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SMALL PLANE VIOLATES WHITE HOUSE AIRSPACE

LOCKDOWN ACTIVATED



A Secret Service agent patrols outside the White House during a lockdown Tuesday, which was initiated by an aircraft that violated secure airspace over the executive residence. Photo by Kevin Dietsch | License Photo

Clyde Hughs
UPI

The U.S. Secret Service locked down the

White House for about 30 minutes Tuesday when an aircraft violated the secure airspace surrounding the executive residence, officials said.

The agency said the lockdown was initiated when a small plane flew inside a prohibited pe-

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OPINION

Women rock in fifth Democratic debate

By Julianne Malveaux
Trice Edney Wire

The November 20th Democratic presidential debate took on a much different tone than the previous debates. I'm not sure if it was because the panel of moderators was all women – NBC's Andrea Mitchell and Kristen Welker, MSNBC's Rachel Maddow, and the Washington Post's Ashley Parker. Or perhaps it was because the candidates finally got over attacking each other (mostly) and instead decided to be themselves and embrace their identities. Maybe they hoped to engage more viewers with a substantive focus on the issues. And since the impeachment hearings loom large (closing only minutes before the debate began), each of the candidates had an opportunity to opine on impeachment.

Hillary Clinton broke the glass ceiling in both 2008 and 2016, first as a strong competitor to President Barack Obama in the 2008 primaries, then as the first woman to gain the nomination of a major party. Now, there are four women –Senators Kamala Harris (CA), Amy Klobuchar (MN), and Elizabeth Warren (MA) along with Hawaii Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard. And the women highlighted their gender in their remarks, with Kamala Harris reminding people that Black women are a backbone of the Democratic Party, and Black women are all too often ignored. Amy Klobuchar got an amusing one-liner off when she said, "If you think a woman can't beat Trump, Nancy Pelosi does it every day." Her point about the double standard women face in politics was an important point to make. Hillary faced it, and all of the Democratic women running for President face it. The double standard is especially acute because the current President of the United States has no problem denigrating women, especially Black women. To be sure, 45 denigrates anyone who disagrees with him, but women take the brunt of his attacks.

Andrea Mitchell, NBC's Foreign Affairs correspondent, was the right one to ask the candidates about foreign policy, and here is where Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard shone. Citing her background as a veteran, she was knowledgeable both about foreign policy and environmental justice. But Gabbard seems to enjoy playing the role of attack dog against her fellow Democrats, including Kamala Harris. Bernie Sanders had it right when he said, "We cannot simply be consumed by Donald Trump because if we are, you know what? We're going to lose the election." Most of the other candidates concurred, and they attacked 45 more than they attacked each other.

While this column focuses on women, the men had their moments as well. It was poignant when Senator Corey Booker (NJ) shouted out Congressman John Lewis (GA) and acknowledged his service to the nation. Candidate Tom Steyer talked about the role of money in politics, and also spoke about a "climate crisis." Biden was Biden, and Bernie was Bernie, delivering performances that were similar to their performances in the other debates. I am intrigued by Andrew Yang, whose unlikely candidacy has shown more sticking power than the campaigns of folk like New York Mayor Bill de Blasio and former Texas Congressman Beto O'Rourke. He has also qualified for the debate stage in November while former HUD Secretary Julian Castro (TX) has not.

A generation ago, both Presidential debates and Congressional hearings would be dominated by grey-suit wearing white men.

Now, the fifth debate was not only moderated by a coterie of women, but there were four women, nearly half of those who qualified, on the stage. Similarly, during the impeachment hearings, women witnesses, especially former US Ambassador to Ukraine, Marie Yovanovitch, Jennifer Williams, and Fiona Hill, held their own in the face of hostile questioning. Their extremely competent performance was as striking as their presence. Again, a generation ago, foreign policy was the purview of white men.

While the foreign policy arena (or presidential races) are hardly equal, the presence of women foreign policy experts represents progress.

Praise, shade and the politics of public funerals



ARMSTRONG WILLIAMS

Public funerals have become somewhat of a unique tradition in American politics. While in times past, deceased politicians, and even famous entertainers, have laid in state -- whether it was Abraham Lincoln or John F. Kennedy -- they were mostly honorific, stately affairs dedicated to honoring the dead and dutifully noting their lifetimes of service and sacrifice. But at this stage of our American civilization, the trend seems to be turning, and a lot of that has to do with the intense media scrutiny that comes along with such public events.

The intense politicization of public funerals seems to have become the fashion of our day. While it is not a new tradition per se -- political speeches at the funerals of historical figures date back to when Greek general Pericles spoke at the funerals for Greek soldiers during the Peloponnesian War or when Roman general Mark Antony spoke at Julius Caesar's public funeral -- the tradition seems to be reaching a high art form here in America.

The recent funerals of the late Sen. John McCain and Rep. Elijah Cummings are cases in point. McCain's was a death foretold, most publicly by McCain himself. He rose from his deathbed, where he lay suffering from terminal brain cancer, to cast the final deciding vote in the U.S. Senate to save the Affordable Care Act from the jaws of certain defeat. In so doing, he publicly rebuked a political rival -- President Donald Trump -- who had campaigned furiously on a promise to "repeal and replace Obamacare" within the first day of his administration. Earlier in the presidential campaign, Trump had directly insulted McCain, dismissing his military sacrifice by saying, "I prefer war heroes who weren't captured." This deep, personal insult lingered with McCain and perhaps gave him the strength to rise one last time to repudiate his antagonist.

But it didn't just end there. McCain called former President Barack Obama in the weeks before his death and asked Obama to deliver a eulogy at his funeral. Obama and McCain had been bitter partisan foes dating back to the 2008 presidential cam-

paign and fought constantly during Obama's eight years in office. During the eulogy, Obama confessed, "Now, when John called me with that request earlier this year, I'll admit sadness and also a certain surprise." But the former president, perhaps sensing the political moment, nonetheless played along. While ostensibly his praise of McCain was an effort to bury the hatchet, or even to restore civility to the partisan debate, it also served a far more sinister function: to bury the hatchet in Donald Trump, McCain's mortal nemesis. The moment was not lost on Trump, who was notably snubbed by having been publicly banned from attending by McCain's wife. It was almost as if everyone else was invited to a party in Trump's own town, except Trump himself. Trump, in characteristic fashion, hit back at a campaign rally a few months later. While speaking at a tank factory in Lima, Ohio, Trump exclaimed, "I gave him the kind of funeral that he wanted, which as president, I had to approve ... I didn't get a thank you, but that's OK. We sent him on the way, but I wasn't a fan of John McCain." Why speak ill of the dead at the campaign rally in Ohio? Well, precisely because it was not in Washington. Trump was making the case that these were his people, the people who elected him, so who cares that he wasn't invited to the elite insider party in Washington? While president, Trump adroitly used McCain's own funeral to continue to drum home the case that he is not a corrupt Washington insider but a man of the people.

