



GW WIRE

WEEKLY DIGEST
AUGUST 10, 2018

**AMERICA'S TOP
HOMELESS EXPERT
SAYS FRESNO IS ON
RIGHT TRACK »**

**CONGRESS OKS
MASSIVE FIREFIGHTING
PLANES FOR CALIFORNIA »**

**POMPEO SAYS SANCTIONS
A PILLAR OF US POLICY
TOWARD IRAN »**



GV Wire Photo/Debbie Darden

FRESNO IS ON RIGHT TRACK

America's Top Homeless Expert Says

August 6, 2018 | Bill McEwen

When it comes to homeless people, we all have our stories and our thoughts on what to do. Our recommendations on how to make things better typically reflect our personal experiences and mindset. Often our proposals do little to reduce homelessness, and sometimes they make things worse. That is where Barbara Poppe comes in. She is a longtime advocate for the homeless, a consultant and a former executive director of the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness. More importantly, she is skilled at empowering communities to tackle their problems through collaboration and measuring the effectiveness of what they are doing. Poppe is the point person on helping Street 2 Home Fresno County get up and running. Street2Home is the countywide homeless effort [announced June 20](#) by Fresno Mayor Lee Brand and Fresno County Board of Supervisors Chairman Sal Quintero. It helps that Poppe knows Fresno well from her visits and work here during the Obama administration. I asked her a few questions recently. Here are Poppe's answers.

How Would You Rate Fresno's Homelessness Efforts?

Poppe: There are some really strong points to the work that has been underway. Fresno compares well to other communities on getting people out of homelessness. There are well over 300 communities across the country that have a continuum of care in place and Fresno's was (ranked) 40th overall. But Fresno definitely has a high rate of unsheltered homelessness. It's visible when you visit your community.

What Is Fresno Doing Right?

Poppe: I had an opportunity to do a deep dive into the information and it was impressive to see the progress that has been made since I first visited here back when Mayor (Ashley) Swearingin was in office. Permanent supportive housing has been built and there is a partnership between the (Fresno) Housing Authority and (Fresno County) Behavioral Health. There has been some implementation of

rapid re-housing and there does seem to be a more robust street outreach. It's a system that is beginning to come together, a system with points that are really quite good. The challenge is to scale up what's working in the community, fill in the gaps and develop the consistency of resources to do that.

Last Year, the Fresno City Council Passed a No-Camping Ordinance. Do These Laws Work?

Poppe: I've never seen an anti-camping ordinance reduce the amount of homelessness in the community. I know that many cities across the country have been adopting these approaches but they simply are not effective. They are punitive and they move a situation from one place to another. I've been on record for many, many years as being opposed to ordinances like anti-camping.

From Your Experience and Knowledge, What Percentage of People Choose Homelessness as a 'Lifestyle'?

Poppe: In my 30-plus years of experience, I would say that rarely do I see homelessness as a choice. I see that people with a long time on the street don't have any other viable options. When the only option they are offered is a bed in the nighttime emergency shelters with a lot of rules and lots of chaos, and it's a person who has a severe mental illness and some paranoia, that's not an option they're going to pursue. So I think it's extremely rare that it becomes a lifestyle choice. There just aren't any real other options presented to them.

One of Your Recommendations Is Creating 'Low Barrier Crisis Housing' Options. What Are Those?

Poppe: We know that one big shelter trying to be all things to all people is not effective. It hasn't been shown to work anywhere in the U.S. So, we're looking right now at three different types of programs that serve different parts of the unsheltered population. One of those is the navigation center model, which was developed in San Francisco...

[READ MORE »](#)



DOZENS WANT A ROLE IN GOVERNING LOCAL SCHOOLS

Shutterstock Photo

August 7, 2018 | David Taub

With the filing deadline three days away, 28 candidates (including 8 incumbents) have qualified for local school board races being decided in November's general election. Among the contests drawing interest is a rare open seat on the Clovis Unified School District board. Area 3 incumbent Jim Van Volkinburg, a dentist and school board member since 1993, has decided not to run for re-election.

