



WEEKLY DIGEST  
JUNE 19, 2020

**POLICE**

**CHORUS GROWS LOUDER  
TO DEFUND FRESNO POLICE  
DEPARTMENT »**

**PG&E TO PLEAD GUILTY TO DEATHS  
FROM CALIFORNIA WILDFIRE »**

**SUPREME COURT REJECTS TRUMP  
BID TO END PROTECTIONS FOR  
'DREAMERS' »**





GV Wire/Jahz Tello

# LOCAL CHORUS GROWS LOUDER TO DEFUND FRESNO POLICE DEPARTMENT

June 15, 2020 | David Taub

Even before the Fresno City Council discussed the police budget Monday, more than three dozen comments arrived opposed to more spending or calling for reduced funding. Those commenting live during

**"Stop investing in the deaths of our community members and start protecting our lives." — Yenifer Gallegos-Mejia**

the meeting echoed similar sentiments. Fresno Police Chief Andrew Hall listened in as commenters advocated for defunding — and even abolishing — the department following George Floyd's death at the hands of Minneapolis police last month.

#### Public Comments: Defund and Reinvest

More than 50 people spoke to the council, nearly all in favor of some form of defunding. Several of the speakers cited demands made by the Fresno State NAACP last week. They included reducing the police budget from its current 49.1% of the general fund to 45%, banning techniques such as the carotid restraint hold, and increasing accountability and transparency. Mariah Thompson, director of the Central Valley chapter of the National Lawyers Guild called for defunding police. She wasn't sold that community policing was the answer. "Having more cops on the ground means more individual and cop contact, which means more opportunities for people to become in contact with the cartel-state and get arrested and get cited," Thompson said. "And this is all resource-intensive. So this means more money."

#### Arambula Participates in Meeting

Assemblyman Joaquin Arambula (D-Fresno) called in, highlighting bills he has supported in Sacramento, including standards for using deadly force and allowing voters to remove the state's ban on affirmative action. "It is now time for us to consider more expansive, systemic change," Arambula said via Zoom. "We see and hear the cry for it all across America, and its time has come as you and we deliberate local and

state budget priorities." Fresno resident Yenifer Gallegos-Mejia had a request for police: "Stop investing in the deaths of our community members and start protecting our lives."

#### Calls for Advance Peace Made

Rev. Simon Biasell of the Woven Community asked for funding for the Advance Peace program, which encourages gang members to give up their lifestyles. Funding for the program in last year's budget was cut by Mayor Lee Brand, who was backed by then-police chief Jerry Dyer. Councilman Nelson Esparza made a motion to spend \$300,000 on Advance Peace. He proposed to use savings from department vacancies on the motion. City Manager Wilma Quan countered that such savings were already accounted for in the budget, and wouldn't be available for such a program. Chief Hall said Mayor Lee Brand is working on a "Fresno-specific version of Advance Peace," but did not release specifics.

**Related Story: What Is Advance Peace? Group's Founder Explains.**

#### Hall Wants to Keep Chokehold for Emergencies

Councilmembers had to wait until after 5:30 p.m. to ask Hall questions. He said his department has met all the criteria in the #8CantWait campaign — eight police reform measures called for by the Fresno State NAACP and other groups. Hall said he has temporarily banned chokeholds and carotid restraint holds. He says, though, he feels it is proper to use it to save the life of a police officer or a citizen. On Thursday, the council will hear a motion to ban it altogether. Gov. Gavin Newsom and California Attorney General Xavier Becerra have called for its removal as a police tactic. Councilwoman Esmeralda Soira asked Hall about police servicing calls for things...

**Hall said he has temporarily banned chokeholds and carotid restraint holds. He says, though, he feels it is proper to use it to save the life of a police officer or a citizen.**

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# FACE MASKS, ONE-WAY HALLWAYS PROPOSED IN FRESNO SCHOOL REOPENING PLAN

June 17, 2020 | Nancy Price

Hallways would be marked with one-way signs, facial masks would be “strongly encouraged/required,” and football player conditioning could begin as soon as Monday under a proposed Fresno Unified schools reopening plan that trustees will consider at tonight’s board meeting.

