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JUNE 5, 2020

**NO RIVER PARK RIOT. JUST  
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GV Wire/David Taub

# NO RIVER PARK RIOT. JUST QUINCY PONDEXTER AND THE COMMUNITY.

June 2, 2020 | David Taub

The most dangerous thing at River Park on Tuesday afternoon was a skateboarder rolling along the sidewalk. As 4 p.m. came and passed, a threatened riot at the shopping center in northeast Fresno never

**"I believe it was somebody's attempt to divide this community. I know for a fact it wasn't part of the NAACP or Black Lives Matter. I believe it was somebody that wanted to create tension in our community. And what we saw as it did just the opposite, it brought people together." — Fresno Police Chief Andy Hall**

materialized. Instead, nearly 100 members of the community joined Fresno police to keep the shopping center and its patrons safe. Rumors circulated online about a violent protest at River Park on Tuesday afternoon to protest the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis. Those rumors were quickly denounced by Fresno's black community, including leaders from the NAACP Fresno State chapter, which had organized a 3,000-strong rally at City Hall on Sunday.

**Related Story: Black Leaders Say Social Media Post Calling for Riots at River Park Is Fake**

**The Community Comes to Protect at River Park**  
Organized by Pastor D.J. Criner, and businessmen Chris Milton and Terrance Frazier, the group met at 3 p.m. in front of Edwards Theater. The gathering included members of the faith community, elected leaders, but mainly community members who didn't want the memory of George Floyd to be destroyed by looters and agitators. Police Chief Andy Hall asked Criner to lead the group in prayer. "Our children's futures matter. So, Father, bless us, Lord. Our color, our black skin, Father God, is important to us because you gave it to us," Criner prayed. "We want to make sure that legacy does not get destroyed by a group of white supremacists." After a meeting in one of the shopping center's community rooms, the group stationed in front of Ruth's Chris Steak House, the gathering spot of the alleged riot. The guardians then

spread out to other areas of River Park to keep watch. Danielle Jones said she's been protesting at events for 30 years. "It's good to see this size of crowd. I'm here to protect businesses," Jones said.

**Pondexter Joins Community**  
NBA veteran and Fresno native Quincy Pondexter volunteered his time to keep his community safe. "Everything is so peaceful and we're trying to keep it that way," Pondexter said. "This is our neighborhood, this where we grew up. We want to be a helping hand and make sure everything stays the course. (We want to be) heard. But at the same time, we want to make sure everything is peaceful and no one hurts our city." Elected officials such as Fresno City Councilmembers Mike Korbassi and Garry Bredefeld and Congressman Jim Costa attended as well.

**Hoaxer Under Investigation**  
Hall said Fresno stood out for its dedication to peaceful protest, while much of the rest of the country has experienced riots and looting. "It's something special going on here. We should embrace it," Hall said. The police chief said that he never put much legitimacy in the riot threats. "I believe it was somebody's attempt to divide this community. I know for a fact it wasn't part of the NAACP or Black Lives Matter," Hall said. "I believe it was somebody that wanted to create tension in our community. And what we saw as it did just the opposite, it brought people together." Hall said the case is under investigation, working with "federal resources." "We believe we have somebody identified. We're still working through it," Hall said. Possible criminal charges include "terrorist threats or other violations or maybe parole or probation." In addition to River Park, Hall said he had...

**"Our children's futures matter. So, Father, bless us, Lord. Our color, our black skin, Father God, is important to us because you gave it to us. We want to make sure that legacy does not get destroyed by a group of white supremacists." — Pastor D.J. Criner**

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## AFTER PROTESTS END, WHAT IS FRESNO'S PATH TO RACIAL EQUALITY AND PROSPERITY?

June 3, 2020 | Bill McEwen

Here's the reality for everyone seeking to remedy Fresno's racial and social inequality: While the death of George Floyd, a handcuffed black man under the knee of a bad white cop in Minneapolis, has ignited a call for community policing and police reform in Fresno, that call can't be answered without a shift in budget priorities.