Pageant Winner Seeks Seat

Two candidates have filed for the race to take his place. Tiffany Stoker Madsen lists herself as a small businesswoman and mother. She is also a former Miss California and Miss

America runner-up in 1996. Financial documents show her raising \$13,700 thus far. Albert Zuniga, listed as a small business owner, is also running. Friday (Aug. 10) marks the deadline for candidates to file to run for office in November (there is a five-day extension of the incumbent does not run).

Former Council Candidates Switch Gears

School board races have also attracted three former candidates who were unsuccessful in their primary campaigns for seats on the Fresno City Council. Kimberly Tapscott-Munson is seeking an open seat on the Fresno County school board. Area 1 incumbent Ismael Herrera is not running for re-election...

[READ MORE »](#)

NEW CENTER HOPES TO LIFT NEGLECTED NEIGHBORHOOD

August 6, 2018 | Myles Barker

For people in **Highway City**, the sounds of gunshots and sirens going off in the middle of the night aren't out of the ordinary. Kids joining gangs and getting into other types of trouble are also not unusual occurrences. Across from older homes in this section of Fresno, a canal is surrounded by hundreds of acres of open land littered with garbage and debris.

Abandoned shopping carts and worn out clothing lay atop of weeds and broken, burnt tree branches. The area attracts the homeless and stray animals roam free. All it takes is a quick drive through the small community located near Highway 99 and Shaw Avenue to get the impression that Highway City has been severely neglected...

[READ MORE »](#)



GV Wire Photo/Jahz Tello

PARKS SALES TAX MEASURE IS ON BALLOT. EARNING VOTER SUPPORT IS NEXT.

August 9, 2018 | David Taub

And now the next challenge begins. After months of fundraising, signature gathering and verifying by **Fresno for Parks**, voters will have the opportunity to vote on a sales tax benefiting parks, trails, and related programs. In the City Hall lobby, supporters of the sales tax celebrated. Central Valley Community Foundation members mingled with Boys and Men of Color and Building Health Communities.

Thursday (Aug. 9), the Fresno City Council approved placing the measure on the Nov. 6 ballot. The council voted unanimously, 7-0, removing the drama of any delay tactics that would have pushed the tax measure to a future election. In nearly 90 minutes of the public hearing, 36 people spoke — all in support of council advancing the measure and the tax itself...

[READ MORE »](#)



GV Wire Photo/David Taub



LEGISLATORS KILL DMV AUDIT

As Lines Continue to Grow

August 8, 2018 | David Taub

Despite calls to hold the DMV accountable for hours-long wait times, a California legislative committee declined to approve an audit of the agency at Wednesday (Aug. 8) hearing. Although none of the 13 assembly members and senators on the Joint Committee on Legislative Audit voted no, not enough voted yes to order the audit.

DMV Under Fire

The vote came one day after another legislative committee questioned Department of Motor Vehicles Director Jean Shiimoto about the public outrage over long wait times and difficulty booking appointments. Shiimoto told lawmakers that wait times began to spike several months ago as Californians update their licenses to meet new federal security standards known as Real ID. The agency underestimated the time needed to explain the new requirements to customers and ensure they have necessary documents, Shiimoto said. Shiimoto asked lawmakers Tuesday for additional money to hire more employees, possibly as much as \$26 million, on top of the millions in additional funding the agency has received to fulfill Real ID demands.

The federal law was enacted in 2005 in the wake of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and requires new ID cards to carry special markings. Beginning Oct. 1, 2020, airport security checkpoints won't accept non-compliant cards. Californians must apply for new cards in person at DMV offices. The department has already hired hundreds of additional employees to handle increased demand. The agency is also encouraging people to complete some paperwork before arriving in person and is piloting text message alerts for waiting customers.

