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WEEKLY DIGEST
JULY 12, 2019



PENCE PULLS ON BOOTS, PROMOTES TRADE IN VALLEY VISIT

July 10, 2019 | GV Wire

Vice President Mike Pence pulled off his tie, slapped on some boots, then stepped off Air Force Two on Wednesday and into a full morning and afternoon of events in the Valley, including a speech supporting the nation's new trade agreement with Canada and Mexico. Pence gave the remarks about the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement at the Freitas Family Farm just outside Lemoore.

The crowd overflowed the farm's pavilion, with some people sitting atop hay bales, shaded from afternoon heat that climbed into the 90s. The event was hosted by America First, which is President Donald Trump's Super PAC. The USMCA is designed to replace the North American Free Trade Agreement, or NAFTA. USMCA needs to be ratified by Congress.

Pact 'Puts American Agriculture First,' Pence Says

"The president made it clear in the course of that campaign that he believed NAFTA had not served American workers and American jobs and American farmers," Pence said. "Well, we promised to renegotiate that agreement and that we did." Pence said he had been traveling across the nation to promote the renegotiated trade agreement.

"I wanted to come here to California, here in the San Joaquin Valley, because you all understand the global impact of our agricultural economy and the need to have a trade deal here with our neighbors to the north and south," Pence said. "It really puts American agriculture first. That's exactly what

we've done. "I mean here in California, this great state already exports more than \$48 billion in goods and services to Canada and Mexico alone. And under the USMCA, we know that number is going to grow."

A Word for the Vice President's Hosts

Pence said the USMCA would open up Canada to poultry producers for the sale of chicken and eggs, "along with expanded access for turkey." That triggered a "woo!" of approval from someone in the crowd. "Somebody is excited about that," Pence responded. "Making Thanksgiving plans over there."

The vice president brought his hosts, the Freitas family, into the speech. "I know that Doug and Julie want to pass this extraordinary, third-generation farm on to (the next generation). Thanks to President Donald Trump and our supporters in the Congress, that's going to be a whole lot easier because the president signed a tax cut that eliminated the death tax for nearly every family farmer in America."

Pence concluded his remarks with Trump's 2016 campaign slogan: "Make America great again." After the speech, Pence responded to a question about Gov. Gavin Newsom approved legislation this week that makes California the first state to offer taxpayer-funded health benefits to young adults living in the country illegally. Pence said the move only will serve to increase the flow of undocumented immigrants across the southern border.

The event at the Freitas farm was Pence's only public appearance of the day, other than brief handshakes at Naval Air Station Lemoore, where the vice president's plane touched down. Before disembarking, Pence changed clothes, putting on a work shirt and boots more befitting of a visitor to the nation's agricultural capital. A crowd of about 75 was at the...

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MAYOR BRAND CUTS ADVANCE PEACE, \$1.3M FROM FRESNO BUDGET

GV Wire/Jahz Tello

July 8, 2019 | GV Wire

A handful of community service officers for the Fresno Police Department and a controversial anti-gang initiative are among \$1.3 million sliced from city's next budget by Mayor Lee Brand. Brand laid out seven line-item veto cuts as he announced approval Monday of the city's 2019-20 fiscal year budget. The vetoes amount to 0.1% of the budget approved by the city council last month. The council has 30 days to override any of the vetoes. An override requires the approval of five of the six current council members. The council's next regularly scheduled meeting is July 25.

Amount Cut by Each Veto

\$346,800: Five Fresno Police Department community services officers.

\$200,000: For seed money that, combined with private funds, could launch an anti-gang initiative called **Advance Peace**. Under the program, community members talk to gang members

about changing their behavior and seeking gainful employment. The program connects those willing to change to therapy, education, and workforce training. Opponents of the initiative zeroed in on one component: monthly stipends of \$300 to \$1,000 to participants.

\$300,000: One-time funding for an Immigration Affairs Committee.

