



FRESNO PD CHIEF WELCOMES FEDERAL SCRUTINY, DEFENDS OFFICERS

October 30, 2019 | David Taub

Fresno Police Chief Andy Hall says he is open to a federal investigation into a 2017 shooting death of a homicide suspect — and his department as a whole. "We want to be as transparent as possible. And, if the FBI or the Department of Justice wants

"We want to be as transparent as possible. And, if the FBI or the Department of Justice wants to look into the case, we'll provide all of our information to whatever agency wants to look into it." — Fresno Police Chief Andy Hall

to look into the case, we'll provide all of our information to whatever agency wants to look into it. We're going to be as transparent as possible to the public, as well as any other agency," Hall

said in an interview with GV Wire. The department came under renewed scrutiny last week when a video surfaced of the shooting death of 16-year old Isiah Murrietta-Golding. His mother and father filed a consolidated federal wrongful-death lawsuit scheduled to be heard next year. According to the lawsuit, Murrietta-Golding was stopped by police because he was a suspect in the homicide of Eugenio "Henie" Ybarra the day before. Murrietta-Golding fled the scene, ran into the yard of a closed daycare center, and was shot by police. He died three days later.

Related Story: Activists Call for Federal Investigation into Fresno Police

Activists Want Federal Investigation

On Monday, activist group Fresno Stolen Lives held a protest at the downtown Fresno federal courthouse and urged U.S. Attorney McGregor Scott to conduct a civil rights investigation of the department. The group said there have been 92 officer-involved killings since 1997. "I'm not running away from anything in our past," said Hall who succeeded Jerry Dyer as police chief on Oct. 16.

"I think all of that information is available and we've been very forward in putting out all of our data. So, if any agency wanted to review it, including the (groups) that actually participated in the (protest) who have this data, they're welcome to it. You know, I believe that police departments and all government agencies should be as transparent as possible to the public." Hall said that of the nearly 500,000 calls for police service in the last year, only a few hundred resulted in the use of force such as firing lethal or less-than-lethal rounds, deploying a Taser, or using a control hold such as a wrist lock. "When you look at the number of contacts that we have, and the number of times that we are required to use force — it's very, very small," Hall said.

Hall Believes in His Officers

Hall said that he stands by the quality of his officers. "I think they would find that we provide first-rate training to our officers," Hall said. "We work on men-

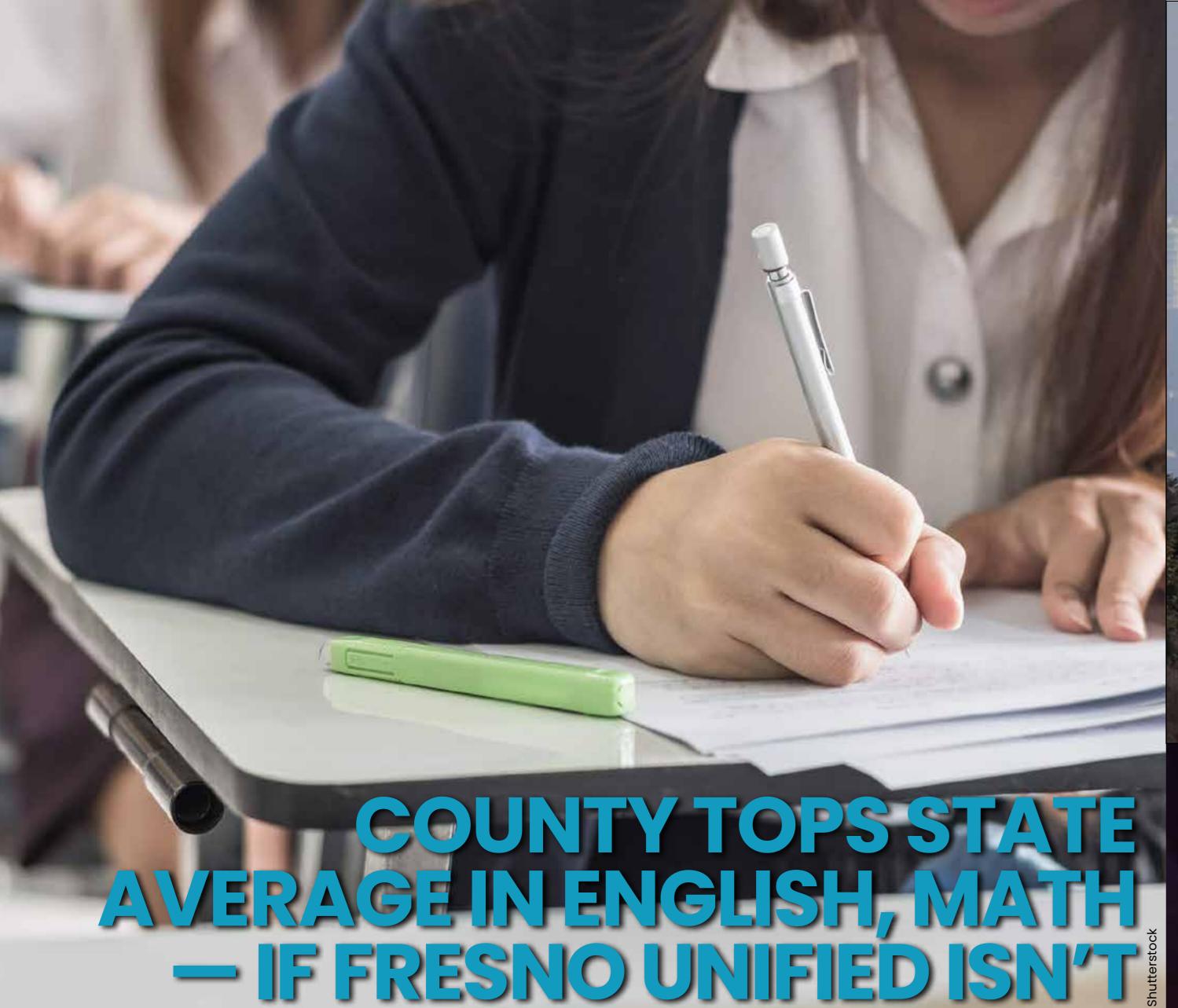
tal illness prevention as well as diffusing situations. We're continually training our officers on deescalating the situation." Hall said that his department has had its fewest officer-involved shootings in 2019 than at any time in

