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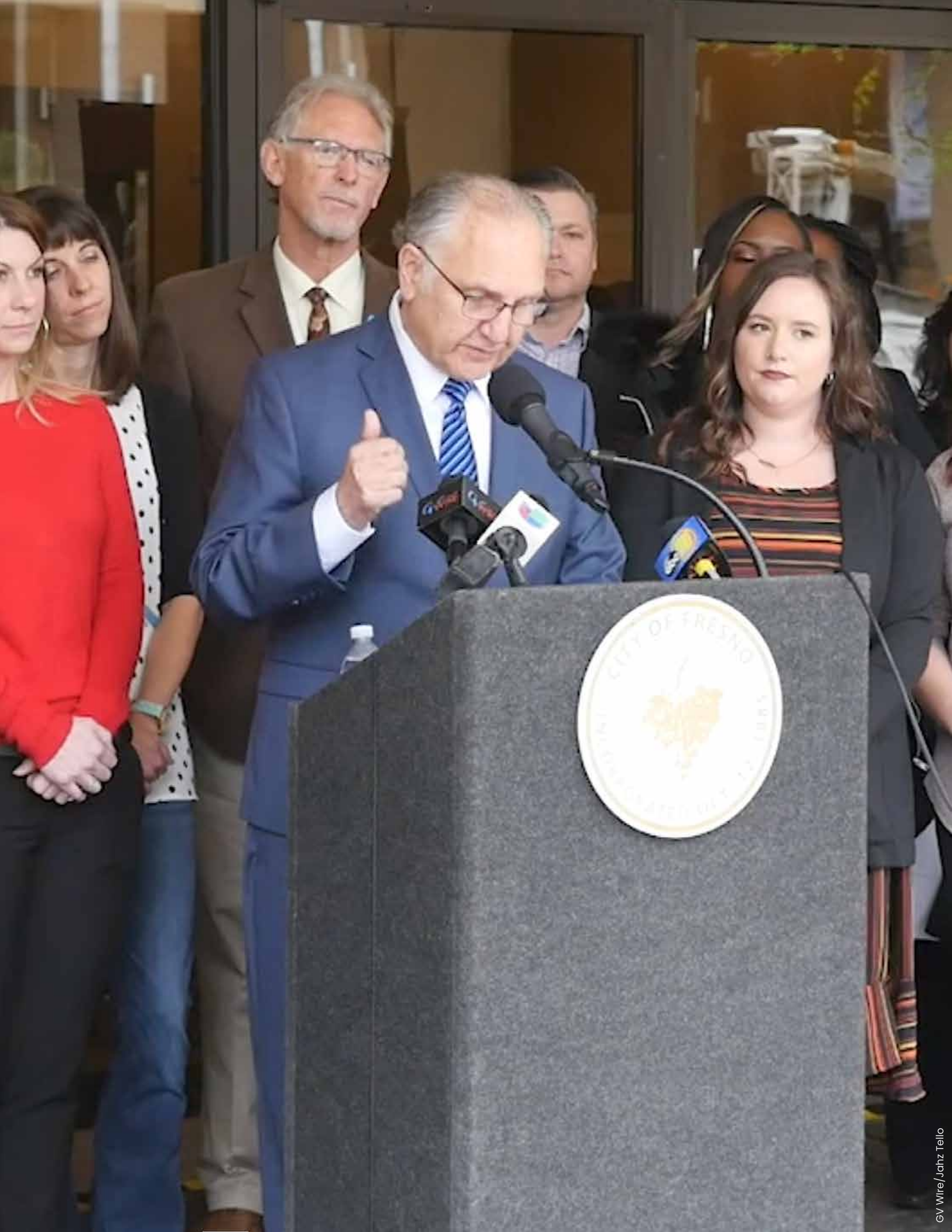
WEEKLY DIGEST
MARCH 29, 2019



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LOCAL

BRAND TO HUMAN TRAFFICKERS: ALL OF FRESNO IS COMING AFTER YOU!

March 27, 2019 | Bill McEwen

Fresno Mayor Lee Brand put human traffickers on notice Wednesday morning. We're coming after you. We're arresting you. You're going to prison.