Just this past October, another major political funeral was held for former congressman -- and another Trump nemesis -- Elijah Cummings. Cummings, an African American Democrat representing Baltimore and surrounding counties, had ceaselessly criticized the president and even chaired several congressional investigations into improprieties alleged against the Trump

administration. Perhaps most worryingly for the president, Cummings, as chair of the Committee on Oversight and Reform, began an impeachment inquiry into the president.

Because Cummings had been a long-serving member of Congress, several congressional leaders, including Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, were in customary attendance. As they gathered to pay their respects to the fallen congressman, Cummings' friend and pallbearer shook their hands in succession -- but notably refused to shake McConnell's outstretched hand. The televised slight reverberated around the political world -- with many initial reactions assuming it was a partisan jab at McConnell.

It wasn't. Although the man, subsequently identified as Bobby Rankin, did intentionally withhold the greeting, his reasons -- while rude and disrespectful -- were not partisan but in fact deeply personal. As it turns out, Rankin's brother had died the previous year from cancer reportedly caused by drinking contaminated water while a Marine serving at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina. According to Rankin, his brother was refused the veteran's medical benefits he was entitled to, and he blamed McConnell for failing to intervene on his brother's behalf. "When I saw Mitch McConnell, all I saw was my brother's face," said Rankin, "I could not put my hands in the man's hand who refused to help somebody who served his country." While the media assumed partisan rancor, the real political importance of this moment was underreported. It was that the leading Republican in Congress, a well-known hawk on issues of national security, was being blamed for letting one of the troops down. And, ironically, the soldier's brother was also the good friend of one of the leading doves in Congress. If it is a truism that politics makes strange bedfellows, it is perhaps equally true that political funerals, as evidenced by those of McCain and Cummings, make strange archenemies.

During his funeral oration for the fallen Greek soldiers, Pericles wisely observed,

"All men praise the dead, and, however preeminent your virtue may be, I do not say even to approach them, and avoid living their rivals and detractors, but when a man is out of the way, the honor and goodwill which he receives is unalloyed." We Americans have shortened the admonition to the simple phrase "do not speak ill of the dead."

But the art of rhetoric at political funerals, especially the act of praising the dead, can often veil the intent of shaming one's living foes. Just as McCain's funeral turned into a "meeting of the Resistance," as a writer for the liberal magazine The New Yorker put it, so did the funeral for Julius Caesar as depicted by Shakespeare in the eponymous theatrical work. Antony, a close friend of Caesar's, sensed the political animus against the recently assassinated leader and immediately sought to allay any concerns over his subsequent eulogy, with the infamous lines, "I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him./ The evil that men do lives after them;/ The good is oft interred with their bones." The line is scalding in both its denial and its accusation. He both chided the opposing senators for continuing to disparage Caesar, as if somehow he could continue to do "evil" even after he was dead, and inferred that within Caesar lay the bones of a man with some residue of "good."

The speech continues in almost inverse fashion from that of most funeral orations. He first praised his friend Caesar as a man whose out-sized ambition nonetheless permitted him to charitably heed cries of the poor, and subsequently cast Caesar's chief antagonist, Brutus, as a man whose own honorable character should have afforded him the dignity to at least mourn a man who he once loved.

Armstrong Williams is manager and sole owner of Howard Stirk Holdings I & II Broadcast Television Stations and Executive Editor of American Current See online magazine. Watch our Right Side Forum every Saturday on NewsChannel 8 TV 28, 10:30 a.m. to 11 a.m., with repeats at 6:30 p.m. EST.

Reparations: America's Unfinished business

By Dr. E. Faye Williams, Esq.
Trice Edney Wire

Whenever Black people bring up the subject of white Americans acting to cure years of discriminatory acts against Black people when our ancestors were forced to work without compensation, they usually pivot to the term "reverse discrimination" or they question whether reparations would be constitutional. My good friend, Gloria Dulan Wilson, responded to the constitutional argument by saying, "It was once constitutional to beat, lynch, rape, enslave, torture Black men, women and children with impunity.

I don't think we have to concern ourselves with what is or is not constitutional - our main responsibility is to push for, stand for and demand reparations on OUR

OWN TERMS - not concerned with what they want - They damned sure weren't concerned about what we wanted when they were making us work for them for free and traumatizing our families."

After the constitutional question, they also pivot to questions like "Why should I pay or I didn't discriminate against anybody." They never respond with, "You're right. I have benefitted from discrimination against you" even though the answer is obvious.

They just don't get it or they have selective memory. Recently the United Nations addressed the subject of reparations. Because I serve on the Reparations Commission with Dr. Ron Daniels, I naturally perked up to hear exactly what the United Nations was saying. I read that

the United Nations panel says the U.S. owes reparations to African Americans and gave as a reason the reparations are owed for slavery.

For those who still benefit from slavery, you should read the report of the United Nations' working group of experts on People of an African Descent affiliated group. The group spelled out that the compensation is necessary to combat the disadvantages caused by more than 200 years of slavery and legally allowing the sale of human beings based on the color of their skin. The resulting article was written by Eugene Mason.

Today's polluted and continuing atmosphere of racism against not only African Americans, but of people of Hispanic and Native American heritage.

We see no indication of America resolving this problem even if an individual group, such as Georgetown University, has recognized its duty to resolve its debt.

In the case of Georgetown University, the school has offered free tuition for descendants of the slaves sold by that University in 1838 to "pay its bills."

The late Congressman John Conyers worked for years to resolve the reparations' issue. He said, "I'm not giving up...Slavery is a blemish on this nation's history, and until it's formally addressed, our country's story will remain marked by this blight." He repeatedly introduced HR 40—a bill that would establish a commission to examine the institution of slavery and recommend appropriate remedies.



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House judiciary schedules its first impeachment hearing



House judiciary committee Chairman Jerry Nadler, D-N.Y., scheduled the impeachment hearing for Wednesday. File Photo by Kevin Dietsch/UPI | License Photo

By Danielle Haynes
UPI

The House judiciary committee joined the ongoing impeachment inquiry into President Donald Trump on Tuesday, scheduling a hearing for next week.

The committee, chaired by Rep. Jerrold Nadler, D-N.Y., scheduled the hearing for 10 a.m. EST Dec. 4. Lawmakers plan to explore the constitutional grounds for impeaching Trump.

The announcement comes one day after House intelligence committee Chairman Adam Schiff, D-Calif., said the three committees overseeing the impeachment inquiry -- intelligence, foreign affairs, and oversight and reform -- plan to submit a report on the probe to the judiciary panel after the Thanksgiving recess.

"Over the course of our inquiry, we have uncovered a months-long effort in which President Trump again sought foreign in-

Race
continued from page 1

terference in our elections for his personal and political benefit at the expense of our national interest," Schiff wrote in a letter to members of the House Democratic Caucus.

"As the evidence conclusively shows, President Trump conditioned official acts -- a White House meeting desperately desired by the new Ukrainian president and critical U.S. military assistance -- on Ukraine announcing sham, politically

motivated investigations that would help President Trump's 2020 reelection campaign."

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi officially announced the impeachment inquiry Sept. 24, enveloping existing investigations into Trump's July 25 phone call with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky under the umbrella of the probe.