"We can surround an area.
We can continue doing a
search. We can use canine. We use helicopters
with heat sensors, as well
as some less-lethal techniques. But the bottom line,
these evolve very quickly
and officers have to make
split-second decisions."

— Fresno Police Chief Andy

the last 20 years. "I think that speaks well, not only to our training but to the equipment that we provide them, as well as the review process," Hall said. The police chief also cited the role of the city's independent police auditor, former FBI agent John A. Gliatta, in providing recommendations to help improve the organization. There has been community criticism since the release of the Murrietta-Golding video...

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October 29, 2019 | Nancy Price

Nearly three-fourths of Fresno County students scored above the state average on both English language arts and mathematics standardized tests last year. In fact, the same contingent of Fresno County students tested above the state average in English language arts for the past three years. But when you add in the remaining one-fourth, the county's test scores dip below the state average for both English and math. Those students who are dragging down the county average? They're attending Fresno Unified schools.

Fresno Unified Still Lags County, State

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The academic performance findings were provided in a recent communication from Fresno Unified staff to district trustees. The report looks at five years of data for meeting or exceeding proficiency standards on the Smarter Balanced Assessment Tests that are administered at the end of the school year to students in grades three through eight and 11. The report found that when Fresno Unified scores are subtracted from Fresno County's totals, the county outperformed the state average in both English and math last year — for the first time over the past five years. The Fresno County Superintendent of Schools Office did not respond to numerous requests for comment.

District Posts Bigger Gains Than County, State

Katie Russell, Fresno Unified's instructional superintendent, said the assessment results also show that the district improved at a faster pace than the county or state over the past five years. She noted that Fresno Unified topped both the rest of the county and the state with an 11.7% gain in math...

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IS RAIN COMING TO CLEAN **UP VALLEY'S DUSTY, SMOKY AIR?**

October 29, 2019 | GV Wire

With an air quality alert in effect this week, the central San Joaquin Valley could use a good soaking. Unfortunately, the earliest possibility of rain for the Fresno area, according to Accuweather, isn't until Saturday, Nov. 9. And even then, the odds aren't very good with just an 11% chance of precipitation. The forecasters at The Weather Channel offer a little more hope. They predict a 10% chance on Sunday, Nov. 10, and 30% on Monday, Nov. 11.