After the politicians have said (mostly) the right things and acknowledged the suffering of African Americans, and after the furor subsides, the challenge for change advocates will be sustaining their momentum in the difficult city of Fresno budget negotiations ahead — and for years to come. The city budget, which is mostly about preserving bureaucracies and catering to union interests, is where new ideas go to die in Fresno. A city's budget reflects its values. And, Fresno's police budget

has long valued crime suppression over crime prevention and community policing. Will city councilmembers, police chief Andy Hall, and mayor Lee Brand make good on their eloquent words in the wake of Floyd's death and expand community policing in a budget decimated by the COVID-19 shelter-in-place orders?

And, when former police chief Jerry Dyer succeeds Brand in January, will he be able to shift his mindset from heading the police department to leading a diverse city of 530,000 people where more than one in four residents live in poverty? While a greater emphasis on community policing is essential to ending Fresno's "Tale of Two Cities," there is much more to do. For example, will city leaders team with nonprofits and the business community to provide more capital and opportunities...

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## FRESNO MOM'S COVID-19 RECOVERY: FAMILY CALLS IT A MIRACLE

June 3, 2020 | David Taub

As she was discharged from the hospital after two months, emotions overwhelmed Sofia Perez. She saw her two children for the first time since contracting COVID-19. Eight-year-old Kalaya gave her mom a big hug, followed by her son, Siah, 14. Grandparents, aunts, and uncles looked after the children while their mom fought for her life. The 35-year old home-care provider's voice was weak. But, her spirit was strong.

"It feels so good to finally see them and see my family. It gets real lonely," Perez said. "Being here by myself was probably the hardest." As Sofia exited Community Medical Regional Center in downtown Fresno, a line of doctors, nurses and other staff cheered. Faith and family helped Perez pull through. "God, of course, but just being with my family because I missed them," Perez said. Pastor Tirso Gonzales of Life Center Church in Fresno helped counsel the family. "We've just been praying together knowing that God — as we've seen God do miracles before — and we believe that he's a miracle worker. We've been..."

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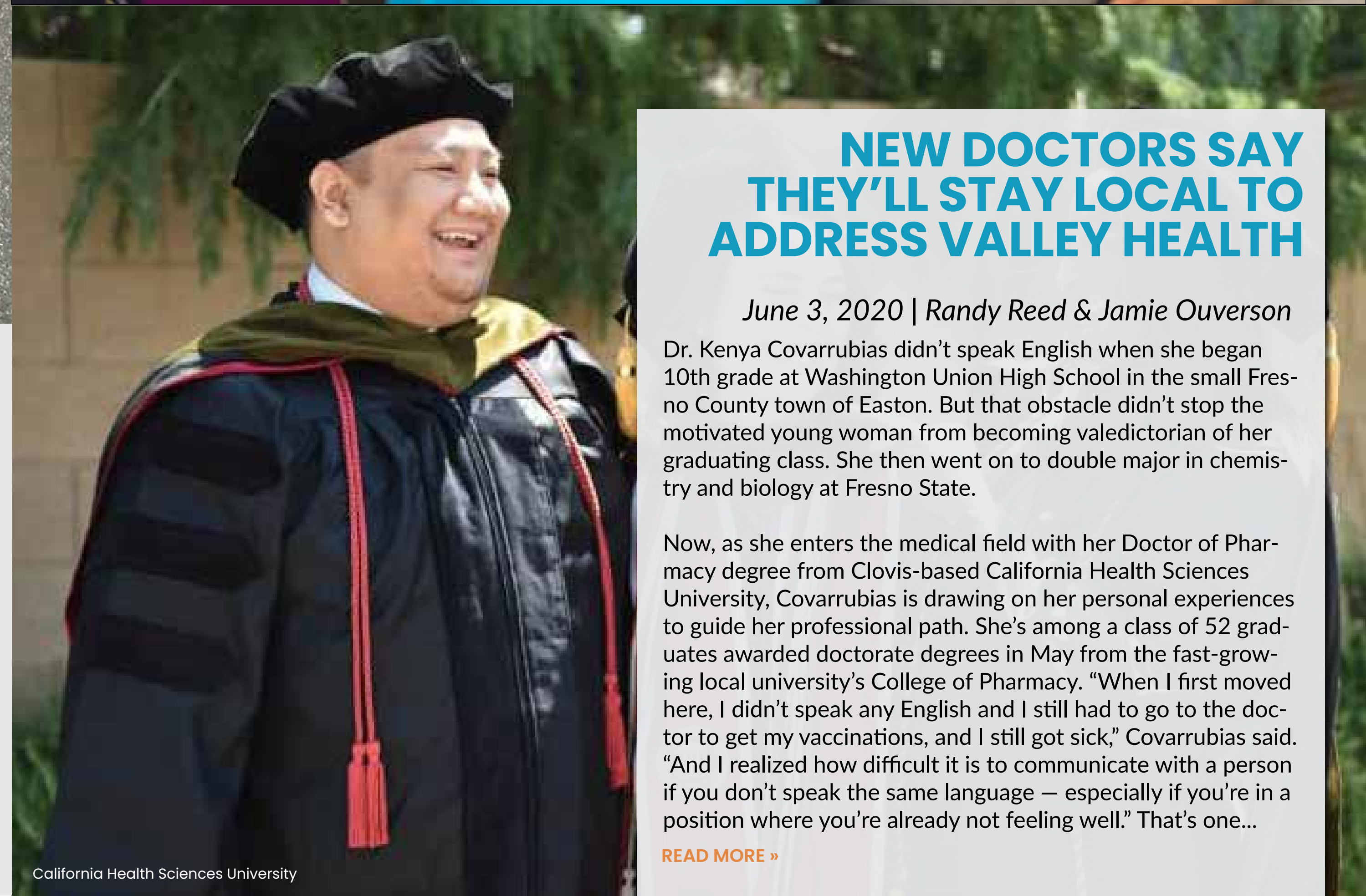
## NEW DOCTORS SAY THEY'LL STAY LOCAL TO ADDRESS VALLEY HEALTH