The investigations were prompted by a whistleblower report about the call, accusing Trump of pressuring a foreign government to investigate a political rival -- Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden and his son, Hunter Biden.

The committees are also attempting to determine whether Trump withheld \$250 million in military aid and a one-on-one meeting between the two leaders in exchange for a Biden investigation.

The Trump administration officially released the military aid in installments in September.

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Supreme Court to hear Louisiana abortion law case March 4

By Sommer Brokaw
UPI

The U.S. Supreme Court announced Tuesday it has set March 4 as the date to hear oral arguments in case over physician requirements in a Louisiana abortion law blocked temporarily from taking effect earlier this year.

The case, June Medical Services versus Gee, was listed on a schedule the court released Tuesday afternoon.

At issue, is Act 620, Louisiana's "Unsafe Abortion Protection Act," which would require doctors performing abortions to have admitting privileges at a hospital no further than 30 miles from location where abortion is performed.

The Center for Reproductive Rights representing June Medical Services, doing business as Hope Medical Group, originally filed the lawsuit with Rebekah Gee, Secretary of the Louisiana Department of Health, being a defendant, in August 2014.

The controversial law has been tied up in legal battles and blocked since then with the Supreme Court most recently temporarily blocking implementation in February.

The Supreme Court agreed last month to hear arguments over the Louisiana abortion law. "In 2014, our duly elected legislators overwhelmingly passed Act 620 to require doctors who perform abortion to



The U.S. Supreme Court has set a March 4 date for oral arguments over abortion law in Louisiana, which it agreed to review last month. File Photo by Chris Chew/UPI | License Photo

have admitting privileges at nearby hospitals," Louisiana Attorney General Jeff Landry said in a statement, which was linked to his Twitter account Tuesday.

"Today, the United States Supreme Court has agreed to consider our case; and we remain hopeful the justices will affirm the Fifth Circuit's decision, as we firmly believe that the facts in our case show Act 620 is constitutional and consistent with our overall

regulatory scheme for surgical procedures."

CBS News first reported last month that if the law is implemented all of Louisiana's abortion clinics would close.

"All eyes must be on the Supreme Court come March. This case will have lasting consequences for abortion access across the country," Center for Reproductive Rights President and CEO Nancy Northrup told CBS News in an emailed

statement Tuesday. "Many states have been openly defying Supreme Court decisions in an effort to criminalize abortion.

At this critical juncture, the court needs to set those states straight."

The Center for Reproductive Rights already filed its opening brief Monday evening as the first of four to be filed before March arguments.

The Louisiana Attorney General's Office has until

Dec. 26 to file a response.

Chief Justice John Roberts joined liberal justices in the February decision to temporarily block the law's implementation, but it's unclear if he'll vote to permanently block the law.

The Supreme Court struck down 5-3 a similar law in Texas in 2016, but Roberts voted to uphold the 2016 law.

The U.S. 5th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled last year that the Louisiana law

wouldn't put the same burden on Louisiana women because it's not as big a state as Texas.

The makeup of the bench has also changed since then with Justice Anthony Kennedy, a swing vote on many decisions, retiring, and President Donald Trump's nominees Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh joining.

Still, Northrup expressed hope for the court to make a similar ruling to its decision with the Texas law.



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Counting children matters most: Frequently asked questions (FAQ) on Census 2020

By Khalil Abdullah
Trice Edney Wire

Within the African American community, the conversation about the upcoming 2020 census ranges from ‘why bother’ to ‘we’re all in.’ Let’s speak to the ‘why bother’ question.

FAQ: Why should I bother with Census2020? I filled out the census form the last time and I didn’t see any improvements in my neighborhood or community.

Answer: Whether or not you saw the improvements you expected, many benefits of the census still touched your life, your community, and the people you love and care about – especially children.

If you have a sense of responsibility for the quality of life of children in your family or beyond, your participation in the census has a direct impact.

Over 200 federal programs derive revenue from data gathered by the census.

This list includes school lunch programs and the Women, Infants and Children Program (WIC) which provides direct monetary assistance for low income pregnant women and new mothers and their children.

Other programs range from Section 8 Housing assistance to LIHEAP, the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program. LIHEAP helps families pay heating bills and assists

with repairs to furnaces, insulation and weatherization costs.

Without these programs, the cost of living for everyone in a neighborhood, city, or county would be higher. Take LIHEAP as an example. Without the financial subsidy to those in need, other ratepayers and customers like yourself, would likely face an increase in monthly utility bills.

Just consider the funding that assists with the cost of schools, teachers, and education.

The lives of children are profoundly affected by your decision to participate in the census.

This is one reason why those who represent African American communities, be they clergy, elected officials, or social justice advocates, see engagement with the census as a moral imperative.

FAQ: That still doesn’t explain why I don’t see the improvements promised during the last census in 2010 or even during the 2000 census.

Answer: You know the saying, “all politics is local.” Almost nowhere does this apply more than when money is being allocated.

There are layers of responsibility for how money is spent, including federal and state formulas as well as decisions made at the local level, often by elected officials.

The census has a direct bearing on our election processes of redistricting



and reapportionment which help determine how your vote is counted and who gets elected. We will take these up as separate FAQ topics.

The immediate question is: will you fill out the census form?

FAQ: What happens if I do not fill out the form? Is that a crime? If so, what’s the punishment?

Answer: Not answering the census or providing false answers are each punishable by a fine of up to \$5,000, but no one has been fined for failure to respond in recent censuses, according to the Census Bureau’s national spokesperson.

But, as one census advocate said, it is a crime of sorts not to participate

because is the children who suffer most without your full participation.

FAQ: Can someone find out my private census responses?

Answer: Your information is confidential and protected by Title 13 which brings heavy fines and possible imprisonment for anyone who divulges your personal information.

The Census Bureau cannot, under penalty, share your information with the IRS, Homeland Security, immigration or law enforcement agencies or anyone else, including housing officials.

However, census information is made publicly available after 72 years.

FAQ: What if I partici-

pate in the census, but there are more people living in my home than I’m supposed to have according to my lease or rental agreement?

Answer: The Census Bureau is trying to gather data.

It is not seeking to determine whether you are violating your lease or local zoning codes, but you have raised an important point.

Families are often fluid -- grandparents taking care of grandchildren while parents are at work or away from home.

Should you claim a student away at school in another state as a member of your household?

There are many scenarios where family members

should be reported, but African Americans were undercounted by 2.1 percent in the 2010 census and many of those missed were children.

Why? In part because people were unsure whether they should report a child or whether that was someone else’s responsibility to do so.

The best thing to do is ask the Census Bureau or one of the many organizations participating in partnership during Census2020.

This article is a monthly column by Ethnic Media Services aimed to educate about the need to respond to the 2020 U. S. Census. Next Topic: If you’re all in, what to expect.

