

# GWIRE

WEEKLY DIGEST  
SEPTEMBER 27, 2019

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GV Wire/Jahz Tejo

# LOCAL

## SUNNYSIDE HIGH CHANGES LIVES WITH RESTORATIVE PRACTICES DONE RIGHT

September 26, 2019 | Nancy Price

Samantha “Sam” Bridgeforth could be the poster child for Sunnyside High School’s restorative practices program. As a sophomore, her grade-point average was 1.0 — a D. She was often angry, rude to school staffers, quick to start swinging her fists

**“What we’ve noticed is sometimes it’s so much harder for students to sit face to face with one another ... than to actually get in the fight and come back and act as if nothing happened.”**

**— Sunnyside head counselor Karina Rodriguez**

in fights. After numerous suspensions, she was inches away from being expelled. But Bridgeforth was too young for a continuation high school. And Sunnyside wasn’t ready to give up on her. Although she was initially reluctant, she started working with the school’s restorative practices counselor and teacher. Over time, she came to see how her behavior was holding her back, and how she could overcome her challenges. Mostly, she learned how to believe in herself. Today, Bridgeforth is an 18-year-old student at Fresno City College, where she takes classes four days a week and is working toward an associate degree in social work. She’s a huge fan of Sunnyside’s restorative practice program, and she’s not alone in that.

### Some Programs Better Than Others

Fresno Unified Superintendent Bob Nelson says Sunnyside’s program is a good example of how to balance discipline while repairing harm and restoring relationships. Nelson acknowledges that the district suspends more students than any other urban district in California and has struggled to meet the state’s mandate of reducing suspensions. “Our implementation of restorative practices was a mess in some spots and, in some other places, it was very good ...,” he says. “In some cases, we just made the restoration the accountability structure,

and that’s not sufficient. At the same time, you’re not likely to punish kids into long-term change. “Suspension is not a deterrent if you’re going to go home and play video games. That’s why discipline is really a two-pronged effort.”

### More Friendly, Less Disruptive

Sunnyside staffers report a decrease in disruptions and repeat suspensions for fighting and a friendlier atmosphere among students and staff on the southeast Fresno campus since the restorative practices program debuted five years ago. The program gives Sunnyside’s employees yet another avenue for working with students to help them grow, develop insights, and become more mature and emotionally stable. School officials say that when kids make mistakes there need to be consequences, but they also should have the chance to learn from those mistakes. The program’s home is room S213, which has been nicknamed the campus Starbucks although there are no baristas serving up lattes and espressos. There are softly upholstered, low-slung chairs that usually are clustered around a low table topped with a small sand garden, a coloring book and bucket of crayons, and a box of tissues. The restorative practices staff — counselor, teacher, and aide — work at desks under the windows or along the walls.

Students are encouraged to drop in whenever they feel the need to talk. On a recent morning, Karina Rodriguez, Gordon Wood, and Giovanni Guzman are working on laptop computers where they keep track of contacts and follow-ups with students, and communicate with other school staffers about students’ welfare and well-being. Rodriguez, now the school’s head counselor, was Sunnyside’s first restorative practices counselor. Wood, who moved to Fresno from Southern California after his daughter enrolled at Fresno State, was hired five years ago as...

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# VETERANS BOULEVARD IS GOING SOMEWHERE BIG AND EXCITING

GV Wire/Jamie Ouverson

September 24, 2019 | Bill McEwen

Thirty-five years after it was envisioned by Fresno planners, long-stalled Veterans Boulevard moved forward Tuesday morning with phase one of a plan that ultimately should ease some of the city's most congested traffic. This phase is modest: a new \$5.5 million section of Bullard Avenue helping residents south of Herndon Avenue get more quickly to that main east-west connector and to The Marketplace at El Paseo. For now, there are stop signs, but traffic signals are installed and await an energy source. But what's coming over the next couple of years, said Fresno City Councilman Mike Karbassi, will ensure that "Forgotten Fresno will be forgotten no more."