June 3, 2020 | Randy Reed & Jamie Ouverson

Dr. Kenya Covarrubias didn't speak English when she began 10th grade at Washington Union High School in the small Fresno County town of Easton. But that obstacle didn't stop the motivated young woman from becoming valedictorian of her graduating class. She then went on to double major in chemistry and biology at Fresno State.

Now, as she enters the medical field with her Doctor of Pharmacy degree from Clovis-based California Health Sciences University, Covarrubias is drawing on her personal experiences to guide her professional path. She's among a class of 52 graduates awarded doctorate degrees in May from the fast-growing local university's College of Pharmacy. "When I first moved here, I didn't speak any English and I still had to go to the doctor to get my vaccinations, and I still got sick," Covarrubias said. "And I realized how difficult it is to communicate with a person if you don't speak the same language — especially if you're in a position where you're already not feeling well." That's one...

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# BIPARTISAN DRUMBEAT GROWS FOR NEWSOM TO DELAY LAW HURTING ‘MILLENNIALS, COMMUNITIES OF COLOR’

June 3, 2020 | Jim Jakobs

A growing number of California legislators have asked Gov. Gavin Newsom to delay the implementation of a law that critics say will drive up home prices and discriminates against the poor and people of color. The opposition to Senate Bill 743 is bipartisan and includes Senators and Assemblymembers from all regions of the state. In addition, a San Francisco attorney filed a motion Tuesday seeking a preliminary injunction to block the law on behalf of residents in San Bernardino County. SB

**“We bring to your attention a regulation that we believe will dramatically impact the ability for many Californians, including millennials and communities of color, in particular, to purchase a home. ...” — bipartisan letter to Gov. Newsom from 20 state lawmakers**

743 goes into effect on July 1. “The challenged regulations make California’s notoriously expensive housing even more expensive, and were adopted in violation of the bedrock civil rights protections in the California and federal Constitutions, as well as environmental, transportation and housing

laws,” stated the motion filed by attorney Jennifer A. Hernandez of Holland & Knight LLP.

