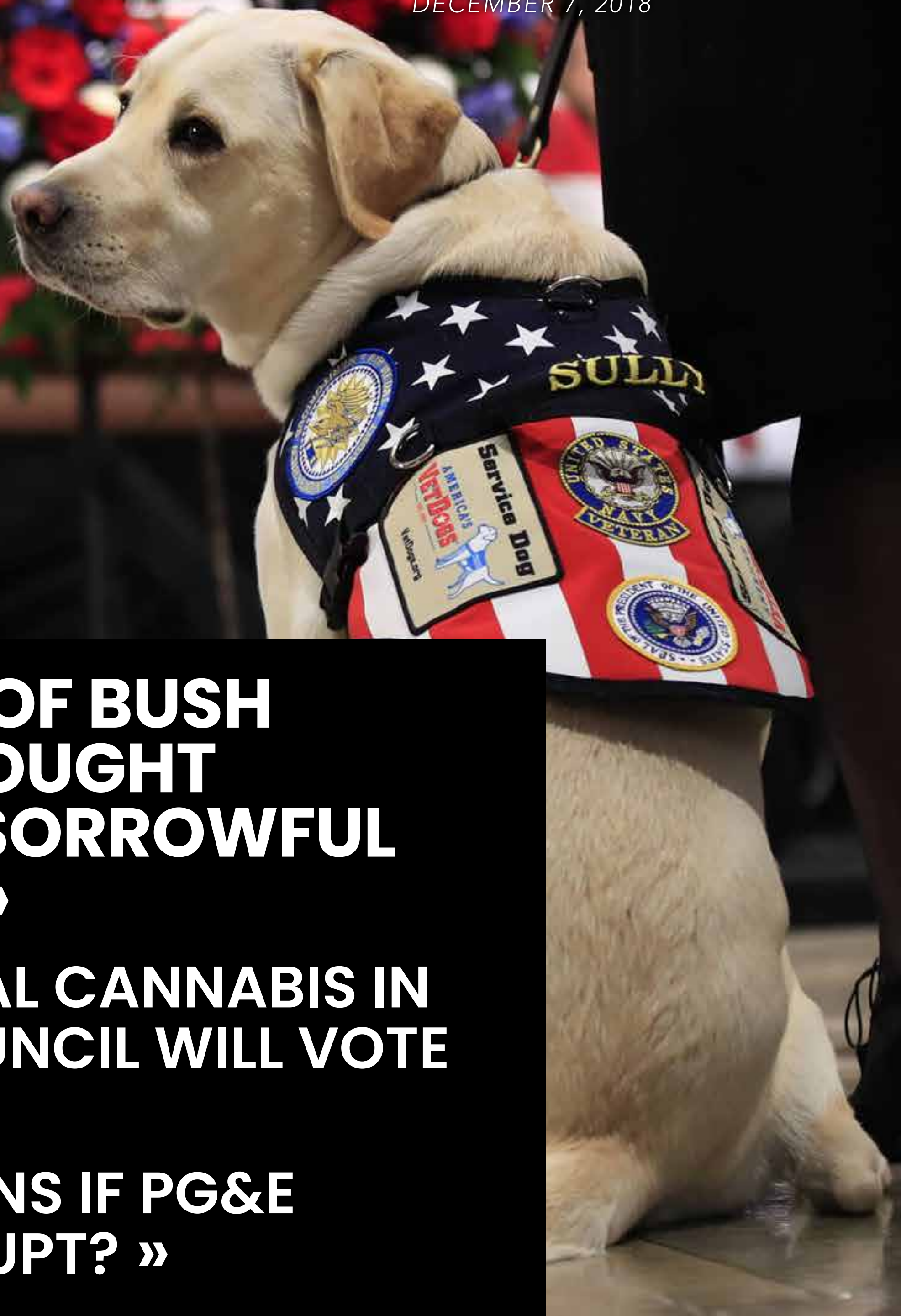


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WEEKLY DIGEST
DECEMBER 7, 2018



**MEMORIES OF BUSH
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**RECREATIONAL CANNABIS IN
FRESNO? COUNCIL WILL VOTE
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**WHAT HAPPENS IF PG&E
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AP Photo/Richard Vogel, File

RECREATIONAL CANNABIS IN FRESNO? COUNCIL WILL VOTE NEXT WEEK.