Patterson, Cox Upset

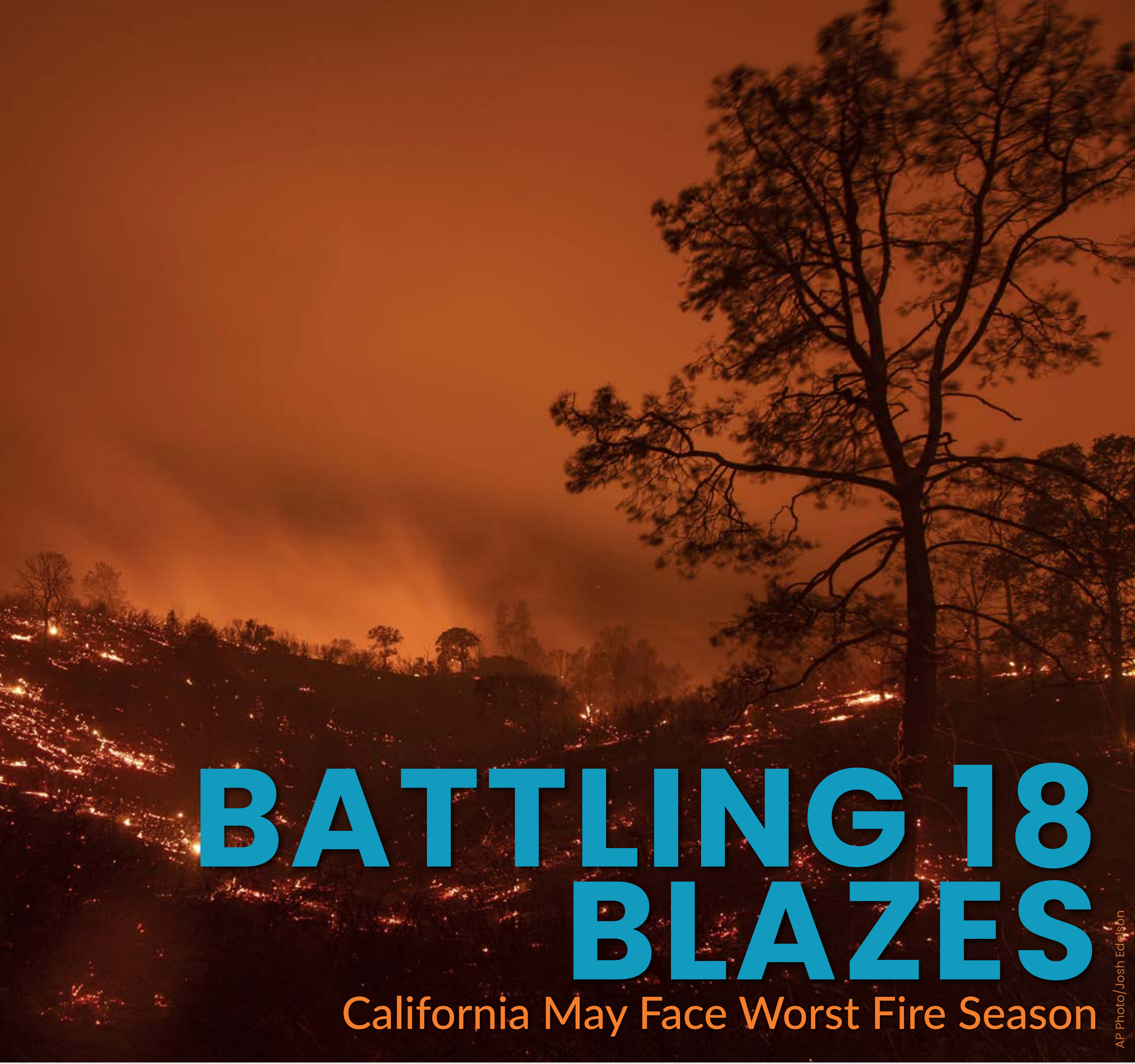
Assemblyman Jim Patterson (R-Fresno) voiced loudly his displeasure about the long wait times and his perceived mismanagement of the DMV. He vented his frustrations

after the vote. "The members of this committee who voted against this audit request have just sentenced California drivers to interminable wait times. The people of this state and the DMV employees have been loud and clear about the absolute failure of this department to do their job," Paterson said in a statement. John Cox, the Republican candidate for governor, expressed similar sentiments. "This is a glaring example of the Sacramento political class bending over backwards to protect a failing system and snubbing Californians that have long been forgotten," Cox said. "Every hour in line at the DMV is time away from a job or family. Not auditing the DMV in light of blatant mismanagement is exactly why Californians need help."