**Related Story: How Much You Drive Soon Will Dictate the Price of a New Home**

Democratic Sen. Anna Caballero Leads Delay Effort  
A total of 20 Senators and Assemblymembers signed a law sent to Newsom seeking the delay. Sen. Anna Caballero, a Salinas Democrat, is leading the effort to push back the law for two years. The law, which was passed in 2013, changes how developer fees to mitigate the transportation impacts of new development are calculated. With a goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, SB 743 uses a Vehicle Miles Traveled formula to measure the impacts of new development. The fees are used to fund vanpools, ride-sharing programs, and mass-transit passes. Critics say that the law is an attempt to force new homebuyers out of cars and into

mass transit — or into high-rise buildings in big cities. Under the existing method, projects are charged a fee based on how much traffic congestion is created. Thus far, the Newsom administration has said the July 1 implementation sticks.

**Related Story: Latest State ‘Green’ Edict Discriminates Against Minorities:**

## Letter to Newsom

VMT opponents say that the formula puts an unfair burden on rural areas, where workers often have to drive many more miles to their jobs than residents in big cities do. “The highest costs imposed by the VMT regulation (are) in areas farther away from job centers. This is where housing can be produced at the lowest cost, and is the primary source of housing for low and middle-class Californians,” the letter said.

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The lawmakers asking for the delay also cited the uncertainties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. They are asking for the law to be reworked during a two-year implementation delay. “During the COVID-19 health crisis, which has already produced dramatic reductions in VMT, we believe that you should pause this regulation for cities and counties until a more equitable solution can be achieved. Therefore, we respectfully request that you extend the implementation of the VMT regulation for two years.”

## Preliminary Injunction Filed Against VMT

Hernandez represents a group called “The Two Hundred.” She, too, cited the pandemic as a reason to...

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June 3, 2020 | AP News

SACRAMENTO — More than 2,400 California National Guard soldiers toting military assault rifles are on the streets and authorities say that has allowed police officers to crack down on the rampant vandalism and thievery that scarred the first several days of demonstrations.

While the vast majority of protesters are peaceful, there have been violent clashes with police in Los Angeles, Sacramento, the San Francisco Bay Area and other cities. Following a weekend that saw hundreds of businesses damaged, Sacramento received 500 Guard members on Monday, instituted a curfew and had a much calmer night. “The National

Guard are not playing a proactive law enforcement role,” said Officer Karl Chan, a spokesman for Sacramento police. “They are guarding, and we’re using them to guard critical infrastructure to free up our officers to respond to incidents of a critical nature — vandalism, looting, things like that.”

It was much the same in Los Angeles, where soldiers have been deployed since early Sunday after the city’s 10,000 officers found themselves unable to stop vandals and thieves from targeting officers and ravaging businesses. Police vehicles were burned and windows on businesses smashed and the goods inside pillaged. Los Angeles Police Chief Michel...

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## WESTLANDS AGAIN IS EYEING SAN JOAQUIN RIVER WATER

June 4, 2020 | SJV Water

Westlands Water District sent shockwaves through the Central Valley water world recently after it alerted several districts that it intends to apply for rights to flood flows on the San Joaquin River. A previous attempt by Westlands to get rights to San Joaquin River water 20 years ago ignited a ferocious east-west battle in the valley that ended in failure for Westlands and left-east side farmers with a bitter taste and lingering suspicions.

This time around is different, said Tom Birmingham, general manager of the giant Westlands district, which covers most of western Fresno County. While he expects news of Westlands’ intent to apply for flood water on the San Joaquin River to scratch at the scar of that old fight, he vowed that no existing water users would lose a drop of what they have now. “This application is significantly different,” Birmingham said in reference to Westlands’ attempt to get river water back in 2000, which could have taken water from...

