



# GWIRE

WEEKLY DIGEST  
SEPTEMBER 21, 2018

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GV Wire Photo/Jahz Tello

# ARE YOU SAFE IN FRESNO?

## Dyer Talks Staffing, 911 Calls, Atlantic Article, Parks, and More

September 19, 2018 | Bill McEwen

Earlier this year it appeared to me that Mayor Lee Brand had teed up the perfect sales tax proposal for Fresno: a half-cent divided between parks and public safety.

But the Fresno City Council majority shot down the idea and now voters have a single option — a 3/8 of a cent hike for parks, trails, and cultural arts — to consider on the Nov. 6 ballot.

A big question remains, however. How many officers does the police department need to keep Fresno citizens safe? I recently interviewed Fresno Police Chief Jerry Dyer on that and other subjects. Here is a transcript of our conversation, lightly edited for clarity.

**How many police officers does Fresno really need?**

Dyer: Currently, we have 815 officers. If you look back to where we were in 2009, we had 847 officers. And the city of Fresno has grown at a rapid pace over the last nine years. So we're actually playing catch-up. And over those years some of the officers that we've hired

**"I would say today we need a minimum of 900 police officers in this organization that we have the latitude to use in a manner in which we see fit. Whether that's having them in patrol, traffic, proactive assignments, special response team, or investigations."**

— Fresno Police Chief  
Jerry Dyer

have been dedicated officers — meaning they come with an outside funding source. Currently, we have about 75 police officers dedicated to an assignment based on an outside funding source — to the schools to the FAX bus detail, to various grants, to our sanitation detail. It's not necessarily how many officers you have in an organization. It's how many officers do you have the discretion to use as you want to use them. So when the question is asked of me, how

many officers do we need? It's really a broader answer. I would say today we need a minimum of 900 police officers in this organization that we have the latitude to use in a manner in which we see fit. Whether that's having them in patrol, traffic, proactive assignments, special response team, or investigations.

**So 900 officers, excluding the grant-funded positions, would give Fresno what it needs today?**

Dyer: I'd say 900 officers today with the flexibility to use all 900 of those officers would be a good place for us to be. Knowing that we have 75 officers that are already dedicated, makes it a little bit more challenging. And, on top of that at any given time, you have a certain number of officers that are on a long-term absence from injuries or whatever the case may be. Today I have 61 that are off on a long-term absence for a week or more that I don't have access to.

When you start factoring those in and you also must have a certain number of officers working in investigative assignments, traffic units, proactive units, and patrol seven days a week 24 hours a day, it takes a lot of officers within a city like Fresno, which has 530,000-plus people. With the number of calls for service that are generated here, it takes an enormous amount of officers to meet those needs.

**Looking ahead, let's say five years from now, can you project what the number of officers should be?**

Dyer: I think the projections of how many officers you hire per year should stay consistent with keeping the department somewhere around 1.8 officers per thousand (population). So if the population increased by 10,000 per year, I'd say we probably need somewhere between 15 to 18 officers added every single year...

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# CENTRAL UNIFIED WILL BUILD NEW HIGH SCHOOL BEHIND FOOTBALL STADIUM

September 14, 2018 | Myles Barker

After nearly two decades on the back burner, a new high school in Central Unified has a target date. The new high school is scheduled to open in three years, just in time for the 2021-22 school year. Cesar Granda, president of the [Central Unified School District Board of Trustees](#), said the project is in the planning stages. He said plans are to have the school built right behind the Deran Koligian Stadium on Grantland Avenue. The area is in close proximity to Harvest Elementary School and Glacier Point Middle School.

“We’ve been working hard as a board for the last three years to make sure that it gets completed,” Granda said.

### Project Costs

The project’s cost is estimated at \$135 million. State new construction funding is expected to cover about \$33 million. District funding will cover the rest. The district also has plans of building two new elementary schools totaling \$50 million.

### Overcrowding In The District

According to the district’s 2016 facilities master plan, once the new high school is completed, the district will have choices on how to configure the high school programs and boundaries among the three campuses. The six-year projections show nearly 4,800 high school students in the district. The high...

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# IS JOSE RAMIREZ THE BEST BOXER EVER FROM FRESNO AREA?

September 17, 2018 | Bill McEwen

Jose Ramirez now has done what no Fresno area boxer has ever done. Landing 381 punches by the count of CompuBox and scoring two knockdowns in his [unanimous victory over previously undefeated Antonio Orozco](#) on Saturday night, Ramirez successfully defended his WBC junior welterweight title. Keeping the title eluded Fresno’s two previous world champions.