December 6, 2018 | David Taub

The Fresno City Council spent nearly 80 minutes Thursday debating the finer points of cannabis regulations. The main question: Whether to regulate medicinal cannabis, recreational use, both, or neither. Tempers flared. Councilmembers exchanged sharp words. Fresno Police Chief Jerry Dyer worried that he had been “used” by cannabis supporters. Councilman Luis Chavez authored a compromise. His proposal would regulate medicinal cannabis for the first year, then add recreational use (“adult use” in the city’s parlance) a year later. No vote was required, as the bill was for introduction only. The actual vote for adoption will take place next week (Dec. 13).

Cannabis Divides the Council

Supporter Clint Oliver battled Garry Bredefeld and Steve Brandau over adult use. Brandau didn’t like that adult use was coming up, after some consensus on allowing medicinal. His exchange with Olivier became testy. “Screw the committee. I don’t care a thing about

“Screw the committee. I don’t care a thing about the committee,”

— Councilman Steve Brandau

the committee,” Brandau frustratingly said. Olivier called him out for being vulgar.

The verbal battle saw Olivier say sarcastically “you are a tough guy, Councilmember

Brandau.” Bredefeld had similar feelings, calling out Mayor Lee Brand to live up to his word and veto adult use regulations — should they pass. “I expect him to take a lead on this and I expect him to follow through on his pledge that recreational dispensaries is something he is opposed to, doesn’t support and shouldn’t be happening,” Bredefeld said.

Council President Esmeralda Soria insisted that the buffer zone for marijuana around major highways be reduced from one mile to a half-mile. And Dyer expressed frustration over the recreational plan. He said he put his reputation on the line when he supported Measure A, which voters approved last month allowing taxation of cannabis business licenses. “I’ve got deep concerns over this. I signed the ballot initiative on Measure A under

the belief we were talking about medicinal marijuana,” Dyer said. “I put my reputation on the line with the law enforcement community. I put my reputation on the line in the faith community. I would hope we are not going backwards and that I was used.”

Review of the Rules

A brief review of the rules decided upon during debate:

— Up to 14 retail locations, with a maximum of two in each council district. They must be at least 800 feet from another retail store, school, daycare or youth center. Another seven would be allowed with council permission.

“I put my reputation on the line with the law enforcement community. I put my reputation on the line in the faith community. I would hope we are not going backwards and that I was used.” — Fresno Police Chief Jerry Dyer

— Allow a total of 16 cultivators, distributors and manufacturers. At least half must be in a “Cannabis Innovation Zone” bounded by Highway 41, Golden State Boulevard, and Church, East, and Parallel avenues. The rest can be in a half-mile zone around Highway 99 and Highway 180 west of Highway 99. They must be 1,000 feet from a school, daycare center, youth center, or residential zone.

— Create a subcommittee to discuss an equity (fairness) component in distributing cannabis business licenses.

Council voted 5-1 to enact a business tax plan. The governing body settled at \$6 per square foot for cultivation, 4% for manufacturing and retail, 1% for distribution and none for testing. The recently passed Measure A gave the council the right to set the rates.

Council Passes 23% Raises

The approved, 5-2, raises for the governing board, but only after removing a provision of tying future raises to salaries for the Fresno County Board of Supervisors. Starting when a council member begins a new term (either by election or re-election), the salary increases...

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JEWEL OF A FEAT: HIGH SCHOOL TO KINGSBURG CITY COUNCIL

Photo: Twitter

November 30, 2018 | Myles Barker

In 2016, Kingsburg High School students voted Jewel Hurtado homecoming queen. Two years later, the Kingsburg community voted the 20-year-old Fresno City College student in as the newest member on the Kingsburg City Council. “It was very unexpected,” said Hurtado, who also recently became a mother. In the Kingsburg race, Hurtado beat out candidate Nathan Williams and unseated one-term incumbent Staci Smith to represent District 1.