Housing discrimination complaints reach a 24-year high as HUD rolls back fair housing rules

By Charlene Crowell
Trice Edney Wire

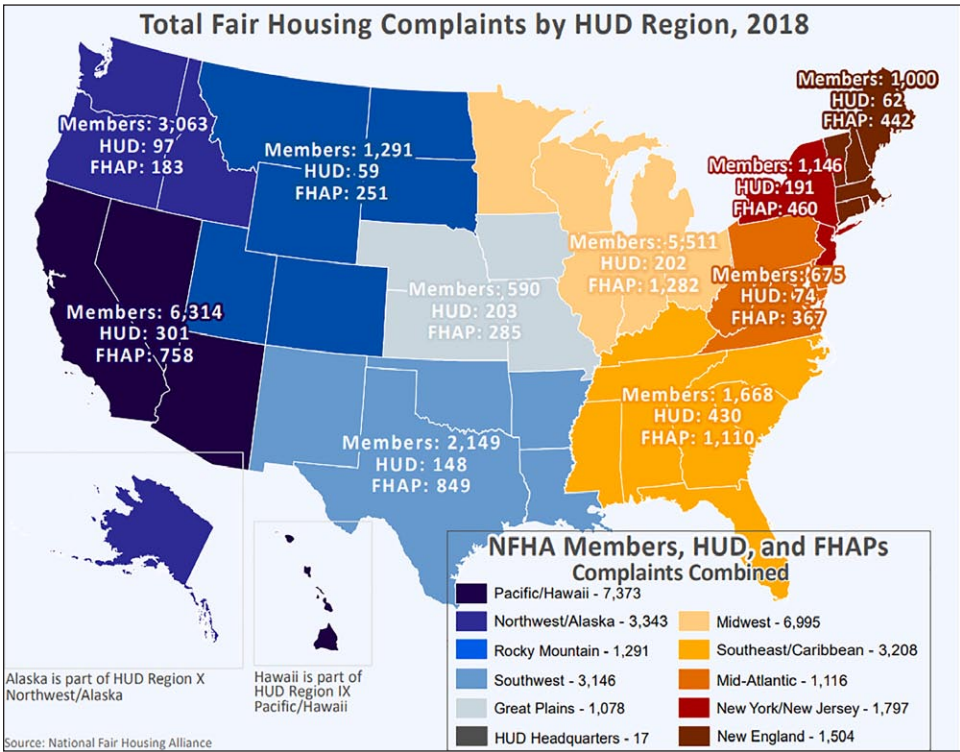
As a candidate, President Donald Trump promised if elected that deregulation of the federal government would be an administration priority. Soon after taking the oath of office, he issued an executive order requiring that all departments and agencies to eliminate two existing regulations for every one new regulation proposed. In some cases, rules that were adopted prior to his term office but had not yet taken effect were either suspended or delayed.

For example, the long-awaited payday rule at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) was one important consumer protection that was delayed. Similarly, at the Department of Education, two rules providing protections for student loans were also delayed.

More recently, this column shared how Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary Ben Carson claimed that regulation was the reason for homelessness, not affordable housing.

Now new research by the National Fair Housing Alliance finds that as fair lending laws have not been aggressively enforced, a corresponding rise in hate crimes and fair housing complaints have emerged.

Defending Against Unprecedented Attacks on Fair Housing: 2019 Fair Housing Trends Report, recently released by the DC-based National Fair Housing Alliance (NFHA),



tallied 31,202 discriminatory housing complaints filed in just one year – 2018. Moreover, this data point is the highest number ever reported since the National Fair Housing Alliance (NFHA) began collecting data 24 years ago. America’s hate crimes jumped 14.7% last year as well.

Even when it comes to enforcing and defending legal breaches, NFHA’s report documents how few government offices are upholding laws.

Some 75% of last year’s fair housing complaints were pursued by private, nonprofit organizations across the country. Only 25% of such cases were the result of combined government actions by state, local and federal agencies.

“All the tools and resources we have been afforded by the passage of

our Fair Housing Act and fair lending laws are either under attack or being gutted,” noted Lisa Rice, President and CEO of NFHA. “[W]e must concern ourselves with policies pushed by our federal, state, and local governments that are steeped in hatred and designed to inflict pain.”

Instead of strengthening federal fair housing guarantees, HUD is a prime example of how regulations are trying to reverse decades of progress. One particular HUD rule, disparate impact, is at severe risk.

This long-standing legal tool has helped root out discriminatory practices and policies in both housing and lending. In 2013 and under the Obama Administration, HUD set up safeguards that assured consumers could pursue related claims while businesses were protected

against claims without merit.

With disparate impact, both community banks and FDIC-insured institutions have achieved net growth profits.

The rule has proven to create lending that is fairer and profits that investors desire.

Even a 2015 landmark fair housing case that made its way to the U.S. Supreme Court upheld disparate impact as a cognizable claim under the Fair Housing Act. In Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs v. The Inclusive Communities Project, Inc., the nation’s highest court found the disparate impact rule to be an important fair housing tool to move towards a more integrated society.

So why would Secretary Carson try to roll back a rule that should be settled

law?

In joint comments filed by the Center for Responsible Lending, Self-Help Credit Union, and Self-Help Federal Credit Union, the organizations advised Secretary Carson.

“Instead of creating barriers for claimants, HUD

should honor its mission and work to ensure that African-American, Latino, and other communities harmed by housing and lending discrimination have every tool to stop it so that all Americans have an opportunity to thrive,” wrote the organizations.



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Religious liberty groups spar over Bible in VA hospital display

By Pamela Manson
UPI

Two advocacy groups dedicated to protecting religious liberty are battling each other over whether a Bible should be part of a display at the Manchester VA Medical Center in New Hampshire.

U.S. Air Force veterans James Chamberlain, a Christian, and Sandra Bell, an atheist, are suing the hospital director in his official capacity to get the Bible taken off a “Missing Man Table” in the hospital lobby.

The display honors prisoners of war and soldiers missing in action.

The Military Religious Freedom Foundation is leading the fight for removal and argues that the inclusion of the Christian Bible violates the constitutional prohibition against government establishment of religion. The Albuquerque, N.M.-based foundation -- which says it represents about 64,000 service members and veterans, about 95 percent of whom identify as practicing Christians -- lists its primary mission as protecting the separation of church and state in the U.S. military and the Veterans Administration. The Northeast POW/MIA Network, which owns and operates the display, was added to the federal lawsuit as a defendant at its request.

The network is represented by the First Liberty Institute, a Plano, Texas, group that describes itself as the largest legal organization in the nation dedicated exclusively to protecting religious liberty for all Americans.

Now Rajan Zed, a Reno, Nev., man who is president of the Universal Society of Hinduism, is asking that an ancient scripture from his faith, the Bhagavad-Gita, be added to the display.

His request has been pending since September before the medical center’s Facility Display Committee.



A legal battle is playing out over a Bible should be allowed in this display honoring prisoners of war and soldiers missing in action at the Manchester VA Medical Center in New Hampshire. Photo courtesy of the Military Religious Freedom Foundation

In a written statement, Zed said the hospital “should not be in the business of discriminating among different scriptures, as every scripture is sacred to its devotees.”