And here's one more thing: The flophouses on Parkway Drive and Blackstone Avenue better clean up their acts. If they don't, the city will take them over. No ifs, ands, or buts. Talk is one thing. Action is another — and many millions of dollars more expensive.

This Is More Than Talk. It's a Community Effort. But the Mayor's Initiative to Combat Human Trafficking has the muscle and the community-wide backing to run most of the pimps out of Fresno and, more importantly, prevent vulnerable young girls from being forced or talked into prostitution.

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effort is the result of nine months of planning and coordination. All the angles are covered: identifying and rescuing victims, providing shelter and counseling, gathering data, arresting and prosecuting human traffickers, stamping out the hotbeds of prostitution, and raising awareness.

"The work of this group has given me even greater hope that a unique, community-wide, collaborative approach is emerging here in Fresno that is not only gaining momentum in terms of impact but also deserving of our continued support and investment," Brand said. Or, as Fresno Police Chief Jerry Dyer put it, "Alone, we can do a little. Collectively, we can do a lot." Someone might want to post those words in capital letters on billboards all over Fresno County.

New Ordinances Targeting Motels, Massage Parlors There's more hard work ahead, especially involving the shape-up or ship-out ultimatum to motel operators whose bottom line hinges on prostitution and renting rooms by the hour. The Fresno City Council must sign off on new, tougher ordinances aimed at making the Parkway Drive and Blackstone motel owners clean up their acts. Revised laws are needed to close down massage parlors that are fronts for human trafficking. Also, the council must ensure that the police department and code enforcement have the funding for undercover operations such as the one March 13 yielding the arrests of 25 "johns" for allegedly soliciting prostitutes. Looking ahead to the opening of licensed marijuana dispensaries in Fresno, it's possible that cannabis tax revenues will be tapped. The Fresno County Board of Supervisors also must prioritize funding for the district attorney's office to prosecute human trafficking and for behavioral health to provide services for human trafficking victims and at-risk youth.

Over the last decade, law enforcement and the justice system have changed their thinking and approach to human trafficking. As Dyer explained Wednesday, he used to think of prostitutes as law-breakers, not victims.

Data Collection, Analysis Will Boost the Effort It is the job of Brand and others to pursue state and federal grants to bolster the effort. They'll likely succeed because of the data-gathering effort headed by Fresno Pacific University's Center for Community Transformation. The goal is to identify the most effective strategies for education, prevention, and healing. "Data is at the core of the fight," said Randy White, the center's executive director. "We can't allocate resources effectively without the data."

Prostitution Isn't a Victimless Crime Over the last decade, law enforcement and the justice system have changed their thinking and approach to...



HOW TO MEET WORKFORCE DEMANDS? DUNCAN POLY LEADS THE WAY.

GV Wire/Jamie Ouverson

March 25, 2019 | Myles Barker

For years, there has been a nationwide shortage of workers in vocational and technical careers, largely caused by society adopting a more college-going culture. [According to Adecco](#), an estimated 31 million career tech jobs will be left vacant by the year 2020 due to Baby Boomer retirements. Fresno Unified, the fourth-largest school district in California, is working to change the narrative of career tech and the looming worker shortage. The district showcased its efforts [last Thursday](#) with an open house displaying \$12 million worth of improvements to CTE facilities at [Duncan Polytechnical High School](#).

New Heavy Trucks Facility

Perhaps the biggest upgrade is a new, 10,000-square foot heavy trucks facility large enough to fit eight semi-trucks. “It’s the first of its kind in the nation,” said Vanessa Ramirez, Fresno Unified’s public information officer. “The facility provides the most modern equipment for preparing students for jobs in the Valley’s growing transport industry.” Ramirez said students in the school’s heavy truck maintenance and repair program will utilize the facility. To ensure it met the needs of employers,

Fresno Unified worked closely with industry partners on designs, she said.