Welterweight titleholder [Young Corbett III](#) was knocked out by the great Jimmy McLarnin in Corbett’s first title defense in 1933 at Wrigley Field in Los Angeles. IBF featherweight titleholder [Hector Lizarraga](#) also fell in his first world title defense. He lost a unanimous 12-round decision to crafty Manuel Medina in 1998 in San Jose, and I was there to see it. So how does Ramirez compare to the local legends who came before him?

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# REEDLEY COLLEGE STUDENTS AIM HIGH AND SOAR IN THE SKY

September 13, 2018 | Myles Barker

After Lorenzo Rios flew in his friend’s small private airplane to [Superior Dairy in Hanford](#), he knew exactly what he wanted to do for the rest of his life. Not overindulge in ice cream. Fly airplanes. “From the first second our wheels got off the ground, I knew instantly that this is what I wanted to do,” Rios said.

Rios started working on his dream of flying airplanes by enrolling in the [flight science degree program at Reedley College](#). So far, he is happy with his decision. “It has been absolutely phenomenal, I have enjoyed every second of it,” Rios said. Although the program is “very intense,” Rios said it has been worth it.

“I have enjoyed the whole duration of this program so far and am looking forward to completing it,” Rios said. Rios is one of 17 students enrolled this semester in the two-year program, which started in August...

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Photo: YouTube

# BIPARTISAN VICTORY FOR VALLEY WATER

Jim Costa and Jeff Denham

September 13, 2018 | GV Wire

The western United States — including the San Joaquin Valley — could see significant increases in water storage capacity due to legislation that passed the House of Representatives on Thursday.

Overcoming the continuing rancor in Congress, the legislation cleared the House with bipartisan backing and also has the support of the Senate’s Republican and Democratic leaders.

Valley Congressmen **Jim Costa (D-Fresno)** and **Jeff Denham (R-Turlock)** championed and played major roles in America’s Water Infrastructure Act, which is expected to be signed into law.

There are provisions supporting local irrigation districts and water agencies in their efforts to raise spillway gates, build new water storage facilities, and repair and expand dams, reservoirs, and other water projects.

## Raise Spillway Gates at New Exchequer Dam

Specifically, AWIA includes **legislation introduced by Costa** and co-led by Denham that would enable Merced Irrigation District to take the first steps forward with a project to raise the spillway gates at New Exchequer Dam. This would enlarge the storage capacity of Lake

**“This legislation creates a pathway for the first new surface water storage in the Valley in decades. This is a victory for Merced County and the people of the Valley.”**

— Rep. Jim Costa

McClure, increasing water supplies for eastern Merced County up to 57,000 acre-feet. The bill extends funding for a program restoring the seismic stability and eventual expansion of San Luis Reservoir. It also creates a pilot program in the Russian River Basin to develop a system for incorporating weather forecast into reservoir operations. “This

legislation creates a pathway for the first new surface water storage in the Valley in decades,” Costa said in a statement. “This is a victory for Merced County and the people of the Valley.”

## New Tool for Financing Water Projects

Language in the act authored by Denham would create a new tool for financing and building Central Valley water infrastructure projects. “We need more water storage in the Valley and my bill will deliver more storage,” Denham said in a statement. “Sacramento’s radical water grab makes this more important than ever.” The bill provides financing for water projects throughout the western U.S., including new reservoirs, below-ground storage projects, recycling, and desalination projects.

**“We need more water storage in the Valley and my bill will deliver more storage. Sacramento’s radical water grab makes this more important than ever.”** — Rep. Jeff Denham

Denham’s provision in the WRDA bill authorizes the Environmental Protection Agency to finance Bureau of Reclamation projects under the Water Infrastructure and Innovation Act program and sets a one-year deadline for execution.





# GOVERNOR VETOES PLAN TO TURN SAN JOAQUIN RIVER INTO STATE PARK

Photo: Water Education Foundation

September 18, 2018 | David Taub

Gov. Jerry Brown vetoed Assemblyman Joaquin Arambula's plan to turn the San Joaquin River Parkway into a state park. [AB 3218](#) would have placed 5,900 acres adjacent to the river between Friant Dam and Highway 99 under the jurisdiction of the Millerton Lake State Recreation Area. It passed both the state Assembly and Senate without a single no vote.

