



WEEKLY DIGEST
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BOARD FLIP-FLOPS ON RIVER ACCESS PLAN, MORE DELAYS AHEAD

February 27, 2019 | David Taub

Brett Frazier stormed out of Fresno City Hall chambers, his face as red as his hair. Angry, he didn't want to talk about the previous five hours chairing the San Joaquin River Conservancy Board meeting. The Madera County supervisor and his colleagues from various local and state agencies endured what one local businessman told them was "Groundhog Day."

The board spent the day deciding how to move forward on a trail access project to the San Joaquin River.

"There will be no opportunity to come back and get this compromise. All our willing partners that are this moment, right now, will not be there I don't think. And, that would be a travesty not for our time sitting in this dais, but the people of the state of California starting with Fresno and Madera and this area." — Brett Frazier

Nees avenues, it may put it on the backburner. The vote, 8-5 in support, came shortly after the board shot down a plan to approve a compromise plan on both options. That failed, 7-6. John Shelton, the conservancy's executive officer, said the only thing for sure he could say after the votes is that any construction will be delayed. Again. "Significant time is going to go between now and when we can go to construction," he said.

Groundhog Day

Wednesday's meeting was just the next episode in the seemingly never-ending saga for the river board to decide something. In Dec. 2017, the board voted on the Spano Park option, with the condition that certain benchmarks were met. The board could not agree if the owner of the land where the Spano Park lot would be built met such benchmarks. Pete Weber, founder and chairman of the [California Bridge Academies](#) and a Spano Park plan proponent, chided

the board during public comment. "When you move the goalpost after the game has been played, you are inviting legal challenge. Now, I hate lawsuits, but I do not want to be sitting here two or three years from now experience Groundhog Day all over again," Weber said, surmising a court would side with the Spano Park supporters. Familiar faces in favor of each plan presented their case to the board. Each made similar arguments regarding access, environment and costs.

In addition to Weber, developer Cliff Tutelian and businessman Tim Bakman spoke for Spano Park. Sharon Weaver of the San Joaquin River Parkway and Conservation Trust, along with advocate Tom Bohigian, spoke in favor of Riverview Drive. "There is one existing access point to this site today. It's called Alternative 1," Weaver said of the Riverview Drive option.

Emotions Boil Over

After hearing from staff and the public, the board meandered back on forth on whether to continue supporting Spano Park, Riverview Drive, or some sort of combination. Bryn Forhan, a citizen member appointee, proposed the latter. That board spent almost as much time debating what such a combination meant versus the merits of the idea itself. Steve Brandau, the Fresno City Council representative of the board, expressed his exasperation.

"I won't be able to take our board very serious if we're willing to allow this (Spano Park advocate) group to do all this hard work and get that close and, quite frankly, hang them up on a technicality that is beyond their control. I won't be able to take our work seriously moving in the future." The board eventually voted against that plan, leading to a vote on moving forward on the Riverview Drive option. Nathan Magsig, the Fresno County supervisor representative, let loose.

"I'm extremely frustrated," Magsig said about the lack of progress. "All of you in this room have been at this for 12 years. This is, in my opinion as we sit here and...

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TALKIN' BASEBALL: FORMER ALL-STAR PITCHERS

GV Wire Photo/Jahz Tello

February 27, 2019 | David Taub

It's hard to believe that Dave Stewart never won the Cy Young Award. After all, he won 20 games four years in a row. He was the dominant pitcher during the Oakland A's championship runs in the late 1980s and early 1990s. But he may have been best known for his stern game face.

Stewart recently appeared at the Fresno Grizzlies Hot Stove event, swapping stories with the likes of former Fresno State star and former National League MVP Terry Pendleton and former All-Star pitcher C.J. Wilson.

GV Wire had a chance to talk to the pitchers, asking them about life in and out of baseball.

Take Five

In this Take Five:

— Stewart talks about his game face. He may have even cracked a smile (watch the video above to know for sure).