This Has Been Needed For a Long Time

Hugo Rodriguez, the service manager at [Fresno Truck Center](#), hopes the new facility is the first of many local high schools will construct for students. “It is 20 years (late), but it is a great start,” Rodriguez said. “I am anxious to see what kind of kids we can get out of the program.” Rodriguez said he’s also concerned about how many students he can get to fill vacant positions. “The trades died out of the high schools years ago, and we’ve struggled for years finding technicians to come in and fill the voids,” Rodriguez said. “This facility is definitely needed.” The district also expanded Duncan’s existing facilities in manufacturing and construction technology, automotive, welding and fabrication.

Students Give Thumbs-Up

To fund the work, the district utilized \$7 million from [Measure Q](#) — a \$280 million bond measure passed in 2010 — along...

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FORBES TALKS DEREGULATION, SUPPORTS TRUMP AT FRESNO STATE

March 22, 2019 | David Taub

Steve Forbes believes Donald Trump is on the right economic track. But, sometimes, Forbes adds, the president gets in his own way. The chairman of his eponymously named financial media empire talked to reporters before his lecture Monday evening at the Save Mart Center. The lecture was to be followed by a question-and-answer session facilitated by Dr. Robert M. Harper, interim provost and vice president for Academic Affairs at Fresno State.

Forbes, a presidential candidate on the Republican ticket in 1996 and 2000, continues to espouse his free-market economic views, shying away from most social topics. He took continued swipes at overregulation, a taboo in Forbes world. “If (California) made some changes in its regulations, its output would be setting records for the ages,” he said of the Valley’s agricultural economy. Click on [this link](#) for a video of the answers to questions posed by GV Wire...

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GV Wire/Jamie Ouverson

IMPOVERISHED STUDENTS AT THIS SCHOOL CHALK UP BIG SUCCESSES

March 27, 2019 | Myles Barker

[Design Science Middle College High School](#) has achieved a lot since opening its doors in 2005. For the past two years, the school has maintained a 100 percent graduation rate with an average graduating class of 50 students. Every graduate also has been admitted to at least one college or university, most with college units already completed thanks to the school’s dual enrollment program.

However, what makes Design Science special has as much to do with its achievements as it does with the demographics of the students that are meeting its high standards. Around 90 percent of the school’s nearly 300 students live in poverty, and are the first in their families to go to college, said Tressa Overstreet, the principal of Design Science. “Design Science was designed for those kids that kind of fly under the radar, not your 4.0 (GPA) students,” Overstreet said. [The California School Recognition Program](#) has taken notice of the school’s track...

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AP File Photo/Rich Pedroncelli

STATE

CALIFORNIA SELLS ANOTHER \$600M IN BONDS FOR HIGH-SPEED RAIL

March 26, 2019 | AP News

SACRAMENTO — California sold \$600 million in bonds Tuesday to help pay for building high-speed rail even as lawmakers and Gov. Gavin Newsom acknowledge challenges to completing the project. The bond money is a key source of funding for the troubled rail system, which has been beset by cost overruns and delays. Voters approved \$10 billion in bonds in 2008, which the state routinely sells to fund construction. The entire project is estimated to cost \$77 billion. “Today’s funding announcement is a continued sign of progress to keep our transformative high-speed rail initiative moving forward in California,” Democratic Sen. Jim Beall of San Jose said in a statement. Wells Fargo and Jefferies, LLC, purchased the bonds, state Treasurer Fiona Ma said.

Funding at Center of State Senate Hearing

The bond sale came ahead of a Senate hearing about how the state should move forward. It was the first public hearing since Newsom signaled changes to the project. But his administration provided few new details, saying those would

come in an update to the Legislature on May 1.

“Today’s funding announcement is a continued sign of progress to keep our transformative high-speed rail initiative moving forward in California.” — Democratic Sen. Jim Beall of San Jose

lead the board overseeing the project. Newsom in his state of state speech said there wasn’t a path for the project as planned and said he will instead focus immediately on completing and expanding a line through the Central Valley, adding about 50 miles of track to a line already under construction rather than going west toward the Bay Area. But he also said he’d continue environmental work on the full line and seek private money to eventually build the full train. Lawmakers said they’re still seeking clarity on Newsom’s vision for the project.