"The bill will not lead to the author's desired outcome," [Brown wrote in his veto message](#). "Regardless of whether the state entity manages the land or not, creating true public access to the San Joaquin River and the 5,900 acres adjacent to it can only be achieved if money is available and if private

landowners are willing to sell. This bill, unfortunately, does not change this." Arambula expressed disappointment, in an email statement.

"While I am disappointed that AB 3218 was vetoed, I remain committed to doing everything I can to make the Parkway a reality. I am glad that the cities and counties of Fresno and Madera, as well as local stakeholders, were able to come forward to support AB 3218. After 26 years of work, the time is now for us to reinvigorate efforts that will protect and expand the San Joaquin River into a space that all of our families can enjoy," Arambula said...

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Photo: Shutterstock

## DID STATE WORKERS HELP PRO-GAS TAX EFFORT?

Watchdog Investigates.

September 12, 2018 | AP News

SACRAMENTO — California's campaign watchdog said Wednesday it is investigating whether a campaign to preserve the state's recent gas tax hike violated finance rules. The Fair Political Practices Commission will look into a complaint filed by the opposing campaign that alleges state employees distributed fliers urging voters to keep the tax increase in place. The FPPC has not determined whether the allegations are valid but will investigate them, according to a letter it sent Carl DeMaio, an activist leading the charge to repeal the tax hike.

**Caltrans Says Work Private Employees Distributed Fliers**  
Laurie Berman, the director of California's transportation department, says the workers identified by the gas tax repeal campaign were private contractors employed by the department. "Caltrans is looking into the matter, but it is our understanding that these individuals were private contractors not Caltrans employees," Berman said in a statement...

