

STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Trump stresses unity to West Point grads

Associated Press

WEST POINT, N.Y. — President Donald Trump on Saturday highlighted the diversity of West Point's graduating class and appealed for America's newest officers to uphold the country's core values, a speech emphasizing unity at a time when the commander in chief's relationship with military leaders has become strained and questions have arisen about the role of soldiers in a civil society.

Trump also told them that under his administration, American soldiers no longer will be responsible for rebuilding foreign nations.

"It is not the duty of U.S. troops to solve ancient conflicts in faraway lands that many people have never even heard of," he said. "We are not the policeman of the world, but let our enemies be on notice: If our people are threatened, we will never, ever hesitate to act. And when we fight, from now on, we will only fight to win."

Trump's commencement speech came as arguments rage over his threat to use American troops on U.S. soil to quell protests stemming from the killing of George

Floyd by a Minneapolis police officer.

To an audience of more than 1,100, he said members of the Class of 2020 "come from the farms and the cities, from states big and small, and from every race, religion, color and creed. But when you entered these grounds, you became part of one team, one family, proudly serving one American nation."

The president said they "became brothers and sisters pledging allegiance to the same timeless principles, joined together in a common mission: to protect our country, to defend our people, and to carry on the traditions of freedom, equality and liberty that so many gave their lives to secure."

Tensions between the White House and the military have escalated since nationwide protests began over the death of Floyd, a black man who was pinned by the neck by a white police officer for several minutes despite saying he couldn't breathe.

Trump seemingly alluded to the protests, saying: "What has made America unique is the durability of its institutions against the passions and prejudices of the moment. When times are turbulent, when

the road is rough, what matters most is that which is permanent, timeless, enduring and eternal."

He said that from the U.S. Military Academy came "the men and women who fought and won a bloody war to extinguish the evil of slavery within one lifetime of our founding."

Lt. Gen. Darryl A. Williams, the West Point superintendent and the first African American to hold the post, told the cadets that their "challenges ahead will require moral and physical courage."

Esper, who did not attend the graduation, told cadets in a video address that he expects them "to remain committed to our core values — loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity and personal courage. These principles will guide you in challenging times and in the face of new and emerging threats."

Trump's appearance had been criticized as a political move that would put the graduates at risk in order to put Trump on stage in a picturesque part of New York, the one remaining military academy where he had yet to give a graduation address.

DOD lifts travel limits for Guam and South Korea

By CAITLIN M. KENNEY
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON—Guam and South Korea have now met conditions to lift travel restrictions put in place by the Pentagon in March due to the coronavirus pandemic, the Pentagon announced Friday.

There are now 46 "green locations," or states and countries that can allow official travel for service members and their families. No specific military installations in these states, territories, or countries are listed. The decision for lifting travel restrictions for individual installations and facilities is up to the service secretaries and combatant commanders.

Defense Secretary Mark

Esper signed a memorandum May 22 that laid out the conditions needed for locations to allow for travel to and from bases. Esper had put in place stop-movement orders for official travel for all Defense Department personnel and their families in March due to the coronavirus pandemic.

For military bases to lift Defense Department restrictions, locations must remove shelter-in-place orders or travel restrictions, have a 14-day decline in flu or virus symptoms, and have a 14-day decline in new cases or positive tests, according to the Pentagon statement.

Guam recently hosted most of the nearly 4,800-member crew of the USS Theodore Roosevelt in hotels and other locations

for almost two months while sailors went through quarantine due to a severe outbreak of the coronavirus aboard the aircraft carrier. The virus infected 1,273 Roosevelt sailors and killed one, Chief Petty Officer Charles Robert Thacker Jr. The ship left port on May 20 to return to its deployment.

South Korea was one of the first countries where the Pentagon imposed travel restrictions due to the spread of the virus in that country. The restrictions ahead of the military moving season impacted thousands of families who were preparing to go to their next assignment, either in the United States or going to South Korea. But the response from South Korea and the U.S. military to the virus

was seen as an early success due to guidance implemented to combat the virus, such as closing down schools and facilities and increasing testing.

Virginia has still not made it onto the list of "green locations," however the Pentagon announced Thursday that they would begin "Phase One" of returning to normal operations on June 15 based on analysis of location conditions.

In this phase, the Pentagon and associated facilities will allow only mission essential personnel to return to work and organizations will still have a majority of their workforce teleworking. People in the building will be required to wear face coverings and maintain social distancing of six feet.

Some states pause, others press on amid spike

Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas — Utah and Oregon put any further reopening of their economies on hold amid a spike in coronavirus cases, but there was no turning back Friday in such states as Texas, Arkansas and Arizona despite flashing warning signs there, too.

One by one, states are weighing the health risks from the virus against the economic damage from the stay-at-home orders that have thrown millions out of work over the past three months.

And many governors are coming down on the side of jobs, even though an Associated Press analysis this week found that cases are rising in nearly half the states — a trend experts attributed in part to the gradual reopening of businesses over the past few weeks.