Audit Rejected

Seven members each from the Senate and the Assembly comprise the joint audit committee. Audit approval requires a majority (or four votes) from representatives of each house. On the Assembly side, Catharine Baker (R-Dublin) and Dante Acosta (R-Santa Clarita) joined Al Muratsuchi (D-Torrance) and Blanca Rubio (D-Baldwin Park) in backing an audit. "We need to get answers about DMV wait times and address this. I have heard time and time again from constituents in my district about unacceptable long wait times at our local offices.

Audits are an important tool to get to the bottom of bureaucratic disarray, which was why I supported the request. I will continue to work with my colleagues to get this fixed," Rubio said in a statement after the vote. However, only three senators voted yes— Richard Roth (D-Riverside), along with Antony Cannella (R-Ceres) and Jean Fuller (R-Bakersfield). Three others, Ben Allen (D-Santa Monica), Jim Beall (D-San Jose) and Ricardo Lara (D-Bell Gardens) abstained, preventing a majority vote on the Senate side. Patterson plans to return to the committee with another audit request. He estimates that might be in six months.



BATTLING 18 BLAZES

California May Face Worst Fire Season

AP Photo/Josh Edelson

August 8, 2018 | AP News and GV Wire

The largest wildfire ever recorded in California needed just 11 days to blacken an area nearly the size of Los Angeles — and it's only one of many enormous blazes that could make this the worst fire season in state history. Some 14,000 firefighters from as far away as Florida and even New Zealand are struggling to curb 18 fires in the midst of a sweltering summer that has seen wind-whipped flames carve their way through national forest land and rural areas, threaten urban areas and incinerate neighborhoods. California is seeing earlier, longer and more destructive wildfire seasons because of drought, warmer weather attributed to climate change and home construction deeper into the forests.

Some of the largest fires have erupted just within the past few weeks as the state has seen record-setting temperatures — and the historically worst months of wildfire season are still to come. In Southern California, a smoky forest fire raged Wednesday in mostly unoccupied land — but firefighting crews were concerned the flames could race down hillsides toward foothill communities.

Ferguson Fire: Nearly 95,000 Acres and Now 43% Contained
The Ferguson Fire, which is in its 27th day, is at nearly 95,000 acres and is 43 percent contained, according to fire officials...

[READ MORE »](#)

SURVIVAL AND OPTIMISM RISE FROM ASHES OF CALIFORNIA FIRES

August 8, 2018 | David Taub

The blue skies ended in southern Oregon. As my family drove back to Fresno on a cross-country RV trip, we headed down I-5. Initially, I thought the white plumes were coastal fog. The campfire smell proved otherwise. Upon my return to Fresno, I realized the thing I will miss the most about our travels across the Pacific Northwest is the blue skies and clean air. The gross haze isn't just confined to the Central Valley. It permeates the skies throughout Sacramento and into the Jefferson region of Northern California, as well.

Fire Victims Camp in RV Park

For our last stop before returning home, we stayed at an RV resort in Red Bluff in Tehama County. In the lobby, various products like basic toiletries and dog food lay across a table. "Take what you need," read the sign...

[READ MORE »](#)



GV Wire Photo/David Taub

CALIFORNIA'S EDUCATIONAL CRISIS FRAMED BY TWO EVENTS

August 6, 2018 | GV Wire

In case you missed it, a Superior Court Judge in Los Angeles is allowing an education lawsuit to proceed against the state. The lawsuit contends that California's public schools have failed to adequately teach reading to some black and Latino students.

