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AP File

NUNES DROPS LOCAL LAWSUIT, FILES AGAINST FUSION GPS INSTEAD

September 4, 2019 | David Taub

The campaign of congressman Devin Nunes withdrew a lawsuit filed against four people it accused of conspiracy and interfering with campaign business because they challenged his ballot designation as a “farmer” in 2018. The attorney representing three of the four defendants expressed joy over the news. “A David and Goliath story, without David ever firing a shot,” attorney Brian Whelan of Fresno said in an email.

“A David and Goliath story, without David ever firing a shot.” — attorney Brian Whelan of Fresno

Nunes’ Lawsuit

On Aug. 1, the Nunes campaign filed suit against Whelan’s clients Paul Buxman, Hope Nisly, and Daniel O’Connell, along with Michael Seeley. They were accused of conspiracy and interfering with prospective economic and/or contractual relations. The defendants attempted to have Nunes’ “farmer” designation removed from the ballot. However, the Secretary of State’s office sided with Nunes.

As of Sept. 3, the campaign filed a motion with the Tulare County court requesting the suit be dismissed without prejudice. “With this failed Nunes lawsuit, the congressman had attempted to undermine rights to free speech, rights to petition the government, and the right to petition the courts,” Whelan said. “With the Nunes lawsuit, Mr. Nunes made a statement that these important rights were to be disregarded when applied to the very powerful.” “Through standing at the ready to fight back, Paul Buxman, Hope Nisly, and Daniel O’Connell told Mr. Nunes and others that these inviolate rights apply to all people in this great country, irrespective of political party, creed, color, walk-of-life, national origin, political power (or lack thereof), etc.”

Dismissal Motivations

The campaign’s attorney, Peter Kapetan, said the lawsuit was dismissed because they could not find Seeley to properly serve him. Also, Kapetan said Nunes’ other legal team based in Virginia filed a federal lawsuit there incorporating some of the same conspiracy themes from the Tulare County lawsuit. “Based on new evidence that the attorneys uncovered, they decided to file a federal RICO violations lawsuit,” Kapetan said. “It’s going to incorporate many of the facts and allegations that underlie the Tulare County lawsuit.”

BuzzFeed News reporter Zoe Tillman posted a link to the suit on Twitter, which lists Fusion GPS as a defendant. Kapetan said that the Tulare County defendants will not be named in the pending Virginia federal lawsuit. Nunes also has a separate lawsuit in a Virginia state court against Twitter, McClatchy (owner of The Fresno Bee), and some Twitter accounts that were critical of the congressman. A judge’s ruling on that case is pending.

Related Story: This Is the Farmer Devin Nunes’ Campaign Is Suing. He’s Praying for His ...



September 5, 2019 | David Taub

A Fresno County Superior Court judge has sided with a tax-payers advocate group’s contention that a Fresno parks sales tax measure failed. Judge Kimberly Gaab issued the ruling Thursday, agreeing with the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association and against Fresno Building Healthy Communities.

Fresno voters backed Measure P in November 2018 with a 52% majority. It was understood then that the proposal needed two-thirds approval to go into effect. But a Supreme Court ruling gave hope to the parks tax advocates that 50% plus one vote was sufficient for adoption. Measure P would have raised the city’s sales tax three-eighths of a cent exclusively for parks and related programs. “We are delighted with the Fresno decision,” said Jon Coupal, president of HJTA. “Judge Gaab understood the issues and was not swayed by the judge in San Fran-

cisco.” Coupal referenced a similar case in the Bay Area.

Two-Thirds vs. Simple Majority

At issue was whether a sales tax that went for a specific purpose needed two-thirds or a simple majority to pass. Prior interpretations of Proposition 13 and Proposition 218 meant such taxes needed the supermajority. The rules are different depending on what method is used to place a proposal on the ballot — by a vote of a governing body or by voter petition. But, a 2017 Supreme Court case confused the issue, leading to challenges for tax measures on the 2018 ballot in California, like Measure P. In the 2017 *Upland* case, the court ruled there is a distinction involving the timing of the ballot measure if it is brought forth by voter petition. Fresno BHC, technically the defendant in the Measure P court case, argued that the...