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## SAN FRANCISCO TO REMOVE STATUE SOME CALL RACIST

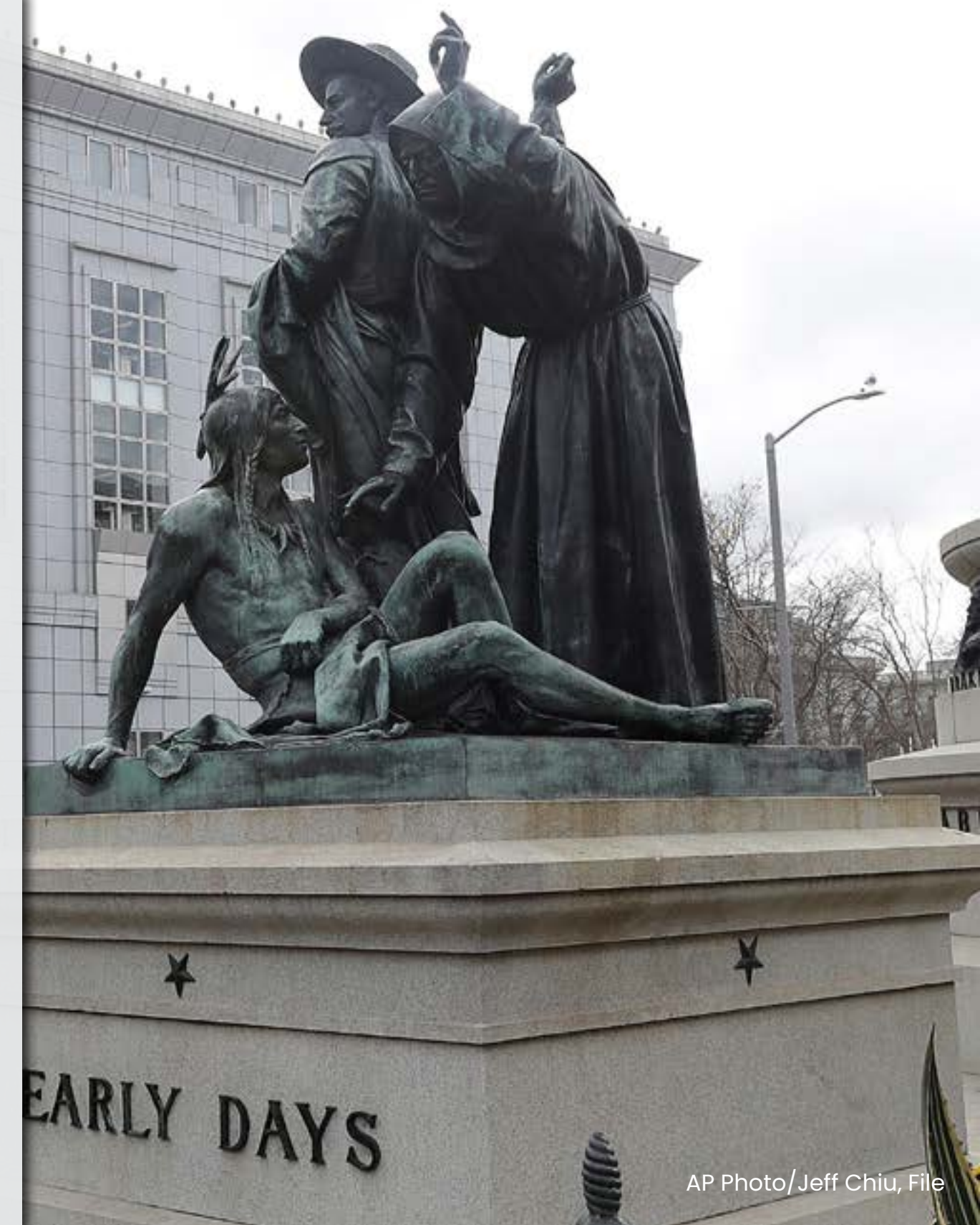
September 13, 2018 | AP News

SAN FRANCISCO — A San Francisco board has voted unanimously to remove a 19th century statue that activists say is racist and demeaning to indigenous people. The unanimous decision Wednesday night by the San Francisco Board of Appeals involves the "Early Days" statue, which depicts a Native American at the feet of a Spanish cowboy and a Catholic missionary. It is part of a group of statues near City Hall that depict the founding of California.

Native American activists have tried to have the statue removed for decades. They renewed efforts last year after clashes broke out over Confederate monuments.

"This has been a tough 30-plus years. But this is wonderful," Dee Dee Ybarra, an Ohlone tribal leader who urged the commissioners to remove the statue, told the San Francisco...

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AP Photo/Jeff Chiu, File





# TRUMP'S TARIFFS COULD SOW TROUBLE FOR GOP IN FARM DISTRICTS

September 19, 2018 | AP News and GV Wire

SPANGLE, Wash. — In the aptly named Harvester Restaurant, wheat farmer Roy Dube makes clear he's no fan of President Donald Trump's trade policy. "We get him elected into office and he pulls us out of trade agreements," Dube said last week as local farmers gathered to hear Democratic House candidate Lisa Brown.

Dube says China is buying less wheat from eastern Washington farmers and Trump's policies have opened the door for Australia and Canada to wrestle away business. His frustration extends to his congressional representative, Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers, who is the highest-ranking Republican woman in the House and running for an eighth term.

"I'm concerned that Cathy McMorris Rodgers didn't put up more resistance," Dube said. The U.S. tariffs on ag-

**"We get him elected into office and he pulls us out of trade agreements."** — Roy Dube, wheat farmer

riculture products, sown by Trump, have grown into an election-year threat to Republicans in rural districts that are heavily reliant on exports

for their economy. With the livelihoods of farmers at risk, opposition to the tariffs could make a difference in some races and help determine which party takes control of Congress.

McMorris Rodgers has made it clear she opposes the president's actions on tariffs, but so far, the Republican-controlled House has not taken up legislation to block them. Democrats characterize GOP lawmakers as unable or unwilling to check Trump, who has declared that "tariffs are the greatest."

"My opponent, though she would say she's concerned and talking to the administration about these issues, she's still mostly a cheerleader for the president," said Brown.

Facing what appears to be the tightest re-election race of her career, McMorris Rodgers is emphasizing that she has encouraged the president to "move from tariffs to agreement."

"I have made it very clear that I don't support the across-the-board tariffs, that we should take a more targeted approach," McMorris Rodgers told The Associated Press.

Polls show her slightly ahead of Brown, a former state Senate majority leader and university chancellor. In addition to the challenges raised by Trump's tariffs, McMorris Rodgers is dealing with controversy arising

from a [fund-raising visit](#) by House Intelligence Committee Chairman Devin Nunes of California.

Like McMorris Rodgers, Nunes faces his toughest re-election campaign to date in a district with an ag-dependent economy. Democratic challenger Andrew Janz, though, has focused more on Nunes' ties to corporate donors than on Trump's tariffs.

**Ag Secretary Perdue Tries to Provide Lift for GOP**  
Clues that the president's trade policies will play a role in the November midterm elections can be seen in Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue's travel schedule. Over the past few months, he's been to Eastern Washington to join McMorris Rodgers in meeting with farmers.