— After his playing career, Stewart served as a player agent and worked in the front office. He offers his thoughts on the progress of minorities in leadership positions in baseball.

— During his first year with Oakland, Stewart got into a memorable brawl with Fresno native Pat Corrales, who managed Cleveland in 1986. Stewart says he still is razzed about it today.

— Wilson talks about why he moved to Fresno and opened a car dealership selling Porsche, BMW, and Audi vehicle.

— The former Rangers and Angels pitcher talks about why he left the game, and if he still misses it.

[Click here to watch the video.](#)

AUDIT SHOWS FRESNO LOST \$250,000 IN PARKING REVENUE

February 27, 2019 | David Taub

A city of Fresno internal audit has revealed that a “lack of standard monitoring procedures” led to a potential loss of nearly \$250,000 in parking revenue. The audit, dated Feb. 15 and received by GV Wire via a source with access to the report, listed five areas in which the city lacks proper oversight of its parking program. “Parking Services does not have effective procedures for monitoring parking usage in City owned facilities. As a result, Parking Services cannot ensure that entities which contract with the City for parking are only using the spaces for which they pay,” wrote auditor Kriti Agrawal.

The city's parking unit is part of the development department —called DARM — under director Jennifer Clark. Her superior is city manager Wilma Quan-Schechter. Quan-Schechter ordered the audit believing it would be a valuable tool for the city's new parking services manager, Thomas Gaffery. He started last June after serving as parking director for Fresno State and CSU San Bernardino. “Our new Parking Services Manager...

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GV Wire Photo/Jahz Tello

MIXED FEELINGS IN SUPREME COURT RULING IN FRESNO EQUAL PAY CASE

February 26, 2019 | David Taub

The attorney who won a landmark equal pay case for a Fresno woman calls the latest Supreme Court ruling a “minor setback.” The high court ruled on Monday that the case of Aileen Rizo, a math consultant with the Fresno County Office of Education, should head back to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals — not because of a ruling on equal pay, but because the judge who wrote the majority opinion died before it was officially published. Rizo initially filed suit in 2014 for [pay discrimination](#) when she learned her pay was less than of her colleagues.

The question for the Ninth Circuit panel was whether, under the law, employers can use past salary to justify a disparity in pay. Judge Stephen Reinhardt wrote that “Based on the text, history, and purpose of the Equal Pay Act, the answer is clear: No.” Five judges agreed with his reasoning. Five other judges agreed with the outcome, but not with the opinion Reinhardt wrote. FCOE has since adjusted its compensation policy...

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Photo: FCOE



AP Photo

STATE

CALIFORNIA AG BECERRA WANTS TO KEEP POLICE CRIMES HIDDEN

February 27, 2019 | AP News

SACRAMENTO — California's attorney general is demanding that a university journalism program return a state list that includes law enforcement officers convicted of crimes in the past decade, saying the information wasn't meant to be public and shouldn't have been given out by another agency. Attorney General Xavier Becerra's office sent reporters from the Investigative Reporting Program at the University of California, Berkeley, a notice that confidential information had been inadvertently released from a confidential database, the program reported Tuesday. The attorney general's office said possessing the list was a misdemeanor and asked the reporters to destroy it. They received it last month from California's police training agency through a public records request.

The reporters refused, but so far have released only limited details about the list. They say the list of nearly 12,000 names includes current and former officers and those who applied to be officers. It's not clear how many are active officers and how many had never been officers. The list outlines crimes including shoplifting, child molestation, embezzlement and murder. It's not clear how many of the convicted officers remain on the job. In a statement to The Associated Press late Tuesday, Becerra's office reiterated its position that the information came from a confidential database to which the reporters should not have had access.

"State law protects the records of all Californians in this database by prohibiting the possession and use of this information by anyone not identified by statute," his office said. The report comes as he is also refusing to release old records of serious misconduct by his own justice department agents under a new law that

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requires the release. Becerra is citing conflicting court decisions on whether records should be made public for incidents that happened before the disclosure law took effect Jan. 1.