The project’s funding challenges were at the center of Tuesday’s hearing.

Federal Funding Threatened

Beyond bonds, the project gets money from the federal government and the state’s cap and trade program, which raises money through credits to emit carbon. The Trump administration recently threatened to withhold or rescind roughly \$3.5 billion in federal money, a move that would put the project further in jeopardy. The state needs at least \$50 billion more to meet the funding plan. “The inspiring vision of high-speed rail, replete with dramatic pictures of speeding gold and blue trains but presented in advance of a credible financing plan is now meeting reality,” said Lou Thompson, head of a peer review group.

“Let there be no doubt, (Newsom) supports high-speed rail in California.” — Lenny Mendonca, the governor’s appointee to lead the board overseeing the project

“Action by the Legislature is badly needed.” Thompson and Helen Kerstein of the Legislative Analyst’s Office said lawmakers need to decide if they’ll provide more money or change the project, potentially by finishing the high-speed line in the Central Valley and connecting it to Los Angeles and San Francisco using existing train and commuter services. Senators also said the high-speed rail authority hasn’t been spending money or building as fast as it needs to ahead of 2022 deadlines.

Uptick in Construction Activity Expected

Construction slowed down through the winter months amid rain but an uptick is expected soon, said Joe Hedges, the chief operating officer of the project. Hedges and other rail officials said the federal government has also slowed down progress because it has not completed required environmental reviews...

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PAN'S BILL WOULD FURTHER RESTRICT VACCINE EXEMPTIONS FOR SCHOOLKIDS

March 26, 2019 | David Taub

Wanting to crack down on what he calls fraudulent doctors, a California legislator introduced a bill that would take the power to approve medical exemptions away from doctors and grant it to other health professionals.

Sen. Richard Pan (D-Sacramento) introduced [SB 276](#) at a Sacramento news conference Tuesday. Pan, a pediatrician, says the bill would combat doctors fraudulently writing medical exemptions for children so they can attend schools. California law requires vaccinations for things like chicken pox and measles for attending schools. Current law allows doctors the latitude to write exemptions. Pan likened his new

law to rights espoused by the Founding Fathers. "We are joined here today to defend our right to save schools for all children and our freedom to go about our community without being infected by its serious disease," Pan said. The bill would require the state Public Health Department to create a standardized medical exemption request form for doctors and surgeons who examine children.

It would allow the health department to approve or deny the decision made by the doctor based on the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention standards](#). The bill also requires the health department to maintain a database of approved...