Limit Your Exposure to Smoke and Dust

Meanwhile, the Valley Air District reminds residents that they should limit their exposure to smoke and dust. Smoke from the Kincade Fire in Sonoma County and dust from gusty winds continue to hurt the Valley's air quality. Anyone exposed to poor air quality or wildfire smoke should move indoors and keep their windows closed. Residents can use the district's Real-time Air Advisory Network to track the air quality at myRAAN.com. However, the air district advises that the RAAN monitors detect the small particles in smoke but not the larger particles often...

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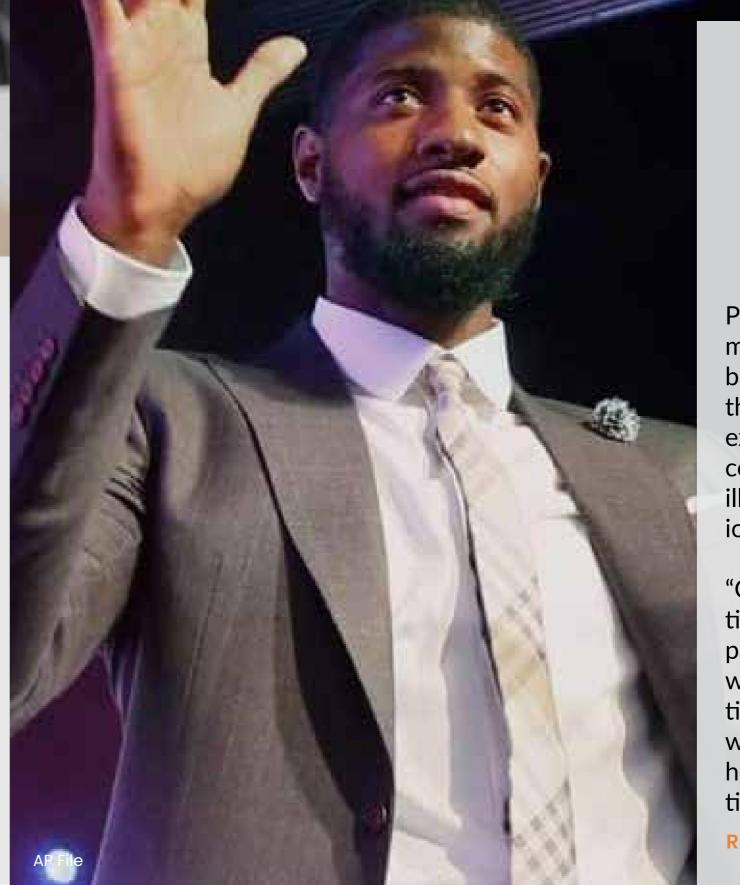


October 30, 2019 | GV Wire

Paul George, a six-time NBA All-Star and 2016 Olympic gold medalist, will have his No. 24 jersey retired at the Fresno State basketball team's regular-season home opener against Winthrop on Nov. 10. "We are proud to honor Paul George for his exemplary contributions to the game of basketball, both while competing as a student-athlete at Fresno State and during his illustrious ongoing career in the NBA," said Fresno State Athletic Director Terry Tumey.

"One of our goals as a Department is to connect our rich tradition with our promising future by honoring the legends of our past appropriately. There will be more recognitions to come, as we have so many great former Bulldogs out there, but this particular opportunity is all about celebrating Paul George and his wonderful achievements." Said George: "I am humbled by the honor of having my jersey retired by Fresno State. I loved my time there and am so appreciative of the staff and the fans...

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WALTERS: NEWSOM NOW OWNS THE WILDFIRE AND PG&E CRISIS

October 30, 2019 | Dan Walters, CalMatters

The careers of political executives — presidents, governors and big-city mayors — are often defined, fairly or not, by how they respond to crises. Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War, Franklin Roosevelt and the Great Depression, John Kennedy and the Cuban missile crisis and Jimmy Carter and the Iranian hostage seizure are examples. There are also telling examples among Cali-

Just months into his governorship, he was confronted with still another spate of fierce wildfires and the bankruptcy of the nation's largest investor-owned utility, Pacific Gas and Electric. PG&E's wind-blown transmission lines apparently caused some of the biggest fires, leading to enormous damage claims.

fornia's recent governors. Pat Brown's absence from the state when the Watts riots erupted in 1965 doomed his bid for a third term and son Jerry Brown's clumsy response to a Mediterranean fruit fly infestation in 1980 likewise undermined his hopes for a U.S. Senate seat. Pete Wilson's decisive management of nat-

ural and human-caused calamities in the early 1990s helped him win a second term. But his successor, Gray Davis, fumbled an energy crisis a decade later, and was recalled. When Jerry Brown returned to the governorship in 2011, he was much older and more circumspect. He dealt adroitly with the near-collapse of the Oroville Dam in 2017 — making sure that those managing the dam and the evacuations had ample resources and avoiding grandstanding. He replicated that quiet approach when wildfires erupted, including one that wiped out the town of Paradise last year.