The plan includes the results of recent surveys showing that parents, students, and staff are pretty much on the same page when it comes to face-to-face versus virtual instruction. Three-fourths of the parents and students and 72% of the staff surveyed said they prefer in-classroom learning “with health and safety rules in place.” Parents who want their children to participate in extra-curricular activities such as football would need to sign liability waivers in the event their child becomes ill with COVID-19 through the activity.

According to the proposed reopening plan, district athletic and co-curricular participants will start workouts next Monday under a three-phase plan. In phase 1, “pods” of students will be limited to no more than 10, and students will start with outside conditioning only.

## Educating Kids with Special Needs

But whereas the plan provides specificity about athletics, there is a noticeable lack of detail about how Fresno Unified will instruct special education students and English learners in the event schools need to move to staggered schedules or close again altogether. The plan says only “Delivery models for SPED and EL Learners” in a section called “Major Decision Considerations.” Parents of special needs children said...

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## FRESNO CONSIDERS PERMANENT BAN ON CAROTID RESTRAINT USE BY POLICE

June 17, 2020 | David Taub

The Fresno City Council will consider immediately outlawing the carotid restraint hold by police at its Thursday meeting. It’s one of several significant items on the council’s meeting agenda:

### Carotid Restraint Ban

Since the death of George Floyd on May 25 in Minneapolis, and the subsequent protests nationwide and in Fresno about racism and policing, there has been renewed emphasis on certain police techniques. The Fresno City Council will consider outlawing the carotid restraint hold by police immediately at Thursday’s meeting. “The carotid artery technique has been demonstrated to be one of the most ineffective and most dangerous techniques in police operations,” City Council President Miguel Arias —the resolution’s author — said. “It sends a clear message to officers that this is not a technique that they’re going to utilize on our residents.” Police Chief Andy Hall did not offer a comment, saying through his spokesman that he wants to hear from the public. On June 5, Hall ordered a temporary ban on the use of...

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Police Magazine



Fresno Police Department

## SUSPECT WRITES AN APOLOGY AFTER FRESNO POLICE TRACK DOWN STOLEN LITTLE LEAGUE

June 18, 2020 | Jim Jakobs

A bit of digital sleuthing by the victim of a Little League building break-in helped police track down a couple of suspects. The ensuing events involved some nifty Facebook work, some boots on the ground police work, an American flag, and a handwritten apology letter from one of the suspects.

### Two Snack Shack Thefts

Southeast Fresno Police Detective Alberto Avelar tells GV Wire<sup>SM</sup> the first of two break-ins happened on Sunday, June 7 at Sunnyside Lonestar Little League’s field near Clovis Ave. and E. Kings Canyon. Avelar says police arrived and discovered someone had cut the lock off a gate and broke into the snack shack. “Somebody broke into it and stole just about everything that was in there,” said Avelar. “A hot dog warmer, a pizza oven, food warmer, yeti ice chest, all the snacks, all the chips, all the sodas, all the Gatorade, all the candy, and an announcer speaker.” A few days later the snack shack was broken into again. The thieves took everything that wasn’t stolen the first time...

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# PG&E TO PLEAD GUILTY TO DEATHS FROM CALIFORNIA WILDFIRE

June 16, 2020 | AP News

SAN RAMON — Pacific Gas & Electric is expected to plead guilty Tuesday to 84 felony counts of involuntary manslaughter during a court hearing in which the nation's largest utility will be confronted with its history of neglect and greed that culminated in a wildfire that killed 85 people and wiped out most of a Northern California town. The hearing before Butte County Superior Court Judge Michael Deems comes nearly three months after PG&E reached a plea agreement in the November

**While Newsom proposed slashing \$14 billion from schools, health care and safety net programs unless the federal government sends funds by July 1, the Legislature's proposal assumes federal funding will arrive — and if it doesn't come by Oct. 1, limits cuts to \$7 billion by drawing on reserves.**

2018 fire that was ignited by its rickety electrical grid that destroyed Paradise, about 170 miles (275 kilometers) northeast of San Francisco. The fire killed 85 people, but prosecutors weren't certain they could prove PG&E was responsible for one of the deaths. The proceeding will unfold as PG&E approaches the

end of a complicated bankruptcy case that the company used to work out \$25.5 billion in settlements to pay for the damages from the fire and others that torched wide swaths of Northern California and killed dozens of others in 2017. The bankruptcy deals include \$13.5 billion earmarked for wildfire victims. A federal judge plans to approve or reject PG&E's plan for getting out of bankruptcy by June 30.