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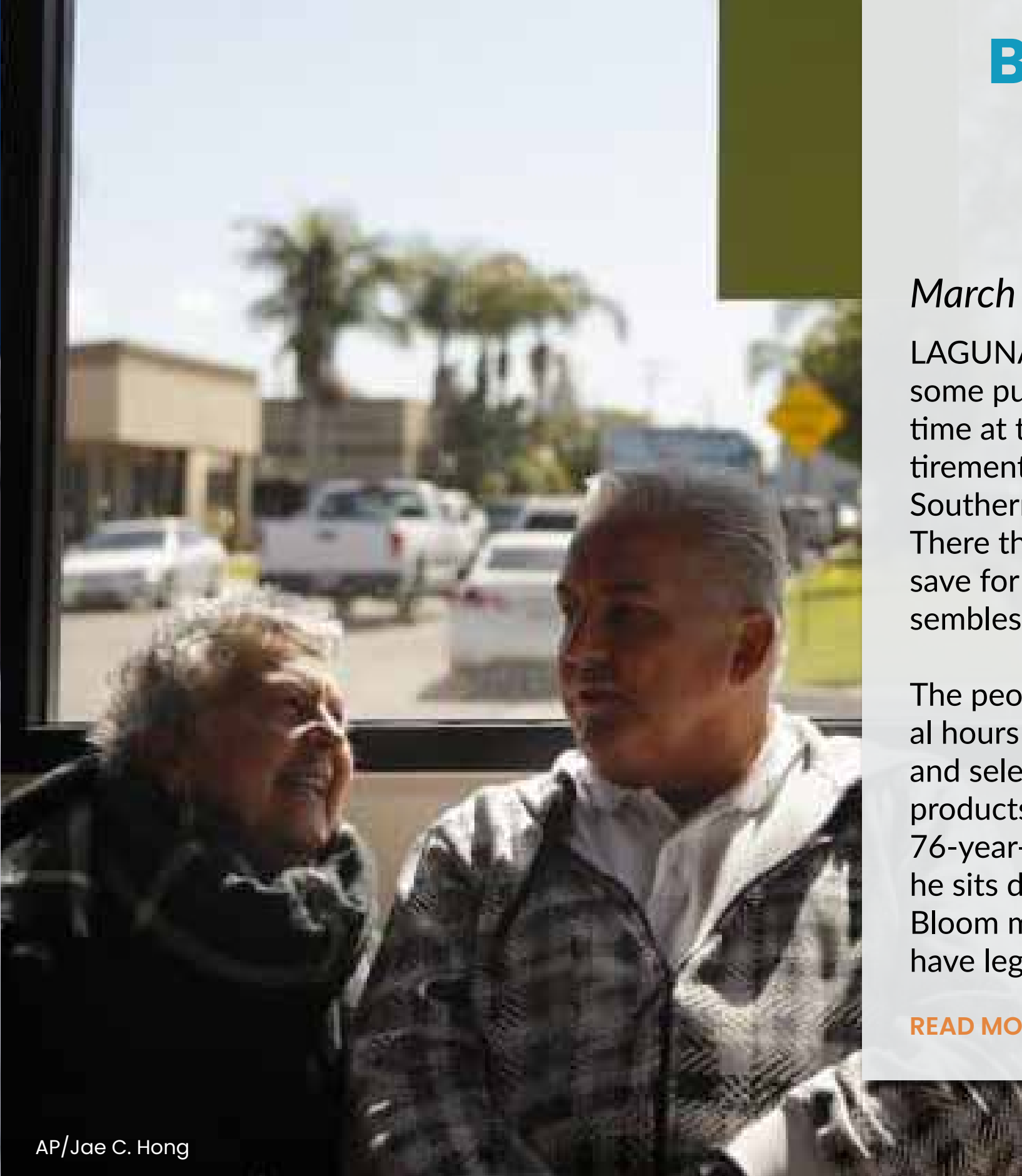
BINGO AND BONGS: MORE SENIORS SEEK POT FOR AGE-RELATED ACHES

March 26, 2019 | AP News

LAGUNA WOODS — The group of white-haired folks — some pushing walkers, others using canes — arrive right on time at the gates of Laguna Woods Village, an upscale retirement community in the picturesque hills that frame this Southern California suburb a few miles from Disneyland. There they board a bus for a quick trip to a building that, save for the green Red Cross-style sign in the window, resembles a trendy coffee bar.

The people, mostly in their 70s and 80s, pass the next several hours enjoying a light lunch, playing a few games of bingo and selecting their next month's supply of cannabis-infused products. "It's like the ultimate senior experience," laughs 76-year-old retired beauty products distributor Ron Atkin as he sits down to watch the bingo at the back of the Bud and Bloom marijuana dispensary in Santa Ana. Most states now have legal medical marijuana, and 10 of them, including...

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AP/Jae C. Hong

HEADED TO THE COAST? CHECK OUT THE MAJESTIC LIGHTHOUSES.

March 27, 2019 | GV Wire

Depending on how you measure it, the California coastline is [840 miles to 3,427 miles long](#) (the latter figure includes inlets and bays). Enhancing the coastline's spectacular appeal are many historic lighthouses and light stations protecting vessels from large rocks, prominent points, and other hazards.

Info, Maps for Lighthouses

Additional information on the lighthouses and beaches is at this [californiabeaches.com link](#). And here is a link to California's lighthouses compiled by Kraig Anderson at [lighthouse-friends.com](#).

Check out these pictures of some — but not all — of our favorite California lighthouses from Shutterstock.

Pictured: Pigeon Point Lighthouse in Pescadero, CA.