For much of the race, Hurtado trailed behind Smith. However, as the count of mail-in and provisional ballots continued, she took the lead in mid-November and has kept it ever since. With all ballots now counted, Hurtado retained an eight-vote margin of victory. “That’s really good news,” she said. Hurtado showed a level of commitment as a candidate that earned her endorsements from the likes of Assemblyman Joaquin Aram-

bula (D-Fresno) and Fresno City Council President Esmeralda Soria. They, as well as other government officials and organizations, helped Hurtado raise nearly \$7,000 for her campaign. Miguel Arias, a newly-elected Fresno City Council member, also supported Hurtado. Doing so was a no brainer, he said.

“When you have someone who is young and willing to do the work and ask people to support her efforts, it was an easy decision to endorse her and contribute to her campaign,” Arias said. Arias said he hopes other young individuals follow suit. “If they do what Jewel did and take the initiative and step up, they will be surprised by the amount of community support they get,” he said.

Hurtado was born and raised in Kingsburg with her six siblings. She comes from a family of politically-minded...

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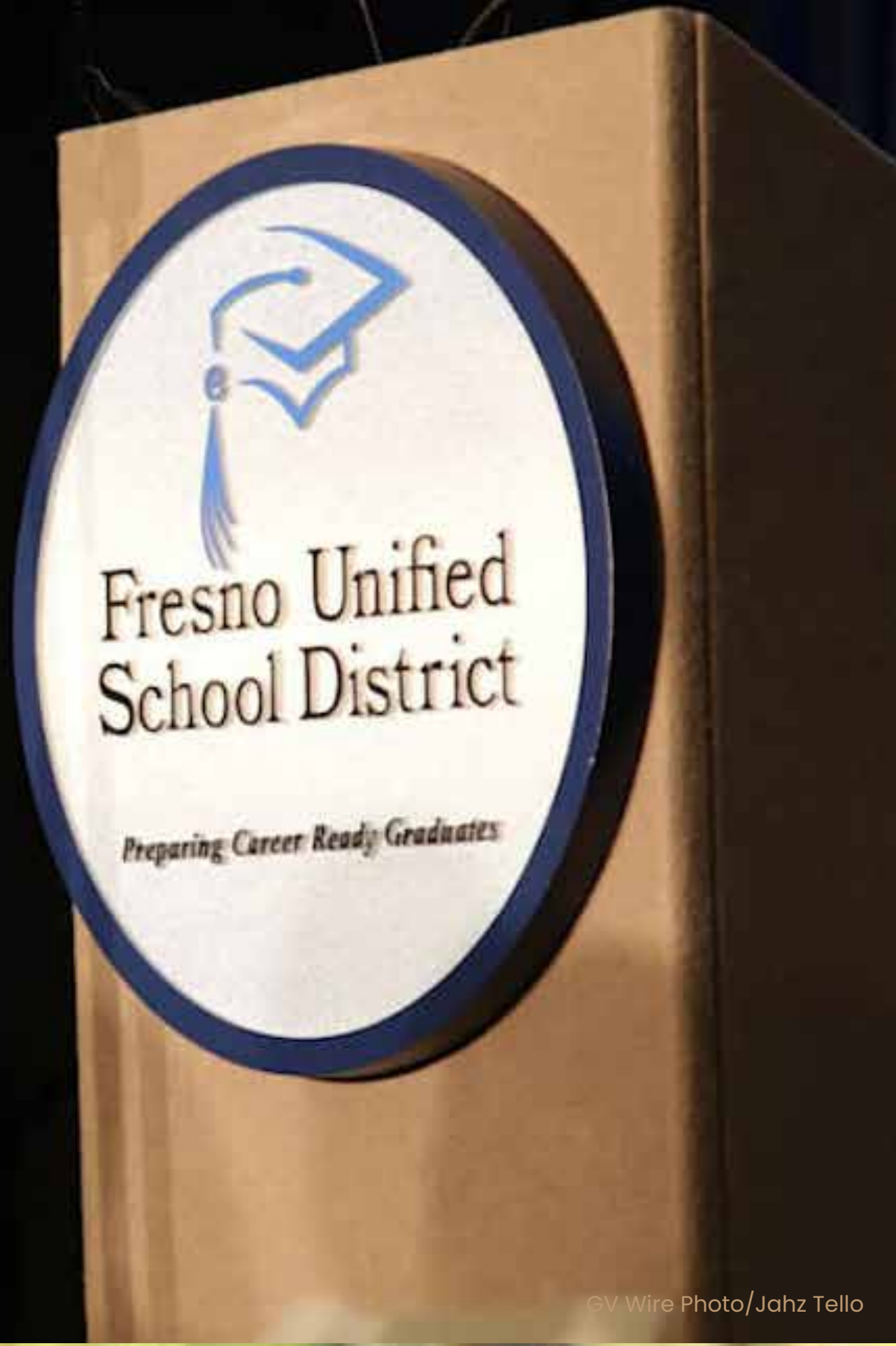
ASHJIAN VS. NELSON: A HOT, LOUD DEBATE