Texas hit highs this week for hospitalizations and new COVID-19 cases, prompting Houston's top county official, Lina Hidalgo, to warn that "we may be approaching the precipice of a disaster." Meanwhile, the state went ahead with allowing restaurants to expand eat-in dining Friday to 75% of capacity, up from 50%.

"Oh, yeah, I've been concerned," 32-year-old Renata Liggins said as she settled in front of a plate of brisket at Black's Barbecue in Austin and the number of people

now hospitalized with COVID-19 in Texas climbed to its highest level yet, at more than 2,100. But "it just feels I can finally breathe a little bit."

Alabama, which began reopening in early May, has seen more than a quarter of the state's 23,000 cases come in the past two weeks as Republican Gov. Kay Ivey emphasized personal responsibility.

Arkansas, which has seen both hospitalizations and active cases more than double since Memorial Day, reported its largest one-day spike in new coronavirus cases Friday. Gov. Asa Hutchinson said at least 11,547 people in the state have tested positive for the virus, an increase of 731 cases over Thursday.

Hutchinson said he expected more increases in the coming week but would press ahead with plans to further ease virus restrictions on businesses starting Monday. Capacity limits will be increased for restaurants, bars, theaters and other businesses while other social distancing restrictions remain in place.

"Regardless of what we see in the next week, we made the right decision to go ahead and lift some of these restrictions so we don't cause more damage to people's lives and their livelihood," Hutchinson said.

Arizona has become one of the most troubling hot spots in the U.S. as new cases

have surged to more than 1,000 a day, up from fewer than 400 before stay-at-home orders expired in mid-May.

Republican Gov. Doug Ducey has given assurances the health care system can handle it, and Arizona Health Director Dr. Cara Christ said: "We are not going to be able to stop the spread, and so we can't stop living as well."

So far, only a small number of governors have shown a willingness to retreat or at least hit pause.

Republican Gov. Gary Herbert of Utah and Democratic Gov. Kate Brown of Oregon said they would halt lifting further restrictions for the time being as new cases flare.

"As I've said before, reopening comes with real risk," Brown said in announcing a one-week pause that will affect, among other places, Portland, the state's biggest city.

She said the increase in positive test results was caused in part by the reopening of some counties.

Elsewhere across the country, Iowa allowed bars, restaurants, theaters and other businesses to pack in more customers. Swimming pools, senior centers and adult day care centers were also cleared to open back up. Iowa is still seeing hot spots, especially near meatpacking plants.

CDC posts tips for minimizing everyday virus risk

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Take the stairs, not the elevator, down from your hotel room. Encourage people to bring their own food and drinks to your cook-out. Use hand sanitizer after banking at an ATM. Call ahead to restaurants and nail salons to make sure staff are wearing face coverings. And no high-fives — or even elbow bumps — at the gym.

These are some of the tips in long-awaited guidance from U.S. health officials about how to reduce risk of coronavirus infection for Americans who are attempting some semblance of normal life.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention posted the guidelines Friday, along with a second set for organizing and

attending big gatherings such as concerts, sporting events, protests and political rallies.

But the guidelines are "not intended to endorse any particular type of event," the CDC's Dr. Jay Butler said in a Friday call with reporters.

The staging and attendance of such events should be in accordance with what local health officials are advising, based on much the coronavirus is spreading in a particular community, he added.

The guidelines are long overdue, some health experts say.

Julia Marcus, a Harvard Medical School infectious disease researcher, has likened stay-at-home suggestions to "abstinence-only" messaging and has pressed for advice to help people minimize risk. She

said she was delighted by the CDC's tips.

"I think it's a huge step in the right direction," Marcus said. "These guidelines are really directed toward ordinary Americans trying to make decisions about risk every day."

But there are notable omissions. There's nothing about precautions to take before going to church, no guidance about dating and sex and no explicit advice on a topic that some doctors say they get asked all the time: Is it OK to take the kids to visit grandparents?

"Visiting grandma is something I must address three times a week," said Dr. William Schaffner, a Vanderbilt University infectious disease expert.

"My empathy goes out to the CDC. It's very, very difficult to

have a precise answer for every circumstance," he added.

Stay-at-home orders, school shutdowns and business closings were followed by a national flattening in the rate of new cases. In recent weeks, many states have started reopening as they face pressure to get the pandemic-damaged economy going again. And cases are rising in nearly half the states, according to an Associated Press analysis.

The CDC has put out many sets of guidelines, including some for churches, camps, schools and transit agencies. But until now, the organization hasn't offered specific advice to people trying to decide how to safely do things like take vacations, get their nails done, host barbecues or visit a bank.

California reopens wine tasting rooms

Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — California wineries started uncorking their bottles and welcoming people back to their tasting rooms Friday as the state's \$145 billion tourism industry gears up with hotels, zoos, museums and aquariums also allowed to reopen.