## Will Trump Administration Deliver the Final Dollars?

Better yet, 93% of the \$138 million project is funded, said Fresno Public Works Director Scott Mozier. City Hall is now

waiting, on pins and needles, to learn whether the Trump administration gives a thumbs-up to Fresno's request for the final dollars. A White House announcement is expected in November. If the funds don't come Fresno's way, the city might look to bond the remainder or convince the Fresno County Transportation Authority, which oversees Measure C, to lend the money.

Former Fresno County Supervisor Phil Larson drove in from Kerman to attend Tuesday's ribbon-cutting. He started advocating for Veterans Boulevard in 2003 and put a full shoulder into the effort until retiring from the board in January 2015. "I figured it would take three years," Larson said, with a laugh. Government, however, moves slower than traffic across the Union Pacific tracks. Thankfully, there's light at the end of...

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## VORACIOUS RODENTS IN CENTRAL VALLEY SET OFF ALARMS

September 25, 2019 | AP News

LOS BANOS — One of the most recent threats to California's environment has webbed feet, white whiskers, shaggy fur and orange buck teeth that could be mistaken for carrots. "Boy, they're an ugly-looking thing," said David Passadori, an almond and walnut grower. "And the way they multiply — jeez." The swamp rodents, called nutria, are setting off alarms in the state. They weigh about 20 pounds each and eat the equivalent of about a fourth of their weight each day by burrowing into riverbanks and chomping into plants that emerge from the water.

[Related Story: Valley Democrats Declare War on Invasive Swamp Rats](#)

The animals can destroy the wetland habitats of rare and endangered species, degrading soil, ruining crops and carrying pathogens that may threaten livestock. Most of all, they pose a public safety risk: Left unchecked, nutria could jeopardize...

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GV Wire/Jahz Tello



## DYER CELEBRATED, UNVEILED IN SCULPTURE FORM

September 27, 2019 | David Taub

For more than an hour, Jerry Dyer endured jokes and good-natured ribbing directed his way. Although not officially called a roast, an event at the Fresno fairgrounds honoring the outgoing Fresno police chief featured speaker after speaker slinging Dyer-focused jokes, followed by heartwarming stories and testimonials.

### Speakers Echoed Common Theme

District Attorney Lisa Smittcamp noted Dyer's frugality. Others rified on Dyer's hair and sense of style. But the speakers echoed a theme — Dyer is a man who cares about his officers and cares about his community. City Hall Director of Strategic Initiatives H Spees noted how Dyer made mistakes in past, but leaned into his faith to find and redeem himself. Dyer officially retires next month and has already stepped away from his day-to-day duties with the department. Earlier in the year he announced his candidacy for Fresno mayor, a fact noted by...

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AP Photo/Terry Chea





AP File

# STATE

## BULLDOGS GANG CONFOUNDS PRISON PEACEMAKING EFFORT

Septmber 25, 2019 | AP News

SACRAMENTO — California prison officials have halted an experiment aimed at forcing warring prison gangs to get along with each other after the inmates wound up brawling and even rioting when allowed to mingle together in prison recreation yards, officials told The

**At the heart of the problem is the Fresno Bulldogs prison gang that has participated in 32 battles with other prison gangs over the last year, ranging from small fights to full-scale riots, according to data prepared for the AP by the inspector general's office.**

Associated Press. Members of Fresno's notorious Bulldogs gang have been particularly resistant to peacemaking, authorities say. The effort started more than a year ago, with officials gradually allowing prisoners from different prison gangs into the same exercise yards to try to get them to make peace. This permitted officials to reduce harsh restrictions that had kept gang members locked up in cells for lengthy periods without access to rehabilitation programs that could allow them to shorten their sentences.

But the greater liberty generated the same result at several state prisons: Gang members brawled in what critics labeled "gladiator fights" that they allege prison officials deliberately set up to get the inmates to fight. The brawls led officials to stop the practice of trying to get the gang inmates to interact with each other in the prisons, Shaun Spillane, a spokesman for the corrections department's inspector general, told the AP in an interview. Prison officials "are kind of at the point where they realize this isn't working. Rather than getting the same result, they're putting their heads together and trying to come up with a new approach," Spillane said. The program is on hold so officials "can explore options to find a resolution to this and safely house these individuals," said Terry Thornton, spokeswoman for the corrections department. She denied that officials set up inmates up to fight.