\$250,000: Reduction in funding in the City Attorney's Office for salaries in the Neighborhood Services Department, more commonly known as code enforcement. Direct oversight of Neighborhood Services is shifting from the mayor and city manager to the city attorney.

\$82,000: Reduction of two budgeted paralegals to one.

\$43,000: One fire inspector for the Fresno Fire Department...

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WHAT FRESNO COUNCIL CANDIDATES SAY ABOUT HOMELESSNESS

July 11, 2019 | Jody Murray

Candidates for the Fresno City Council's empty seat say one issue is consistently among the top concerns expressed by voters: the human suffering and public unease caused by homelessness. The city has more money than ever to spend on the problem, thanks to its share of a one-time injection of \$500 million in state funds approved last year by then-Gov. Jerry Brown to address homelessness.

The community's share of that money is \$13 million; the city of Fresno received \$3 million and \$9 went to Fresno Madera Continuum of Care, which manages homeless programs on a county level. More state funding will be coming from Gov. Gavin Newsom's budget, as well. Fresno's controversial "no camping" ordinance, passed in 2017 and designed to prevent homeless encampments from taking root, remains on the books, though it's been tied up in legal battles since last fall. And the challenge of homelessness shows no signs of...

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MILITARY SPOUSES DESERVE HELP WITH CAREERS, SECOND LADY

July 10, 2019 | Jody Murray

Casey Fisher is a lawyer. She's also married to a member of the military. "Having to get licensed in every state we're in is difficult," she said. Fisher's situation mirrors that of many military spouses, who can have a difficult time maintaining a career as they follow their partner from posting to posting. Fisher joined about 150 people at Naval Air Station Lemoore as they listened Wednesday to second lady Karen Pence, who has made steady employment for military spouses one of her top issues.

According to the Department of Defense, the employment rate for spouses of service members is 24%. Speaking from a stage set up inside one of the air base's hangars, Pence, who came to the Valley for a day with husband and Vice President Mike Pence, described some programs that could help spouses find or stabilize careers. "I really felt that military spouses needed someone to come alongside and say, 'We see you, we thank you, and we stand with you,' " Pence said. She added that her...

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GV Wire/Jamie Ouverson



REPORT: PG&E IGNORED REPAIRS ON AGING POWER LINES

July 11, 2019 | AP News

SAN FRANCISCO — Pacific Gas & Electric, which is blamed for some of California's deadliest recent fires, knew for years that dozens of its aging power lines posed a wildfire threat but avoided replacing or repairing them, it was reported Wednesday. The Wall Street Journal, using company documents obtained under the federal Freedom of Information Act, reported that the

"As we have disclosed publicly, we are taking significant actions to inspect, identify, and fix these issues with our electric system. While the number of safety issues we have identified on our electric system is small by percentage, it's unacceptable." — PG&E

utility told the U.S. Forest Service in 2017 and 2018 that 49 aging steel towers on one transmission line needed replacement and another 57 needed replacement of their hardware and aluminum lines. The Journal previously reported that PG&E delayed safety work on the line, known as the Caribou-Palermo line, for five years. State investigators said an equipment failure on that line sparked a November wildfire that essentially wiped out the Northern California town of Paradise and killed 85 people. It was the deadliest and most destructive in state history. On Wednesday, the Butte County Sheriff's Office identified a previously unnamed victim as 67-year-old Shirley Haley of Paradise.

Some Were More Than a Century Old

Four other people have been tentatively identified while two bodies remain unidentified. After the fire, PG&E decided to stop using the line, which was built in 1921. PG&E also estimated back in 2017 that its towers had an average age of 68 years and some were more than a century old, the Journal said, reporting that the company also said it needed a plan to replace towers and better manage lines to prevent electrical conductors from falling on the ground and causing fires. Gusty winds that can topple trees and down power

lines are concerns for California utilities. Last month, PG&E briefly cut power to thousands of people in selected portions of Northern California to guard against wildfires as the weather turned very windy, dry and hot. Also in June, PG&E said its workers discovered more than 1,000 high-priority safety risks on its transmission lines and distribution poles over several months of inspections and almost all of them had been fixed. A federal judge in San Francisco on Wednesday ordered PG&E to provide a "paragraph-by-paragraph" response to the Wall Street Journal story.