November 30, 2018 | Bill McEwen & Myles Barker

Cool, calm and collected Fresno Unified Superintendent Bob Nelson has a temper after all — as you can see in the video accompanying this article. The trustee who spiked Nelson’s blood pressure: Brooke Ashjian, with his comments on a \$1 million supplementary spending proposal for special education. A million dollars isn’t nearly enough, Ashjian said at the Nov. 14 board meeting.

“We’ve got to get more resources in there. We need more paraprofessionals. We need more speech pathologists. We need more psychologists. These kids are screaming (for help).” Nelson’s voice rose and his index finger tapped the table as he responded to Ashjian. “This is my affinity group. I have a kid in (the adult transition program),” Nelson said. “If you honestly think we’re going to sit idly by and not push forward on this, you’re kidding yourself. I wonder what you’ve heard me say over the past two years, quite frankly.” Ashjian got in one more broadside.

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GV Wire Photo/Jahz Tello



Photo: TJ Cox Website

TJ COX BACK IN FRESNO

December 4, 2018 | David Taub

Newly-elected congressman TJ Cox is preparing to take office next month. With the election count about to become official, the Democrat has declared victory over incumbent David Valadao (R-Hanford) in the 21st district. After spending a week in Washington, Cox returned to Fresno this past weekend where GV Wire caught up with him.

Cox says he is transitioning out of his position as president and COO of [Central Valley NMTC Fund, LLC](#). “I need to wrap up a lot of the activities I have as a private citizen, and dedicate myself solely as an elected public servant,” Cox said. Just like he did on the campaign trail, Cox is still calling for comprehensive immigration reform. He wants a plan that keeps America safe, without tearing apart immigrant families. He says he is troubled by recent skirmishes on the Southern border. “This is a situation that never should have happened in the first place. Why was the caravan even started and allowed to...congregate...

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STATE WHAT HAPPENS IF PG&E GOES BANKRUPT?

December 3, 2018 | CALmatters

Investigators are massing. Lawsuits are mounting. The death toll in Butte County's historic Camp Fire stands at 88, so far. Another year, another megafire, another calamity in which faulty Pacific Gas and Electric equipment is a prime suspect. And once again, Californians face a familiar question: What's going to happen to the behemoth power company in the thick of the fire zone?

It's a concern not just for PG&E—one of the largest utilities in the nation—but also for utilities and their customers throughout California. State laws make power companies **especially liable** for fires sparked by and around their equipment, and California's fire season is year-round now, thanks to global warming.

Just this month, **Southern California ratepayers sued** Southern California Edison for damage from the Woolsey Fire in Ventura County. And earlier this year, the Legislature passed a special **wildfire bill** to help PG&E spread the costs of its potential liability in 17 Northern California wildfires last year.