### Fresno Bulldogs at Center of Conflict

"I don't know why they fight. We just expect our people to engage in positive behavior, engage in positive programs," she said. According to data prepared by the inspector general's office, the Fresno Bulldogs prison gang has participated in 32 battles with other prison gangs over the last year, ranging from small fights to full-scale riots. The Bulldogs, a drug trafficking gang, take their name from the Fresno State's canine mascot.

Members wear the school's trademark red clothing and the gang has affiliates in the city, but membership solidifies after its members are imprisoned, said Fresno police spokesman Mark Hudson. California prison officials tried 45 times to put gang members in the same yards with other inmates, with violence erupting 27 times, the data showed.

The inmates also rioted three times last fall before prison officials began trying to get them to co-exist. "Every threat group is having issues with the Bulldogs, or vice versa. These are all Bulldogs vs. other threat groups," Spillane said. Early attempts by prison officials involved a few inmates each from the Bulldogs and competing gangs, but the fights recently escalated into full-scale riots.

The most recent brawl happened Aug. 14 at the Correctional Training Facility in Soledad, south of San Francisco, when 200 inmates rioted. Eight inmates were treated at outside hospitals for puncture wounds, cuts and bruises, while another 50 inmates were treated by prison medical staff for what officials described as minor injuries. "That was part of their efforts to see if the two gangs could co-exist," Spillane said. Officials were forced to fire nine warning shots to break up the fight and they also used pepper spray and other non...

**"Bulldogs basically have an attack-on-sight ethos."  
— prisoner rights attorney  
Charles Carbone**

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## NEWSOM SIGNS PACT TO BOOST TRADE WITH ARMENIA

September 24, 2019 | AP News

Trade opportunities between California and Armenia are getting a boost following the signing of an economic cooperation agreement by Gov. Gavin Newsom and Armenia's foreign minister Tuesday in New York.

The agreement establishes a Trade and Services Desk in Armenia to connect Californian and Armenian businesses and help facilitate various trade and commercial activities, according to a news release from the governor's office. Newsom is in New York City this week attending events at the United Nations and the World Economic Forum. California is fortunate to share in the rich heritage of the Armenian people,

Newsom said. "This agreement builds on our strong ties and will create new opportunities for entrepreneurs from both California and Armenia."

### Newsom Meets with Prime Minister

California is home to the largest Armenian community in the United States, the release said. Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan attended the signing and met with Newsom, along with Armenia's Ambassador to the United States, Varuzhan Nersesyan, Armenia's High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs Zareh Sinanyan, Armenia's Consul General in Los Angeles Armen Baibourtian. The meeting followed a visit...

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## KAISER PERMANENTE STRIKE THREAT EASES WITH TENTATIVE DEAL

September 25, 2019 | GV Wire

Kaiser Permanente and more than 80,000 of its union workers reached a tentative contract settlement early Wednesday. In a statement, the Coalition of Kaiser Permanente Union said the tentative pact "will revitalize the long-standing worker-management partnership and accomplish a set of goals to make sure Kaiser is the best place to receive and give care." If ratified by workers, the four-year agreement between Kaiser and seven unions in six states — including California — and the District of Columbia would avert a nationwide strike set for Oct. 14.

### Contracts Expired September 2018

The previous contracts expired in September of last year. Tensions between employees and the healthcare giant then escalated until Wednesday's tentative agreement. "We greatly respect and value our employees who deliver on our mission every day," said Arlene Peasnell, interim chief human...

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## EPA TARGETS CALIFORNIA OVER POOR AIR QUALITY

September 24, 2019 | AP News

The Trump administration on Tuesday blamed California's worst-in-the nation air quality on shoddy paperwork, calling on the state to overhaul its plans for cleaning up toxic smog or risk losing billions in federal road dollars. The government's warning is the latest battle between the Trump administration and California. It comes days after the Trump administration moved to block the state's emission standards for cars and trucks, a move that would eliminate California's most important weapon for combating its biggest source of pollution.