PG&E must provide "a fresh, forthright statement owning up to the true extent" of the Wall Street Journal report by July 31, ordered U.S. District Judge William Alsup.

PG&E Disagreed With Conclusions of Report

PG&E must provide "a fresh, forthright statement owning up to the true extent" of the Wall Street Journal report by July 31, ordered U.S. District Judge William Alsup, who is overseeing PG&E's probation for a natural gas pipeline explosion in 2010 that killed eight people in San Bruno. Alsup also asked the company to explain its payment of \$5 billion in dividends in recent years "at a time when PG&E was aware of the problems" named in the Journal report. PG&E said it disagreed with the conclusions of the Journal report but "we have acknowledged that the devastation of the 2017 and 2018 wildfires made clear that we must do more to combat the threat of wildfires and extreme weather while hardening our systems."

"As we have disclosed publicly, we are taking significant actions to inspect, identify, and fix these issues with our electric system," the utility said in a statement, adding that "while the number of safety issues we have identified on our electric system is small by percentage, it's unacceptable." PG&E filed for...

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July 10, 2019 | AP News

SACRAMENTO — California has become the first state to offer taxpayer-funded health benefits to young adults living in the country illegally.

Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom signed a bill into law on Tuesday that makes low-income adults age 25 and younger eligible for the state's Medicaid program regardless of their immigration status. State officials expect the plan to cover about 90,000 people and cost taxpayers \$98 million.

California already covers children ages 18 and younger regardless of immigration status. The law will not give health

insurance benefits to everyone 25 and younger, but only those whose income is low enough to qualify.

A Way to Improve the Health of Immigrants
Newsom and Democratic legislative leaders say they plan to further expand coverage to more adults in the years to come. Republican President Donald Trump has called the move “crazy .”

Advocates of the measure say it's a way to improve the health of immigrants in the state by providing them with access to the medical care they need. Many immigrants who...