Includes Current, Former or Prospective Officers

In a letter to reporter Robert Lewis with the reporting program's production arm, Investigative Studios, Deputy Attorney General Michelle Mitchell said the criminal history information was taken from a confidential law enforcement database where "access to information is restricted by law."

"You are hereby on notice that the unauthorized receipt or possession...is a misdemeanor," she wrote, threatening unspecified legal action. First Amendment Coalition executive director David Snyder told the reporting program that, "It's disheartening and ominous that the highest law enforcement officer in the state is threatening legal action over something the First Amendment makes clear can't give rise to criminal action against a reporter."

Without providing many details, the reporting program said the list includes current, former or prospective officers who dealt drugs, stole from their departments, sexually assaulted suspects, took bribes, filed false reports and committed perjury. A large number drove drunk, and sometimes killed people while doing so.

The reporting program said the list came after a law last year allowed the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training to keep records of when current or former officers are convicted of felonies or other crimes that would disqualify them from law...

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February 27, 2019 | AP News

GUERNEVILLE — A California town north of San Francisco is accessible only by boat after the rain-swollen Russian River overflowed its banks and inundated it overnight, authorities said Wednesday.

“Guerneville is officially an island,” the Sonoma Sheriff’s Office said in a statement, adding that all roads leading to it are covered by water from the Russian River, which was forecast to swell more throughout the day. The river topped 32 feet Tuesday evening and it could crest at more than 46 feet by Wednesday night, which would be the highest level in about a quarter-century. About 4,000 residents of Guerneville and

two dozen other communities along the river were ordered to evacuate Tuesday evening. There also was concern about potential mudslides in hillside areas saturated from days of downpours, and in areas scarred by 2017 wildfires.

A mudslide Tuesday near the community of Monte Rio near Guerneville trapped a man and a woman before they were rescued, messy but unharmed. “I fell into the mud when the tree fell over the top of me. It happened so fast you don’t even know, you know?” Kear Koch told KGO-TV. Elsewhere in the area, several people had to be rescued from cars stranded while motorists tried to drive through flooded...

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AMID CLOUDS OF DUST, BORDER WALL PROTOTYPES ARE DEMOLISHED

February 27, 2019 | AP News

SAN DIEGO — The government is demolishing eight prototypes of Donald Trump’s prized border wall that instantly became powerful symbols of his presidency when they were built nine months after he took office. The Trump administration says elements of the prototypes have been melded into current border fence designs and they have served their purpose.

The four concrete and four steel panels, spaced closely together steps from an existing barrier separating San Diego and Tijuana, Mexico, were one of Trump’s top priorities, and he visited the location a year ago to see the installations firsthand. For Trump’s allies, the towering models were a show of his commitment to border security and fulfilling a core campaign promise. For detractors, they were monuments to wasted taxpayer dollars and a misguided display of aggression toward Mexico and immigrants seeking a...

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AP Photo/Gregory Bull

DOLPHIN STRANDINGS INCREASE ALONG SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA COAST

February 26, 2019 | AP News

LAGUNA BEACH — Experts were working Tuesday to determine the cause of an increase in dolphin strandings along the Southern California coast. The Pacific Marine Mammal Center said it has responded to six beached dolphins this month and received reports of two others. Necropsies have been performed on all the dolphins to try to determine the cause of the strandings.

The center’s veterinarian, Kristen Sakamaki, said in a statement there were a variety of potential reasons, including viral infections, bacterial infections and toxins. “We may not always get a definitive answer, but we consider our research with these dolphins to be a very important piece to the puzzle in providing clues as to what is going on in our nearshore habitats,” Sakamaki said. The center said that, according to the Southern California Coastal Ocean Observing System, there have recently been blooms of algae that can produce...