"We want this to be impactful because this can't go on any longer," Butte County District Attorney Mike Ramsey told The Associated Press. "There is going to have to be a sea change in PG&E's method of operation." The hearing will start with a recitation of each felony count while the pictures of all the people who died in the 2018 fire are shown on a large screen, according to Ramsey. The proceedings will continue Wednesday when surviving relatives of those who died in the 2018

wildfire that was dubbed the Camp Fire will be allowed to make statements. More than 20 people plan to appear in the court while others have sent in statements that Ramsey plans to read aloud. The judge will formally sentence PG&E on Thursday or Friday, according to Ramsey.

**The Plea Agreement Also Spares PG&E From Being Placed on Criminal Probation for a Second Time**

The court hearing will be streamed online. Besides the mass killings, PG&E also will plead to one felony count of unlawfully causing a fire. No executives will be charged, leaving no one to imprison for the crimes. PG&E instead will pay a maximum fine of \$3.5 million in addition to \$500,000 to cover the county's costs of the criminal investigation. The plea agreement also spares PG&E from being placed on criminal probation for a second time. The company is in the midst of a five-year probation under the withering supervision of U.S. District Judge William Alsup for a 2010 explosion in its natural gas lines that blew up a neighborhood in San Bruno and killed eight people. The probation lasts until January 2022.

**Lawmakers also want to extend a tax break for low-income workers to include undocumented immigrants with a child under age 6, at a cost of \$65 million. Newsom rejected a similar proposal last year.**

Since filing for bankruptcy early last year, PG&E says it has been dramatically altering a corporate culture that prioritized profits for its shareholders over the safety of the 16 million people who rely on the utility. The company says it is being more vigilant about trimming trees around its power lines and replacing outdated equipment before it crumbles, although Alsup has repeatedly scolded PG&E for not doing even more to ensure its grid doesn't cause more tragedy. As part of a deal with California power regulators, PG&E will...

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## CA HOME SALES FALL TO LOWEST LEVEL SINCE THE GREAT RECESSION, BAY AREA AND COAST SEE BIGGEST DROPS