With COVID-19 cases in the state still growing, the tourism industry is trying to balance how to implement safety measures to control a pandemic without ruining the fun.

Hotels will limit people lounging by pools and nix breakfast buffets for now. There will be no double-decker safari buses packed with tourists rolling through the San Diego Zoo, nor animal shows that draw crowds.

The zoo instead is using its buses to hold moving shows that will glide past people standing on green circles to keep them 6 feet apart. Every visitor over the age of 2 will be required to wear face coverings.

Wine tasting rooms also are encouraging masks and making room for physical distancing. Many are requiring appointments for tastings.

Alabama

MONTGOMERY — A surge of coronavirus cases in Alabama is prompting renewed health warnings from health and public officials that the risk of COVID-19 remains, and people need to take precautions.

As of Friday, more than 23,000 people statewide had tested positive for COVID-19, the disease caused by the new coronavirus, with more than one-fourth of the cases coming in the last two weeks. The state reported 1,500 cases over a two-day period.

"COVID-19 spreads quickly, and your actions affect others," State Health Officer Scott Harris said in a Friday statement.

Harris told The Associated Press this week that it is more important than ever for people to take precautions.

Illinois

SPRINGFIELD — The Illinois Department of Public Health reported Friday 77 additional fatalities related to COVID-19, bringing the total number of deaths to 6,260.

Health department officials also reported 595 new known coronavirus cases, lifting the statewide total to 131,198. It is the first time the daily number of new infections has fallen below 600 since March 30.

Health officials said more than 1.1 million people have been tested in Illinois. The state is also reporting an additional 181 deaths and 861 non-fatal infections were "probable" cases of COVID-19, though lab tests weren't performed.

Kansas

TOPEKA — A protester who attended a demonstration over the death of George Floyd in downtown Topeka last week has tested positive for the coronavirus, health officials say.

According to a news release from the Shawnee County Health Department, the person attended June 1 protests at the city's Law Enforcement Center, The Topeka Capital-Journal reported. The department encourages anyone who attended protests that day to monitor themselves for COVID-19 symptoms.

Meanwhile, the City-Cowley County Health Department on Friday said a 14-year-old who tested positive for COVID-19 likely exposed people in Sedgwick and Cowley counties.

The City-Cowley County Health Department ordered anyone who believes they might have been exposed to self-isolate for the next two days.

Michigan

LANSING — The state of Michigan said Friday it has resumed unemployment benefits for 140,000 people whose accounts were frozen during an investigation of potentially fraudulent claims filed by impostors.

The payments are being made "within days" of identities being validated, according to the announcement that came a week after the state said payments had been halted to 340,000 accounts — 20% of all those being paid — during the coronavirus pandemic. Criminals have applied used previously stolen or false personal information from data breaches at Equifax and others.

"It's extremely upsetting that the actions of these fraudsters have delayed payments meant for our working families," Steve Gray, director of the Unemployment Insurance Agency.

Minnesota

MINNEAPOLIS — University of Minnesota leaders have mapped out a plan to reopen classrooms, dormitories and other common spaces this fall amid the coronavirus outbreak.

The Board of Regents endorsed the plan Thursday and is expected to vote on it in July.

The reopening plan includes some physical distancing, COVID-19 monitoring, testing and isolation.

The Star Tribune reported each of the university's five campuses would adjust their academic calendars to start the semester early and end classroom instruction by Thanksgiving.

"We believe that we are as safe as any place to be able to protect the health and safety of our students, faculty and staff," President Joan Gabel said. "It is our number one priority, and we are prepared with extensive planning to be able to do so."

New Jersey

TRENTON — A New Jersey shore town backed off Friday on its plans to offer indoor dining beginning Monday, in defiance of a state order.

Asbury Park's council had authorized restaurants this week to offer indoor dining with restrictions beginning Monday, violating Democratic Gov. Phil Murphy's executive

order. After the state sued on Friday and a judge issued an order temporarily blocking the town's attempt, Mayor John Moor and the council released a statement Friday evening recommending that restaurants not serve diners indoors.

"We are advising Asbury Park businesses not to open indoors as we had announced earlier this week, as opening indoors would violate the court order and could jeopardize your business's liquor licenses" and subject businesses to fines and other penalties, the statement said.

New York

ALBANY — New York state's health commissioner on Friday said overnight summer camps will not be allowed to operate over coronavirus concerns.

Health Commissioner Dr. Howard Zucker said it would be too difficult to manage the risks in overnight camps and maintain practices like social distancing and mask wearing.

The state had previously said that summer day camps would be allowed to reopen on June 29 with regulations about capacity and health practices.

"Overnight camps have congregate settings and sleeping arrangements in close quarters that present too many risks," Zucker said in announcing the decision.

Oklahoma

OKLAHOMA CITY — A spike in coronavirus cases in the Tulsa area is linked to indoor events and people who attend such gatherings should take health precautions, Oklahoma health officials warned Friday.