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WHERE’S THE AC? FRESNO UNIFIED STUDENTS, TEACHERS FEELING THE HEAT

September 6, 2019 | Nancy Price

Air conditioning continues to be a hot-button issue for Fresno Unified School District, which has grappled with 800 requests for service since the start of the school year on Aug. 19. For those classrooms and other spaces without operating air conditioning, the first 13 days were sweltering. The National Weather Service recorded triple-digit temperatures on seven of those days, with an average temperature of 99 degrees. The hottest day was Aug. 27, when the thermometer climbed to 105 degrees.

Karin Temple, chief operating officer for facilities management and planning for Fresno Unified, said in an email to GV Wire that all air conditioning is turned on two weeks before the start of the school year to make sure it is operating properly, or repaired if it is not. “Some issues are not known until classrooms are fully occupied with students and teachers,” she said. “In other cases, unexpected mechanical failures occur due to normal wear and tear.” As of Thursday, 600 of the requests for service...

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WHAT’S GRANITE PARK’S FUTURE? LETTERS OFFER CLUES.

September 5, 2019 | David Taub

Terance Frazier, the real estate developer and president of the nonprofit that runs a city sports park, says his public partner isn’t doing all it can to help him. Right now, Frazier is preparing the Granite Park sports facility operated by his nonprofit — the Central Valley Community Sports Foundation — for a huge bounce park event over the weekend, the largest in the world if you believe [Big Bounce America’s hype](#).

In the same week a city councilman criticized the way Frazier is running Granite Park and also City Hall for letting it happen, Frazier struck back. He says the city isn’t holding up its end at a park providing baseball, softball, soccer and other sports programs for Fresno’s youth. “CVCSF has put more than \$2 million dollars into improving this facility after the city let it sit for eight years and become a run-down weed patch. I have also put my own money into the facility and have volunteered hundreds of hours to keep the park open,” Frazier said. Now, he is hesitant...

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STATE

NEWSOM'S CALIFORNIA VACCINE BILL CHANGE SURPRISES BACKERS

September 5, 2019 | AP News

SACRAMENTO — Medical groups and a lawmaker behind California legislation to crack down on vaccine exemptions said Wednesday they were surprised by Gov. Gavin Newsom's last-minute call for changes to the bill, a move that inserted fresh uncertainty into one of the year's most contentious issues. It was the second time the Democratic governor sought to change the mea-

"I don't think any of them, from the bullets I saw, are needed. I'm puzzled why the governor says he has broad support for them when I literally saw them for the first time in a tweet last night, and I'm one of the sponsors." — Leah Russin, Vaccinate California's executive director

sure aimed at doctors who sell fraudulent medical exemptions for students, a proposal vehemently opposed by anti-vaccine activists. After expressing hesitancy with the bill and winning substantial changes to the measure in June, Newsom had committed to signing it. After it passed out of the Senate on Wednesday, advocates said they still expect him to sign it, even as opponents target Newsom and his wife, Jennifer Siebel Newsom, urging a veto. Leaders of Vaccinate California and the American Academy of Pediatrics, California, both sponsors of the bill, said Newsom's office hadn't communicated with them about the changes, which he announced in a tweet Tuesday and is likely to seek through a second piece of legislation.

"I don't think any of them, from the bullets I saw, are needed. I'm puzzled why the governor says he has broad support for them when I literally saw them for the first time in a tweet last night, and I'm one of the sponsors," said Leah Russin, Vaccinate California's executive director, who added Newsom's office hadn't responded to her request for a meeting. The California Medical Association, the third major sponsor, also likes the bill without Newsom's last minute proposed amendments but hadn't seen any details beyond his tweet,

said spokesman Anthony York. Newsom's office did not respond to requests about whether he'd veto it.