Tuesday's announcement by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Andrew Wheeler chastised California for its backlog of pending rules and regulations to reduce pollution in areas that do not meet federal air quality standards. But Wheeler's letter to the California Air Resources Board puzzled state regulators and even former EPA officials who say the backlog exists because the federal government has not...

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AP/Andrew Harnik

# PELOSI ORDERS IMPEACHMENT PROBE: 'NO ONE IS ABOVE THE LAW'

September 24, 2019 | AP News & GV Wire

WASHINGTON — House Speaker Nancy Pelosi launched a formal impeachment inquiry against President Donald Trump on Tuesday, acquiescing to mounting pressure from fellow Democrats and plunging a deeply divided nation into an election year clash between Congress and the commander in chief. The probe

**The probe centers on whether Trump abused his presidential powers and sought help from a foreign government to undermine Democratic foe Joe Biden and help his own reelection. Pelosi said such actions would mark a “betrayal of his oath of office” and declared: “No one is above the law.”**

centers on whether Trump abused his presidential powers and sought help from a foreign government to undermine Democratic foe Joe Biden and help his own reelection.

Pelosi said such actions would mark a “betrayal of his oath of office” and declared: “No one is above

the law.” Pelosi’s brief statement, historic yet presented without dramatic flourish, capped a frenetic stretch on Capitol Hill as details of a classified whistleblower complaint about Trump have burst into the open and momentum has shifted swiftly toward an impeachment probe. The **charge was led by several moderate Democratic lawmakers from political swing districts**, many of them with national security backgrounds and serving in Congress for the first time.

After more than two and one-half years of sharp Democratic criticism of Trump, the formal impeachment quest sets up the party’s most urgent and consequential confrontation with a president who thrives on combat — and injects deep uncertainty in the 2020 White House race. Trump has all but dared Democrats to take this step, confident that the specter of impeachment led by the opposition party would bolster his political support. Trump, who was meeting with world leaders at the United Nations, previewed his defense in an all-caps tweet: “PRESIDENTIAL HARRASSMENT!”

## ‘No Choice but to Initiate Impeachment’

Pelosi had barely finished speaking as he began a mini-blizzard of tweets assailing her announcement. At issue are Trump’s actions with Ukraine. In a summer **phone call with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy**, he is said to have asked for help investigating former Vice President Biden and his son Hunter.

In the days before the call, Trump ordered advisers to freeze \$400 million in military aid for Ukraine — prompting speculation that he was holding out the money as leverage for information on the Bidens. Trump has denied that charge, but acknowledged he blocked the funds, later released. Biden said Tuesday, before Pelosi’s announcement, that if Trump doesn’t cooperate with lawmakers’ demands for documents and testimony in its investigations the president “will leave Congress ... with no choice but to initiate impeachment.” He said that would be a tragedy of Trump’s “own making.”

**By the time Pelosi addressed the nation on Tuesday, about two-thirds of House Democrats had announced moving toward impeachment probes.**

The Trump-Ukraine phone call is part of the whistleblower’s complaint, though the administration has blocked Congress from getting other details of the report, citing presidential privilege. **Trump has authorized the release of a transcript of the call, which is to be made public on Wednesday.** “You will see it was a very friendly and totally appropriate call,” Trump said. Trump has sought to implicate Biden and his son in the kind of corruption that has long plagued Ukraine. Hunter Biden served on the board of a Ukrainian gas company at the same time his father was leading the Obama administration’s diplomatic dealings with Kyiv. Though the timing raised concerns among anti-corruption advocates, there has been no evidence of wrongdoing by either...

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## BORDER COLLIE MISSING FOR 57 DAYS OUT OF STATE REUNITED

Daily Inter Lake/Mackenzie Reis

September 23, 2019 | GV Wire

How do you get back a beloved dog that's missing in another state? If you're Carole King, you quit your job as a postal carrier. You reach out on social media, you post hundreds of flyers, and answer all phone calls. You drive and walk hundreds of miles. And you are supported by complete strangers in the Montana town where Katie, your beloved border collie, disappeared.

