor Story to open the inning, and with one out, Tapia drove in Reynolds with a grounder.

Ryan Hanigan, called up from the minors earlier in the

day, delivered a two-out single to drive in Story and give Colorado a 3-1 lead.

"I felt like I was around the zone just missing, just barely," said Ray, who took his first loss since May 9 against Detroit. "It's tough. I got behind in counts and paid for it."

The Diamondbacks made it 3-2 in the bottom of the fourth on Owings' 10th home run of the season. Tapia connected in the top of the sixth off Ray for a 4-2 Rockies lead.

"I hope it's not my last," Tapia said in Spanish. "I'm going to keep working hard to try to keep it going."

Owings' second home run came off Rockies reliever Mike Dunn in the eighth. Major League saves leader Greg Holland pitched the ninth for his 26th of the season.

MLB roundup

Leake returns to form, helps Cardinals top Nationals

Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — Mike Leake started the season as one of the top pitchers in the league. He struggled throughout June until Friday night.

The Cardinals righty pitched eight strong innings and Yadier Molina drove in four as St. Louis beat Washington 8-1.

"I think he sees the bigger picture of the season that he's had and the kind of pitcher that he was from the start for us," Cardinals manager Mike Matheny said. "It was exactly what we saw today. This is the kind of guy that he believes he should be every time he gets on the mound."

The Cardinals have won five of their past six, while the Nationals have dropped four of six.

Leake (6-6) got his first win since beating the Los Angeles Dodgers on May 24. He was 0-4 with two no-decisions before picking up the victory Friday.

He pitched eight innings, giving up one run on five hits, striking out four and walking three.

A wild Tanner Roark (6-6) took the loss, lasting just three innings. He gave up four hits but walked a season-high five, the final two of which resulted in the Cardinals' first two runs. Of his 85 pitches in the game, only 46 were strikes.

Yankees 13, Astros 4: Brett Gardner tied a career high with six RBIs and his seventh-inning grand slam helped visiting New York beat Houston, whose veteran Japanese outfielder Nori Aoki pitched for the first time in Major League Baseball.

Braves 3, Athletics 1: Atlanta's Mike Foltynewicz lost his no-hit bid when Matt Olson clobbered a full-count pitch into the elevated right-field seats leading off the ninth inning of the visting Braves' interleague victory over the Athletics.

Reds 5, Cubs 0: Scott Feldman held the Chicago Cubs'

depleted lineup to two singles over seven innings and Adam Duvall hit a three-run homer, powering host Cincinnati to victory.

Mets 2, Phillies 1: Jacob deGrom struck out 12 in seven dominant innings to win his fourth consecutive start, leading New York past visiting Philadelphia.

Rays 6, Orioles 4 (10): Ad-einy Hechavarria hit a tying single in the ninth inning and Steven Souza followed with a three-run homer in the 10th to carry Tampa Bay past host Baltimore.

Royals 8, Twins 1: Jason Vargas picked up his American League-leading 12th victory and Eric Hosmer hit a three-run homer to help host Kansas City beat Minnesota.

Giants 13, Pirates 5: Hunter Pence drove in four runs and visiting San Francisco pounced on Pittsburgh starter Gerrit Cole for seven runs then added

six more against the bullpen.

Brewers 3, Marlins 2: Stephen Vogt, claimed off waivers this week from Oakland, hit two home runs as host Milwaukee held off Miami.

Red Sox 7, Blue Jays 4 (11): Xander Bogaerts hit a tiebreaking single in the 11th inning as visiting Boston beat Toronto.

White Sox 8, Rangers 7: Melky Cabrera hit a two-run double against closer Matt Bush to cap a three-run ninth inning and lift host Chicago past Texas.

Dodgers 10, Padres 4: Austin Barnes hit two homers and drove in seven runs to help visiting Los Angeles to a victory over San Diego.

Mariners 10, Angels 0: At Anaheim, Calif., Robinson Cano hit two home runs while Ariel Miranda allowed only two hits in seven innings as Seattle snapped a four-game losing streak with a victory over Los Angeles.