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Photo: Shutterstock



‘RACIST,’ ‘CONMAN’: COHEN ASSAILS TRUMP BEFORE CONGRESS

February 27, 2019 | AP News

WASHINGTON — In a damning depiction of Donald Trump, the president’s former lawyer on Wednesday cast him as a racist and conman who used his inner circle to cover up politically damaging allegations about sex and lied about his business interests in Russia throughout the campaign that sent him to the White House.

Cohen, who pleaded guilty last year to lying to Congress, testified that Trump had advance knowledge and embraced the news that emails damaging to Hillary Clinton would be released. But he also said he has no “direct evidence” that the Trump presidential campaign colluded with Russia. Shaking off incessant criticism from Republicans anxious to paint him as a felon and liar, Cohen became the first Trump insider to pull back

“I am ashamed of my weakness and misplaced loyalty, of the things I did for Mr. Trump in an effort to protect and promote him. I am ashamed that I chose to take part in concealing Mr. Trump’s illicit acts rather than listening to my own conscience. I am ashamed because I know what Mr. Trump is.”

— Michael Cohen

the curtain on his version of the inner workings of Trump’s political and business operations. He likened the president to a “mobster” who demands blind loyalty from underlings and expects them to lie on his behalf to conceal information and protect him — even if it means breaking the law. “I am not protecting Mr. Trump anymore,” he declared. In one revelation, Cohen said that prosecutors in New York are investigating conversations Trump or his advisers had with him after his hotel room was raided for documents by the FBI last April. He was asked by a Democratic congressman about the last contact he had had with Trump or any agent representing the president.

Hush Money Payments and Furtive Russian Meetings
Cohen said that happened about two months after his

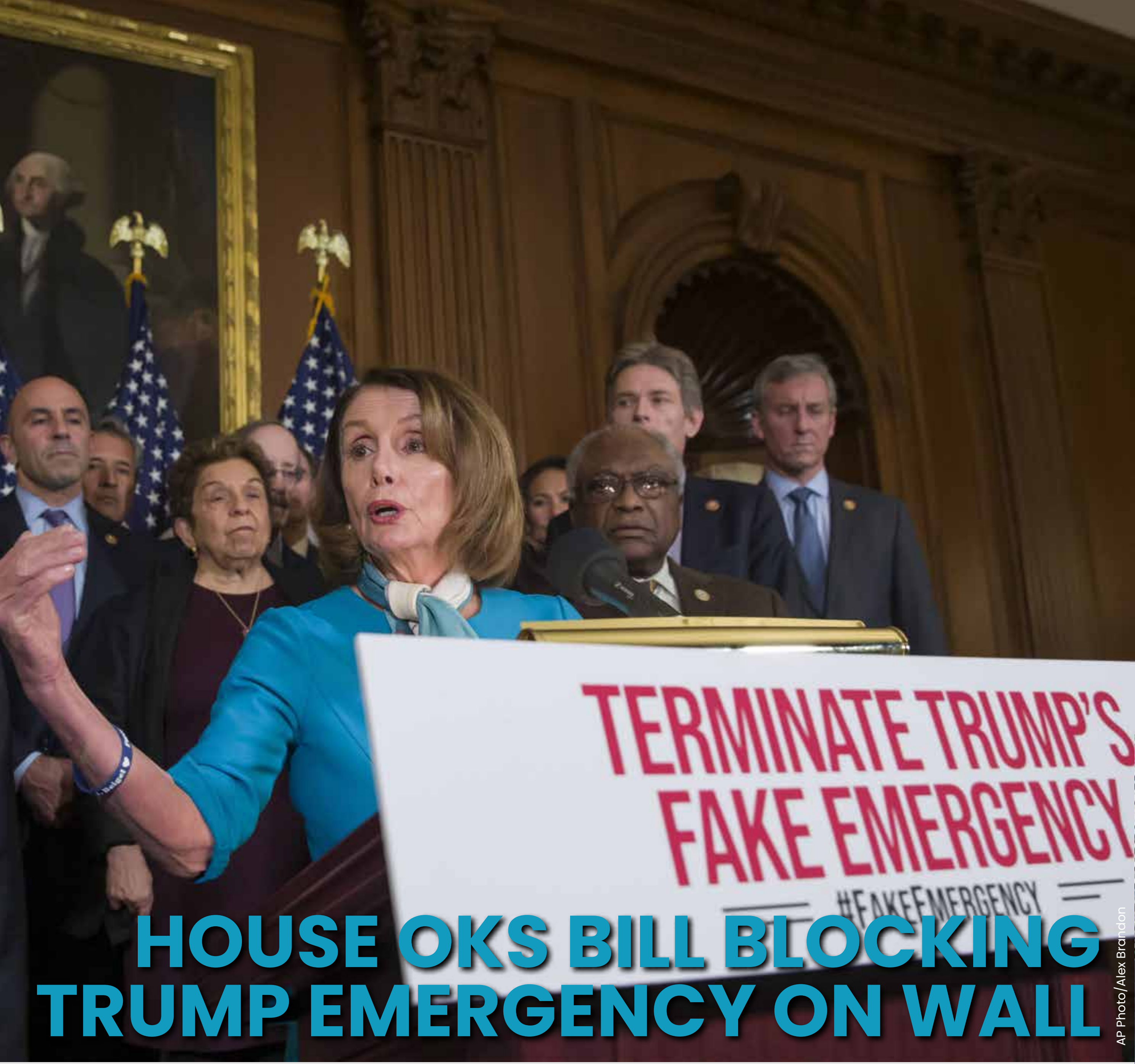
hotel room was raided by the FBI. But he declined to provide more specific details on grounds that the matter was under current investigation by federal prosecutors. His appearance marked the latest step in Cohen’s evolution from legal fixer for the president — he once boasted he’d “take a bullet” for Trump — to a foe who has implicated him in federal campaign finance violations. The matter-of-fact testimony about hush money payments and furtive Russian meetings unfolded as Trump met with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, offering stark TV counter-programming to the president’s official duties. At a Vietnam hotel and unable to ignore the drama thousands of miles away, Trump lashed out on Twitter, saying Cohen “did bad things unrelated to Trump” and “is lying in order to reduce his prison time.”