The Tulsa Health Department's warning comes eight days before President Donald Trump is scheduled to hold a campaign rally at the city's BOK Center, which has a listed seating capacity of over 19,000.

Anyone who is sick or might have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 should stay home, Department Director Bruce Dart said.

Potential Biden VPs start 2nd round of vetting

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Joe Biden's search for a running mate is entering a second round of vetting for a dwindling list of potential vice presidential nominees, with several black women in strong contention.

Democrats with knowledge of the process said Biden's search committee has narrowed the choices to as few as six serious contenders after initial interviews. Among the group still in contention: Sens. Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts and Kamala Harris of California, as well as Susan Rice, who served as President Barack Obama's national security adviser.

Those with knowledge declined to name other contenders and said the process remains somewhat fluid. Additional candi-

dates may still be asked to submit to the extensive document review process now underway for some top contenders. Those familiar with Biden's search spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to publicly discuss the process.

The campaign dismissed the idea of a shortened list as early speculation.

"Those who talk don't know and those who know don't talk," said Andrew Bates, a Biden spokesperson.

Biden, who has already said he will pick a woman as his running mate, is facing increased calls from Democrats to put a woman of color on the ticket — both because of the outsize role that black voters played in Biden's road to the nomination and because of the reckoning over racism and inequality roiling the nation following

the death of George Floyd. The black Minneapolis man died after a white police officer pressed his knee on his neck for several minutes, an episode that was captured on video.

The campaign's list includes several black women, including Harris and Rice. Advisers have also looked closely at Florida Rep. Val Demings and Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms, both of whom are black, and New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham, a Latina.

Biden's vetting committee had conversations with a larger group of women earlier this spring; those continuing on in the process have been asked to turn over financial records, past writings and other documentation.

Transgender health protections revoked

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — In a move applauded by President Donald Trump's conservative religious base, his administration Friday finalized a rule that overturns Obama-era protections for transgender people against sex discrimination in health care.

The Department of Health and Human Services said it will enforce sex discrimination protections "according to the plain meaning of the word 'sex' as male or female and as determined by biology." This rewrites an Obama-era regulation that sought a broader understanding shaped by a person's internal sense of being male, female, neither or a combination.

LGBTQ groups say explicit protections are needed for people seeking sex-reassignment treatment, and even for transgender people who need care for common illnesses such as diabetes or heart problems.

But conservatives say the Obama administration exceeded its legal authority in broadly interpreting gender.

The reversal comes in the middle of LGBTQ Pride Month. Activists and Democratic lawmakers noted that Friday was

also the four-year anniversary of the mass shooting at the Pulse gay nightclub in Orlando, Fla., in which 49 people were killed.

"Under the old Obama rule, medical professionals could have been forced to facilitate gender reassignment surgeries and abortions — even if they believed this was a violation of their conscience or believed it harmful to the patient," said Mary Beth Waddell of the religious conservative Family Research Council.

But House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said, "Religious freedom is no justification for hatred or bigotry, and every American has the right to seek and receive care without intimidation or fear."

The American Medical Association strongly criticized the Trump administration's action.

"The federal government should never make it more difficult for individuals to access health care — during a pandemic or any other time," said Dr. Susan Bailey, the group's president.

Women's groups say the new regulations also undermine access to abortion, which is a legal medical procedure.

New book says first lady delayed move to DC to get new prenup

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — First lady Melania Trump delayed her move to Washington after Donald Trump became president to gain leverage in renegotiating her prenuptial agreement, according to a new book. The White House denounced the book after it became public on Friday.

Mary Jordan, author of the book "The Art of Her Deal: The Untold Story of Melania Trump," wrote that the 2016 campaign had been rife with reports about Trump's alleged infidelities and the first lady was learning new details about them from media reports.

Jordan, a reporter for The Washington Post, wrote that the incoming first lady wanted time to cool off and amend her financial arrangement with Trump to ensure the financial future of both herself and their son, Barron. Melania Trump had said that she wanted to wait until the end of the school year to move to Washington.

Citing interviews with several people close to the Trumps, Jordan wrote that during the cam-

paign, Melania Trump thought a lot had changed since she signed the prenuptial. She wanted to ensure that Barron got his "rightful share of inheritance," particularly if the president's daughter, Ivanka, took the reins of the family business.

The Associated Press purchased an early copy of the book, which will be published June 16.

Stephanie Grisham, a spokeswoman for Mrs. Trump, said the book was based on inaccurate information. "Yet another book about Mrs. Trump with false information and sources," Grisham said in an emailed statement.

Jordan writes that Melania Trump wanted "proof in writing" that Barron would be treated more of an equal to Trump's oldest three children when it came to financial opportunities and inheritance. Among the items under discussion was Barron's possible involvement in the family business, the Trump Organization, and ownership of Trump property, according to the book.

Triple-digit heat challenges Ariz. firefighters

Associated Press

TUCSON, Ariz. — Hundreds of Arizona residents under an evacuation notice were allowed to return home Friday but were told to remain ready to leave at a moment's notice as a wildfire burns in a national forest near Tucson.