The inclusion of the Bhagavad-Gita would be beneficial “as scriptures provided us comfort and strength and God wanted us well,” he said.

Zed told UPI he has not requested that the Hindu scripture be placed at any other hospital.

The case began with complaints to MRFF during the last weekend of January from 14 patients at the Manchester hospital about the placement of the Christian Bible on the POW/MIA table, according to the lawsuit.

Nine are Protestant or Roman Catholic; the others practice other faiths or are atheist or agnostic.

The 14 veterans asked MRFF to complain on their behalf but to protect their

identities because they feared reprisal.

The group’s president and founder, Michael “Mikey” Weinstein, phoned medical center officials to demand the removal of the Bible and three hours after the first call, he received an email from an assistant to then-director Alfred Montoya saying the Bible would be removed. (Montoya became the director of the Connecticut VA Healthcare System in October.)

The email said, in part, “I want you to know that you can inform your clients that the Manchester VAMC has the utmost respect and admiration for all veterans, regardless of their beliefs. As such, we are going to be removing the Bible from the display to better serve all veterans.”

Three weeks later, though, the Bible -- which was donated by retired U.S. Army Air Corps Tech. Sgt. Herman “Herk” Stre-

itburger, a World War II POW in Germany -- was back on display in a locked acrylic box after the VA hospital received a flood of complaints about the removal.

Vice President Mike Pence has weighed in on the dispute, saying during an August speech at the American Legion National Convention in Indianapolis that VA hospitals would not be religion-free zones and that “the Bible stays.”

MRFF sent an email objecting again to the placement, but the Bible remained, and the foundation decided to sue.

Chamberlain, who was not part of the group that complained originally, said he would be a plaintiff in a lawsuit, and Bell later joined the legal action.

The suit, filed May 7 in U.S. District Court in Concord, N.H., seeks an order requiring the removal of the Bible from the display.

In a court filing, the

Northeast POW/MIA Network says removing the Bible would violate its First Amendment right to have a display that represents its own viewpoint merely because it contains a religious symbol.

“The network’s Missing Man Table is consistent with this nation’s history and tradition and does not violate the Establishment Clause,” the filing says.

On Zed’s request to include the Hindu scripture at the POW/MIA table, Mike Berry, who is First Liberty’s chief of staff and one of the network’s attorneys, said in an email, “We support the right of any veterans group to create and maintain their own display, consistent with VA policy.”

Until early July, the discretion to authorize displays such as Remembrance Tables was delegated to individual VA facility directors, which meant some might be al-

lowed to include Bibles, while others could not, according to First Liberty. But after it urged a policy change, new directives were issued “permitting religious literature, symbols and displays at VA facilities to protect religious liberty for veterans and families while ensuring inclusivity and non-discrimination,” First Liberty said.

Weinstein counters that if a judge rules the Bible can stay, “then you better get a MIA/POW table the size of an aircraft carrier.” “If you leave the Bible there, you have to put every religious and nonreligious book there,” he said.

U.S. District Judge Paul Barbadoro in September denied a motion to dismiss the case. A few days before a hearing on that issue, MRFF bought a billboard in Manchester urging President Donald Trump, Pence and the VA Medical Center to “Remove the Bible, Honor All Veterans.”

BID REQUEST

RPC Contracting is requesting bids from any interested HUB Certified minority business firm for the Town of Nags Head FY 19/20 Capitol Improvement Project Phase 8A W, Side Multi-Use Path didding On 12/3/19. There will be a pre-bid conference at 3:00 PM on Monday 11/25/19 at the office of RPC Contracting, 934 W. Kitty Hawk Road, Kitty Hawk, NC. Plans and specifications are available for review at the same location or may be downloaded from the Town of Nags Head website at www.nagsheadnc.gov. For more information, please call 252-261-3336, ask for Jay. RPC Contracting is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

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U.N. climate report: Major emissions cuts needed to meet key goals

Don Jacobson
UPI

Global emissions of heat-trapping greenhouse gases are rising so quickly the world will have to make drastic reductions for the next several years just to meet levels established by the Paris climate agreement, a United Nations environmental report said Tuesday.

The body’s Environment Program, which coordinates and manages environmental issues among U.N. agencies, said the world’s nations must cut emissions 7.6 percent annually until 2030 to reach the Paris levels.

UNEP’s annual Emissions Gap Report warned that unless global emissions were reduced by that amount, the ability to reach the “safe” 1.5 degree Centigrade global warming goal of the Paris Agreement will not be met.

The report found that even if all the current unconditional commitments made under the agreement are fully implemented, temperatures were still on a pace to rise by 3.2 degrees -- a level they say would trigger wide-ranging and destructive climate impacts.

“For ten years, the Emis-



Tuesday’s report said a united world must cut emissions by nearly 8 percent over the next 11 years to meet goals established by the Paris Agreement. File Photo by Kevin Dietsch/UPI | License Photo

sions Gap Report has been sounding the alarm -- and for ten years, the world has only increased its emissions,” U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres said in an accompanying statement. “There has never been a more important time to listen to the science. Failure to heed these warnings and take drastic action to reverse emissions means we will continue to witness deadly and cata-

strophic heatwaves, storms and pollution.”

The Emissions Gap Report followed an analysis Monday by the U.N.’s World Meteorological Organization, which said in its Greenhouse Gas Bulletin greenhouse gases levels in the Earth’s atmosphere again reached record levels in 2018.

A climate change conference that will discuss how to step up climate ef-

forts is set for Scotland at the end of 2020, but UNEP Executive Director Inger Andersen said that may be too long to wait.

“This shows that countries simply cannot wait until the end of 2020, when new climate commitments are due, to step up action,” she said.

“They -- and every city, region, business and individual -- need to act now.”



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Devlin Hodges named Pittsburgh Steelers’ starting QB against Cleveland Browns

By Connor Grott
UPI

Head coach Mike Tomlin and the Pittsburgh Steelers are turning back to rookie quarterback Devlin “Duck” Hodges for Sunday’s game against the Cleveland Browns.

Tomlin told reporters Tuesday that Hodges will start in the rematch versus the Browns. The coach cautioned that it isn’t a permanent decision as the Steelers (6-5) continue their late-season playoff push.

“We met as a staff, [and] we decided that we’re going to start ‘Duck’ this week,” Tomlin said. “Really, the decision is clear for us. ... I thought he provided us a spark in-game [against the Cincinnati Bengals on Sunday]. I’m hopeful that he’s capable of continuing to provide that spark as we step into this stadium.”