Enforcement Will Start Next Year

"We're very much looking forward to the governor keeping his word and signing it" as is, said Kris Calvin, chief executive of the American Academy of Pediatrics, California. The bill by state Sen. Richard Pan, a Sacramento Democrat, would allow state public health officials to investigate doctors who grant more than five medical exemptions in a year and schools with vaccination rates of less than 95%. He said lower vaccination rates erode the "community immunity" that limits measles outbreaks like those that reached their highest level in decades this year and that intent of his bill is to "keep children safe."

Newsom's newly proposed amendments would say enforcement will start next year, meaning doctors who previously granted a high number of medical exemptions won't face scrutiny. They would also remove a requirement that doctors swear under penalty of perjury that they are not charging fees to fill out medical exemption forms or conducting related medical examinations. They would insure that an expert panel reviewing appeals of exemption denials could consider additional information from the doctor beyond the exemption form. And they would exempt the individual medical forms from being made public.

"I just wanted to get an understanding what's going on here in regards to these proposed amendments." — Sen. Richard Pan, a Sacramento Democrat

Related Story: How Valley Lawmakers Voted on Vaccine Exemption Bill

Opportunities for additional changes are limited, as lawmakers must wrap business for the year by Sept...

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CALIFORNIA BANS FUR TRAPPING FOR RECREATION, COMMERCE

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September 5, 2019 | AP News

SACRAMENTO — California on Wednesday became the first state to ban commercial fur trapping, ending the practice nearly 200 years after animals like beavers and otters introduced the American West to international trade.

Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom said Wednesday he had signed a bill into law making it illegal to trap animals for the purposes of recreation or to sell their fur. It is still legal to trap animals for other purposes, including pest control and public health. Before the gold rush put California on the map, it was fur traders who first flocked to then far-flung Mexican territory in search of the area's plentiful population of

beavers, minks and badgers. The so-called fur rush made fur trappers a recognizable symbol of the Old West. But in recent years, California licenses for fur trappers have declined considerably. In 2018, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife said it sold 133 licenses, leading to the harvest of 1,568 animals and the sale of 1,241 pelts.

A legislative analysis of the bill noted most furs are sold outside of California, with data suggesting there have been no fur sales in the state for the past three years. Meanwhile, the state has issued about 500 trapping licenses a year for pest control and other uses. People who trap animals for those...

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AP File

CALIFORNIA SENATE OKS EXPANSIONS OF 'RED FLAG' GUN LAW

September 5, 2019 | AP News

SACRAMENTO — Employers, co-workers and teachers could ask judges to take away guns from people who are deemed a danger to themselves or others under a bill that has cleared the California Senate.

California enacted a so-called “red flag law” that took effect in 2016. But it only allows law enforcement and immediate family members to ask judges for gun restraining orders. Assembly Bill 61 by Democratic Assemblyman Phil Ting of San Francisco would expand that law.

Ting introduced the bill in response to a November 2018 mass shooting in Thousand Oaks, California, where 12 people were killed. The gunman, Ian David Long, had shown **signs of instability** to family and friends. Groups advocating gun rights and civil liberties oppose the bill, which still must...

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CALIFORNIA GOVERNOR ANNOUNCES DEAL TO CAP RISING RENT PRICES

September 3, 2019 | AP News

SACRAMENTO — Gov. Gavin Newsom reached a deal with apartment owners and developers Friday on legislation that would cap how rapidly rents can rise as the state grapples with a housing crisis. The deal would cap annual rent increases at 5% plus inflation, with a 10% maximum increase. That's lower than the 7% threshold lawmakers had previously negotiated amid strong resistance from the real estate and development industries. Staff members Newsom's office shared details of the deal, which is not yet in print.

It marks a victory for renters who say they are being priced out as rents rise, though many renters and social justice groups likely want an even stricter proposal. Democratic Assemblyman David Chiu of San Francisco, the bill's author, had made numerous concessions to the real estate and development industries to even get the bill to the state Senate. While the new deal is in renters' favor by lowering the allowable rent...