June 10, 2020 | AP News

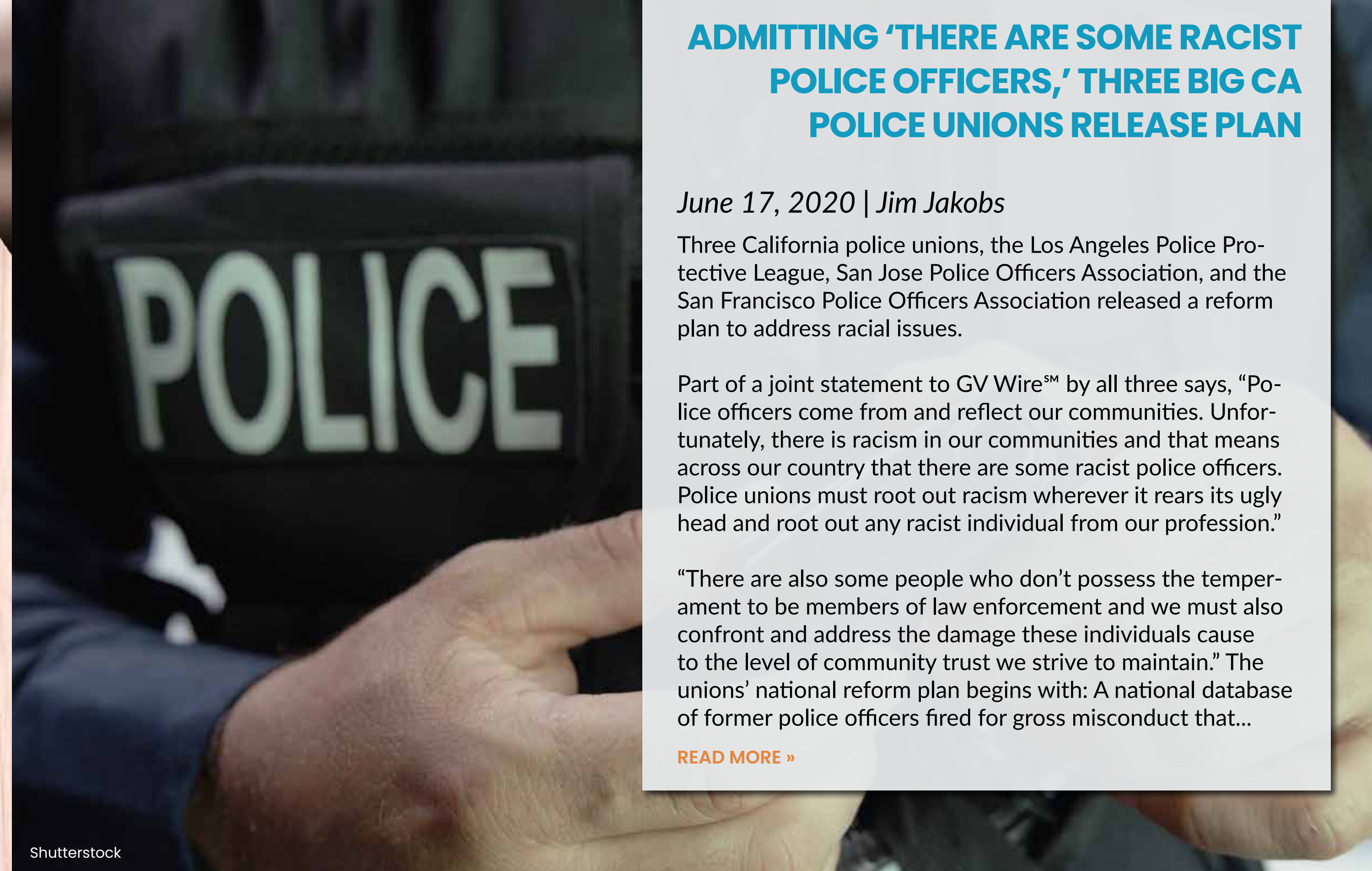
According to the California Association of Realtors, home sales in the state fell to the lowest level since the Great Recession as the housing market suffered the full impact of the coronavirus pandemic in May. CAR's May report shows sales remained below 300,000 for the second straight month.

"The sharp sales drop in May was the steepest we've seen in some time, but there are encouraging signs that show the market is recovering and should continue to improve over the next few months," said 2020 CA. president Jeanne Rad-sick in a news release. "As we predicted, May home sales took the full impact of the coronavirus pandemic as much of

the state remained in lockdown during the past few months and caused three straight months of double-digit sales declines, which we haven't experienced since the Association began reporting monthly home sales in 1979," said CAR economist Leslie Appleton-Young.

The May statewide median price of \$588,070 for existing single-family homes in the state was down 3.0 percent from April and down 3.7 percent from May 2019, when the median price was a revised \$610,940. "With pending home sales up a stunning 67 percent in May, buyer demand is on the upswing amid record-low rates that are making monthly...

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## ADMITTING 'THERE ARE SOME RACIST POLICE OFFICERS,' THREE BIG CA POLICE UNIONS RELEASE PLAN

June 17, 2020 | Jim Jakobs

Three California police unions, the Los Angeles Police Protective League, San Jose Police Officers Association, and the San Francisco Police Officers Association released a reform plan to address racial issues.

Part of a joint statement to GV Wire<sup>SM</sup> by all three says, "Police officers come from and reflect our communities. Unfortunately, there is racism in our communities and that means across our country that there are some racist police officers. Police unions must root out racism wherever it rears its ugly head and root out any racist individual from our profession."

"There are also some people who don't possess the temperament to be members of law enforcement and we must also confront and address the damage these individuals cause to the level of community trust we strive to maintain." The unions' national reform plan begins with: A national database of former police officers fired for gross misconduct that...

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## CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL SPENT \$38M RESPONDING TO PROTESTS

June 17, 2020 | AP News

SACRAMENTO — The California Highway Patrol spent \$38 million responding to recent widespread protests over racial injustice, state officials said Tuesday, bringing state agencies' combined law enforcement costs to \$63 million so far. The new highway patrol tally sent to state lawmakers is on top of \$25 million that Gov. Gavin Newsom's administration last week reported spending to deploy 8,000 National Guard soldiers to aid state and local police during demonstrations following the May 25 death of George Floyd in Minnesota.