California Achievement Gap Persists

And, [notes Dan Walters](#), in his Aug. 1 column for CALmatters, the state's latest highest graduation rates reveal a big achievement gap among students. California's overall rate of 82.7 percent "is not horrible, but when one looks at the details ... Asian students, including Filipinos, graduated at a 93 percent rate, trailed by whites at 87.3 percent, but for black students, it was 73.1 percent and for Latinos, the largest single bloc of K-12 students, it was 80.3 percent," Walter writes...

[READ MORE »](#)



Shutterstock Photo



FIREFIGHTING PLANES FOR CALIFORNIA

Thanks to Congress

August 3, 2018 | Myles Barker

Thanks to Congress, California has a good chance of getting more aid in fighting its deadly wildfires. Earlier this week, the U.S. Senate passed Sen. Dianne Feinstein's (D-California) provision to transfer seven C-130H air tankers to California to help fight deadly wildfires. The provision is included in the National Defense Authorization Act. The defense policy bill, which authorizes a \$717 billion budget, requires the president's signature.

More Aircraft Needed In California

The passage of the provision is critical, especially since last year was the worst wildfire season on record for California. In 2017, more than 9,500 fires burned throughout the state, consuming more than 1.2 million acres, destroying more than 10,800 structures and killing 46 people. This year already, more than 4,000 wildfires have burned at least 144,000 acres in California. In addition, the speed of the blazes is posing heightened dangers to firefighters and residents. Winds in a "fire whirl" created July 26 near Redding reached speeds of 143 mph, a speed that rivaled some of the most destructive Midwest tornados, National Weather Service meteorologist Duane Dykema told Associated Press. The whirl uprooted trees and tore roofs from homes, Dykema said. Cal Fire now has 22 air tankers in its fleet as well as a dozen helicopters and 17 air tactical aircraft.

Can Drop Significantly More Fire Retardant

The seven C-130H aircraft, which are in the U.S. Coast Guard fleet, would transfer to Cal Fire under the NDAA provision. The Lockheed C-130 can drop almost three times the amount of fire retardant as the Grumman-built S-2 air tankers now in Cal Fire's fleet. "This would be a big step for us," Cal Fire Deputy Chief Scott McLean told CNBC. McLean said the agency's current S-2A tankers can drop about 1,200 gallons of fire retar-

dant and the C-130 is capable of roughly 4,000 gallons of retardant. So it would allow the agency to pack more punch from each drop.

Caylym's Guardian System vs. Tank System

Rick Goddard, the managing director for Caylym Technologies International in Fresno, said the company's Guardian system — a 4-foot cardboard cube that can hold up to 264 gallons (about 1,000 liters) of liquid — can get over 4,200 gallons on a C-130. Utilizing the Guardian system, Goddard said, would not only enable CalFire to fight fires more efficiently, but it would save the costs associated with adding tanks to the C-130s. "Instead of spending \$10 million to \$11 million and putting a tank in this airplane, take the airplane in its original configuration and use our system," Goddard said. "Then you can use the airplane for all kinds of other disaster relief things." In addition to being more expensive, Goddard said tank systems can really only hold 3,000 gallons of liquid or less. "Usually they have to go less because the tank system itself weighs so much that it diminishes the amount of liquid you can take," Goddard said. "When they load these tanks, they are only loading 2,400 to 2,800 gallons in the tank."

Guardian Not Approved In California

However, the state hasn't approved Caylym's Guardian system. Not only that, but it hasn't viewed the technology or allowed Caylym to demonstrate how the Guardian works. The company's system is used to fight fires internationally. Goddard said Caylym is committed to working with the state and is "certainly letting them know we are available to work with them," Goddard said. "I don't know if it is just because it is a new idea, but we are committed to going through whatever they need us to go through," "If the Guardian gets approved then we can start taking care of our home state."



TLAIB WILL BECOME FIRST MUSLIM WOMAN IN CONGRESS

AP Photo/AI Goldis

August 8, 2018 | AP News

Former Michigan state Rep. Rashida Tlaib has won the Democratic nomination to run unopposed for the House seat long held by former Rep. John Conyers, setting her up to become the first Muslim woman elected to Congress. No Republicans or third-party candidates ran in Tuesday's District 13 primary race, meaning Tlaib is set to win the seat in November's election and begin serving a full term in January.