Perdue has also been to California's Central Valley to meet with farmers in the districts of Republican Reps. Jeff Denham and [David Valadao](#). He additionally went...

**"My opponent, though she would say she's concerned and talking to the administration about these issues, she's still mostly a cheerleader for the president."** — Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers, R-Wash.

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# FLORENCE DEATH TOLL CLIMBS. TRUMP VISITS AREA.

September 19, 2018 | AP News

WILMINGTON, N.C. — The death toll from Hurricane Florence climbed to at least 37, including two women who drowned when a sheriff's van taking them to a mental health facility was swept away by floodwaters, and North Carolina's governor pleaded with thousands of evacuees not to return home just yet.

President Donald Trump, meanwhile, arrived in storm-ravaged North Carolina on Wednesday and helped volunteers at a church in the hard-hit coastal town of New Bern. "How's the house?" Trump was heard asking one person as distribut-

ed plastic foam containers of food, including hot dogs, chips and fruit. "You take care of yourself." Wilmington, population 120,000, was still mostly an island surrounded by floodwaters, and people waited for hours Tuesday for handouts of food, water and tarps.

Thousands of others around the state waited in shelters for the all-clear. "I know it was hard to leave home, and it is even harder to wait and wonder whether you even have a home to go back to," Gov. Roy Cooper said. After submerging North Carolina with nearly 3 feet of rain, the storm dumped more...

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Photo: Politico

## 65 WOMEN CAME TO KAVANAUGH'S DEFENSE IN MATTER OF HOURS

September 20, 2018 | AP News

NEW YORK — It started as a series of phone calls among old high-school friends and ended up embroiling 65 women in the firestorm over a sexual assault allegation that could shape the Supreme Court. In a matter of hours, they all signed onto a letter rallying behind high court nominee and their high school friend Brett Kavanaugh as someone who "has always treated women with decency and respect."

And they signed up, whether they anticipated it or not, for becoming a focus of scrutiny themselves. The powerful strength-in-numbers statement, offered to bolster Kavanaugh's **denial of a claim** that he attacked a girl at a party during their high school years, has drawn questions from journalists, social media skeptics, even Hollywood figures. How well did the women know him? How could a statement and 65 signatures come together so fast after outlines of the allegation...

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## WOMAN WHO HELPED KIDNAP ELIZABETH SMART RELEASED FROM PRISON

September 19, 2018 | AP News

DRAPER, Utah — A woman who helped kidnap Elizabeth Smart when she was a teenager and stood by as the Utah girl was sexually assaulted was released Wednesday after spending 15 years in prison. Wanda Barzee, 72, quietly left the state prison in the Salt Lake City suburb of Draper, bypassing a throng of reporters gathered outside, spokeswoman Kaitlin Felsted did not say where Barzee was going.

Her release followed a surprise announcement last week that Utah authorities had miscalculated the amount of time Barzee should spend behind bars. Smart, now 30, has said she was shocked and disappointed by the move and hopes Barzee will be closely watched and given treatment. Smart has recalled some of the horrors she experienced as a 14-year-old when she was snatched from her Salt Lake City...

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Photo: Today Show





AP Photo/Jacquelyn Martin

# WORLD

## US SLASHES NUMBER OF REFUGEES TO 30,000 NEXT YEAR

September 18, 2018 | AP News

WASHINGTON — The U.S. will slash the number of refugees it will accept for a second straight year, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Monday, insisting amid criticism from human rights groups that the country is still committed to providing sanctuary to people fleeing the world’s danger zones. Up to 30,000 refugees will be allowed into the country next year, down from a cap of 45,000 this year. It will be the lowest ceiling on admissions since the program began in 1980. The announcement comes despite calls from global humanitarian groups that this year’s cap of 45,000 was too low.

Pompeo sought to head off potential criticism of the reduction by noting that the U.S. would process more than 280,000 asylum claims in addition to more than 800,000 already inside the country who are awaiting a resolution of their claims. “These expansive figures

**“These expansive figures continue the United States’ long-standing record as the most generous nation in the world when it comes to protection-based immigration and assistance.”**

— Secretary of State Mike Pompeo

continue the United States’ long-standing record as the most generous nation in the world when it comes to protection-based immigration and assistance,” he said.

The 30,000 cap is the maximum number of refugees

the U.S. will admit during the fiscal year that starts Oct. 1. The actual number allowed in could be lower. So far this year, the U.S. has only admitted 20,918 refugees for the fiscal year set to end in two weeks, according to State Department records.