### A Reunion Born of Love and Determination

It's a remarkable story of love, determination, teamwork, and a bit of good luck played out over 57 agonizing days. When

King finally spotted Katie by a tree in Kalispell, Montana, on the morning of Sept. 15, she bear-hugged the dog. "People are stopping in their vehicles, getting out and hugging us. I think the whole neighborhood knew that we found her," she told the [Daily Inter Lake newspaper](#) of Kalispell.

"I never gave up. I never lost hope. I think what I got out of this was the kindness of strangers." King and her husband, Verne, live near Spokane, Washington, and had just arrived in Kalispell for a four-day getaway. They believe that a thunderstorm caused Katie to run out of their hotel room. When a...

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AP File

## MCDONALD'S TAKES A NIBBLE OF THE PLANT-BASED BURGER

September 26, 2019 | AP News

McDonald's is finally taking a nibble of the plant-based burger. McDonald's said Thursday that will sell the PLT, or the plant, lettuce and tomato burger for 12 weeks in 28 restaurants in Southwestern Ontario by the end of the month. The small-market test is rolling out about six months after rival Burger King began testing the plant-based Impossible Foods burger, which no surprise, is a rival to Beyond Meat. It's now selling those burgers nationwide because of strong demand from customers.

[Related Story: What Makes Impossible Meat Possible? A 'Bloody' Ingredient](#)

The entry of McDonald's, the world's largest burger chain, into the alternative meat arena has largely been seen as a question of when, and not if. Shares of Beyond Meat Inc...

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## A SPOONFUL LESS SUGAR, TAD MORE FAT: US DIETS STILL LACKING

September 24, 2019 | AP News

CHICAGO — Americans' diets are a little less sweet and a little crunchier but there's still too much sugar, white bread and artery-clogging fat, a study suggests. Overall, the authors estimated there was a modest improvement over 16 years on the government's healthy eating index, from estimated scores of 56 to 58. That's hardly cause for celebration — 100 is the top score.

Diets are still too heavy on foods that can contribute to heart disease, diabetes, obesity and other prevalent U.S. health problems, said co-author Fang Fang Zhang, a nutrition researcher at Tufts University near Boston. The [study](#) was published Tuesday in the Journal of the American Medical Association. The results are from an analysis of U.S. government health surveys from 1999 to 2016 involving nearly 44,000 adults. "Despite observed improvements," the authors wrote, "important dietary challenges" remain. Among...

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AP/ Jason DeCrow

# WORLD

## 'GRETA': A YOUNG ACTIVIST'S MOMENT, PRAISED AND CRITICIZED

September 24, 2019 | AP News

UNITED NATIONS — She stepped onto the biggest of global stages to face the most diverse of audiences, and she made it count. “How dare you?” she kept saying to some of the world’s most powerful people. “You are failing us,” she told them. Sometimes, a moment

**Climate change is a diffuse topic. And in a society trained to consume narratives by movies and TV shows that feature sharp storylines and powerful protagonists and antagonists, it can be difficult to focus on something so vast and all-encompassing.**

and a person align. For 16-year-old Greta Thunberg — whether you admire her or dislike her, and there are plenty of passionate partisans in both camps — Monday was that time. Climate change is a diffuse topic. And in a society trained to consume narratives by movies and

TV shows that feature sharp storylines and powerful protagonists and antagonists, it can be difficult to focus on something so vast and all-encompassing. Thunberg is changing that, and Monday was the pinnacle of her efforts thus far. She navigated the United Nations like a diplomatic pro, her size and age the only indications that she hasn’t been around for years. A Swedish high school student who started by protesting outside her nation’s parliament, Thunberg has spent recent months in an accelerating bid to cast attention on global warming and its effects on the rising generation.

### Words Enchanted Many, But Not All

She made the most of her time in the spotlight of global politics on Monday. Her approach and words enchanted many and disgusted others. In the latter camp, it seems, may be President Donald Trump, who appeared to jab at her late Monday after her U.N. climate conference appearance. At 8:36 p.m., after Thunberg’s utterances of doom and gloom reverberated across the warming planet, he produced this tweet: “She seems like a very happy young girl looking forward to a bright and wonderful future. So nice to see!” Thunberg’s supporters say

a voice like hers is pivotal to command attention, and that her cause is both selfless and her own. Detractors have said she is being used by climate-change activists and is swimming in waters out of her depth. “Kids are powerful pawns,” Rich Lowry wrote in the conservative National Review on Tuesday. “There’s a reason that we don’t look to teenagers for guidance on fraught issues of public policy.”