The special primary race to serve the last two months of Conyers' term was narrowly won by Detroit City Council President Brenda Jones. But Jones has yet to decide whether she wants to hold the seat as a caretaker because she would

have to resign from the city council. Tlaib, 42, served in the Michigan House from 2009 until 2014. She defeated five other candidates to win the nomination to run for a full term representing the heavily Democratic district, which covers much of Detroit and some of its suburbs. She edged Jones for the Democratic nomination, 31% to 30%.

Conyers Has Served in the House Since 1964

The 89-year-old Conyers was first elected to the House in 1964. He stepped down in December citing health reasons, though several former female staffers had accused him of sexual harassment.

[READ MORE »](#)

COULD HARD-RIGHT SUPREME COURT HAUNT GOP?

August 7, 2018 | AP News

WASHINGTON — Be careful what you wish for. That's the history lesson for Republicans eagerly anticipating **Brett Kavanaugh's ascension to the Supreme Court**, which could cement conservative control of the court for a generation. The GOP may ultimately pay a political price. When and how steep? That depends on how momentous the issues and how jolting the decisions, according to legal scholars who've studied the high court's impact on electoral politics.

The past century is replete with cautionary tales for political parties that rejoice when the Supreme Court's ideology turns their way. That track record, coupled with today's intensifying partisanship, suggests that when it comes to high court nomination fights, both sides should be careful what they wish for...

[READ MORE »](#)



AP Photo/Manuel Balce Ceneta

ARMY USING DRUG WAIVERS, BONUSES TO FILL RANKS

August 4, 2018 | AP News

WASHINGTON — Under the gun to increase the size of the force, the Army is issuing more waivers for past drug use or bad conduct by recruits, and pouring an extra \$200 million into bonuses this year to attract and retain soldiers. According to data obtained by The Associated Press, nearly one-third of all the waivers granted by the Army in the first six months of this fiscal year were for conduct and drug problems, mainly involving marijuana use. That number is significantly higher than the other three military services, and represents a steady increase over the past three years.

At the same time, the Army increased bonuses by more than 30 percent this year, with enlistment money going to recruits for high-tech jobs such as satellite communications and cryptologists. Recruits in those jobs can get up to an additional \$30,000 for a five-year enlistment. The enlistment bonuses grew by \$115 million this year over last year...

[READ MORE »](#)



AP Photo/Gerry Broome



WORLD POMPEO ON SANCTIONS

“A Pillar of US Policy Toward Iran”

July 23, 2018 | AP News

WASHINGTON — Secretary of State Mike Pompeo says renewed U.S. sanctions on Iran will be rigorously enforced and remain in place until the Iranian government radically changes course. Speaking to reporters en route from a three-nation trip to Southeast Asia, Pompeo said Monday’s re-imposition of some sanctions is an important pillar in U.S. policy toward Iran.

He said the Trump administration is open to looking beyond sanctions but that would “require enormous change” from Tehran. “We’re hopeful that we can find a way to move forward but it’s going to require enormous change on the part of the Iranian regime,” he said Sunday. “They’ve got to behave like a normal country. That’s the ask. It’s pretty simple.” European foreign ministers said Monday they “deeply regret” the re-imposition of U.S. sanctions. A statement by European Union foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini and foreign ministers of France, Germany and the United Kingdom insisted that the 2015 Iran nuclear deal “is working and delivering on its goal” of limiting Iran’s nuclear program.

Treaty Crucial for Everyone’s Safety

The ministers said the Iran deal is “crucial for the security of Europe, the region, and the entire world.” A senior administration official said the United States is “not particularly concerned” by EU efforts to protect European firms from the re-imposition of sanctions. The official

was not authorized to discuss the matter by name and spoke Monday on condition of anonymity. The European Union issued a “blocking statute” Monday to protect European businesses from the sanctions set to snap back Monday at midnight.