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AP File



WALMART TO STOP SELLING CERTAIN GUN AMMUNITION

September 3, 2019 | AP News

NEW YORK — Walmart says it will discontinue the sale of handgun and short-barrel rifle ammunition and also publicly request that customers refrain from openly carrying firearms in stores even where state laws allow it. The announcement comes just days after a mass shooting claimed seven lives in Odessa, Texas and follows

"We have a long heritage as a company of serving responsible hunters and sportsmen and women, and we're going to continue doing so." — Walmart's CEO Doug McMillon

two other back-to-back shootings last month, one of them at a Walmart store.

The Bentonville, Arkansas-based discounter said Tuesday it will stop handgun ammunition as well as short-barrel rifle ammunition, such as the .223 caliber and 5.56 caliber used in military style weapons, after it runs out of its current inventory.

It will also discontinue handgun sales in Alaska. Walmart stopped selling handguns in the mid-1990s, with the exception of Alaska. The latest move marks its complete exit from that business and allows it to focus on hunting rifles and related ammunition only.

Related Story: Texas Mass Shooting: Gunman Identified; Death Toll Rises to 8, Including

"We have a long heritage as a company of serving responsible hunters and sportsmen and women, and we're going to continue doing so," according to a memo by Walmart's CEO Doug McMillon to be circulated to employees Tuesday afternoon. The retailer is further requesting that customers refrain from openly carrying firearms at its Walmart and Sam's Club stores unless they are law enforcement officers. However, it said that it won't be changing its policy for customers who have permits for concealed carry. Walmart says it will be adding signage to inform customers of those changes.

Reducing Its Market Share of Ammunition

Last month, a gunman entered a Walmart store in El Paso, Texas, killing 22 people with an AK-style firearm that Walmart already bans the sale of and marking the deadliest shooting in the company's history. Texas became an open carry state in 2016, allowing people to openly carry firearms in public.

Related Story: How the El Paso Killer Echoed the Incendiary Words of Conservative Media Stars

Walmart's moves will reduce its market share of ammunition from around 20% to a range of about 6% to 9%, according to Tuesday's memo. About half of its more than 4,750 U.S. stores sell firearms. The nation's largest retailer has been facing increasing pressure to change its gun policies by gun control activists, employees and politicians after the El Paso shooting and a second unrelated shooting in Dayton, Ohio that killed nine people. A few days before that, two Walmart workers were killed by another worker at a store in Southaven, Mississippi. In the aftermath of the El Paso shooting, Walmart ordered workers to remove video game signs and displays that depict violence from stores nationwide.

"That work doesn't end with Walmart's decision today. As Congress comes back to consider gun violence, Walmart should make it clear that it stands with Americans who are demanding real change." — Igor Volsky, Executive Director and Founder of Guns Down America

But that fell well short of demands for the retailer to stop selling firearms entirely. Critics have also wanted Walmart to stop supporting politicians backed by the National Rifle Association. At least one gun control activist group applauded Walmart's moves. "Walmart deserves enormous credit for joining the strong and growing majority of Americans who know that we have...

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September 5, 2019 | AP News

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon will cut funding from military projects like schools, target ranges and maintenance facilities to pay for the construction of 175 miles of fencing along the U.S.-Mexico border, diverting a total \$3.6 billion to President Donald Trump's long-promised barrier.

Projects in 23 states, 19 countries and three U.S. territories would be stalled or killed by the plan, though just \$1.1 billion in cuts would strike the **continental** U.S., according to a list released Wednesday by the Pentagon. Almost \$700 million would come from projects in U.S. territories, including Puer-

to Rico, with another \$1.8 billion coming from projects on **overseas** bases. Trump's move would take the biggest step yet in delivering on his promise to build a wall to block immigrants from entering the country illegally.