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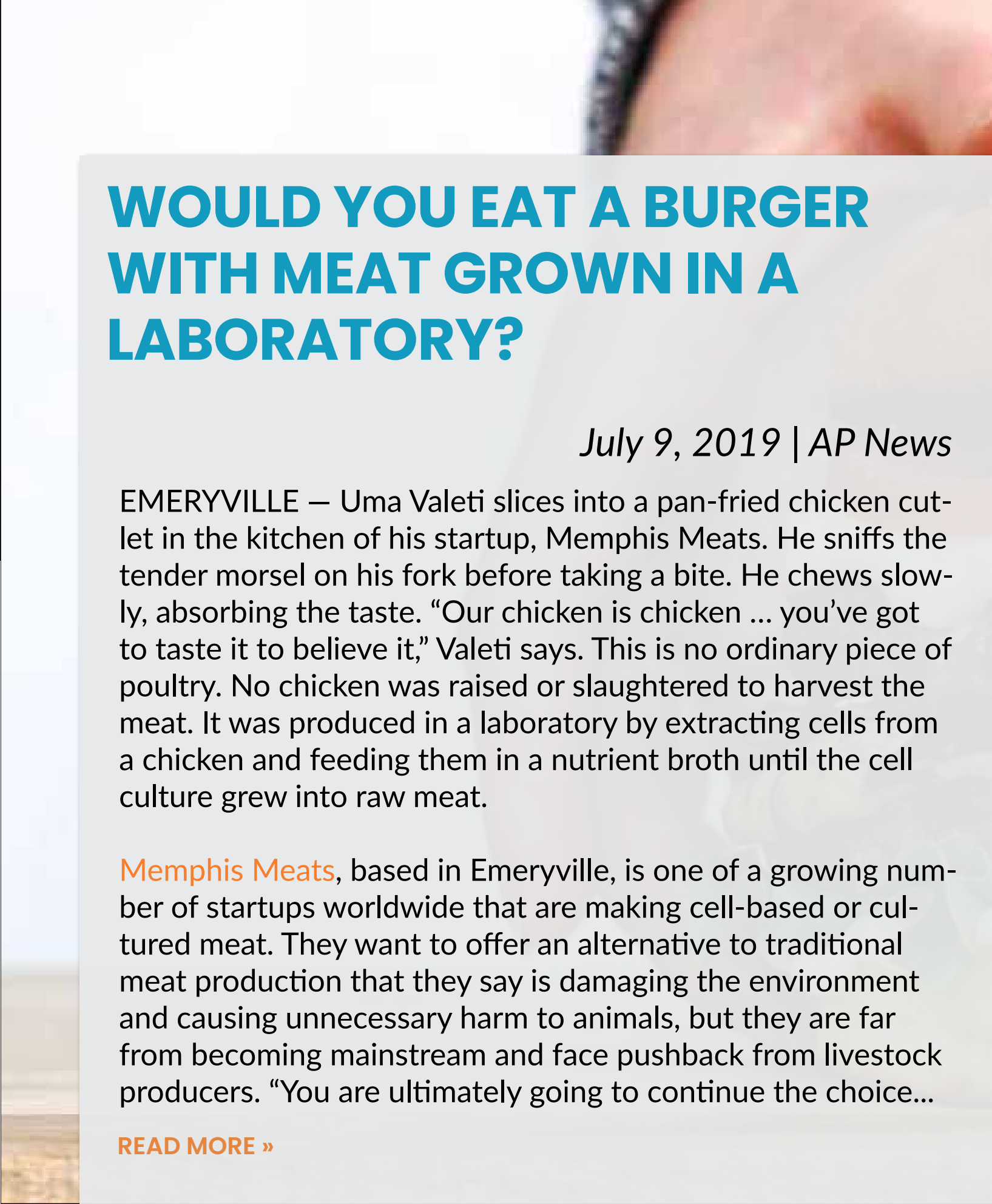
BILL TO REPORT CONFESSED ABUSE BY PRIESTS PUT ON HOLD

July 10, 2019 | AP News

SACRAMENTO — A bill that would require California religious leaders to report their co-workers' confessions of child abuse or neglect has been put on hold amid opposition from the Catholic church. California law already requires clergy to report knowledge of child abuse and neglect. But they can keep it a secret if they learned about it during a confession.

State Sen. Jerry Hill, a Democrat from San Mateo, wrote a bill this year to change that, but only if the confession was from another religious leader or someone who works at the church. It passed the Senate by a vote of 30-4 in May. On Tuesday, Hill announced he was putting the bill on hold because it did not have enough support to pass the state Assembly. But Hill said the issue remains important to him, and he vowed to continue his efforts to pass it. “Senate Bill 360 has one purpose only, not to restrict faith, but to ensure...

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WOULD YOU EAT A BURGER WITH MEAT GROWN IN A LABORATORY?

July 9, 2019 | AP News

EMERYVILLE — Uma Valeti slices into a pan-fried chicken cutlet in the kitchen of his startup, Memphis Meats. He sniffs the tender morsel on his fork before taking a bite. He chews slowly, absorbing the taste. “Our chicken is chicken ... you've got to taste it to believe it,” Valeti says. This is no ordinary piece of poultry. No chicken was raised or slaughtered to harvest the meat. It was produced in a laboratory by extracting cells from a chicken and feeding them in a nutrient broth until the cell culture grew into raw meat.

Memphis Meats, based in Emeryville, is one of a growing number of startups worldwide that are making cell-based or cultured meat. They want to offer an alternative to traditional meat production that they say is damaging the environment and causing unnecessary harm to animals, but they are far from becoming mainstream and face pushback from livestock producers. “You are ultimately going to continue the choice...