### ‘You Are Failing Us’

Young people around Thunberg have tended to focus on emotional appeals in recent months, saying older generations’ refusal to address climate change properly is stealing their futures. Thunberg, though hardly impassive, has made a point of focusing on the science and being prepared with the facts. On Monday, though, the emotional appeal took precedence. It was a powerful landing. “This is all wrong. I shouldn’t be up here,” Thunberg said. “I should be back in school on the other side of the ocean. Yet you have come to us young people for hope. How dare you.

You have stolen my dreams and my childhood with your empty words.” She added: “We are in the beginning of a mass extinction and yet all you can talk about is money. You are failing us.” Where Thunberg goes from here is unclear. She has been positioned as a clarion voice; the question is, will she continue to be considered a “youth climate activist”? Or

has her U.N. performance this week — at both youth events and the full-on climate conference — elevated her voice even further? Thunberg seems undeterred by criticism of her activism and her emerging public persona. In an interview with The Associated Press last...

**“I should be back in school on the other side of the ocean. Yet you have come to us young people for hope. How dare you. You have stolen my dreams and my childhood with your empty words.”**  
— Greta Thunberg

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# ISRAEL'S NETANYAHU GIVEN CHANCE TO FORM NEW GOVERNMENT

AP File

September 25, 2019 | AP News

JERUSALEM — Israel's president on Wednesday asked Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to form a new government, giving the longtime leader the difficult task of breaking a post-election deadlock that has paralyzed the country's political system.

After a divisive campaign, Netanyahu called for a "broad unity government" with his chief rival former military chief Benny Gantz. But he faces an uphill struggle, with his future clouded by a likely corruption indictment and his opponents opposed to sitting with him. President Reuven Rivlin announced his decision late Wednesday after a second meet-

ing aimed at brokering a unity deal between Netanyahu and Gantz ended without an agreement. Standing alongside Rivlin, Netanyahu said it was clear that neither his Likud party nor Gantz's Blue and White could put together a coalition on its own, and that the only option was to band together.

"The two of us cannot form a government unless we are together," he said. "The order of the moment is a unity government, a broad national unity government that is formed quickly." He said the country faced great security challenges, highlighted by Iran, economic challenges and the "great opportunity" of settling its borders when President Donald...

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AP/Natacha Pisarenko

## ARGENTINE ORANGUTAN SANDRA TO HEAD TO US GREAT APE SANCTUARY

September 25, 2019 | AP News

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina — Sandra shows little interest as she slowly shuffles past the structure of beams and ropes built for her to climb on inside her concrete enclosure in Argentina's capital. Outside are tall buildings and traffic that bear no resemblance to the lush forests where orangutans naturally live.

But the unstimulating, solitary life of the 33-year-old orangutan with gentle eyes and dark-red hair will take a turn Thursday when she leaves Buenos Aires for the United States. After a quarantine period in Kansas, she is expected to become the new resident of the Center for Great Apes in Florida, a sanctuary much better suited to her needs.

"There she will be able to spend the rest of her life in a more dignified situation," said Argentine judge Elena Liberatori, who in 2015 ruled that Sandra was legally not an animal....

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## TOP UK COURT: JOHNSON'S SUSPENSION OF PARLIAMENT WAS ILLEGAL

September 24, 2019 | AP News

LONDON — In a major blow to Prime Minister Boris Johnson, Britain's highest court ruled Tuesday that his decision to suspend Parliament for five weeks in the crucial countdown to the country's Brexit deadline was illegal.

The unanimous, strongly worded [Supreme Court judgment](#) declared Johnson's order to suspend Parliament "void and of no effect." The court found that Johnson's suspension had the effect of limiting debate by lawmakers on Britain's impending departure from the European Union in violation of Parliament's constitutional role.