But it may come at the expense of projects that the Pentagon acknowledged may be difficult to fund anew. Capitol Hill Democrats, outraged over Trump's use of an emergency order for the wall, promised they won't approve money to revive them. A senior defense official told reporters the Pentagon is having conversations with members of Congress...

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SURVEY: US SERVICES SECTOR EXPANDS AT FASTER PACE IN AUGUST

September 5, 2019 | AP News

WASHINGTON — U.S. services expanded at a stronger pace in August, driven by an uptick in business activity and new orders. The Institute for Supply Management, an association of purchasing managers, said Thursday that its non-manufacturing index rose to 56.4 from 53.7 in July after two months of cooler growth. Readings above 50 signal growth, and the US services sector has been expanding for 115 months.

Services make up the bulk of US economic activity, so the results are a reassuring signal of continued economic strength. While services companies surveyed express their concern over tariffs and geopolitical uncertainty, they appear so far to have avoided the challenges faced by the manufacturing sector. The ISM manufacturing index released Tuesday reported the sector shrinking for the first time in three years. Paul Ashworth, chief economist at Capital Economics said...

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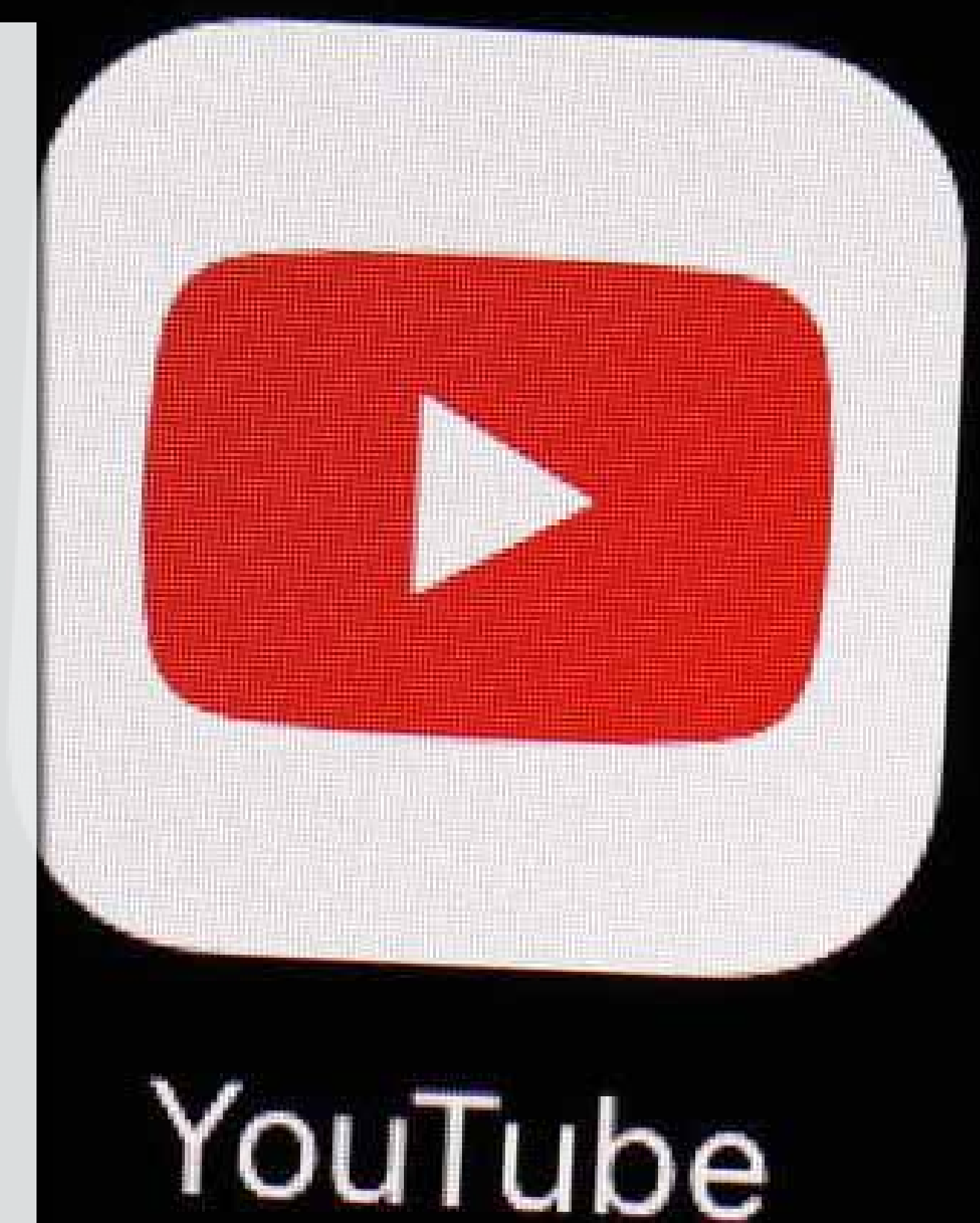
YOUTUBE TO PAY \$170M FINE AFTER VIOLATING KIDS' PRIVACY LAW