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Memphic Meats



AP File

NATIONWIDE ICE ROUNDUP POISED TO BEGIN THIS WEEKEND

July 11, 2019 | AP News

WASHINGTON — A nationwide immigration enforcement operation targeting people who are in the United

The operation is similar to ones conducted regularly since 2003 that often produce hundreds of arrests. It is slightly unusual to target families, as opposed to immigrants with criminal histories, but not unprecedented.

States illegally is expected to begin this weekend after it was postponed last month by President Donald Trump, according to two administration officials and immigrant activists. The operation, which is sparking outrage and concern among immi-

grant advocates, would target people with final orders of removal, including families whose immigration cases had been fast-tracked by judges in 10 major cities.

The sweep remains in flux and possibly could begin later, according to the officials, who were not authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity. Activists are circulating information about hotlines for immigrants to call and bolstering know-your-rights training. The operation is similar to ones conducted regularly since 2003 that often produce hundreds of arrests. It is slightly unusual to target families, as opposed to immigrants with criminal histories, but not unprecedented. The Obama and Trump administrations have targeted families in previous operations.

Agency Will Not Discuss Specifics

But this one is notable really because of the politics swirling around it. Trump announced on Twitter last month that the sweep would mark the beginning of an effort to deport millions of people who are in the country illegally, a near-impossibility given the limited resources of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, which makes the arrests and carries out deportation orders. Then he abruptly canceled it after a phone call with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., while lawmakers worked to pass a \$4.6 billion border aid pack-

age. Plus, details had leaked and authorities worried about the safety of ICE officers, railing against suspected leakers. The agency said in a statement that it would not discuss specifics about enforcement operations.

“As always, ICE prioritizes the arrest and removal of unlawfully present aliens who pose a threat to national security, public safety and border security,” according to the statement. Pelosi said she hoped the administration would think again about the operation. “Families belong together,” she said.

Activists Have Been Preparing for More Raids

The administration has been straining to manage a border crisis, and some officials believe flashy shows of force in deporting families would deter others migrants from coming. But others have criticized drawing resources away from the border at a time when the Border Patrol is detaining four times the number of people it should.

Also, a **watchdog report** found filthy, potentially dangerous conditions

at some stations. Democratic Rep. Pramila Jayapal of Washington state, co-chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus and a former immigrant advocate, accused the administration of showing a “willingness to be cruel at every turn. It sickens me that this is this is the United States of America, we are so much better than this.”

Activists have been preparing for more raids, publicizing hotlines for immigrants to call and stepping up know-your-rights trainings on what to do if agents show up. Some said they were gearing up for them to start Sunday. Activists in Chicago planned a Saturday rally with roughly 10,000 people expected to attend. Others said they continued to do what they had since Trump took...

“We don’t want to alarm folks, but we want to alert folks.” — Melissa Taveras, Florida Immigrant Coalition

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FED CHAIRMAN SIGNALS THAT RATE CUT COULD HAPPEN SOON

AP/Susan Walsh

July 10, 2019 | AP News

WASHINGTON — Chairman Jerome Powell signaled Wednesday that the Federal Reserve is likely to cut interest rates late this month for the first time in a decade in light of a weakening global economy and rising trade tensions.

Delivering the central bank's semiannual report to Congress, Powell said that since Fed officials met last month, "uncertainties around trade tensions and concerns about the strength of the global economy continue to weigh on the U.S. economic outlook." In addition, annual inflation has dipped further below the Fed's annual target level. Powell's

remarks triggered a stock market rally, with the Dow Jones industrial average up nearly 100 points in late-morning trading. Economists suggested that Powell's message made a quarter-point rate cut a virtual certainty at the Fed's meeting this month, with many forecasting further rate cuts to come.

Paul Ashworth, chief U.S. economist at Capital Economics, said he thinks economic growth will slow below a 1% annual rate in the second half of this year, which he thinks will lead to additional quarter-point cuts in December and then March. Ashworth said a July rate cut would be "insurance..."