And then there is Gavin Newsom.

Newsom Loves the Limelight

Just months into his governorship, he was confronted with still another spate of fierce wildfires and the bank-ruptcy of the nation's largest investor-owned utility, Pacific Gas and Electric. PG&E's wind-blown transmis-

sion lines apparently caused some of the biggest fires, leading to enormous damage claims. Newsom has re-

jected Brown's diffident example in favor of a high-profile commander-in-chief approach, with personal appearances at command centers and fire refugee sites and multiple news

"I own this. I've been in office now nine months. My Public Utilities Commission, which has new leadership as of a few weeks ago, owns this." — Gov. Gavin Newsom

conferences and media interviews. "I own this," Newsom told Capital Public Radio. "I've been in office now nine months. My Public Utilities Commission, which has new leadership as of a few weeks ago, owns this." One shouldn't be surprised. Newsom loves the limelight, loves making bold gestures and loves the sound of his own voice. However, this is a very complex crisis, involving decades of expanding human habitation in fire-prone areas, climate change, a liability law that's unworkably simplistic, the proper role of a state-regulated utility and other factors too numerous to list.

Changing Ownership Does Not Change the Essential Conflict

Politicians criticize PG&E for shutting off service when fire danger rises, causing inconvenience to customers, but then denounce the company for not acting sooner when fire erupts — all the while ignoring the fact that their laws and Public Utilities Commission decrees dictate much of what the utility does. When PG&E shut down service in fire-prone areas earlier in the month, Newsom was quick to complain. "What has occurred in the last 48 hours is unacceptable," Newsom said. "We are seeing the scale and scope of something that no state in the 21st Century should experience." After fire broke out in Sonoma County, perhaps due to a PG&E line downed by very high winds, Newsom again denounced the company. "I have a message for PG&E: Your years and years of greed. Years and years of...

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LYFT, UBER WILL ASK **CALIFORNIA VOTERS TO BLOCK NEW LAW**

October 30, 2019 | AP News

SACRAMENTO — Some of the country's largest ride-sharing companies announced a ballot initiative Tuesday that would let them continue to treat drivers as independent contractors while also guaranteeing them a minimum wage and money for health insurance. The Legislature enacted AB 5 this year requiring ride-sharing companies to treat drivers as employees, which would let them form a union and entitle them to benefits like a minimum wage and workers compensation.

But the initiative proposed Tuesday would exempt ride-sharing companies from the law. If passed by voters, it would supersede the Legislature's action and any similar ordinances passed by local governments. It also prevents lawmakers from passing another law to block it. The proposal will only get on the ballot in November 2020 if supporters can gather roughly 660,000 signatures from registered voters. Uber...

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CONGRESSWOMAN'S EXIT PROMPTS QUESTION OF EQUITY AMID SCANDAL

Protect
App-Based Drivers
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October 28, 2019 | AP News

The resignation of a female Democratic congresswoman over a consensual, sexual relationship with a campaign aide has sparked questions about whether women are held to higher standards in public life. At the center of the controversy is Katie Hill, a first-term lawmaker from California and a rising Democratic Party star. In a video released Monday, Hill said she was stepping down because she was "fearful of what might come next" following the online publication of explicit pictures that outed her relationship with a female staffer.

Sex scandals are nothing new in national politics and have mostly centered on men, some of whom have weathered the controversy and gone on to have successful careers. One of

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Hill's congressional colleagues, Republican Rep. Duncan Hunter of California, is running for reelection despite being...

October 30, 2019 | AP News

SAN FRANCISCO — Twitter is banning all political advertising from its service, saying social media companies give advertisers an unfair advantage in proliferating highly targeted, misleading messages.