Now comes the Camp Fire, which sent PG&E stock whipsawing this month after evidence of an equipment malfunction near the fire's point of origin sparked fears the company's liability **won't be covered** by its insurance. Investors were so panicky that Public Utilities Commission President Michael Picker **had to step in**, pointedly announcing that PG&E's financial stability was crucial to making the utilities' equipment safer. Pasadena Democratic Assemblyman Chris Holden even raised the possibility that the Legislature will **intervene** a second time to help California utilities cope with wildfire expenses. But the century-old PG&E—which employs 20,000 workers and is slated to play an integral role in California's clean energy future—also has a

checkered history and little goodwill to spare with the public. On Thursday, the **PUC launched an investigation** into the utility's safety record and corporate structure, as Bay Area residents shouted, protested and urged commissioners not to give them a bailout.

What if Sacramento lacks the political appetite to bail out the soulless corporation in "**Erin Brockovich**" and the negligent villain that was found guilty in the 2010 San Bruno pipeline **explosion**? Let's look at what could happen if PG&E, which provides natural gas and electricity to 16 million people in northern and central California, seeks debt restructuring in the aftermath of the deadliest blaze in state history. According to Sacramento-based bankruptcy attorney Steven Felderstein, PG&E would most likely continue with business operations. **Michael Wara, director of the Climate and Energy Policy Program at Stanford University, says the state shouldn't allow PG&E to go bankrupt because it would be expensive for ratepayers to pay back that debt.**

This means the lights would stay on and utility workers would keep working. But a Chapter 11 filing would allow PG&E to propose a reorganization plan to reduce expenses and free up assets.

Felderstein, who has represented state agencies in bankruptcy courts around the country, said a judge is usually assigned to mediate to get most, if not all, parties to a consensus. The bankruptcy court would then confirm that the plan is feasible, made in good faith and in the best interest of creditors. PG&E would have four months to file a reorganization plan but could get an extension. Bankruptcy could affect wildfire victims seeking damages because the filing triggers a stay on lawsuits against PG&E. Multiple victims of the Camp Fire have **already sued PG&E** alleging negligence and health and safety code violations by the utility. That comes on the heels of dozens of lawsuits related...

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RESIDENTS OF CALIFORNIA TOWN LEVELLED BY FIRE CAN NOW GO HOME

December 5, 2018 | AP News

PARADISE — Some residents of a Northern California town devastated by a deadly wildfire will be allowed to return home Wednesday, nearly a month after the blaze swept through the parched Sierra Nevada foothills, authorities said. Evacuation orders were being lifted for all neighborhoods in the eastern side of the town of Paradise, where the fire that started Nov.

8 destroyed about 14,000 homes and killed at least 85 people, the Butte County Sheriff's Office said in a statement. There will be limited access to residents on Wednesday, but the same neighborhoods will be opened to anyone on

Thursday. More than 50,000 people in the town and two neighboring communities were forced to flee the wind-driven flames that charred 240 square miles. Authorities said 11 people are still unaccounted for in the deadliest U.S. wildfire in at least a century. The communities will have very limited services for the immediate future, and authorities urged residents to bring food, water and fuel for vehicles with them.

Residents were also warned they should not move back into homes until ash and hazardous waste have been cleared away. And they were told that rain could increase risks in fire-impacted areas for flash floods and mud and debris...

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GV Wire Photo Illustration/Alexis DeSha

GETTIN' BUSY IN SACRAMENTO: OVER 200 LEGISLATIVE ITEMS IN JUST THREE DAYS.

December 5, 2018 | David Taub

After only three days in session, members of the California Legislature have already proposed 204 items for consideration. Maybe that shouldn't be so surprising. After all, 5,617 pieces were introduced in the 2017-18 session. Here's a small sampling of the solutions state legislators are offering as a way to fix things you may not have known were problems:

—Do youth football players practice too much? That is a concern of Assemblyman Jim Cooper (D-Elk Grove). His **AB1** would limit youth football to two full-contact practices during the week, and none during the offseason. Practices would be limited to one hour. The law would place youth teams under the same guidelines as school teams. "The assemblyman believes that it is important to have uniform standards to protect children from injuries in contact sports. Right now it is hard to know how often youth teams are participating in full contact practices, so limiting it to two per...

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DID BALLOT HARVESTING CAUSE BLUE WAVE? REVISITING THE DEBATE.