Firefighters are trying to keep the blaze in canyons and ridges and prevent it from moving downhill.

"The fire activity near the homes has dropped down due to the good work of our firefighters," said Adam Jarrold,

public information officer for the fire management team.

Late Friday, however, officials ordered an evacuation near Catalina State Park, north of the area where some residents are being asked to be ready to leave. People in the evacuation zone were told to move west, away from the Catalina Mountains.

Most of the western United States is experiencing extreme dryness or drought, creating challenging conditions for wildfire season, Bryan Henry, meteorologist with the National Interagency Fire Center, said

in a recent fire season outlook.

Authorities have said southern Arizona's dry, hot weather and the steep, rocky topography have been the main challenges in fighting the fire. Friday was the hottest day yet for crews battling the blaze, with temperatures forecast to reach 107 in the afternoon.

National Weather Service forecasters said temperatures were projected to remain in the triple digits through the weekend with a 10% chance of dry thunderstorms or potentially dangerous downbursts that bring only a trace of moisture

but can kick up gusts of wind that feed flames.

"We do have some weather concerns," said incident meteorologist Gary Zell, who was stationed Friday at now-closed Catalina State Park.

"These guys are heroes, working all day in up to 107 degrees," said Zell, who has worked wildfires around the West for two decades. "This is the first time I've worked a fire in my hometown so I'm pretty vested in making sure everything goes well."

UN links arms shipments, attacks to Iran

Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS — The United Nations says it has determined that Iran was the source for several items in two arms shipments seized by the United States and for debris left by attacks on Saudi Arabia's oil installations and an international airport, according to a new report.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said some of the items seized by the U.S. in November 2019 and February 2020 "were identical or similar" to those found after the cruise missiles and drone attacks on Saudi Arabia in 2019.

He said in a report to the U.N. Security Council obtained Fri-

day by The Associated Press that some items seized by the U.S. in international waters off Yemen are not only Iranian but may have been transferred "in a manner inconsistent" with the council resolution that endorsed the 2015 Iran nuclear deal.

The secretary-general was reporting on implementation of the 2015 resolution enshrining the nuclear agreement aimed at preventing Iran from developing nuclear weapons. It includes restrictions that took effect on Jan. 16, 2016, on transfers to or from Iran of nuclear and ballistic missile material as well as arms.

The Security Council is scheduled to discuss the resolu-

tion's implementation on June 30, and the U.S. is expected to press for the U.N. arms embargo against Iran, which is part of it, to be extended indefinitely before it expires in October.

Iran's U.N. Mission responded to the report Friday saying: "Iran categorically rejects the observations contained in the report concerning the Iranian connection to the export of weapons or their components that are used in attacks on Saudi Arabia and the Iranian origin of alleged U.S. seizures of armaments."

Its statement said the U.N. "lacks the capacity, expertise, and knowledge to conduct such a sophisticated and sensitive investigation," adding that the

report reproduces exact claims by the United States.

"In essence, the U.S. is sitting in the driver's seat to shape the so-called 'assessment' regarding the Iranian connection to the attacks," Iran said.

President Donald Trump withdrew the United States from the nuclear agreement in May 2018 and re-imposed U.S. sanctions that had been eased or lifted. American officials contend Iran is working to obtain nuclear-capable missiles, which the Iranians deny.

The nuclear agreement is still supported by the five other parties — France, Britain, Russia, China and Germany.

Attacks on police, warlord kill at least 18 in Afghanistan

Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — Two separate attacks in Afghanistan have killed at least 18 people amid a wave of violence across the country, local Afghan officials said Saturday.

A local police chief in western Ghor, Fakhrudin, said Taliban insurgents stormed a police checkpoint late Friday night and killed 10 police offi-

cers. He added that one policeman was wounded and another one was still missing after the attack in the remote village in the Pasaband district.

The police official blamed the Taliban for the attack who have a strong presence in the area, especially in the Pasaband district. The Taliban have not commented on the attack in Ghor.

Meanwhile in the eastern

Khost province, unknown gunmen targeting a former warlord killed at least eight people in the province's Ali Sher district, said Adel Haider, spokesman for the provincial police chief.

The police spokesman said that the target of the attack was among the dead — Abdul Wali Ekhlās, a candidate in last year's parliamentary elections who didn't win a seat.

No one immediately claimed

responsibility for the attacks in Khost province.

Violence has spiked in recent weeks in Afghanistan with most of the attacks claimed by the local Islamic State group affiliate. On Friday, a bomb explosion inside a mosque in the capital, Kabul, killed at least four people, including the prayer leader.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

1st openly transgender person elected to office

WV WHEELING — A West Virginia woman who won a city council race is the first openly transgender person elected to office in the state, according to national and local advocacy groups.

Rosemary Ketchum is set to take office in July as the Wheeling City Council's Ward 3 representative, news outlets reported.