CHP officers reported more than 431,000 hours of unanticipated overtime between May 28 and June 11, accounting for the bulk of the cost. Officers were put on 12-hour shifts starting May 29 when CHP Commissioner Warren Stanley declared a "tactical alert" in response to the civil unrest. The CHP's request said it had to act because there were "threats to the immediate health and safety of persons or property throughout the state." "The CHP and the National Guard and that tally...

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# SUPREME COURT REJECTS BID TO END PROTECTIONS FOR 'DREAMERS'

June 18, 2020 | AP News

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court on Thursday rejected President Donald Trump's effort to end legal protections for 650,000 young immigrants, a stunning rebuke to the president in the midst of his reelection campaign. For now, those immigrants retain their protection from deportation and their authorization to work in the United States. The 5-4 outcome, in which Chief Justice John Roberts and the four liberal justices were in the majority, seems certain to elevate the issue in Trump's campaign, given the anti-immigrant rhetoric of his first presidential run in 2016 and immigration restrictions his administration has imposed since then. It was the second big liberal victory at the court this week, following Monday's ruling that it's illegal to fire people because they're gay or transgender. The justices rejected administration arguments that the 8-year-old Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program is illegal and that courts have no role to play in reviewing the decision to end DACA. Trump's first reaction came on

**For now, those immigrants retain their protection from deportation and their authorization to work in the United States.**

Twitter, where he retweeted a comment incorporating a line from Justice Clarence Thomas' dissenting opinion in which Thomas called the ruling "an effort to avoid a politically controversial but legally correct decision." Roberts wrote for the court that the administration did not pursue the end of the program properly.

"We do not decide whether DACA or its rescission are sound policies," Roberts wrote. "We address only whether the agency complied with the procedural requirement that it provide a reasoned explanation for its action. Here the agency failed to consider the conspicuous issues of whether to retain forbearance and what if anything to do about the hardship to DACA recipients."

## DACA Recipients Elated by the Ruling

The Department of Homeland Security can try again, he

wrote. But any new order to end the program, and the legal challenge it would provoke, would take months, if not longer, immigration experts said. The court's four conservative justices dissented. Justice Thomas, in a dissent joined by Justices Samuel Alito and Neil Gorsuch, wrote that DACA was illegal from the moment it was created under the Obama administration in 2012.

**The program grew out of an impasse over a comprehensive immigration bill between Congress and the Obama administration in 2012. President Barack Obama decided to formally protect people from deportation while also allowing them to work legally in the U.S.**

Justice Brett Kavanaugh wrote in a separate dissent that he was satisfied that the administration acted appropriately in trying to end the program. DACA recipients were elated by the ruling. "We'll keep living our lives in the meantime," said Cesar Espinosa, who leads the Houston immigration advocacy group FIEL. "We're going to continue to work, continue to advocate." Espinosa said he got little sleep overnight in anticipation of a possible decision Thursday. In the minutes since the decision was posted, he said his group was "flooded with calls with Dreamers, happy, with that hope that they're going to at least be in this country for a while longer." From the Senate floor, the Democratic leader Chuck Schumer said of the DACA decision, "I cried tears of joy." "Wow," he went on, choking up. "These kids, these families, I feel for them, and I think all of America does."

## Rep. Costa: 'Big Win for Our Dreamers'

"This is (a) big win for our Dreamers. But the fight is not over," said Rep. Jim Costa (D-Fresno). "We must work to pass comprehensive immigration reform so we have a legal process for those who want to stay and continue to contribute to our country in meaningful ways. These young people should not have to live in fear of being ripped away from their families and for many, the only...

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# AP-NORC POLL: SWEEPING CHANGE IN US VIEWS OF POLICE VIOLENCE

AP/Jacquelyn Martin

June 17, 2020 | AP News

DETROIT — A dramatic shift has taken place in the nation's opinions on policing and race, as a new poll finds that more Americans today than five years ago believe police brutality is a very serious problem that too often goes undisciplined and unequally targets black Americans.