November 30, 2018 | AP News

TJ Cox was down by more than 4,000 votes as returns were counted the night of the Nov. 6 election. As it stands now, he will be elected to Congress in the 21st district by nearly 600 votes. That drastic turnaround in Cox's and other California races is one of the top post-election questions. House Speaker **Paul Ryan (R-Wisc.)** called the **Golden State's results** "bizarre." He received a sharp rebuke from California Secretary of State Alex Padilla, among others, noting that it is just democracy in action.

Other analysts are saying "ballot harvesting" powered California's Blue Wave. Ballot harvesting is the practice of third-parties collecting filled out, sealed, and signed ballots and returning them to election offices. Cox's campaign tells GV Wire it did not engage in the practice during the campaign. But Republican campaign experts say that Democratic operatives took advantage of the legal practice in last month's election...

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GV Wire Photo Composite/Alexis DeSha



AP Photo/Evan Vucci

MEMORIES OF BUSH HUMOR BROUGHT SMILES TO SORROWFUL FAREWELL

December 5, 2018 | AP News

WASHINGTON — Memories of George H.W. Bush's underappreciated sense of humor drew laughter and brought smiles to the sorrowful mourning of the death of American's 41st president.

Presidential historian Jon Meacham recounted how comedian Dana Carvey once said that the key to doing his iconic impersonation of Bush was to mimic "Mr. Rogers trying to be John Wayne." That prompted chuckles that rang from the vaulted arches inside the Washington National Cathedral.

Shaking Hands with Mannequin

Meacham said once on the primary campaign trail in New Hampshire, Bush mistakenly grabbed the hand of a department store mannequin asking for votes. Meacham said, "When he realized his mistake, he said 'Never know. Gotta ask.'" The former president, who died Friday at age 94, often had tongue-twisted moments

"It's no exaggeration to say that the undecideds could go one way or the other."

— former President George W. Bush

and uttered funny one-liners. Looking ahead to the 1988 election, Bush once said: "It's no exaggeration to say that the undecideds could go one way or the other." And Meacham

said that late in his presidency, Bush's tongue ran amok when he said: "We are enjoying sluggish times, but we're not enjoying them very much."

Presidential Dislike of Broccoli

The former president's eldest son, former President George W. Bush, got in on the act, telling the packed cathedral that his father was no Fred Astaire on the dance floor and couldn't stomach vegetables, especially broccoli. While president, the elder Bush famously declared his dislike of broccoli. George W. Bush said his father also shared jokes via email with his circle of friends. "His grading system for the quality of the joke

was classic George Bush: The rare sevens and eights were considered huge winners, most of them off-color," the younger Bush said.

He said his dad really got the last laugh of the day because he chose former Sen. Alan Simpson to be one of the people to speak at Wednesday's ceremony. "He placed great value on a good joke, so he chose Simpson to speak," the younger Bush said.

Bush Never Lost Sense of Humor

Simpson said his friend never lost his sense of humor.

"He had a very serious flaw known by all close to him: He loved a good joke — the richer the better," Simpson said.

"And he threw his head back and gave that great laugh, but he never, ever could remember a punchline. And I mean never." "Humor is the universal solvent against the abrasive elements of life," Simpson continued. "He never hated anyone. He knew what his mother and my mother always knew: Hatred corrodes the container it's carried in."

"He never hated anyone. He knew what his mother and my mother always knew: Hatred corrodes the container it's carried in."

— former Sen. Alan Simpson



CHINA PROMISES ACTION ON US TRADE DEAL BUT GIVES NO DETAILS

December 5, 2018 | AP News

BEIJING — China issued an upbeat but vague promise Wednesday to carry out a tariff cease-fire with Washington but gave no details that might dispel confusion about what Presidents Xi Jinping and Donald Trump agreed to in Argentina. China has yet to confirm Trump's claim that Beijing committed to cut auto tariffs and buy more American farm exports.

That, coupled with conflicting statements by Trump and U.S. officials, helped trigger a tumble in U.S. stock prices Tuesday amid doubt about the chances for a lasting settlement of a

battle over technology that threatens to chill global economic growth. "China will start from implementing specific issues on which consensus has been reached, and the sooner, the better," the Commerce Ministry said on its website.