The 26-year-old ran against three others on a platform addressing homelessness and affordable housing in the city, as well as opioid addiction and other issues, according to her campaign website.

National organizations have since celebrated her victory, including GLAAD and the LGBTQ Victory Fund, which said the win would inspire other transgender people to consider running for office in their communities.

Female bear and cubs returned to wilderness

NM LOS ALAMOS — A female bear and three cubs found raiding the neighborhood trash in Los Alamos were safely captured and moved to a new, more appropriate hunting ground in the countryside of western New Mexico.

The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish said that seven conservation officers worked around the clock over two days to capture and relocate the four bears. They were all healthy and had not been captured by the agency in the past.

The agency said the bears were in danger of getting used to finding their food in neighborhoods where people live.

Family traps baby gator found in swimming pool

FL BRADENTON — A Florida family who found a baby alligator in their home's pool took matters into their own hands.

After discovering the reptile in his pool, Carlos Rivera of Bradenton went back inside and ate dinner with his family while they contemplated which authorities they needed to call.

Television station WFTS reported that the family decided they were up to the task and trapped the alligator in a trash bin when it got out of the pool.

They then released the alligator in a nearby pond.

Man admits to turtle, salamander smuggling

MA WORCESTER — A Massachusetts man pleaded guilty to illegally importing and exporting turtles and salamanders in violation of federal law and international agreements, federal prosecutors said.

Nathan Boss, 27, of Worcester, pleaded guilty to smuggling wildlife out of the U.S., smuggling wildlife into the U.S., and lying to federal investigators, according to a statement from the U.S. attorney's office in Boston.

During an investigation authorities intercepted a package from Hong Kong intended for Boss that contained four black-breasted leaf turtles, a species included in the Convention for Trade in Endangered Species and Wild Fauna, prosecutors said.

Boss also imported a species of salamander that can carry a fungal disease and is prohibited from importation into the U.S., prosecutors said.

Ivy Tech offering free classes to 10K students

IN INDIANAPOLIS — Ivy Tech Community College will offer free classes and training for 10,000 Indiana students to help those affected by the coronavirus outbreak, the statewide community college system announced.

Ivy Tech is offering courses in a range of high-demand areas including manufacturing, business and information technology, it said in a news release.

Many of the classes and training will be available on a flexible timeline allowing students to start and finish at their own pace, but some may be time-limited. Course types will be increased throughout the summer, it said.

"Nearly 650,000 Hoosiers are faced with unemployment, reduced hours or furloughs," Ivy Tech President Sue Ellspermann said in the news release. "This is an outstanding opportunity for Hoosiers to skill up and become more marketable to their current and future employers."

Festival for 'Mothman' delayed due to outbreak

WV POINT PLEASANT — An annual festival that commemorates a local legend about a "Mothman" in West Virginia was postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

If the festival honoring the legend of the red-eyed creature's sightings in Point Pleasant was held this September as previously scheduled, it would "be subpar and lackluster to what has been built over the last 18 years," organizers for the event said on Facebook while announcing the change. The festival has been moved to September 2021.

Mentally ill man dead after stabbing people

DE DOVER — Police in Delaware said that a 29-year-old man who suffered from mental illness is dead after stabbing several people.

Police said they arrived at a home to find a 66-year-old male with knife wounds who had been stabbed when he answered the door.

Police said that officers then learned of other victims at another home. They were women ages 73 and 37 as well as an 11-year-old boy. Two people also suffered bite wounds.

The 29-year-old male was found dead in that home. The exact cause of death has yet to be determined, police said.

Car tops 100 mph and crashes at complex

NH MANCHESTER — A car traveling at over 100 miles an hour on Interstate 93 didn't stop for a state trooper and ended up crashing at an apartment complex, police in New Hampshire said.

The trooper attempted to stop the car in Bow, but then pursued the vehicle, which eventually got off at an exit. The car kept speeding and the trooper ended the pursuit due to the risk to public safety, police said.

Shortly afterward, the trooper came across the scene of a car crash at the entrance to an apartment complex in Manchester. Police said the vehicle matched the one involved in the pursuit.

The driver, identified as Kevin Gilman, 48, of Hooksett, was treated at a hospital for minor injuries. He was charged with disobeying a police officer, reckless driving and conduct, and driving with a suspended license.

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STARS AND STRIPES®

NASCAR driver Wallace finding voice

Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Bubba Wallace can count Spike Lee and Demi Lovato in his corner since he became the leader of NASCAR's push for change.

Where he has failed to find support is from corporate America.

Wallace is the only black full-time driver at NASCAR's top level and has had to scrap for sponsorship money his entire career. Since he has taken a prominent role as an activist — successfully calling on NASCAR to ban Confederate flags at its events and leading the conversation among his peers about racial equality — the only new friends Wallace has are celebrities and fans.

Richard Petty Motorsports has not heard from a single potential sponsor looking to back Wallace on the track.