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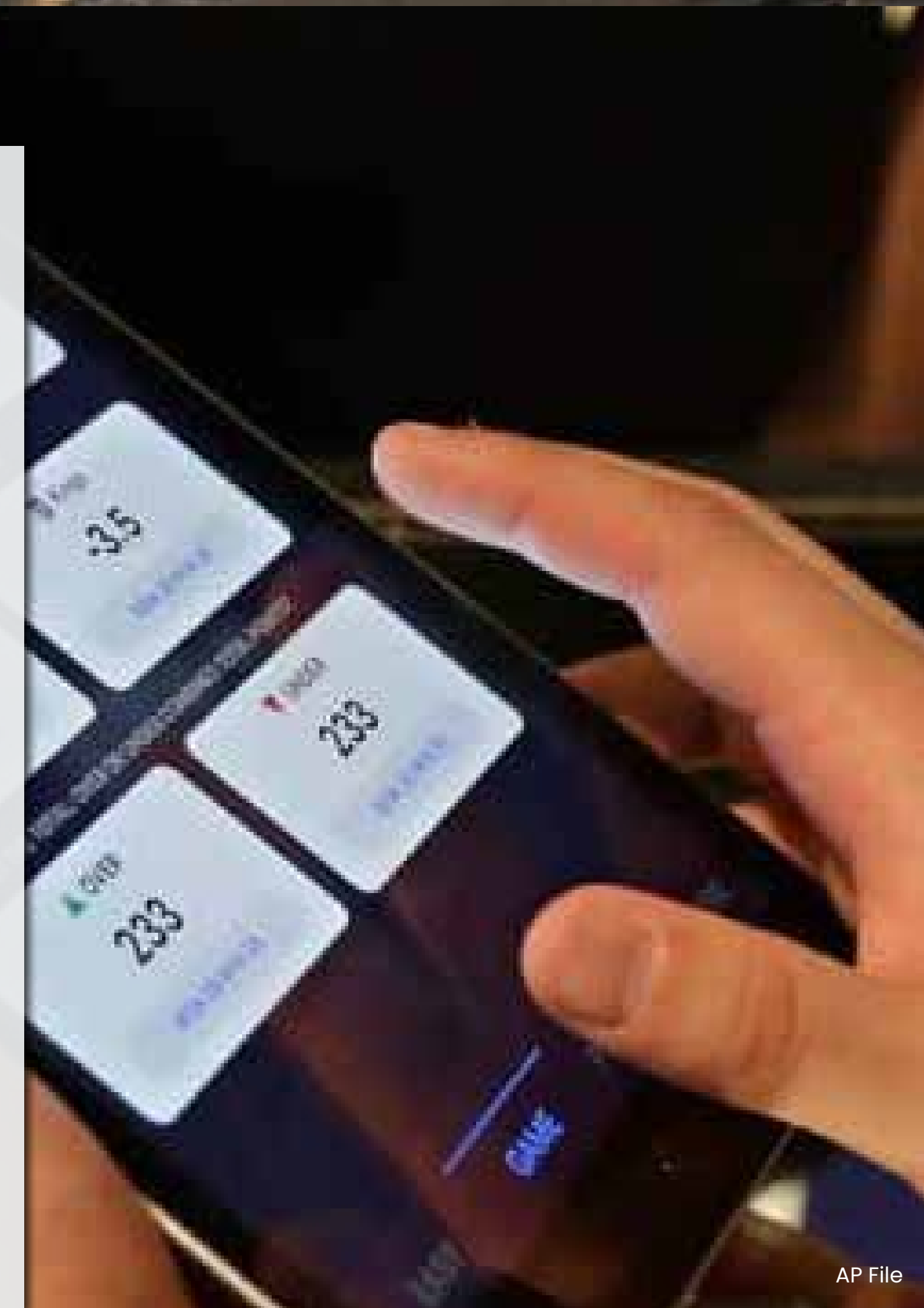
## LEGAL CALIFORNIA SPORTS BETTING CLEARS KEY HURDLE

June 2, 2020 | Bill McEwen

The odds improved Tuesday that California voters will have their say on legalizing sports betting on the November 2020 ballot. A proposal from state Sen. Bill Dodd (D-Napa) and Assemblymember Adam Gray (D-Merced) to generate hundreds of millions of dollars with legalized sports betting cleared a key committee Tuesday. “The legalization of sports wagering gives California an opportunity to provide much-needed revenue to our state during tough economic times,” Sen. Dodd said.