### Prioritizing the Safety of the American People

President Barack Obama raised the ceiling to 110,000 in 2017, but the pace slowed dramatically after President Donald Trump took office and issued an executive order addressing refugees. In 2016, the last full year of the Obama administration, the U.S. welcomed nearly

85,000 refugees. Pompeo said the lower ceiling reflected commitment to aiding families forced to flee their homes by war, persecution or natural disasters while “prioritizing the safety and well-being of the American people.” He cited the case of an Iraqi refugee who was arrested in California for killing a policeman in his homeland while fighting for the Islamic State organization. “This year’s proposed refugee ceiling must be considered in the context of the many other forms of protection and assistance offered by the United States,” he said, citing U.S. contributions to foreign aid and other forms of humanitarian assistance.

**“This is the lowest goal in the history of the program... This must be perceived as an all-out attack against our country’s ability to resettle refugees both now and in the future.”** — Ryan Mace of Amnesty International

Amnesty International accused the Trump administration of “abandoning” refugees with the lower cap. “This is the lowest goal in the history of the program, and compounded by this administration’s history of creating road block after road block for refugees to arrive, this must be perceived as an all-out attack against our country’s ability to resettle refugees both now and in the future,” said Ryan Mace of Amnesty International.

Worldwide, there were some 25.4 million refugees last year, according to the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, with many more people internally displaced within their home countries. Most aid groups and governments advocate resettlement as a last resort, preferring to allow refugees to return to their homes if conditions improve, rather than permanently moving to another country.

### Advocating U.S. Efforts to End Conflicts

During the ceiling announcement Monday Pompeo advocated U.S. efforts “to end conflicts that drive...

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# SUU KYI SAYS HANDLING OF ROHINGYA COULD HAVE BEEN BETTER

September 13, 2018 | AP News

HANOI, Vietnam — In the face of global condemnation, Myanmar’s leader and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Aung San Suu Kyi on Thursday said that the handling of Rohingya Muslims, 700,000 of whom have fled to Bangladesh amid a brutal military campaign, could have been better, but still defended security forces from charges of civilian atrocities.

Myanmar’s army is accused of mass rape, killings and setting fire to thousands of homes in the aftermath of an August 2017 attack by Rohingya militants on security outposts. A report issued two weeks ago by a specially appointed U.N. human rights team recommended prosecuting senior Myanmar commanders for genocide and other crimes. “There are of course ways in which with hindsight I think the situation could have been handled better,” Suu Kyi said, responding to questions during a one-on-one discussion at the World Economic Forum’s regional meeting in Hanoi. She still...

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AP Photo/Bullit Marquez

# KIM AGREES TO DISMANTLE MAIN NUKE SITE IF US TAKES STEPS

Pyongyang Press Corps Pool via AP

September 19, 2018 | AP News

PYONGYANG, North Korea — The leaders of North and South Korea announced a wide range of agreements Wednesday which they said were a major step toward peace on the Korean Peninsula. But the premier pledge on denuclearization contained a big condition, with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un stating he’d permanently dismantle his main nuclear complex only if the United States takes unspecified corresponding measures.

Compared to the vague language of their two summits earlier this year, Kim and South Korean President Moon Jae-in agreed in their second day of meetings to an ambitious

program meant to tackle soaring tensions last year that had many fearing war as the North tested a string of increasingly powerful weapons.

Kim promised to accept international inspectors to monitor the closing of a key missile test site and launch pad and to visit Seoul soon, and both leaders vowed to work together to try to host the Summer Olympics in 2032.

But while containing several tantalizing offers, their joint statement appeared to fall short of the major steps many in Washington have been looking for — such as a...

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# LIBERALISM HAS EVOLVED INTO CLOSED, ELITIST SYSTEM IT ONCE REPLACED

September 18, 2018 | GV Wire

*“Liberalism made the modern world, but the modern world is turning against it.”*

So begins a thought-provoking essay from [The Economist](#) magazine analyzing the growing global shift away from long-standing Western democratic values to a more widespread acceptance of nationalism and authoritarianism.

“Western voters have started to doubt that the system works for them or that it is fair,” the magazine asserts. “In polling last year just 36% of Germans, 24% of Canadians and 9% of the French thought that the next generation would be better off than their parents. Only a third of Americans under 35 say that it is vital they live in a democracy; the share who would welcome military government grew from 7% in 1995 to 18% last year. Globally, according to [Freedom House](#), an NGO, civil liberties and political rights have declined for the past...

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