"While internet advertising is incredibly powerful and very effective for commercial advertisers, that power brings significant risks to politics, where it can be used to influence votes to affect the lives of millions," Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey said Wednesday in a series of tweets announcing the new policy. Facebook has taken fire since it disclosed earlier in October that it will not fact-check ads by politicians or their

campaigns, which could allow them to lie freely. CEO Mark Zuckerberg told Congress last week that politicians have the right to free speech on Facebook. The issue suddenly arose in September when Twitter, along with Facebook and Google, refused to remove a misleading video ad from President Donald Trump's campaign that targeted former Vice President Joe Biden, a leading Democratic presidential candidate.

In response, Democratic Sen. Elizabeth Warren, another presidential hopeful, ran her own ad on Facebook taking aim at Zuckerberg. The ad falsely claimed that Zuckerberg endorsed President Donald Trump for re-election...

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DEMOCRATS PUSH IMPEACHMENT RULES PACKAGE THROUGH HOUSE

October 31, 2019 | AP News

WASHINGTON — Democrats rammed a package of ground rules for their impeachment inquiry of President Donald Trump through a sharply divided House Thursday, the chamber's first formal vote in a fight that could stretch into the 2020 election year. The vote was 232-196, with all Republicans against the resolution and two Democratic defectors joining them. The vote laid down the rules as lawmakers transition from weeks of closed-door interviews with witnesses to public hear-

"What is at stake in all this is nothing less than our democracy." — House Speaker Nancy Pelosi ings and ultimately to possible votes on whether to recommend Trump's removal from office. The action also took on more

than technical meaning, with each party aware that the impeachment effort looms as a defining issue for next year's presidential and congressional campaigns. Democrats spoke of lawmakers' duty to defend the Constitution, while Republicans cast the process as a skewed attempt to railroad a president whom Democrats have detested since before he took office. "What is at stake in all this is nothing less than our democracy," said House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif. Underscoring her point, she addressed the House with a poster of the American flag beside her and began her remarks by reading the opening lines of the preamble to the Constitution.

Likely to Take Weeks Before the House Decides Whether to Vote on Impeaching Trump

House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., said Trump had done nothing impeachable and accused Democrats of trying to remove him "because they are scared they cannot defeat him at the ballot box." Noting that elections are just a year away, he added, "Why do you not trust the people?" No. 3 House GOP leader Steve Scalise, R-La., accused Democrats of imposing "Soviet-style rules," speaking in front of a bright red poster depicting the Kremlin. The investigation is fo-

cused on Trump's efforts to push Ukraine to investigate his Democratic political opponents by withholding military aid and an Oval Office meeting craved by the country's new president. Democrats said the procedures - which give them the ability to curb the president's lawyers from calling witnesses — are similar to rules used during the impeachment proceedings of Presidents Richard Nixon and Bill Clinton. Republicans complained they were skewed against Trump. It is likely to take weeks or more before the House decides whether to vote on actually impeaching Trump. If the House does vote for impeachment, the Senate would hold a trial to decide whether to remove the president from office. Both parties' leaders were rounding up votes as Thursday's roll call approached, with each side eager to come as close to unanimity as possible. Republicans said a solid GOP "no" vote would signal to the Senate that the Democratic push is a partisan crusade against a president they have never liked.

Republicans Said They'd Use the Vote to Target Freshman Democrats

Democrats were also hoping to demonstrate solidarity

from their most liberal elements to their most moderate members. They argued that GOP cohesion against the measure would show

"It will show the other party has become the party of Trump. It's really not the Republican Party any longer." — Rep. Dan Kildee

that Republicans are blindly defending Trump, whatever facts emerge. "It will show the other party has become the party of Trump. It's really not the Republican Party any longer," said Rep. Dan Kildee, D-Mich. Republicans said they'd use the vote to target freshman Democrats and those from districts Trump carried in 2016. They said they would contrast those Democrats' support for the rules with campaign promises to focus on issues voters want to address, not on impeaching Trump. The House GOP's campaign arm sent emails to reporters...

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October 30, 2019 | AP News

WASHINGTON — The Federal Reserve cut its benchmark interest rate Wednesday for the third time this year to try to sustain the economic expansion in the face of global threats. But it hinted that it won't likely cut again this year.

The Fed's move reduces the short-term rate it controls which influences many consumer and business loans — to a range between 1.5% and 1.75%. A statement the Fed released after its latest policy meeting removed a key phrase that it has used since June to indicate a future rate cut is likely. This could mean that Fed officials will prefer to leave rates alone while they assess how the economy fares in the months ahead. The economy is in its 11th year of expansion, fueled by consumer spending and a solid if slightly weakened job market. By cutting rates, the Fed has tried to counter uncertainties heightened by President Donald Trump's trade conflicts, a weaker global economy and a decline in U.S.