“Because sports betting will continue to occur regardless of its legality. A vote for my bill is a vote to regulate the industry, to protect consumers, and to ensure California gets its fair share. I’ll be working with stakeholders as we continue to refine and advance the measure through the legislative process.” Said Gray: “Illegal sports wagering goes on every day unregulated and untaxed in California. Legalized sports wagering will generate hundreds of millions of dollars for vital services in our most vulnerable communities.” Under the proposal, tribal...

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AP/Robert F. Bukaty

# U.S. PROTESTS LARGE BUT PEACEFUL AFTER NEW CHARGES IN FLOYD CASE

June 4, 2020 | AP News

MINNEAPOLIS — Demonstrations across the U.S. to condemn racism and police abuses remained large but mostly without the violence of previous nights on the eve of a Thursday memorial service for George Floyd that kicks off a series of events to mourn the man whose death empowered a national movement. The calmer protests followed a decision by prosecutors to charge three more police officers and file a new, tougher charge against the officer at the center of the case. The most serious new charge Wednesday was an accusation of second-degree murder against Minneapolis Police officer Derek Chauvin, who was caught on video pressing his knee to Floyd's neck.

The three other officers at the scene were charged for the first time with aiding and abetting second-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter. If convicted, they could be sentenced to up to four decades in prison. The move punctuated an unprecedented week in

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modern American history, in which largely peaceful protests took place in communities of all sizes but were rocked by bouts of violence, including deadly attacks on officers, rampant thefts and arson in some places. In Minneapolis alone, more than 220 buildings were damaged or burned, with property damage topping \$55 million, city officials said.

Nationwide, more than 10,000 people have been arrested in connection with unrest, an Associated Press tally shows. More than a dozen deaths have been reported, though the circumstances in many cases are still being sorted out. Floyd's name has become a rallying

cry in other countries, too, unleashing protests against police violence and racial injustice. In the U.S., protests were still big, but largely peaceful, and most police forces kept a mainly hands-off policy, even after curfews took effect. NBA stars Steph Curry and Klay Thompson marched with protesters in Oakland. The Duchess of Sussex, the former Meghan Markle, told high school graduates in Los Angeles in a virtual address that "the only wrong thing to say is to say nothing, because George Floyd's life mattered." Some demonstrators lay down to represent the amount of time a white police officer pressed a knee into Floyd's neck while he pleaded for air.

**An overpowering security force — including officers from the FBI Hostage Rescue Team, the Secret Service, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Bureau of Prisons and, according to a senior defense official, at least 2,200 National Guard soldiers — was out in force Wednesday as thousands of peaceful protesters demonstrated in the nation's capital.**

## Chauvin Was Initially Charged With Third-Degree Murder and Second-Degree Manslaughter, Counts That Still Stand

The first of three memorial gatherings for the man whose name has been chanted by hundreds of thousands of people was planned for Thursday afternoon in Minneapolis, with the Rev. Al Sharpton and family attorney Ben Crump speaking. Floyd's body will then travel to Raeford, North Carolina, where he was born 46 years ago, for a public viewing and private family service Saturday.

And there will be a large service Monday in Houston, where Floyd spent most of his life. That will include addresses from Sharpton, Crump, and the Rev. Remus E. Wright, the family pastor. Former Vice President Joe Biden, the presumptive Democratic presidential...

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# PENTAGON-TRUMP CLASH BREAKS OPEN OVER MILITARY AND PROTESTS

June 4, 2020 | AP News

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump’s Pentagon chief shot down his idea of using troops to quell protests across the United States, then reversed course on pulling part of the 82nd Airborne Division off standby in an extraordinary clash between the U.S. military and its commander in chief.

Both Trump and Defense Secretary Mark Esper also drew stinging, rare public criticism from Trump’s first defense secretary, Jim Mattis, in the most public pushback of Trump’s presidency from the men he put at the helm of the world’s most powerful military. Mattis’ rebuke Wednesday followed

Trump’s threats to use the military to “dominate” the streets where Americans are demonstrating following the death of George Floyd, a black man who died when a white police officer pressed his knee into his neck for several minutes. Trump had urged governors to call out the National Guard to contain protests that turned violent and warned that he could send in active duty military forces if they did not.