“A lot of people have asked me about whether Mr. Trump knew about the release of the hacked Democratic National Committee emails ahead of time. The answer is yes.” — Michael Cohen

Cohen will soon report to prison for a three-year sentence. At the same time, he is seen as a vital witness for federal prosecutors because of his proximity to the president during key episodes under investigation. He is the first of six Trump aides charged in special counsel Robert Mueller’s Trump-Russia investigation to testify publicly about crimes committed during the 2016 campaign and in the months that followed.

Cohen gave lawmakers his first-person account of how he arranged hush money payments to a porn actress and a Playboy model who said they had sex with the president. He testified that he was present for conversations in which Trump denigrated blacks as “too stupid” to vote for him. And he said he overheard Trump confidant Roger Stone telling the candidate that WikiLeaks would dump damaging information about Clinton. “I am ashamed of my weakness and misplaced...

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HOUSE OKS BILL BLOCKING TRUMP EMERGENCY ON WALL

February 26, 2019 | AP News

WASHINGTON — Democrats ignored a veto threat and rammed legislation through the House Tuesday that would stymie President Donald Trump's bid for billions of extra dollars for his border wall, escalating a clash over whether he was abusing his powers to advance his paramount campaign pledge.

The House's 245-182 vote to block Trump's national emergency declaration throws the political hot potato to the Republican-run Senate, where there were already enough GOP defections to edge it to the cusp of passage. Vice President

Mike Pence used a lunch with Republican senators at the Capitol to try keeping them aboard, citing a dangerous crisis at the border, but there were no signs he'd succeeded. "I personally couldn't handicap the outcome at this point," said Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., who's planning a vote within the next three weeks.

Senate Passage Would Prompt Veto
Senate passage would force Trump's first veto, which Congress would surely lack the votes to override. But the showdown was forcing Republicans to cast uncomfortable votes...