The third rate cut of the year has partly reversed the four

manufacturing. hikes that the Fed made last year in response to a strengthening economy. That was before rising global risks led the...

HOUSE RECOGNIZES **ARMENIAN GENOCIDE IN REBUKE TO TURKEY**

October 29, 2019 | AP News

The House of Representatives voted overwhelmingly Tuesday to recognize the century-old mass killings of Armenians by Ottoman Turks as genocide. The move comes as a clear rebuke to NATO ally Turkey in the wake of its invasion of northern Syria. But for members of Congress from the central San Joaquin Valley and other regions of California with large Armenian immigrant populations, the resolution's passage was long-overdue recognition of the 20th century's first genocide.

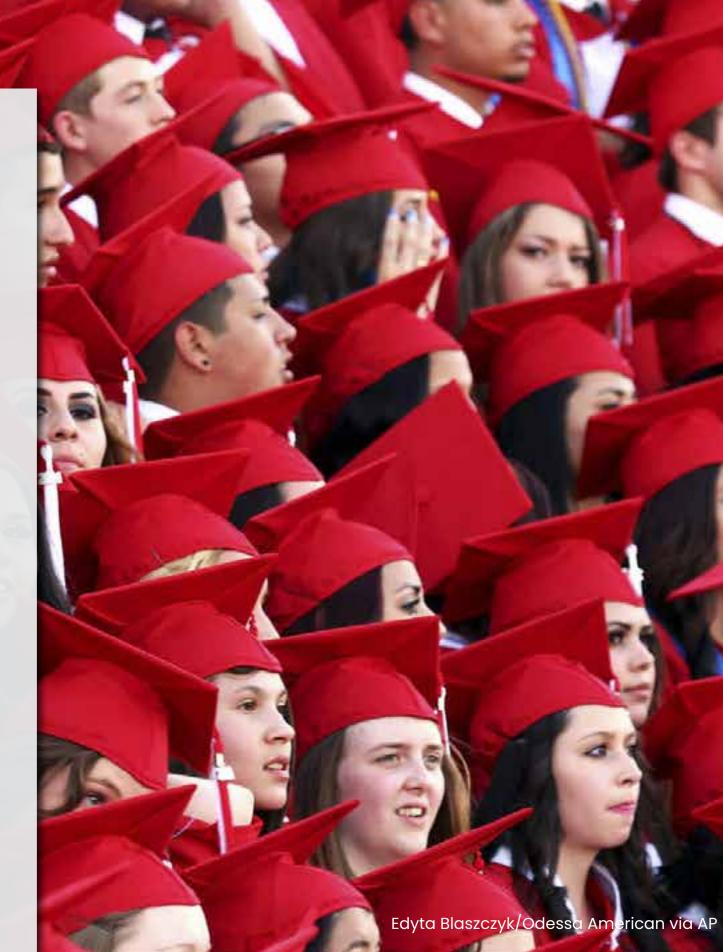
"I'm proud our nation has finally found the courage to acknowledge this tragedy and injustice," said TJ Cox, a Fresno Democratic who co-sponsored the resolution. "Our previous silence was an insult to the Armenian-American community. We must acknowledge acts of war against innocent civilians wherever they occur, to defend human dignity and stop...

STUDENT PERFORMANCE LAGS ON NATION'S REPORT

October 30, 2019 | AP News

ATLANTA — America's eighth graders are falling behind in math and reading, while fourth graders are doing slightly better in reading, according to the latest results from the Nation's Report Card. But there were some exceptions to the findings, which also showed declines among fourth graders in math. Mississippi and the District of Columbia showed gains, along with some other big-city school districts. Nationwide, a little more than a third of eighth graders are proficient in reading and math.