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AP/Evan Vucci

U.S. TRUMP BORDER EMERGENCY SURVIVES AS HOUSE VETO OVERRIDE FAILS

March 26, 2019 | AP News

WASHINGTON — The Democratic-led House failed Tuesday to override President Donald Trump’s first veto, salvaging his effort to steer billions of extra dollars to erecting border barriers and delivering a victory to the White House in a constitutional and political clash that’s raged for months. Lawmakers voted 248-181 to overturn Trump’s veto, but that fell 38 votes shy of the required two-thirds margin. Just days after Attor-

On top of the \$3.6 billion from construction, the Pentagon has formally informed Congress that it wants to steer another \$1 billion from personnel accounts to barriers instead.

ney General William Barr announced that special counsel Robert Mueller had found Trump didn’t scheme with Russia to help his 2016 election, Tuesday’s vote bolstered Trump’s drive to build a wall along the boundary with Mexico, a hallmark of his 2016 presidential campaign and a priority of his presidency. While clearly a defeat for Democrats, the vote afforded them a chance to reemphasize policy differences with Trump and change the subject from collusion allegations that have lost political clout. Under-scoring that, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi placed her name atop a House Democratic fundraising email referencing the failed veto override, writing, “I know grassroots Democrats won’t let Trump’s enablers get away with this.”

Just 14 Republicans joined all voting Democrats in Tuesday’s futile effort to void Trump’s declaration of a national emergency at the Southwest border. By invoking that power, Trump has said he will shift \$3.6 billion from military construction to erecting barriers along that boundary. Congress has voted to provide less than \$1.4 billion for border barriers, leaving Democrats and some Republicans fuming that Trump is abusing his powers by ignoring Congress’ constitutional control over spending. Despite his veto remaining intact, Trump may not be able to spend the money for barriers quickly

because of lawsuits by Democratic state attorneys general and others that could take years to resolve.

Trump’s Plan to Siphon the Money From the Military
Trump insisted during his campaign that Mexico, not taxpayers, would pay for the wall. To keep the issue alive into the 2020 campaign season, House Democrats may force fresh votes on the emergency declaration in six months, as the law allows. The Pentagon sent lawmakers a list last week of hundreds of military construction projects that might be cut to pay for barrier work. Though the list was tentative, Democrats say that by backing Trump, GOP lawmakers were endangering local bases to pay for the wall. Unhappiness over Trump’s plan to siphon the money from the military has become a bipartisan concern. On top of the \$3.6 billion from construction, the Pentagon has formally informed Congress that it wants to steer another \$1 billion from personnel accounts to barriers instead.

“We take an oath that we must honor” to protect the Constitution. The choice is simple, between partisanship and patriotism. Between honoring our sacred oath or hypocritically, inconsistently breaking this oath.” — House Speaker Nancy Pelosi

At a House Armed Services Committee hearing Tuesday, panel Chairman Adam Smith, D-Wash., said it was wrong to use the Pentagon as “sort of a piggy-bank-slash-slush fund.” The committee’s top Republican, Mac Thornberry of Texas, also said he opposes redirecting defense funds. Acting Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan told the lawmakers that while his department could pay a price in the future for maneuvering around Congress, he was following a “legal order from the commander in chief.” Congress sent Trump a resolution annulling the national emergency that Trump declared at the U.S.-Mexico border in February. That included passage by the Republican-led Senate, in which 12...

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March 28, 2019 | AP News

President Donald Trump announced Thursday that he was backing off a budget request to eliminate funding for the Special Olympics, reversing course after his administration weathered days of criticism for the proposed cut. Speaking to reporters as he left the White House for a rally in Michigan, Trump said he had authorized funding for the event. “I heard about it this morning.

I have overridden my people. We’re funding the Special Olympics.” Trump’s announcement came after Education Secretary Betsy DeVos spent days defending the proposal,

which drew widespread criticism from lawmakers, as well as advocates and celebrities. Even before the president stepped in, legislators said the cut was unlikely to be approved. The president added:

“I’ve been to the Special Olympics. I think it’s incredible.” His comments came hours after Senate Democrats grilled DeVos during a budget hearing on the proposal. She was also pressed by House Democrats days earlier, sparking a wave of criticism online. In a heated exchange with Sen. Dick Durbin, D-Ill., DeVos said she “wasn’t personally involved” in...