Hodges, an undrafted rookie out of Samford, replaced starter Mason Rudolph early in the second half in the Steelers’ 16-10 win over the Cincinnati

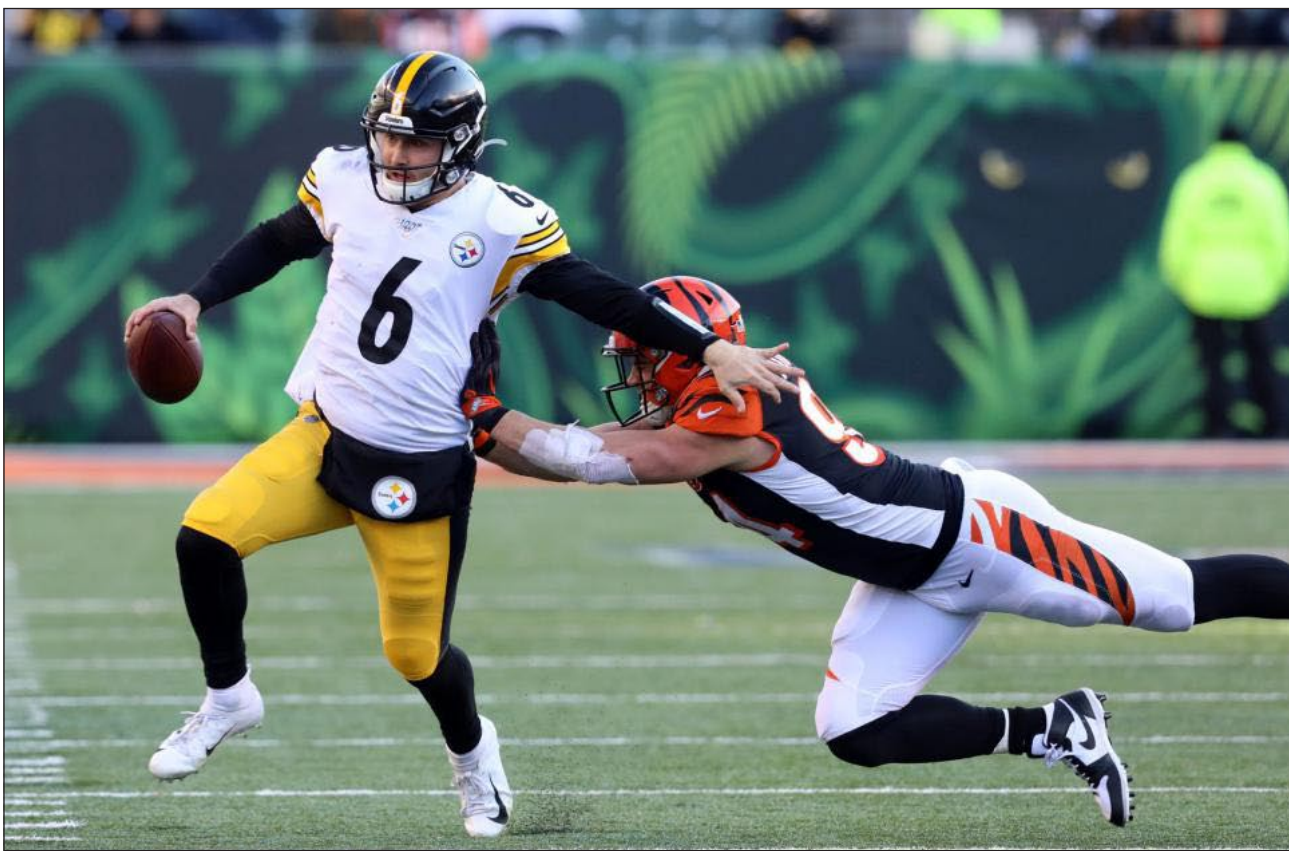
Bengals on Sunday. On his third play under center, Hodges threw a 79-yard touchdown pass to receiver James Washington.

Hodges later directed two more scoring drives for the Steelers to seal the win. Tomlin said the young quarterback’s performance earned him another chance to lead the team’s offense.

“I thought the quarterback position by virtue, by nature of the job, it’s an opportunity to provide that spark,” Tomlin said. “And he made a play there early on, I thought was significant and energized not only our offensive unit, but our team and our sideline. It was enough for us to get out of that stadium. We’ll see what this week holds.”

Hodges previously filled in for one game after Rudolph sustained a concussion against the Baltimore Ravens on Oct. 6. He made his first start this season in a 24-17 victory over the Los Angeles Chargers on Oct. 13.

In five games since returning from his concussion, Rudolph has completed 99-of-169 passes (58.6



Pittsburgh Steelers quarterback Devlin Hodges (6) fights to break free from Cincinnati Bengals defender Sam Hubbard (94) during the second half of play Sunday at Paul Brown Stadium in Cincinnati, Ohio. Hodges replaced Mason Rudolph at quarterback in the game. Photo by John Sommers II/UPI | License Photo

percent) for 990 yards, five passing touchdowns and seven interceptions, including a four-pick performance in the Steelers’ Week 11

loss to the Browns.

“It means nothing about our intended plans for the foreseeable future or the trajectory of Mason’s career,” Tomlin said about his decision to go with Hodges. “We’re just not of that mentality. We’re not in a position to be of that

mentality. We’re putting pieces together on a week-by-week basis because of the adversity that the game presents.”

MLB players’ pool reaches 3rd-highest total of \$80.8M

By Danielle Haynes
UPI

The NFL has scheduled a private workout for free-agent quarterback Colin Kaepernick on Saturday in Atlanta that all teams are permitted to attend.

League sources told ESPN and NFL Media on Tuesday that Kaepernick’s public session will include on-field work and an interview. According to ESPN, video of the workout and interview will be available to all 32 teams.

Kaepernick confirmed the private workout Tuesday night on social media.

“I’m just getting word from my representatives that the NFL league office reached out to them about a workout in Atlanta on Saturday,” Kaepernick wrote on Twitter. “I’ve been in shape and ready for this for 3 years, can’t wait to see the head coaches and GMs on Saturday.”

Multiple NFL teams have inquired about Kaepernick and his readiness to play football, according to ESPN. He has been out of the league since 2016,



Washington Nationals General Manager Mike Rizzo (L) and manager Dave Martinez raise the Commissioners Trophy after the Nationals defeated the Houston Astros 6-2 to win the 2019 World Series at Minute Maid Park in Houston, Texas, October 30. Photo by Kevin Dietsch/UPI | License Photo

when he started to protest police brutality and racial injustice by kneeling during the national anthem.

Kaepernick, 32, opted

out of his contract with the San Francisco 49ers in March 2017, following the season in which he began the protests. The quar-

terback filed a grievance against the NFL in October 2017 that accused team owners of colluding to keep him out of the league. The

sides reached a settlement in February.

In 69 career games, Kaepernick completed 59.8 percent of his passes for

12,271 yards, 72 touchdowns and 30 interceptions. He added 375 carries for 2,300 yards and 13 rushing scores.

Henry Bullough: Former NFL coach, Michigan State player dies at 85

By Alex Butler
UPI

Former NFL coach and Michigan State star Henry Bullough has died. He

was 85.

Michigan State announced the death Monday. Bullough was a guard on the Spartans’ 1952 national championship team. He

also played for the Spartans when they won the Big Ten championship the year after the title-winning campaign.

“We are deeply sad-

dened to learn that MSU Athletics Hall of Famer Henry Bullough has passed away,” Michigan State said in a statement. “The Spartan football family has

lost a truly great Spartan. We send our sincere condolences to the Bullough family.”