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AP Photo/Jose Luis Magana

WALMART IS GETTING RID OF GREETERS, WORRYING THE DISABLED

February 27, 2019 | AP News

As Walmart moves to phase out its familiar "greeters" at some 1,000 stores nationwide, disabled workers who fill many of those jobs say they're being unfairly targeted. Walmart told greeters around the country last week that their positions would be eliminated on April 26 in favor of an expanded, more physically demanding "customer host" role. To qualify, they will need to be able to lift heavy objects and perform other physical tasks.

That comes as a heavy blow to greeters with cerebral palsy, spina bifida and other disabilities. Now Walmart, America's largest private employer, is facing a backlash as customers rally around some of the chain's most highly visible employees. Walmart says it is striving to place greeters in other jobs at the company, but workers with disabilities are worried. Donny Fagnano, 56, who has worked at Walmart for more than 21 years, said he cried when a manager at the store in...

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NEARLY 6,000 ABUSE COMPLAINTS AT MIGRANT CHILDREN SHELTERS

February 26, 2019 | AP News

WASHINGTON — Thousands of accusations of sexual abuse and harassment of migrant children in government-funded shelters were made over the past four years, including scores directed against adult staff members, according to federal data released Tuesday.

The cases include allegations of inappropriate touching, staff members allegedly watching minors while they bathed and showing pornographic videos to minors. Some of the allegations included inappropriate conduct by minors in shelters against other minors, as well as by staff members.

Rep. Ted Deutch, D-Fla., released the Health and Human Services Department data during a hearing on the Trump administration's policy of family separations at the border. The data span both the Obama and Trump administrations. The...

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Rachel Wasser via AP



AP Photo

WORLD

TRUMP, KIM END SUMMIT WITH STANDOFF OVER EASING US SANCTIONS

February 28, 2019 | AP News

HANOI, Vietnam — Talks between President Donald Trump and North Korea's Kim Jong Un collapsed Thursday after the two sides failed to bridge a standoff over U.S. sanctions, a dispiriting end to high-stakes meetings meant to disarm a global nuclear threat. Trump blamed the breakdown on North Korea's insistence that all the punishing sanctions the U.S. has imposed on Pyongyang be lifted without the North committing to eliminate its nuclear arsenal.

"Sometimes you have to walk," Trump explained at a closing news conference after the summit was abruptly cut short. He said there had been a proposed agreement that was "ready to be signed." "I'd much rather do it right than do it fast," Trump said. "We're in posi-

White House aides stressed that Trump stood strong, and some observers evoked the 1987 Reykjavik summit between Ronald Reagan and the Soviet Union's Mikhail Gorbachev, a meeting over nuclear weapons that ended without a deal but laid the groundwork for a future agreement.

tion to do something very special." Mere hours after both nations had seemed hopeful of a deal, the two leaders' motorcades roared away from the downtown Hanoi summit site within minutes of each other, their lunch canceled and a signing ceremony scuttled. The president's

closing news conference was hurriedly moved up, and he departed for Washington more than two hours ahead of schedule. The disintegration of talks came after Trump and Kim had appeared to be ready to inch toward normalizing relations between their still technically warring nations and as the American leader dampened expectations that their negotiations would yield an agreement by North Korea to take concrete steps toward ending a nuclear program that Pyongyang likely sees as its strongest security guarantee.

Denied Trump a Much-Needed Triumph

In something of a role reversal, Trump had deliberate-

ly ratcheted down some of the pressure on North Korea, abandoning his fiery rhetoric and declaring that he wanted the "right deal" over a rushed agreement. For his part, Kim, when asked whether he was ready to denuclearize, had said, "If I'm not willing to do that I won't be here right now." The breakdown denied Trump a much-needed triumph amid growing domestic turmoil back home, including congressional testimony this week by his former personal lawyer Michael Cohen, who called Trump a "racist" and "con man" and claimed prior knowledge that WikiLeaks would release emails that would damage Hillary Clinton's campaign in 2016.