Esper angered Trump when he said he opposed using military troops for law enforcement, seemingly taking the teeth out of the president’s threat to use the Insurrection Act. Esper...

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AP/Wilfredo Lee

## GOP RECKONS WITH POLARIZING CANDIDATES AMID CIVIL UNREST

June 4, 2020 | AP News

WASHINGTON — The Republican Party is facing a reckoning over some of its most divisive candidates. So far the results are mixed, and that’s dicey for the GOP as a country shuddering from coast-to-coast civic unrest hurtles toward November elections. Republican leaders looking to broaden the party’s appeal were buoyed Tuesday when Iowans refused to renominate Rep. Steve King, known for racially incendiary comments.

But Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, their surest bet for derailing a Republican immigration hard-liner who might cost them a Senate seat from deep-red Kansas, definitively skipped that race on Monday. And most seriously, President Donald Trump has exhibited little empathy as he’s taunted demonstrators as “thugs,” accused governors of being “weak” on protesters and threatened to deploy the military to their states. His tweets like “when the looting starts, the...

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## 1.9 MILLION SEEK JOBLESS AID EVEN AS REOPENINGS SLOW LAYOFFS

June 4, 2020 | AP News

WASHINGTON — Nearly 1.9 million people applied for U.S. unemployment benefits last week, evidence that many employers are still cutting jobs even as the gradual reopening of businesses has slowed the pace of layoffs. The total number of people who are receiving jobless aid rose slightly to 21.5 million, down from a peak of nearly 25 million two weeks ago but still at a historically high level.

It shows that scattered rehiring is offsetting only some of the ongoing layoffs with the economy mired in a recession. Thursday’s latest weekly number from the Labor Department is still more than double the record high that prevailed before the viral outbreak. Still, the number of people who applied for benefits last week marked the ninth straight decline since applications spiked in mid-March. The job market meltdown that was triggered by the coronavirus may have bottomed out as more companies call at least some of...

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AP File





# THOUSANDS IN LONDON DECRY RACIAL INJUSTICE, POLICE VIOLENCE

June 3, 2020 | AP News

LONDON — Thousands of people demonstrated in London on Wednesday against police violence and racial injustice following the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis, which has set off days of unrest in the United States. Chanting “Black lives matter,” thousands gathered in Hyde Park, central London’s biggest open space and a traditional protest venue. Many of them passed through barriers at the park and marched through the streets, blocking traffic. There were no signs of violence,

**“Black lives have always mattered. We have always been important. We have always meant something. We have always succeeded regardless and now is the time. I ain’t waiting.” — actor John Boyega**

Nigerian parents and grew up in south London’s Peckham neighborhood, pleaded tearfully for demonstrators to stay peaceful.

“Because they want us to mess up, they want us to be disorganized, but not today,” he said. Boyega recalled the case of Stephen Lawrence, an 18-year-old black man from southeast London who was stabbed to death in 1993 as he waited for a bus. The case against his attackers collapsed in 1996, and a government report cited institutional racism on the part of the London police force as a key factor in its failure to thoroughly investigate the killing. “Black lives have always mattered,” Boyega said. “We have always been important. We have always meant something. We have always succeeded regardless and now is the time. I ain’t waiting.” Police appeared to keep a low profile during the demonstration and the ensuing marches. Earlier, the U.K.’s most senior police officer said she was “appalled” by Floyd’s death and “horrified” by the subsequent violence in U.S.

cities. Floyd died May 25 after a white Minneapolis officer, Derek Chauvin, pressed his knee on the handcuffed black man’s neck for several minutes.