"Nope. Nothing," Wallace said Friday in an interview with The Associated Press. "There's a lot going on and part of me thinks, 'Hell, they always told me winning would make the sponsors come,' and we won a couple times and the sponsors never came."

"I'm not doing this for spon-

sorship," he added. "I am doing this because it's what I believe in. If sponsors do come through, then they are showing support and they believe in the message and they line up with the same core values that I have. That's important."

The 26-year-old Wallace was widely praised at Wednesday night's race for running a Black Lives Matter paint scheme on the iconic No. 43 made famous by Hall of Famer Richard Petty, his boss. The opportunity for RPM to support Wallace with the paint scheme was possible only because no other corporation had bought the hood space to advertise.

RPM has sponsors including the Air Force, Coca-Cola and McDonald's for 16 races this year. It has space available for 20 more.

It has been a whirlwind two weeks for Wallace, who at last has grown comfortable with a pioneering role he never sought.

He understood early that his rise through NASCAR gave him a platform he had to use responsibly. His 2013 victory in a Truck Series race was the first national series win by an African American driver, and

helped push him into NASCAR's elite Cup Series. He pinned a message to his Twitter profile in 2017 that remains there today: "There is only 1 driver from an African American background at the top level of our sport. I am the 1. You're not gonna stop hearing about 'the black driver' for years. Embrace it, accept it and enjoy the journey."

It has not always been a comfortable role. It took Wallace a few days to offer his thoughts on fellow driver Kyle Larson's firing for use of a racial slur. Even after George Floyd was killed last month while in police custody in Minneapolis, Wallace was not the first driver to speak out for racial equality.

To understand why requires a look at his childhood. Wallace is of mixed race, born in Alabama but raised in Concord, N.C., the area most NASCAR teams call home. He was drawn to auto racing over other sports and admittedly was somewhat sheltered in his youth from racial discrimination. His father, who is white, wouldn't stand for ignorant or racist comments and handled all negative experiences his son encountered at the tracks.

"What I go through and before all this, I didn't have it as bad as other African Americans in the community," Wallace said. "The encounters I had were very few, but they were powerful. The negative encounters I've had with law enforcement were very few, but they stood out."

Wallace remembers those comments well, things like "can you afford this car?" and the suggestion he must sell drugs to pay for luxuries.

It was not necessarily Floyd's death that was a watershed moment for Wallace. He told AP he began to find his public voice on racism after watching video in May of Ahmaud Arbery's fatal shooting in Georgia. He said he now recognizes he must not let his platform go to waste.

"We are much more than just drivers who drive a race car," he said. "We are ambassadors. We are leaders of our own brands, and then in life things are thrown at you, you have to stand up for what's right. That brings on a whole new role. It's not on the front of the agenda that you see, but if you read the fine print it's part of becoming an athlete and the pedestal you get with that."

MLB makes proposal for 72 games, 80% of salaries

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Major League Baseball and its players are moving closer — to a deal or to Commissioner Rob Manfred ordering a shortened season without an agreement.

MLB offered players 80% of their prorated salaries and a 72-game schedule beginning July 14 in an effort to start the pandemic-delayed season, according to details of the proposal obtained by The Associated Press.

Players would get 70% of their prorated salaries during the regular season and the rest for completion of the postseason under MLB's plan, given to

the union Friday.

"This represents our final proposal for a 72-game season," Deputy Commissioner Dan Halem wrote in a letter to union chief negotiator Bruce Meyer that was obtained by the AP. "You should let us know by the end of the day on June 14 whether players desire to accept it."

Teams cut their proposed schedule each time they make an offer due to the calendar, unwilling to delay the World Series past October. Because salaries are tied to games, total pay for the year decreases as time goes by.

The players' last offer, on Tuesday, was for an 89-game

regular season at full prorated pay. The union said it will convene a call of players to discuss its response, but players repeatedly have said they don't intend to move off their stance for full prorated pay.

"The owners' whole strategy from the beginning has been this. Play as few regular season games as possible to limit player cost as much as possible," Cincinnati pitcher Trevor Bauer tweeted. "Play as many postseason games as possible to drive revenue as high as possible. They're more than happy to play only 50 games. ... Why would players play the additional 24 games for free and burden the additional risk of injury?"

MLB proposed that players be guaranteed about \$1.27 billion in salaries including projected earned bonuses, increasing the total to \$1.45 billion if the post-season is completed. The union's proposal would guarantee players roughly \$2.25 billion.

Before the new coronavirus caused opening day to be pushed back from March 26, salaries had been set to total \$4 billion. Each side includes an additional \$50 million postseason pool.

Players have insisted they receive 100% of their prorated salaries, the terms the sides agreed to in March, but that agreement was contingent on fans having access to stadiums.

Varner up 1 stroke over Spieth

Associated Press

FORT WORTH, Texas — Harold Varner III took his place in history in the PGA Tour's technology era, all because of a triple bogey.