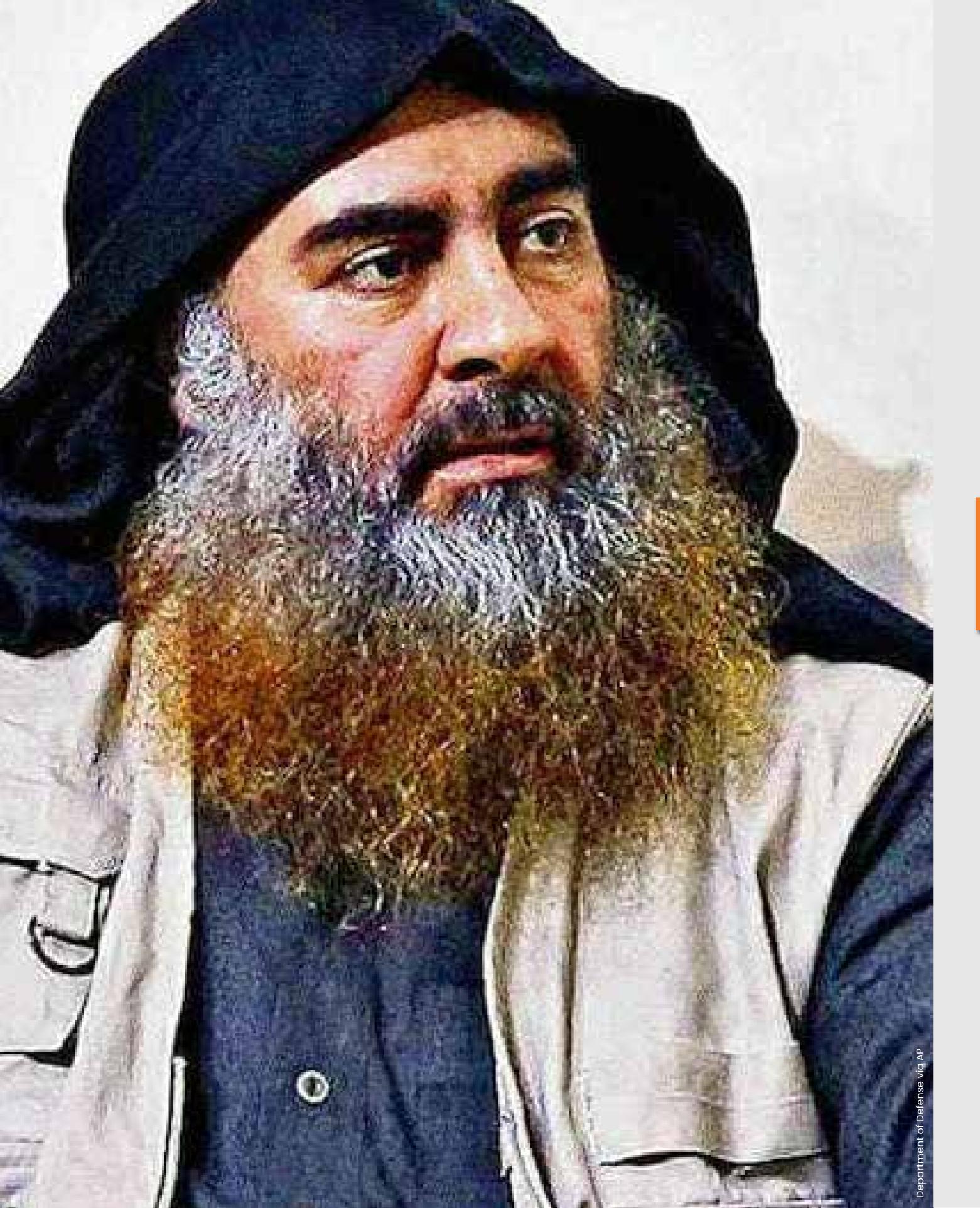
About a third of fourth graders are proficient in reading, while more than 40% of fourth graders are proficient in math. "This country is in a student achievement crisis, and over the past decade it has continued to worsen, especially for our most vulnerable students," Education Secretary Betsy DeVos said. The decline in both reading and math performance among eighth grade students preparing to enter...



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ISLAMIC STATE GROUP ANNOUNCES SUCCESSOR TO AL-BAGHDADI

October 31, 2019 | AP News

BEIRUT — The Islamic State group declared a new leader Thursday after it confirmed the death of its leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi days earlier in a U.S raid in Syria. In its audio release by the IS central media arm, al-Furqan Foundation, a new spokesman for IS identifies the

The new spokesman, named Abu Hamza al-Qurayshi, urged followers to pledge allegiance to the new Caliph and addressed the Americans, saying: "Don't rejoice."

successor as Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurayshi — tracing his lineage, like al-Baghdadi, to the Prophet Muhammad's Quraysh tribe. It provided no other details about al-Qurayshi and it was not immediate-

ly clear who the name was in reference to. The group typically identifies its leaders using noms de guerre that refer to their tribal affiliation and lineage.