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LINKED BY PAIN: 2 SCHOOL MASSACRE SURVIVORS, DAD KILL SELVES

March 26, 2019 | AP News

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. — Tragedies like the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High and Sandy Hook Elementary school massacres eventually faded from view, blunted by other mass shootings and the passage of time. But for the survivors, the pain can never end. The father of a Sandy Hook victim killed himself Monday, just days after two Stoneman Douglas students also took their lives.

The Florida deaths have officials in Parkland and nearby Coral Springs renewing their communities’ focus on the suicide prevention and mental health resources that remain available 13 months after a gunman killed 17 people at the high school. In Newtown, Connecticut, where 20 first-graders died along with six staff members six years ago, the body of 49-year-old Jeremy Richman was found outside his office Monday morning. Richman’s daughter Avielle was fatally...

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FACEBOOK EXTENDS BAN ON HATE SPEECH TO ‘WHITE NATIONALISTS’

March 27, 2019 | AP News

SAN FRANCISCO — Facebook is extending its ban on hate speech to prohibit the promotion and support of white nationalism and white separatism. The company previously allowed such material even though it has long banned white supremacists. The social network **said Wednesday** that it didn’t apply the ban previously to expressions of white nationalism because it linked such expressions with broader concepts of nationalism and separatism — such as American pride or Basque separatism (which are still allowed).

But civil rights groups and academics called this view “misguided” and have long pressured the company to change its stance. Facebook said it concluded after months of “conversations” with them that white nationalism and separatism cannot be meaningfully separated from white supremacy and organized hate groups. Critics have “raised these issues to the highest levels at Facebook (and held) a number of...

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AP/Majdi Mohammed

WORLD

CALM APPEARS TO HOLD IN GAZA DESPITE EXCHANGE OF FIRE

March 27, 2019 | AP News

JERUSALEM — An unofficial cease-fire appeared to be holding Wednesday between Israel and Gaza's Hamas rulers despite limited exchanges of fire. Schools re-opened in southern Israel and residents resumed their daily routines after a few overnight rocket attacks from Gaza that set off air-raid sirens, breaking a daylong lull.

The Israeli military struck back against additional Hamas targets but there were no reports of casualties on either side. In the West Bank, meanwhile, a teenage Palestinian medic was shot dead during clashes between Israeli troops and protesters. Both Israel and Hamas

Violence could erupt again this weekend, when large-scale protests are expected along the Israel-Gaza frontier marking the anniversary of weekly rallies in which nearly 200 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli fire.

appeared to have stepped back from the brink of a full-fledged confrontation. But violence could erupt again this weekend, when large-scale protests are expected along the Israel-Gaza frontier marking the anniversary of weekly rallies in which nearly 200

Palestinians have been killed by Israeli fire. The Israeli military bolstered its forces along the Gaza frontier in advance. Hamas' supreme leader made his first public appearance since the cross-border violence with Israel began earlier this week.

Israel and Hamas Have Fought Three Wars

Ismail Haniyeh visited the rubble of his Gaza City office, which was destroyed in an Israeli airstrike on Monday, and told reporters that "the Israeli occupation got the message." He also urged Gazans to participate in mass protests along the Israel-Gaza frontier on Saturday marking the first anniversary of a movement aimed at ending an Israeli-Egyptian blockade. Israel and Hamas have fought three wars and dozens of skirmishes since the Islamic militant group seized control of Gaza in 2007. The latest round was triggered by a Gaza rocket

fired early Monday that slammed into a house in central Israel and wounded seven people. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu rushed back to Israel from a trip to Washington to deal with the crisis. Israel struck dozens of targets in Gaza, including the office of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh. Gaza's Health Ministry said seven Palestinians were

wounded in the air-strikes. Netanyahu faced the **difficult task** of delivering a tough blow to Hamas while avoiding protracted fighting that could work against him in

Israeli troops killed four Palestinians last week, including one said to be unarmed. That followed a weekend stabbing and shooting attack in which a Palestinian killed two Israelis near a West Bank settlement.

next month's national elections. He has come under heavy criticism from both allies and opponents for what they say has been a failure to contain Gaza militants. He has conducted indirect cease-fire talks through Egyptian mediators in recent months, and even allowed the delivery of millions of dollars of Qatari aid to Hamas to ease harsh conditions in the territory, which has been under an Israeli-Egyptian blockade since Hamas seized power in 2007.