North Korea's state media made no immediate comment on the diplomatic impasse, and Kim remained in his locked-down hotel after leaving the summit venue. The North Korean leader was scheduled to meet with top Vietnamese leaders on Friday and leave Saturday on his armored train for the long return trip, through China, to North Korea. Trump insisted his relations with Kim remained warm, but he did not commit to having a third summit with the North Korean leader, saying a possible next meeting "may not be for a long time." Though both he and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said significant progress had been made in Hanoi, the two sides appeared to be galaxies apart on an agreement that would live up to U.S. stated goals.

White House Aides Stressed That Trump Stood Strong

"Basically, they wanted the sanctions lifted in their entirety, and we couldn't do that," Trump told reporters. Kim, he explained, appeared willing to close his country's main nuclear facility, the Yongbyon Nuclear Scientific Research Center, if the sanctions were lifted. But that would leave him with missiles, warheads and weapon systems, Pompeo said. There are also suspected hidden nuclear fuel production sites around the country. "We couldn't quite get there today," Pompeo said, minimizing what seemed to be a chasm between the two...

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Malcolm Denmark/Florida Today via AP

February 22, 2019 | AP News

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — An Israeli spacecraft rocketed toward the moon for the country's first attempted lunar landing, following a launch Thursday night by SpaceX. A communications satellite for Indonesia was the main cargo aboard the Falcon 9 rocket, which illuminated the sky as it took flight. But Israel's privately funded lunar lander — a first not just for Israel but commercial space — generated the buzz.

Israel seeks to become only the fourth country to successfully land on the moon, after Russia, the U.S. and China. The spacecraft — called Beresheet, Hebrew for Genesis or "In The Beginning" — will take nearly two months to reach the moon.

"We thought it's about time for a change, and we want to get little Israel all the way to the moon," said Yonatan Winetraub, co-founder of Israel's SpacelL, a nonprofit organization behind the effort.

The moon, nearly full and glowing brightly, beckoned as it rose in the eastern sky. Within an hour after liftoff, Beresheet was already sending back data and had successfully deployed its landing legs, according to SpacelL. "We'll keep analyzing the data, but bottom line is we entered the very exclusive group of countries that have launched a spacecraft to the moon," said Yigal Harel, head of SpacelL's spacecraft...