The two sides have a "clear timetable and road map" for talks, the ministry said, but gave no details. The ministry didn't respond to questions by phone and fax. The Chinese silence prompted questions about what Trump said was a promise by Beijing to buy more American exports and negotiate over U.S. complaints that it steals American...

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AP Photo/Michael Hill

SHOULD YOU NEED TO PASS A SOCIAL MEDIA CHECK TO GET A GUN?

December 4, 2018 | AP News

ALBANY, N.Y. — Should hateful tweets keep you from getting a gun? That's a question many have asked after suspects in several horrific mass shootings were found only later to have left social media hints of violence that went unheeded for years. Now a New York lawmaker has introduced a bill that would require police to scrutinize the social media and online searches of handgun license applicants, and disqualify those who publish violent or hate-filled posts.

"We certainly want to make sure we're putting weapons in the hands of the right people and keeping them out of the hands of the wrong people," said state Sen. Kevin Parker, a Brooklyn Democrat who added he was inspired to act after the Pittsburgh synagogue shooting suspect left social media rants that Jews were "children of Satan." Free-speech watchdogs and even some gun-control advocates have already...

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DEPORTED NURSE WINS APPROVAL TO RETURN TO US

December 3, 2018 | AP News

SAN FRANCISCO — A nurse who was deported to Mexico has won her improbable fight to return to her four children and job in California after winning a ticket in a visa lottery. Maria Mendoza-Sanchez told the San Francisco Chronicle she learned Friday her visa had been approved by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

"This is amazing," she said. "I could barely believe it." Mendoza-Sanchez, 47, and her husband were deported to Mexico last year amid the Trump administration's crackdown on undocumented immigrants. Her case drew support from political leaders and her colleagues at Highland Hospital in Oakland held a rally protesting her deportation. The hospital petitioned for her to get an H-1B visa, arguing her experience caring for cancer patients qualifies her as a high-skilled worker. Democratic Sen. Dianne Feinstein said she was pleased Mendoza-Sanchez was granted the visa, given the...

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Leah Millis/San Francisco Chronicle via AP



G20 Press Office via AP, File

TURKEY SEEKS ARREST OF 2 FORMER AIDES TO SAUDI CROWN PRINCE

December 6, 2018 | AP News

ISTANBUL — Turkey is seeking the arrest of two former aides to Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman who were dismissed amid the fallout from the killing of Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi. The U.N.'s human rights chief, meanwhile, said an international probe is needed into Khashoggi's death. Turkey's official Anadolu news agency said Wednesday a court

"The international community seems to doubt Saudi Arabia's commitment to prosecute this heinous crime. Saudi authorities could address those concerns." — senior Turkish official familiar with the investigation

approved arrest warrants for former royal court adviser Saud al-Qahtani and former deputy intelligence chief Ahmed al-Assiri, who are believed to have overseen the team that killed and dismembered Khashoggi at the kingdom's Istanbul consulate in October. Saudi authorities say the agents who killed Khashoggi exceeded their authority.

The Istanbul chief prosecutor's Tuesday court application says there is "strong suspicion" the two aides were involved in planning the killing. Turkey has been seeking to extradite 18 suspects, including 15 members of the alleged assassination squad. The government says a trial in Turkey would provide transparency and accountability and says Saudi authorities have not fully cooperated with the probe.

Turkey Awaits Information From Saudi Investigation
Speaking in Brussels, Turkey's Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said Wednesday that Turkey had been "patiently" requesting information from the Saudi investigation. He said Saudi Arabia instead gave "contradictory statements" and called on the kingdom "to be transparent towards us and the international community, share what has resulted from the investigations." Speaking on condition of anonymity in line with government protocol, a senior Turkish official familiar with the investiga-

tion said the arrest warrants reflect Turkey's view that Saudi Arabia won't hold the suspects accountable.

"The international community seems to doubt Saudi Arabia's commitment to prosecute this heinous crime," the official said, adding that by extraditing all suspects to Turkey, "Saudi authorities could address those concerns."