Israeli Troops Killed Four Palestinians Last Week

Hamas has recently faced rare demonstrations over its mismanagement of an economic crisis that has left Gaza with an unemployment rate above 50 percent. Hundreds of Gazans took part in the protests last week, and Hamas responded with a violent crackdown, beating and arresting dozens of demonstrators.

The fighting in Gaza comes amid an uptick in violence in the Israeli-occupied West Bank. The Palestinian Health Ministry said Israeli soldiers shot dead 18-year-old paramedic Sajed Mizher after stones were thrown at them during an arrest raid in the Dheisheh refugee camp near Bethlehem early Wednesday. It said two...

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CRADLING CHILDREN, MIGRANT FAMILIES CROSS BORDER IN WAVES

AP/Eric Gay

March 22, 2019 | AP News

MCALLEN, Texas — A mother cradled a crying toddler as she waited in line with 20 other women to shower. Dozens of fathers quietly held their children's hands in an enclosure made of chain-link fencing.

While these families were held at an overcrowded Border Patrol processing center, a fresh wave of migrants crossed the nearby river separating the U.S. and Mexico and waited for border agents to bring them to the same facility. One Honduran woman carried a feverish 7-month-old baby. The cycle is repeated multiple times a day. Waves of desperate families are trying to cross the border almost hourly and en-

tering an overtaxed government detention system. The Border Patrol has become so overwhelmed in feeding and caring for the migrants that it announced plans this week to start releasing some families onto the street in the Rio Grande Valley to ease overcrowding in the processing center, providing the immigrants with a notice to appear at an upcoming court date.

"We have an unprecedented crisis upon us," Robert Perez, deputy commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the Border Patrol's parent agency, said in an interview. The Border Patrol says it made about 66,000...

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AP Pool

TRUMP: US RECOGNIZES ISRAELI CONTROL OF GOLAN HEIGHTS

March 21, 2019 | AP News

JERUSALEM — President Donald Trump said Thursday that it's time for the United States to recognize Israel's sovereignty over the disputed Golan Heights, an announcement that signals a shift in U.S. policy and comes ahead of the Israeli prime minister's planned visit next week to the White House. The administration has been considering recognizing Israel's sovereignty over the Golan, which Israel captured from Syria in 1967.

Last week, in its annual human rights report, the State Department dropped the phrase "Israeli-occupied" from the Golan Heights section, instead calling it "Israeli-controlled." "After 52 years it is time for the United States to fully recognize Israel's Sovereignty over the Golan Heights, which is of critical strategic and security importance to the State of Israel and Regional Stability!" Trump tweeted. Minutes later, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu tweeted his appreciation. "At a time when Iran seeks to use Syria as a platform...

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CHINESE LEADER XI IN FRANCE TO SIGN MULTIBILLION DOLLAR DEALS

March 25, 2019 | AP News

PARIS — Chinese President Xi Jinping was greeted with full honors Monday during a state visit to France in which he is expected to sign multibillion-dollar deals on energy, the food industry, transport, and other sectors as well as a bilateral statement on climate change. French President Emmanuel Macron welcomed Xi and his wife, Peng Liuan, at the Arc de Triomphe monument in Paris. The French National Guard played the country's anthems. Both leaders laid a wreath at the Unknown Soldier from World War I whose tomb is under the monument.

They then headed to the Elysee presidential palace for a meeting followed by a signature ceremony. Later, the Chinese president was to be honored with a state dinner at the Elysee, with prestigious guests including French actor Alain Delon, Michelin-starred chef Alain Ducasse and French-Chinese painter Yan Pei-Ming. A top official at the French...

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