Jordan Spieth had his lowest 36-hole score in four years. Rory McIlroy shot 63 with a bogey on his last hole. The strongest field of the year in golf's return to competition produced an All-Star leaderboard at the Charles Schwab Challenge.

No wonder a spectator tried to sneak into Colonial on Friday. There was plenty to see.

The man didn't get to see much before course officials noticed someone looking out of place with so few people in the first place. He wore jogging shorts, a black T-shirt and no credentials. He was sent packing.

"Watching from afar, this is a golf course that's always let the best players rise to the top," said McIlroy, two shots behind Var-

ner going into the weekend. "You have to be in complete control of your game, hit fairways, hit greens, convert some putts. Yeah, the leaderboard is a 'Who's Who' of golf right now. I'm just happy to be in the mix."

If the opening round of the Charles Schwab Challenge felt like the first day of school, players quickly adjusted to the quiet environment as the PGA Tour tries to restart from the COVID-19 pandemic.

It's still not a return to normal. Some of the 81 players who missed the cut and are on the charter to Hilton Head will have to stick around for the flight. Everyone on the flight will be tested for the coronavirus Saturday.

And there are still no spectators, making Colonial sound more like a library. And while players are getting accustomed to birdies and eagles greeted with silence, it figures to take on another dimension as the stakes get higher.

"It's tough to get adrenaline going," U.S.

Open champion Gary Woodland said after a 67 left him three shots behind. "I think you can get a little bit more of that this weekend getting in the hunt and get those juices flowing, but it is different without a crowd. You've got to kind of get that adrenaline going yourself."

Varner had plenty of juices flowing after his first tee shot on No. 10 went onto a bridge, leading to a one-shot penalty and eventually a triple bogey that quickly knocked him out of a share of the lead. No worries. He answered with eight birdies and a place in the record book with a 66.

Dating to the ShotLink era in 2003, it was the lowest score on the PGA Tour by a player who began his round with a triple bogey. He was at 11-under 129, the lowest 36-hole score of his career.

"Not the start I wanted, but it's just a part of golf," Varner said. "If I would have tripled the last, it would have added up to the same. It's a great opportunity going into the weekend."

Florida is third state to pass an NIL bill

Associated Press

Florida has cleared the way for college athletes in the state to earn money from endorsement deals as soon as next summer. That comes even as some in college sports want to slow things down due to concerns about how athlete compensation will actually work.

A bill that would allow college athletes in Florida to be paid for the use of their name, images and likenesses was signed into law by Gov. Ron DeSantis. By then, both the NCAA and Congress could have rules or legislation in place to lift their restrictions, too.

Florida is the third state, joining California and Colorado, to pass an NIL law targeting current NCAA rules that restrict college athlete compensation.

"I just want to say Florida is leading on this and if you're a blue-chip high school recruit out there trying to figure out where to go I think any of our Florida schools is a great landing spot," DeSantis said at a signing ceremony and news conference at the University of

Miami in Coral Gables. He was joined by former NFL players Jonathan Vilma, who played at Miami, and Corey Simon, who played at Florida State.

Florida's law increases the urgency for the NCAA to act because it goes into effect July 1, 2021 — 18 months earlier than California's and Colorado's. About two dozen more states are working on similar legislation.

The NCAA's board of governors signed off in April on recommendations to allow athletes access to a free market — with "guardrails" — while also emphasizing that it will need help from Congress to avoid a patchwork of state laws. The NCAA wants its own legislation ready for a vote in January.

Federal lawmakers have expressed concerns about the NCAA's desire and ability to regulate NIL compensation. They have also said an anti-trust exemption for the NCAA is unlikely, but they could move on national NIL legislation later this year.

While NCAA leaders have

touted the need for modernizing rules for amateurism while still maintaining the so-called collegiate model, not everyone in college sports is comfortable with where NIL is headed.

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill recently sent a memo outlining "significant concerns" about NIL to a law commission that is examining whether to craft a standardized athlete-compensation law for states to adopt. Co-authored by athletic director Bubba Cunningham and associate athletics director Paul Pogge, the memo referenced the potential for reduced resources for non-revenue programs — possibly leading to their elimination. It was signed by more than a dozen national associations in various sports.

Cunningham and Pogge on Friday sent a second memo, obtained by The Associated Press, to the Uniform Law Commission (ULC) to offer "alternative considerations" that includes group licensing.

The memo supports group licensing by sport instead of

having college athletes secure individual deals with third parties. They argue that it would offer "widespread benefits" by permitting athletes to get a cut of ventures involving their sport such as video games, trading cards or jersey sales.

"My own personal feeling is that a step in that direction through group licensing is something that we can handle ... something that's easily tracked, it's something that we have done previously," Cunningham said in an interview with the AP. "And it's something that is new money into the collegiate system because it's not there now, so that would not have any adverse effect on our existing financial model."

"Whether you agree with the model or not, it's new money into the system."

Duke athletic director Kevin White issued a statement earlier this week echoing Cunningham's concerns about "potential complications" from NIL.