Those names often change. The speaker in the audio also confirmed the death of Abu Hassan al-Muhajir, a close aide of al-Baghdadi and a spokesman for the group since 2016. Al-Muhajir was killed in a joint U.S. operation with Kurdish forces in Jarablus in northern Syria on Sunday, hours after al-Baghdadi blew himself up during a U.S. raid in Syria's northwestern Idlib province.

The New Caliph Is Identified as a Scholar

The killings were a double blow to the extremist group, nearly seven months after its territorial defeat in Syria. The new spokesman, named Abu Hamza al-Qurayshi, urged followers to pledge allegiance to the new Caliph and addressed the Americans, saying: "Don't rejoice."

"The Shura Council met immediately after confirming the martyrdom of Sheik Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. The leaders of the Mujahedeen agreed after consultation with their brethren and acting according to the will (of al-Baghdadi) they pledged allegiance to Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurayshi as the new leader of the Believers." The new Caliph is identified as a scholar, a well-known warrior and "emir of war" who has battled American forces and knows "its wars." "So don't rejoice America for the death of Sheik al-Baghdadi," the speaker said. "Don't you know America that the state (IS) today is at the doorstep of Europe and is in Central Africa? It is also expanding and remaining from east to west." The speaker was referencing the slogan IS used at the height of its successes: "Remaining and expanding."



October 29, 2019 | AP News

BEIRUT — Lebanon's prime minister resigned Tuesday, bowing to one of the central demands of anti-government demonstrators shortly after baton-wielding Hezbollah supporters rampaged through the main protest camp in Beirut, torching tents, smashing plastic chairs and chasing away protesters.

The demonstrators later returned to the camp in time to hear the news that Prime Minister Saad Hariri said he was stepping down after hitting a "dead end" in trying to resolve the crisis, which has paralyzed the country for nearly two weeks. The protesters erupted in cheers at the news. The Hezbollah rampage marked a violent turning point in Leba-

non's protests, which have called for the resignation of the government and the overthrow of the political class that has dominated the country since the 1975-1990 civil war. The government is dominated by factions allied with Hezbollah, the most powerful armed group in the country.

Hariri had reluctantly worked with those factions as part of a national unity government that had failed to address an increasingly severe economic and fiscal crisis. "I tried all this time to find an exit and listen to the voice of the people and protect the country from the security and economic dangers," Hariri said. "Today, to be honest with you, I have hit...

AP/Hassan Ammar

US TRAVEL INDUSTRY TO CHINESE TOURISTS: WHAT TRADE WAR?

October 28, 2019 | AP News

WASHINGTON — Washington, D.C., has dangled hotel discounts tied to the Chinese Lunar New Year. Arizona has promoted its outdoor attractions to draw visitors during another popular Chinese holiday. San Francisco has expanded its social media presence on Chinese apps to market year-round travel to millennial tourists.

Across the country, the U.S. tourism industry is trying to counter one of the casualties of the trade war with China that is still raging despite a temporary truce this month: A drop in the flow of affluent Chinese visitors to the U.S. As the conflict has dragged on for 15 months with no meaningful breakthrough, the travel industry is trying to minimize the damage. It has good reason. An enlarged Chinese middle class has become a lucrative market for the U.S. travel industry. Close to 3 million Chinese tourists visited the U.S. last year. And they spent liberally: An estimated average...

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EU GRANTS BREXIT DELAY TO JAN. 31; UK PONDERS NEW ELECTION

October 28, 2019 | AP News

LONDON — The European Union agreed Monday to delay Brexit by three months until Jan. 31, acting to avert a chaotic U.K. departure just three days before Britain was due to become the first country ever to leave the 28-nation bloc. The decision was welcomed by politicians in the U.K. and the EU as a temporary respite from Brexit anxiety — but not by British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who said just weeks ago that he would "rather be dead in a ditch" than postpone the U.K.'s leaving date past Oct. 31.

In the end, the choice was not in his hands. The U.K. Parliament forced Johnson to ask for a delay in order to avoid a no-deal Brexit, which would hurt the economies of both Britain and the EU. Johnson is now pushing for an early election as a way of breaking the political impasse. He hopes voters will give his Conservative Party a majority, allowing Johnson to push through the divorce deal he struck with the EU and...

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