## Many Also Pointed to Issues Closer to Home

“I do want to reassure people in London ... that we will continue with our tradition of policing, using minimum force necessary, working as closely as we possibly can with our communities,” Metropolitan Police Commissioner Dame Cressida Dick told the London Assembly police and crime committee. “Met officers and staff are highly professional, they’re very well trained, they’re very restrained and they’re also very, very highly scrutinized, something we don’t flinch from at all,” Dick said. While the London protesters expressed solidarity with Americans protesting Floyd’s death, many also pointed to issues closer to home. “Racism is a pandemic,” said one placard at the London demonstration. Other protests are taking place around the world, including in Cape Town, South Africa, and in Reykjavík, Iceland.

**“The U.K. police service has massive issues with discrimination ... and I really do think now is the time to confront it.” — Owen West, a former police chief superintendent**

In Cape Town, about 20 people gathered at the gates of the parliament complex and held up signs with the slogans of “Black Lives Matter” and “Justice 4 George Floyd and Collins Khosa.” Khosa is died a month ago after being confronted by soldiers and police in Johannesburg’s Alexandra township. Family members say he died hours after he was choked and beaten. A South African army investigation cleared the soldiers of wrongdoing, but lawyers for Khosa’s family say they will challenge those findings. The London demonstrators appeared to ignore coronavirus social distancing guidelines in the U.K., where people have been told to stay 2 meters (6 feet) apart. Some of them carried placards saying...

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## SCIENTIST DEFENDS SWEDEN'S HOTLY DEBATED VIRUS STRATEGY

June 3, 2020 | AP News

STOCKHOLM — Sweden's chief epidemiologist on Wednesday defended his country's controversial coronavirus strategy, which avoided a lockdown but resulted in one of the highest per capita COVID-19 death rates in the world. Anders Tegnell of the Public Health Agency denied that "the Swedish strategy was wrong and should be changed. That's not the case."

"We still believe that our strategy is good, but there is always room for improvement. ... You can always get better at this job," Tegnell told a news conference in Stockholm. Sweden has stood out among European nations and the world for

the way it has handled the pandemic, not shutting down the country or the economy like other nations but relying on citizens' sense of civic duty. Swedish authorities have advised people to practice social distancing, but schools, bars and restaurants have been kept open the entire time.

Only gatherings of more than 50 people have been banned. Tegnell's statement to reporters came after more contrite comments earlier in the day to Swedish radio in which he said "I think there is potential for improvement in what we have done in Sweden, quite clearly." Asked if the country's high death toll has made him reconsider his unique...

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## PALESTINIAN AMERICANS DRAW STARK COMPARISONS OF US AND ISRAELI USES OF FORCE

June 4, 2020 | [Middle East Eye](#)

The angry scenes that have erupted in at least three dozen US cities since the police killing of George Floyd last Monday have activists and Palestinian Americans across the country drawing stark comparisons with Israeli tactics. US authorities – police and national guard – have tear-gassed peaceful gatherings, mass arrested protesters, implemented curfews, detained lawmakers and indiscriminately targeted journalists, all of which are tactics commonly used by Israel against Palestinians.

As some of the protests have turned violent, especially late at night, with some demonstrators burning police cars, vandalising buildings and looting stores, the debate over language used to describe these events has also been similar to discourse in the Middle East. Over the objections of most Palestinians, Israeli authorities routinely use the term "riots" to describe even small Palestinian protests. While critics in the US have used that word to describe the burning...

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## HOW CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC IS BRINGING A RETURN TO FEUDALISM

June 4, 2020 | [USA Today](#)

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted many things, but also accelerated America's descent into a new form of feudalism. The preexisting conditions of extreme economic concentration, inequality and reduced social mobility already were painfully evident before, but the pandemic has made them considerably worse. Pestilence has often shaped societies, most notably in the Middle Ages, where populations were repeatedly decimated, particularly among the urban poor.

Disease undermined societies and economies, obliterating trade and nurturing the influence of prelates linking pestilence to human sinfulness. Even as the upper classes, as today, departed disease-plagued cities, they also looked to consolidate control of now abandoned holdings. As in the Middle Ages, some classes have emerged stronger from the pandemic. Clear winners have bolstered the technology oligarchs' – the modern version of the medieval aristocracy...

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