Bullough was a fifth round pick by the Green

Bay Packers in the 1955 NFL Draft. He served in the U.S. Army after his rookie campaign before returning to the team for the 1958 season.

Normani: ‘Motivation’ video showcases black culture

By Annie Martin
UPI

Normani says her “Motivation” music video is meant to showcase black culture.

The 23-year-old singer discussed the video and her desire to be authentic to herself and her heritage in the December issue of Cosmopolitan.

“Motivation” has received over 69 million views on YouTube since its release in August.

The video shows Normani performing an energetic and intricate dance routine on the streets of Los Angeles.

Normani purposely made the video colorful, with pink signifying women owning their sexuality and gold calling to mind hit records.

The video gives her spin on pop music.

“I told the director, ‘I want this to be as black as possible,’” the star said. “I was like, let’s show black culture.”

Why does pop music have to be so white? Why don’t we make it a little bit more me?”

Normani said she em-



Normani discussed her “Motivation” music video and her desire to be authentic to herself and her heritage. File Photo by Jim Ruymen/UPI | License Photo

braces black culture in all aspects of her work. She is working on her debut studio album, which she said is influenced by Brandy. “I’m gonna make what ever I do black,” the singer said. “You’ll know that I’m a black girl, even if it’s on the quote unquote whitest record ever.” Normani came to fame with the girl group Fifth Harmony, which disbanded in 2018. She said she’s found a new self-confidence since going solo. “I’m not sure what that turning point was, but I was like, Normani is enough. You can be onstage and perform and you can be enough,” the star shared. Normani released the solo EP Normani x Calvin Harris in 2018. In addition to “Motivation,” she has released the singles “Love Lies” with Khalid, “Waves” featuring 6lack and “Dancing with a Stranger” with Sam Smith.

LL Cool J to host Kennedy Center Honors

By Annie Martin
UPI

Rapper and actor LL Cool J will host the 2019 Kennedy Center Honors in December.

CBS announced in a press release Monday that LL Cool J, 51, will host the gala for the first time Dec. 8 at the Kennedy Center Opera House in Washington, D.C.

The Kennedy Center Honors celebrates leading performers and their lifetime contributions to American culture. Actress Sally Field, conductor and composer Michael Tilson Thomas, singer Linda Ronstadt, the children’s program Sesame Street, and the band Earth, Wind & Fire will be honored at the 2019 ceremony.

LL Cool J was a Kennedy Center honoree in 2017. “They call LL Cool J ‘The G.O.A.T.’ [Greatest of All Time] for a very good reason -- he earned it,” CBS Entertainment EVP of specials, music and live events Jack Sussman said.

“He’s the absolute renaissance man: musical artist, actor, author, fashion



LL Cool J will host the 2019 Kennedy Center Honors celebrating Sally Field, Michael Tilson Thomas, Linda Ronstadt, “Sesame Street” and Earth Wind & Fire. File Photo by Mike Theiler/UPI | License Photo

icon, Grammy winner and a 2017 Kennedy Center honoree.” “He will be a masterful master of ceremonies for the Kennedy Center Honors, with his unique style and charisma guiding us through a night of heartfelt and well-deserved tributes celebrating the life’s work of this year’s stellar honorees.” CBS confirmed the news in a tweet Monday. @LLCoolJ is going back to DC to host the 42nd Annual Kennedy Center Honors,” the post reads. The Kennedy Center Honors will air Dec. 15 at 8 p.m. ET on CBS. LL Cool J, born James Smith, has released 13 studio albums, most recently Authentic in 2013. He plays Sam Hanna on the CBS series NCIS: Los Angeles and hosts the Paramount Network series Lip Sync Battle.

WWE Raw: Seth Rollins and Kevin Owens collide, Rey Mysterio wins gold

By Wade Sheridan
UPI

Seth Rollins kicked off Raw with a town hall meeting featuring the majority of the locker room after the red brand was handily defeated at Survivor Series.

Rollins, who served as team captain for the Raw men’s team at Survivor Series, started berating

superstars for their performance at the event. The BeastSlayer said Randy Orton was the weak link on the men’s team, called out Charlotte Flair’s performance on the women’s team, wondered why AOP didn’t even compete and criticized Rey Mysterio for being unable to defeat WWE Champion Brock Lesnar. Rollins’ comments caused the roster to leave the ringside area except for Kevin Owens. KO didn’t say a word as Rollins called him lazy and jealous of his position in the company. Owens responded with a Stunner, setting up the night’s main event. Owens and Rollins had a competitive, back and fourth affair with both men pulling out all the stops to win. Owens was able to dodge a Curb Stomp attempt and hit Rollins with a Pop Up Power Bomb but it wasn’t enough. Owens, after avoiding a second Curb Stomp, was able to nail Rollins with a Stunner when Akam and Rezar of AOP unexpectedly arrived onto the scene. The Authors of Pain, who have been out of action for months, brutally assaulted Owens, ending the match. AOP also starred down Rollins but left him alone. Rollins then took advantage of a weakened Owens and hit him with a Curb Stomp as Raw went off the air. Also on Raw, United States Champion AJ Styles was set to defend his title against Humberto Carrillo, however, when the high-flyer made his way to the ring, Styles’ crew The O.C. attacked him, leaving him unable to compete.

Omarion, Bow Wow to launch ‘Millennium’ tour

By Anne Martin
UPI

R&B singer Omarion and rapper Bow Wow are going on tour in 2020.

The pair shared plans Tuesday on Instagram to co-headline the Millen-

nium 2020: Face Off tour. Omarion and Bow Wow will be joined by Ying Yang Twins, Lloyd, Sammie, Pretty Ricky and Soulja Boy. Shows will be announced Dec. 2, with pre-sale tickets to begin Dec. 5. “We are so excited to announce The Millennium Tour 2020! Come rock with @omarion @shadmoss @therealyingyangtwins @curlyheadedblackboy @sammiealways @prettyr- icky and @souljaboy!” Omarion wrote. Bow Wow shared the news in a post on his own account. “Millennium Tour 2020! Watch @omarion FACE OFF WITH Bow Wow,” he wrote. Omarion initially launched the Millennium tour with his former boy band, B2K, in 2019. The North American leg started in Pittsburgh, Pa., in March, and ended in Louisville, Ky., in April. Omarion performed with B2K in the late 1990s and early ‘00s, and released his debut solo album in 2005. He is expected to release his fifth studio album, Reasons, this year.

La Voz Latina

Hispanics could turn swing states Democratic in 2020 election

By Chiara Vercellone
UPI

WASHINGTON- Hispanic voters, who are expected to overtake black voters as the largest minority bloc in 2020, could push swing states like Nevada and Florida into the Democratic column in the 2020 presidential elections, some experts say.

Although they still will comprise only 13.3 percent of all eligible voters, Hispanic voters could make the difference in tight races.

In 2008, conservative-leaning states like Nevada and Florida flipped and voted Democrat in the presidential election. But in 2016, Florida switched to Republican once again, while Hillary Clinton kept Nevada blue by a 1.5 percent margin.