Saudi Arabia has detained 21 people and says it is seeking the death penalty for five. Saudi authorities initially said Khashoggi, who had written articles critical of the crown prince's policies, had disappeared after safely leaving the consulate. It only acknowledged he was killed after Turkish press reports based on intelligence leaks revealed extensive details of the operation. Khashoggi had visited the consulate on Oct. 2 to obtain documents required to wed his Turkish fiancée. His remains are still to be found, and Turkey has repeatedly demanded that Saudi officials reveal the identity of a local collaborator who may have disposed of the body.

Unlikely Crown Prince Didn't Know About Killing

U.S. intelligence assessments and experts say it's unlikely the killing could have happened without the crown prince's knowledge. U.N. human rights chief Michelle Bachelet said an international investigation is needed into the "awful" killing of Khashoggi. Speaking at a news conference in Geneva timed for the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, she alluded to similar calls from outside experts linked to the U.N. human rights office. "We also call for an international investigation," she said. "We mentioned to the (U.N.) secretary-general that we...

"We also call for an international investigation. We mentioned to the (U.N.) secretary-general that we thought it was needed, a criminal investigation — international investigation." — U.N. human rights chief Michelle Bachelet

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HOUTHI REBELS BLOCK FOOD DELIVERIES TO STARVING YEMENI

December 6, 2018 | AP News

RIMBO, Sweden — The head of the U.N. food agency has accused Shiite Houthi rebels of blocking access to food deliveries to civilians devastated by the war in Yemen. World Food Program chief David Beasley, who has previously criticized the Saudi-led coalition for a blockade of Yemeni ports, told The Associated Press on Thursday that it's now the Houthis who are impeding access in parts of the country.

In an interview at the agency's headquarters in Rome, Beasley says: "I'm on their back because we have access issues out into different areas throughout Yemen. We need more people; they blocked our visas. We need equipment, they

blocked our equipment, they blocked our access." Beasley, who visited Yemen two weeks ago, called the humanitarian situation there "desperate" and said the WFP needs access and money to avert a famine.

Meanwhile, Yemen's warring sides agreed to a broad prisoner swap Thursday, sitting down in the same room together for the first time in years at U.N.-sponsored peace talks in Sweden aimed at halting a catastrophic war that has brought the country to the brink of famine. Hopes were high that talks wouldn't deteriorate into further violence as in the past, and that the prisoner exchange would be an important first step...

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AP Photo/Francisco Seco

US TO SUSPEND NUCLEAR PACT WITH RUSSIA

December 4, 2018 | AP News

BRUSSELS — The United States will suspend its obligations under a landmark nuclear treaty in 60 days in response to Russia's alleged violation of the pact, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Tuesday. Pompeo announced the decision after NATO allies meeting in Brussels supported Washington's contention that Russia violated the terms of the 1987 Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty.

"We either bury our head in the sand or we take common sense action," he said. Accusing Russia of "cheating at its arms control obligations," Pompeo said a six-month notice period for leaving the treaty would start in 60 days. President Donald Trump previously threatened to withdraw from the treaty signed by Ronald Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. Washington alleges Russia's new SSC8 missile system contravenes the Cold War-era treaty, which bans all land-based cruise missiles with a range between 310-3,410 miles. Pompeo said Washington "would welcome a Russian...

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HONDURAN WOMAN IN CARAVAN GIVES BIRTH ON US SOIL

December 6, 2018 | AP News

SAN DIEGO — A Honduran woman affiliated with a caravan of Central American migrants gave birth on U.S. soil shortly after entering the country illegally amid growing frustration about a bottleneck to claim asylum at official border crossings. Border Patrol agents arrested the woman Nov. 26 after she entered the country illegally near Imperial Beach, California, across the border from Tijuana, Mexico, Customs and Border Protection said Wednesday. She was arrested with her 20-year-old husband and 2-year-old son.

The woman, who was eight months pregnant, was taken to a hospital after complaining about abdominal pain the day after her arrest, Customs and Border Protection said. The family was released from custody on Sunday, pending the outcomes of their immigration cases. Univision reported that the family is seeking asylum and hoped to join family in Columbus, Ohio, while their cases are pending. Maryury Serrano...

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AP Photo/Rodrigo Abd



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