The official says the U.S. will use the sanctions aggressively and cited Iran’s severe economic downturn this year as evidence the sanctions would prove to be effective despite opposition from the EU, China and Russia. Pompeo called the Iranian leadership “bad actors” and said President Donald Trump is intent on getting them to “behave like a normal country.” A first set of U.S. sanctions that had been eased by the Obama administration under the terms of the landmark 2015 Iran nuclear deal takes effect on Monday, following Trump’s May decision to withdraw from the accord. Those sanctions target Iran’s automotive sector as well as gold and other metals. A second batch of U.S. sanctions targeting Iran’s oil sector and central bank will be re-imposed in early November. Pompeo noted that the U.S. has long designated Iran as the world’s foremost state sponsor of terrorism and said it cannot expect to be treated as an equal in the international community until it halts such activities.



IRAN WEIGHS RESPONSE AS US SANCTIONS BITE

August 7, 2018 | AP News

TEHRAN, Iran — As Iranians awoke Tuesday to renewed U.S. sanctions that had been lifted by Tehran’s nuclear deal with world powers, the question on everyone’s mind remained: What happens now? From deciphering President Donald Trump’s tweets on Iran — including one demanding “WORLD PEACE” — to trying to figure out how much their cratering currency is worth, Iranians on the streets appear divided on how to respond. The same goes for inside its theocratic government. President Hassan Rouhani, a relative moderate, has taken an increasingly confrontational line in recent weeks, applauded by the hard-liners who had long opposed him. Meanwhile, Rouhani seemed to suggest on live television the

night before that direct talks with Trump could be possible — something of which North Korean Foreign Minister Ri Yong-hu, who visited Tehran on Tuesday, has personal experience.

Whether Iran should choose a Singapore-style photo-op with the American president who backed out of the nuclear deal or abandon the unraveling accord and increase its uranium enrichment remains a fiercely debated question. But everyone agrees something has to be done soon, as sporadic, leaderless protests across the country of 80 million people only add to the pressure. The newly imposed American sanctions target U.S. dollar financial transactions...

[READ MORE »](#)



Shutterstock Photo

SENATE OK’S \$38 BILLION FOR ISRAEL DEFENSE

August 3, 2018 | GV Wire

Israel would receive a \$38 billion aid package providing munitions and other defense-related assistance under a bill approved this week by the U.S. Senate. The 10-year package, the largest of its kind ever, was negotiated in the final days of the Obama administration. The bill was approved in the Senate by voice vote.

The bill provides Israel, which currently receives more American aid than any other nation, an additional \$3.8 billion a year over the next decade. It includes financing to upgrade most of Israel’s fighter aircraft, improve its ground forces’ mobility and strengthen its missile defense systems. The act also expands a stockpile of weapons that the United States keeps in Israel, which Israeli forces may access in wartime. The bill now heads to the House of Representatives for consideration...

[READ MORE »](#)

SAUDI ARABIA CRUCIFIES MYANMAR MAN CONVICTED OF MURDER

August 8, 2018 | AP News and GV Wire

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Saudi Arabia says it executed and crucified a man from Myanmar convicted of killing a woman and carrying out other crimes. The state-run Saudi Press Agency reported on the execution Wednesday, saying it was carried out in the Muslim holy city of Mecca. It said Elias Abulkalaam Jamaleddeen entered a Myanmar woman’s home firing a gun and then stabbed her to death. He was convicted of robbing her home and another home, attempted rape, and stealing firearms and ammunition.

Crucifixion Endorsed by King Salman
The report said his conviction was upheld by the courts and his execution was endorsed by King Salman. Saudi Arabia is one of the world’s top executioners, though crucifixions — in which the condemned is usually beheaded and then the body put on display — are rare...

[READ MORE »](#)



Asharq Al-Awsat Photo



 GVWIRE.COM  GV WIRE  @GVWIRE  @GVWIRE

SUBSCRIBE TO OUR NEWSLETTER