September 4, 2019 | AP News

WASHINGTON — Google's video site YouTube has been fined \$170 million to settle allegations it collected children's personal data without their parents' consent. The Federal Trade Commission fined Google \$136 million. The company will pay an additional \$34 million to New York state to resolve similar allegations.

The fine is the largest the agency has leveled against Google, although it is tiny compared with the \$5 billion fine the **FTC imposed against Facebook** this year for privacy violations. The FTC has been investigating YouTube for the way it handles the data of kids under 13. Young children are protected by a federal law that requires parental consent before companies can collect and share their personal information. YouTube has said its service is intended for ages 13 and older, although younger kids commonly watch videos on the site and many popular YouTube channels feature cartoons...

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AP File

WORLD

TRUMP'S MIDEAST PEACE ENVOY SET TO LEAVE THE WHITE HOUSE

September 5, 2019 | AP News

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration official tasked with developing a plan to bring peace between Israel and the Palestinians is leaving the White House. Jason Greenblatt, Trump's special representative for international negotiations, will depart the administration

The White House says the peace plan is complete but will not be released until at least after this month's Israeli elections. The plan already is facing rejection by Palestinian officials.

in the coming weeks, the White House said Thursday. The former Trump Organization lawyer had been leading the effort to devise the oft-delayed peace plan. His departure casts further doubt on the proposal's future. The White House

says the **peace plan** is complete but will not be released until at least after this month's Israeli elections. The plan already is facing rejection by Palestinian officials, who object to strengthening ties between the U.S. and Israel.

In a tweet, President Donald Trump thanked Greenblatt for his service and said that Greenblatt's "dedication to Israel and to seeking peace between Israel and the Palestinians won't be forgotten." He said Greenblatt is pursuing work in the private sector. Greenblatt worked in concert with White House senior adviser Jared Kushner, the president's son-in-law, on the plan. Kushner praised Greenblatt and said "work has helped develop the relationships between Israel and its neighbors as he is trusted and respected by all of the leaders throughout the region."

The Team's Only Visible Accomplishment

Greenblatt advocated for decisions to relocate the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem and recognize Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights — moves that drew skepticism from Palestinians and Arab nations. Apart from alienating the Palestinian leadership and securing the tacit support from some Gulf Arab states, the team's

only visible accomplishment has been the release of an **ambitious \$50 billion economic proposal** for the West Bank, Gaza and Palestinian communities in Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon. That plan was rolled out a workshop in Bahrain this year that was boycotted by the Palestinian Authority. Despite the plan's lofty goals, no money for the projects it envisions has been secured.

Greenblatt had stepped up his public engagement before the announcement of the economic plan, but it was perhaps most notable for criticizing Palestinian leaders on Twitter for their rejection of the proposal and the as-yet unseen political portion of the peace plan.