The new findings from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research suggest the death of George Floyd and the weeks of nationwide and global protests that followed have changed perceptions in ways that previous incidents of police brutality did not.

About half of American adults now say police violence against the public is a "very" or "extremely" serious problem, up from about a third as recently as September last year. Only about 3 in 10 said the same in July 2015, just a few months after Freddie Gray, a black man, died in police custody in Baltimore.

In the latest poll, roughly 3 in 10 said police violence is a moderately serious problem. Those who say it is not a serious problem has declined from a third in 2015 to about 2 in 10 today. Floyd, a black man, died in late May after a...

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AP/Courtney Dittmar

## AS PROTESTS RAGE, CHANGES FOR AUNT JEMIMA, UNCLE BEN'S BRAND

June 17, 2020 | AP News

The owner of the Uncle Ben's brand of rice says the brand will "evolve" in response to concerns about racial stereotyping. The announcement Wednesday arrived hours after Quaker Oats said it was retiring its Aunt Jemima brand of syrup and pancake mixes. Caroline Sherman, a spokeswoman for Mars, which owns Uncle Ben's, says the company is listening to the voices of consumers, especially in the black community, and recognizes that now is the right time to evolve the brand, including its visual identity.

Quaker Oats is retiring the 131-year-old Aunt Jemima brand, saying the company recognizes the character's origins are "based on a racial stereotype." Quaker, which is owned by PepsiCo, said it's overhauled pancake mix and syrup will hit shelves by the fourth quarter of 2020. The company will announce the new name at a later date. "We recognize Aunt Jemima's origins are based on a racial stereotype," said...

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## VOICES OF PROTEST, CRYING FOR CHANGE, RING ACROSS US, BEYOND

June 17, 2020 | AP News

They are nurses and doctors, artists, students, construction workers, government employees; black, brown and white; young and old. Hundreds of thousands of demonstrators have taken to the streets in big cities and tiny towns in every U.S. state – and even around the world – to protest the killing of George Floyd, who died after a police officer pressed his knee into his neck as he pleaded for air.

They say they are protesting police brutality, but also the systematic racism non-white Americans have experienced since the country's birth. Many say they marched so that one day, when their children asked what they did at this historic moment, they will be able to say they stood up for justice despite all risks. Most say they do not support the violence, fires and burglaries that consumed some of the demonstrations, but some understand it: these are desperate acts by desperate people who have been screaming for change...

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AP File



# WORLD

## AMERICAN CONVICTED OF SPYING IN RUSSIA, GETS 16 YEARS

June 15, 2020 | AP News

MOSCOW — A Russian court convicted an American corporate security executive Monday of espionage and sentenced him to 16 years in prison after a closed trial that the U.S. denounced as a “mockery of justice,” and it angrily said his treatment in jail was “appalling.” Paul Whelan, a former Marine from Novi, Michigan, has insisted he was innocent, saying he was set up when he was arrested in Moscow in December 2018 while he was visiting Russia to attend a friend’s wedding. “We

**“We have serious concerns that Mr. Whelan was deprived of the fair trial guarantees that Russia is required to provide him in accordance with its international human rights obligations.” — U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo**

have serious concerns that Mr. Whelan was deprived of the fair trial guarantees that Russia is required to provide him in accordance with its international human rights obligations,” U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said in a statement. The 50-year-old Whelan, who also holds

British, Irish and Canadian citizenship, has publicly complained of poor prison conditions and has said his life is in danger. Two weeks ago, Whelan underwent a hernia operation, which his twin brother, David, described as “emergency surgery ... which is never a good sign.”

He said his brother had been allowed one phone call in 18 months and had voiced concern about coronavirus infections in Moscow’s Lefortovo prison, where he was being held. Pompeo said the U.S. was “outraged” by the verdict and noted that Paul Whelan’s treatment “has been appalling,” adding that authorities ignored his medical condition and kept him isolated from family and friends. He called the proceedings “a secret trial, with secret evidence and without appropriate allowances for defense witnesses.” The Moscow City Court, where the trial took place, said it was held behind closed doors because authorities saw it as necessary for considering sensitive information.

Speaking to reporters after the verdict, U.S. Ambassador John Sullivan called the trial “a mockery of justice.” Whelan’s lawyer has said his client was handed a flash drive that had classified information on it that he didn’t know about.

### Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov Rejected Allegations That Whelan Was a Political Hostage

David Whelan described the case as political and voiced hope that the U.S. government will help gain his freedom. “The Russian Federation wouldn’t talk about releasing Paul until he was convicted,” he told The Associated Press. “And so, now that that has happened, we hope that the U.S. government will speak to the Russian government. We will have to continue to treat it as a political case, which is what it is, and seek a political solution for his freedom.”

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov rejected allegations that Whelan was a political hostage, telling reporters his guilt was proven at the trial. Peskov refused to comment on whether Russia could be eyeing his exchange for some of its citizens in the U.S. custody.

Whelan’s Russian lawyer, Vladimir Zherebenkov, pointed at Russian official statements signaling a possibility that Whelan could be exchanged for Russians Viktor Bout and Konstantin Yaroshenko. “There have been proposals of exchange, the issue is being discussed,” he said. Bout, a Russian arms trader, is serving a 25-year sentence in the U.S. for a 2011 conviction on charges he conspired to sell millions of dollars of weapons to Colombian rebels. He insisted he was a legitimate...

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SHAM TRIAL !  
MEATBALL SURGERY !  
NO HUMAN RIGHTS !  
PAUL'S LIFE MATTERS !  
DECISIVE ACTION FROM  
POTUS AND PMs NEEDED !  
HAPPY BIRTHDAY FLORA !

Sofia Sandurskaya, Moscow News Agency photo via AP

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*June 12, 2020 | AP News*

PARIS — French police defied a ban on mass gatherings to protest what they see as a lack of government support, marching shoulder to shoulder on Friday on the Champs-Élysées to show their anger against new limits on arrest tactics and criticism of racism in their ranks.

France this week announced a ban on chokeholds is part of government efforts to stem police brutality and racism in the wake of global protests over George Floyd's death in the U.S. But police have especially taken issue with any implication of systemic racism among French police. Interior Minister Christophe Castaner said earlier this week any "strong suspicion"

of racism would be punished, in response to investigations into racist comments on closed Facebook and WhatsApp groups for police.

Friday's protest was small but highly visible, with honking, flags and blue smoke blowing under rainy skies. As officers marched close together, with hardly a mask in sight, Paris police issued a bulletin confirming that anti-police protests planned this weekend were banned because of the coronavirus pandemic. Friday's group walked unimpeded to the interior ministry, which is next to the presidential palace and has been barricaded against demonstrators since the...

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## MAJORITY OF SENATE DEMOCRATS SPEAK OUT AGAINST ISRAELI SETTLEMENT ANNEXATION

*June 17, 2020 | AP News*

WASHINGTON — More than half of the Democratic senators currently in office have spoken out in recent weeks against Israeli annexation of settlements in the West Bank. Together with the opposition to annexation expressed by former Vice President Joe Biden, the senators' statements on the subject show that annexation could harm Israel's standing with Democratic politicians and voters.

As of Monday, at least 28 of the 47 Democrats in the Senate have expressed their opposition to annexation, most of them by sending letters on the subject to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Benny Gantz. A Democratic source in the Senate told Haaretz that more lawmakers are expected to make similar statements against annexation in the coming days. Out of the 28 senators who have so far expressed opposition to annexation, 19 did so in a joint letter to Netanyahu and Gantz last month, which was led by Senators Tim Kaine, Chris Murphy and Chris Van Hollen. The...

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## CABLES: US FALSELY SAID BRITISH QUEEN BACKED 1953 IRAN COUP

*June 12, 2020 | AP News*

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — The U.S. ambassador to Iran mistakenly told the shah in 1953 that Britain's newly enthroned Queen Elizabeth II backed a plan to overthrow the country's elected prime minister and America maintained the fiction even after realizing the error, historians now say.

The revelation, based on U.S. diplomatic cables cited by the historians, shows how America has struggled even to this day to offer a full, unvarnished account of its actions in the coup that cemented Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi's power and lit the fuse for Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution.

"There's an acceptance that you're never going to have the whole story," said Richard Aldrich, a professor at the University of Warwick whose research on the cables will be featured in a Channel 4 documentary in Britain on Sunday. "You're on a journey to try and achieve a better history but..."

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