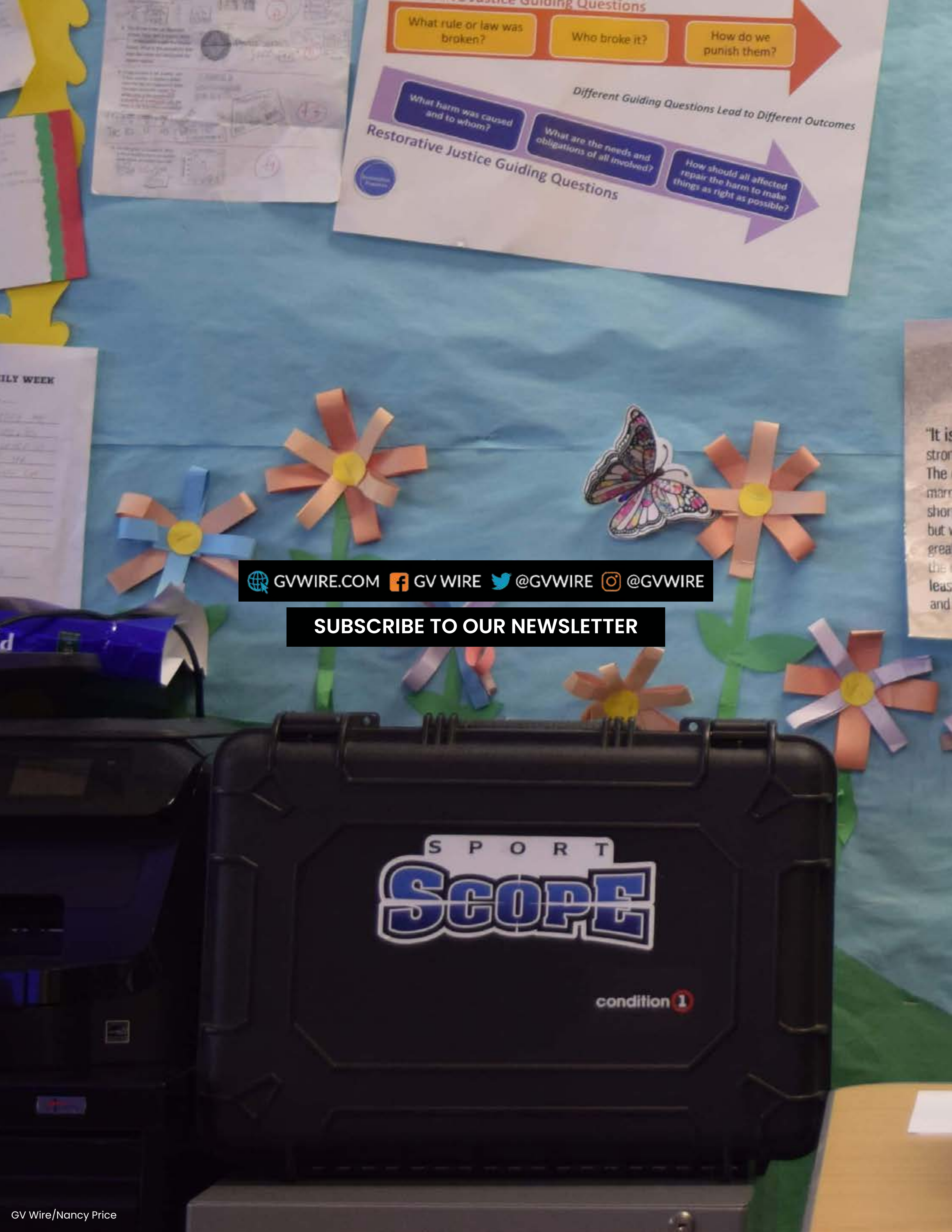
The landmark decision was quickly criticized by Johnson and prompted calls for him to quit from opposition leaders. The Conservative prime minister and Parliament have been at odds since he took power in July with the determination to take Britain out of the EU on Oct. 31 with or without a...





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AP/Mark Lennihan





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