William Frey, a senior fellow and expert demographer at the Brookings Institution, predicts both states will go Democratic in 2020.

“To me, it’s a pretty safe bet that they will be Democratic,” Frey said. President Donald Trump “is not someone who is welcomed by Hispanics, and I think this could be the reason why they turn out and vote Democratic.”

In 2020, there will be 32 million eligible Hispanics, while black voters, at 30 million, will count for 12.5 percent.

Asian Americans will make up 5 percent of the electorate.

If Hispanic turnout follows the upward trajectory it has been on, reaching 40



In 2020, there will be 32 million eligible Hispanics, while black voters, at 30 million, will count for 12.5 percent. File Photo by Kevin Dietsch/UPI | License Photo

percent in 2018, it could be enough to move them to the Democratic column even though Hispanics make up less than a quarter of the population, Frey said.

The Hispanic voting bloc has continued to grow: It represented 11.9 percent of all eligible voters in 2016 and 9 percent in 2008.

Though a majority of the Hispanic electorate has not favored Trump, his support has been dropping, including among older, more conservative voters who tend to be the key demographic of Latino Trump voters, a recent Equis Research poll found.

In Nevada, Trump’s favorability among Hispanics fell 12 points to 19 percent as many blamed

Trump for fueling racially charged speech directed at Hispanics.

“The 2020 presidential election will be won at the margins, so the data we’re seeing that shows Donald Trump losing ground, despite early spending and outreach by his campaign into the Latino community, speaks volumes,” Equis research director Melissa Morales said in an email.

In Florida, only 29 percent of Hispanics would vote to re-elect Trump in 2020, compared with 21 percent of all Latino eligible voters nationwide, a poll commissioned by Unidos U.S. found.

“The poll shows that support for the GOP is eroding,” Clarissa Martínez de Castro, Unidos

U.S. Deputy Vice President for Policy and Advocacy, said in a press release. “It’s also clear that there is a shift away from the GOP as the Republican Party has come to be seen as embracing or leading the charge on anti-immigrant and anti-Latino rhetoric and actions.”

Carolina Contreras, an American citizen who migrated from Venezuela to Miami in 2008, still sees a lot of racism toward Latinos and Hispanics near her home in Orlando. She said this racism, fueled by Trump’s derogatory comments about Latin American immigrants, is one of the reasons many of her Latino neighbors will vote for the Democratic nominee.

“I feel like for this upcoming election there is more hope in that more people have opened their eyes and realized that every vote counts, including theirs,” Contreras said. “Change needs to happen, and I hope we have learned our lesson” with this administration.

The latest Univision/Latino Decisions poll from September found that 78 percent of Hispanics disapprove of Trump and his skills to handle the presidency.

Over 70 percent of respondents said they’ll vote for the Democrat nominee in 2020.

The number of voters who identify as “white only” has decreased 12 percent since 2016, accord-

ing to U.S. Bureau Census data.

White voters are projected to compose 67 percent of all eligible voters in 2020

Adrián Pantoja, a senior political analyst for Latino Decisions and professor of political and Chicano studies at Pitzer College, said a “sense of unity” has grown among U.S. Latinos in recent years that makes them more likely to vote for what is best for the community rather than policies they agree most with.

Jennie Leal, a first-generation Mexican-American college senior from California, said she wants to vote for Sen. Bernie Sanders because he has promised to lower the costs of going to college and of healthcare, which affect the Latino community directly, she said.

“There hasn’t been any opportunity that could tell me, ‘This [administration] could be good for America,’ so I’m just very concerned about next year.”

Latino voters like Josefina White, a citizen since 2015 living in Massachusetts, have not seen the Republican Party making an effort to reach their communities. Instead, she has seen more people say they are against immigration and people who speak Spanish, like her.

“I feel that because this sense of anti-immigration and resentment has been created, there are some Latinos who don’t have that support they need to feel empowered to go vote” for the Republican Party, she said.

Champions League: PSG benching Neymar against Real Madrid

By Alex Butler
UPI

Brazilian soccer superstar Neymar will not start for Paris Saint-Germain’s UEFA Champions League clash against Real Madrid on Tuesday in Madrid.

Sources told ESPN FC and Le Parisien that Neymar will be on the bench during kickoff. Official lineups won’t be released until 45 minutes before the first touch of the Group A matchup at 3 p.m. EST Tuesday at Santiago Bernabeu Stadium.

Kylian Mbappe, Maura Icardi and Angel Di Maria are expected to start the match against the La Liga power. Neymar and Edinson Cavani will be available off the bench. Icardi and Di Maria scored in PSG’s 2-0 win against Lille Friday in Paris. Neymar started and played 65 minutes, before being replaced by Mbappe in the

second half of the Ligue 1 meeting.

Neymar missed six weeks this season due to a left thigh injury. He has yet to make an appearance during the 2019-2020 Champions League group stage after missing the first two games due to a suspension and the second two due to injury. He has four goals in six Ligue 1 games this season.

“We are going to pick the players [Tuesday] morning,” PSG manager Thomas Tuchel told reporters Monday. “My players have shown a lot of qualities in recent weeks even though we have had to shuffle the team around a lot.

“I’m going to have some tough choices to make, but they’re nice choices, because it means my players are available. I have faith in them and I know they’re ready to accept the tactical decisions that will



Neymar has four goals in six Ligue 1 games this season for Paris Saint-Germain. Photo by Yoan Valat/EPA-EFE

be taken.”

PSG battles Monaco in Ligue 1 at 3 p.m. EST

Sunday in Monaco. They play their final Champions League Group stage clash

against Galatasaray at 3 p.m. Dec. 11 in Paris. PSG sits atop Group A with

a 4-0 record, while Real Madrid is in second place at 2-1-1.

Tottenham hires Jose Mourinho as new coach

By Alex Butler
UPI

Premier League soccer power Tottenham Hotspur said Wednesday it’s hired former Manchester United manager Jose Mourinho as their new coach.

Tottenham announced

the firing of former coach Mauricio Pochettino Tuesday. Mourinho, 56, coached Manchester United until he was dismissed last December. He had previous stops at Benfica, Porto, Chelsea, Inter Milan and Real Madrid. “I am excited to be joining a club with

such a great heritage and such passionate supporters,” Mourinho told the team website. “The quality in both the squad and the academy excites me. Working with these players is what has attracted me.”

Spurs signed Mourinho through the 2022-2023

season. Mourinho has won 25 senior trophies and domestic titles in a record four countries. He has also won the UEFA Champions League twice and is a three-time Premier League champion. “In Jose we have one of the most successful managers in football,” Spurs

chairman Daniel Levy said. “He has a wealth of experience, can inspire teams and is a great tactician. He has won honors at every club he has coached.

We believe he will bring energy and belief to the dressing room.”

Spurs sit at No. 14 in the

Premier League standings and finished in fourth place last season. They finished in second place during the 2016-2017 season under Pochettino.

Tottenham battles West Ham United at 7:30 a.m. EST Saturday at London Stadium.