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AP File

AOC'S FEUD WITH PELOSI TESTS PARTY HEADING TO 2020 ELECTION

July 10, 2019 | AP News

WASHINGTON — They don't talk to each other much, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. But lately they're speaking at one another in a way that threatens party unity and underscores broader tensions reshaping the Democrats. Their power struggle has spilled open in what could be a momentary blip or a foreshadowing of divisions to come.

It started with a rare public rebuke — Pelosi chiding AOC, as she's called, in a newspaper interview; AOC responding pointedly on Twitter — that's now challenging the House agenda and rippling into the 2020 presidential campaign. A new test will come this week on a must-pass defense bill the White House on Tuesday threatened to veto. At its core, the tension between the most powerful Democrat in the country and one of the party's newest, most liberal members...

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STURGEON, AMERICA'S FORGOTTEN DINOSAURS, SHOW SIGNS OF LIFE

July 10, 2019 | AP News

CHARLES CITY, Va. — Sturgeon were America's vanishing dinosaurs, armor-plated beasts that crowded the nation's rivers until mankind's craving for caviar pushed them to the edge of extinction. More than a century later, some populations of the massive bottom feeding fish are showing signs of recovery in the dark corners of U.S. waterways. Increased numbers are appearing in the cold streams of Maine, the lakes of Michigan and Wisconsin and the coffee-colored waters of Florida's Suwannee River.

A 14-foot Atlantic sturgeon — as long as a Volkswagen Beetle — was recently spotted in New York's Hudson River. "It's really been a dramatic reversal of fortune," said Greg Gorman, a Virginia Commonwealth University ecologist who studies Atlantic sturgeon in Virginia's James River. "We didn't think they were there, frankly. Now, they're almost every place we're looking." Following the late 1800s caviar rush...

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AP/Sait Serkan Gurbuz

WORLD

BRITISH AMBASSADOR QUILTS AFTER CRITICISMS OF TRUMP LEAKED

July 10, 2019 | AP News

LONDON — Britain's ambassador to the United States resigned Wednesday after being made a diplomatic nobody by President Donald Trump following the leak of the envoy's unflattering opinions about the U.S. administration. Veteran diplomat Kim Darroch said he could no longer do his job in Washington after Trump branded him a fool and cut off all contact with the representative of one of the U.S.'s closest allies. The break in relations followed a British newspaper's publication Sunday of leaked documents that revealed the ambassador's dim view of Trump's administration, which Darroch described as dysfunctional, inept and chaotic.

"The current situation is making it impossible for me

In the leaked documents, he called the Trump administration's policy toward Iran "incoherent," said the president might be indebted to "dodgy Russians," and raised doubts about whether the White House "will ever look competent."

to carry out my role as I would like," Darroch said in his resignation letter. In the leaked documents, he called the Trump administration's policy toward Iran "incoherent," said the president might be indebted to "dodgy Russians," and raised doubts about whether the

White House "will ever look competent." "We don't really believe this administration is going to become substantially more normal; less dysfunctional; less unpredictable; less faction riven; less diplomatically clumsy and inept," one missive said.

Darroch Had Been Set to Retire at End of Year

Prime Minister Theresa May and other British politicians have praised Darroch and condemned the leak in recent days. Some also accused Boris Johnson, who is likely to be picked as Britain's next prime minister later this month, of failing to stand up for the U.K.'s envoy in Washington because he wanted to curry favor with Trump. "The fact that Sir Kim has been bullied out of

his job, because of Donald Trump's tantrums and Boris Johnson's pathetic lick-spittle response, is something that shames our country," said Emily Thornberry, the spokeswoman on foreign affairs issues for the main opposition Labour Party. Darroch had been set to retire at the end of the year. It's unclear whether May will have time to name a replacement before she leaves office later this month.

Appointing ambassadors usually involves a formal civil service process with advertisements, applications and interviews, though Simon McDonald, head of Britain's diplomatic service, said the post of ambassador to the U.S. wasn't always chosen that way. Darroch announced his decision the morning after a debate between the two contenders to replace May as party leader and prime minister, Johnson and Jeremy Hunt.