The Peace Effort Initially Operated Largely in Isolation From the Rest of the U.S.

In contrast to Democratic and Republican predecessors, the White House has stopped promoting a two-state solution between Israel and the Palestinians and avoided condemning Israeli settlement expansion on occupied lands. The Jerusalem move, followed by cuts of hundreds of millions of dollars in aid, prompted the Palestinians to sever most ties with the U.S. Nabil Abu Rdeneh, spokesman for Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, said the Palestinians will "shed no tears" over Greenblatt's departure. "He ruined the credibility of the United States and destroyed the peace process," Abu Rdeneh said. The White House peace effort initially operated largely in isolation from the rest of the U.S. foreign policy apparatus. But as Greenblatt's departure has approached, the White House has begun integrating it with the State Department's Iran team. Greenblatt's role is expected to be assumed by Kushner aide Avi Berkowitz and Brian Hook, the State...

"He ruined the credibility of the United States and destroyed the peace process." — Nabil Abu Rdeneh, spokesman for Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas

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THIS TIME, IT'S BORIS JOHNSON'S YOUNGER BROTHER TO JUMP SHIP

September 5, 2019 | AP News

LONDON — British Prime Minister Boris Johnson's bad week got even worse Thursday when younger brother Jo walked away from his government post over their differing stances on Brexit. It was clearly a difficult decision for Jo Johnson, who had returned to government as an education minister when his big brother replaced Theresa May as prime minister in July.

Jo Johnson had quit May's government last year and argued that Britain should have another vote over its decision to leave the European Union. His pro-European credentials stood at odds with those of his brother's, who became prime

minister on a pledge to leave the EU by the Oct. 31 Brexit deadline come what may. Jo Johnson — who, like his brother, has prominent blond hair — also said he will step down from Parliament rather than compete at the next election. He said he was “torn between family loyalty and the national interest” and came to the conclusion that it was time for someone else to fill his shoes in Parliament and in the government.

The illustrious Johnson family is deeply divided over the wisdom of leaving the EU. Boris Johnson played a key cheer-leading role in the 2016 Brexit referendum, helping...

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MEXICO'S NEW DRUG WAR MAY BE WORSE THAN OLD ONE

August 31, 2019 | AP News

COATZACOALCOS, Mexico — Mexico's drug war appears to be back — and it may be worse this time around than in the bloody years of the government's 2006-2012 offensive against drug cartels. Back then, the worst of the violence was confined to a few cities. Now it is spread out throughout the country. Once it was not uncommon for gangs to kill adults but leave children unharmed. Now, the killing of children alongside their parents has become all too frequent.

Perhaps the most disconcerting change: Bloody cartel violence outraged Mexicans and captured international attention for the drug war, which saw 27,000 homicides during its peak in 2011. Today, even though the number of Mexico's homicides soared to near 35,000 last year, the bloodshed seems to draw less attention and indignation. It has all left many Mexicans wondering which way to turn. That was evident this week in Coatzacoalcas, an oil industry city in the Gulf coast state of Veracruz where residents say gangs...

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'CATASTROPHIC' HURRICANE DORIAN PARKS OVER THE BAHAMAS




September 3, 2019 | AP News

FREEPORT, Bahamas — Practically parking over the Bahamas for a day and a half, Hurricane Dorian pounded away at the islands Tuesday in a watery onslaught that devastated thousands of homes, trapped people in attics and crippled hospitals. At least five deaths were reported, with the full extent of the damage far from clear. The United Nations and the International Red Cross began mobilizing to deal with the unfolding humanitarian crisis. Prime Minister Hubert Minnis called it “a historic tragedy.”

The storm's punishing winds and torrential rain battered the islands of Abaco and Grand Bahama, which have a combined population of about 70,000 and are known for their marinas, golf courses, and all-inclusive resorts. The Grand Bahama airport was under 6 feet of water. Desperate callers trying to find loved ones left messages with local radio stations as Health Minister Duane Sands said that Dorian devastated...

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