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US-CHINA BATTLE OVER HUAWEI COMES TO HEAD AT TECH SHOW

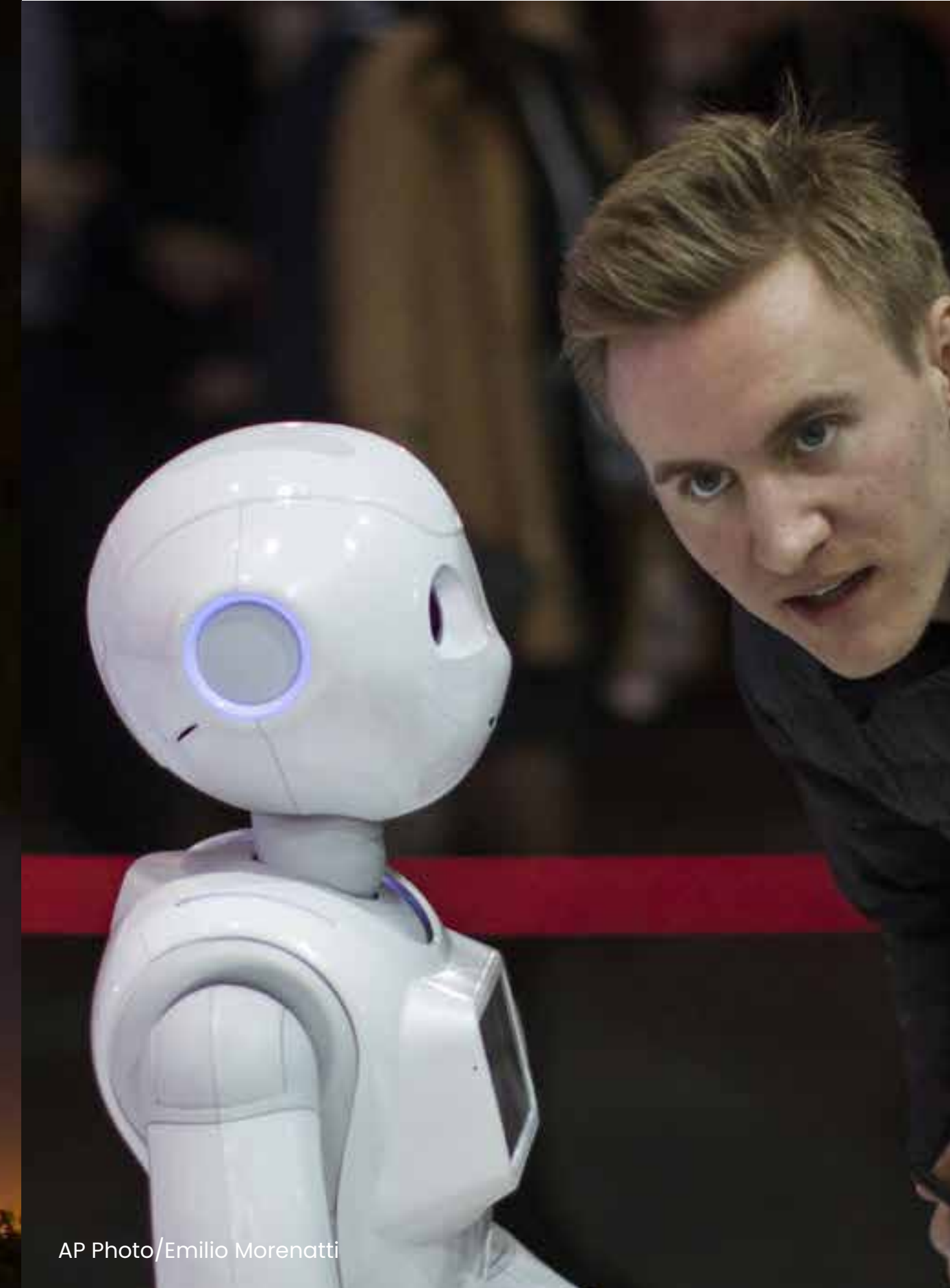
February 25, 2019 | AP News

BARCELONA, Spain — A global battle between the U.S. government and Chinese tech company Huawei over allegations that it is a cybersecurity risk overshadowed the opening Monday of the world's biggest mobile industry trade fair.

Huawei has an outsize presence at MWC Barcelona, from its displays in three separate show halls down to its red sponsorship logo adorning visitor pass lanyards. The focus at this year's meeting is new 5G networks due to roll out in the coming years. But the dispute over Huawei, the world's biggest maker of networking gear, is casting a pall.

The United States government dispatched a big delegation to press its case with telecom executives and government officials that they should not use Huawei as a supplier over national security concerns. U.S. President Donald Trump's administration says the Chinese government could use Huawei equipment to snoop on the world's internet traffic...

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AP Photo/Emilio Morenatti

ANALYSIS: POPE'S SEX ABUSE SUMMIT: WHAT IT DID AND DIDN'T DO

February 25, 2019 | AP News

VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis' summit on preventing sexual abuse was never going to meet the expectations placed on it by victims groups, the media and ordinary Catholics outraged over a scandal that has harmed so many and compromised the church's moral authority so much.

Indeed, no sweeping new law was announced to punish bishops who cover up abuse. No files were released or global reporting requirement endorsed requiring priestly rapists to be reported to police. In his final speech to the summit Sunday, Pope Francis even fell back on the hierarchy's frequent complaint of unfair press coverage. But something has changed.

By inviting the leaders of Catholic bishops conferences and religious orders from around the world to a four-day tutorial on preventing sex abuse, Francis has made clear that they all are responsible for protecting the children in their care and...

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