"The fact that Sir Kim has been bullied out of his job, because of Donald Trump's tantrums and Boris Johnson's pathetic lick-spittle response, is something that shames our country."
— Emily Thornberry, Labour Party spokeswoman on foreign affairs issues

British Officials Hunting for Culprit Behind Leak

Hunt, who is Britain's foreign secretary, vowed to keep Darroch in the post, but Johnson pointedly did not. "I think it's very important we should have a close partnership, a close friendship with the United States," Johnson said. Darroch's forthright, unfiltered views on the U.S. administration — meant for a limited audience and discreet review — appeared in the leaked documents published by Britain's Mail on Sunday newspaper. Darroch had served as Britain's envoy to Washington since 2016; the leaked cables covered a period from 2017 to recent weeks. British officials are hunting for the culprit behind the leak, which was both an embarrassment to May's government and a major breach of diplomatic security. "We will pursue the culprit...

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HOMELAND SECURITY OFFICIAL DEFENDS CONDITIONS AT BORDER

AP File

July 8, 2019 | AP News

WASHINGTON — Acting Homeland Security Secretary Kevin McAleenan on Sunday defended conditions at U.S. Border Patrol stations following reports of crowded and unsanitary conditions that have heightened debate about President Donald Trump’s immigration policy, a trademark issue for his reelection campaign. “It’s an extraordinarily challenging situation,” McAleenan told ABC’s “This Week.”

The Homeland Security Department’s internal watchdog provided new details Tuesday about the overcrowding in Texas’ Rio Grande Valley, the busiest corridor for illegal crossings. The report said children at three facilities had no access to

showers and that some children under age 7 had been held in jammed centers for more than two weeks. Some cells were so cramped that adults were forced to stand for days on end.

Trump Complains of ‘Exaggerated Accounts’

Government inspectors described an increasingly dangerous situation, both for migrants and agents — a “ticking time bomb,” in the words of one facility manager. The report echoed findings in May by the department’s inspector general about holding centers in El Paso, Texas: 900 people crammed into a cell with a maximum capacity of 125...

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AP Photo/Mohammad Hmeid

BEST WAY TO FIGHT CLIMATE CHANGE? PLANT A TRILLION TREES

July 8, 2019 | [Al Jazeera](#) Aggregation

The most effective way to fight global warming is to plant lots of trees – one trillion of them, maybe more, a study says.

And there’s enough room, Swiss scientists say. Even with existing cities and farmland, there’s enough space for new trees to cover nine million square kilometres, they reported in Thursday’s journal Science. That area is roughly the size of the United States.

The study calculated that over the decades, those new trees could suck up nearly 750 billion tonnes of heat-trapping carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. That’s about as much carbon pollution as humans have spewed in the past 25 years.

“This is by far – by thousands of times – the cheapest climate change solution” and the most effective, said study co-author Thomas Crowther, a climate change ecologist at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich...

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IRAN BREACHES KEY URANIUM ENRICHMENT LIMIT IN NUCLEAR DEAL

July 8, 2019 | AP News





TEHRAN, Iran — Iran on Monday began enriching uranium to 4.5%, just breaking the limit set by its nuclear deal with world powers, while it is still seeking a way for Europe to help it bypass U.S. sanctions amid heightened tensions between Tehran and Washington. The acknowledgment by the spokesman of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran to The Associated Press shows the Islamic Republic trying to increase pressure on those still in the 2015 nuclear deal. It also comes just days after Iran acknowledged breaking the 661-pound limit on its low-enriched uranium stockpile, another term of the accord.

Experts warn that higher enrichment and a growing stockpile could begin to narrow the one-year window Iran would need to have enough material for an atomic weapon, something Iran denies it wants but the deal prevented. While the steps now taken by Iran remain quickly reversible, Europe so far...

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AP File

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