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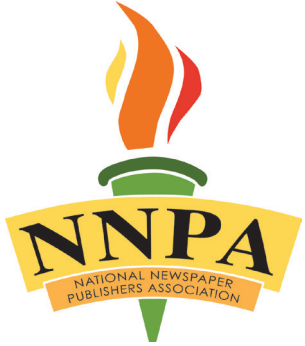
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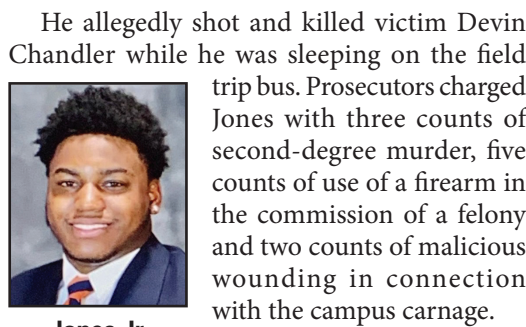
Court gives Biden administration 5 weeks to end Title 42 rule expelling migrants
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University of Virginia shooting suspect makes first court appearance

By A.L. Lee & Clyde Hughes
UPI

Christopher Darnell Jones, Jr., the suspect in the shooting death of three University of Virginia football players over the weekend was held without bail after he made his first court appearance Wednesday.

Appearing at the hearing via video link from jail, Jones was appointed an attorney but said he would be looking to secure his own. Albemarle County Commonwealth's Attorney Office Prosecutor James Hingeley charged that Jones shot five people after a field trip.



Jones Jr.

Davis Jr. and D'Sean Perry, were members of the University of Virginia Cavalier football team.

He allegedly shot and killed victim Devin Chandler while he was sleeping on the field trip bus. Prosecutors charged Jones with three counts of second-degree murder, five counts of use of a firearm in the commission of a felony and two counts of malicious wounding in connection with the campus carnage.

Jones, who previously worked at the Charlottesville Boys and Girls Club and at a local hospital, did not enter a plea.

The team, student body, and entire Charlottesville community have been emotionally devastated by the tragedy, with mourners holding memorials and candlelight vigils as Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin ordered flags lowered to half-mast across the state.

See SHOOTING, page 3

Federal judge rules disarming those under protective orders violates rights

By William Melhado
The Texas Tribune

A Texas federal judge declared it was unconstitutional to disarm someone who is under a protective order, setting into motion a likely legal fight over who can possess firearms -- a move that advocates say could have wide-ranging impacts on gun access across the country.

U.S. District Judge David Counts, who was appointed by former President Donald Trump, ruled last week that banning those under a protective order from possessing a gun infringes on their Second Amendment rights.

Judges who deem people a danger to family members or intimate partners can take the extra step to issue a protective order requiring people to relinquish the guns they already have. Federal law currently prohibits domestic abusers who are charged with a felony, misdemeanor

or or are under a protective order from possessing a gun.

The ruling comes months after a landmark U.S. Supreme Court case on the Second Amendment, the effects of which, legal experts say, are just beginning to be felt.

This June, the high court's ruling in New York State Rifle & Pistol Association vs. Bruen, written by Justice Clarence Thomas, struck down the state's concealed carry law and held that courts going forward should uphold gun restrictions only if there is a tradition of them in U.S. history.

The case involves Litsson Antonio Perez-Gallan, who was stopped at a border checkpoint in Presidio while carrying a firearm. Law enforcement found Perez-Gallan had a restraining order issued against him, in which case federal law prohibits the possession of a firearm.

Counts ruled that the federal

See RIGHTS, page 3



A Texas judge has ruled that banning those under a protective order from possessing a gun infringes on their Second Amendment rights.
File Photo by Brian Kersey/UPI

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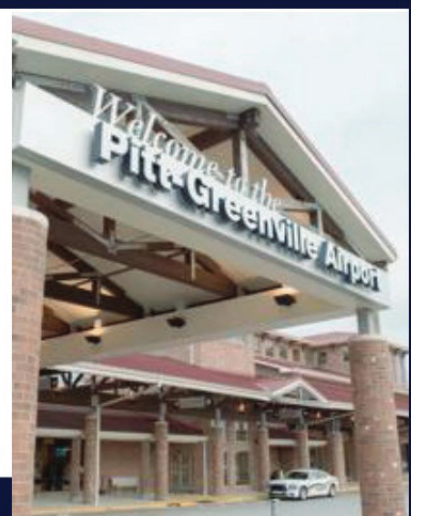


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OPINION

Party Loyalty Will Be Our End

American society, not democracy, is under threat

By Harlan Ullman,
Arnaud de Borchgrave Distinguished Columnist
UPI

Media attention remains riveted on which party will finally control the House of Representatives and analysis of Donald Trump's announcement in light of the 2024 presidential sweepstakes.

But the most critical conclusion from the Nov. 8 elections has gone unnoticed. Despite throaty warnings that democracy was endangered, it was not.

Far worse, it is American society that is under threat. The election was a seeming rejection of left- and right-wing extremism, with many of those candidates defeated. However, the underlying causes of extremism were not exorcised. That is the crisis and THE clear and present danger confronting the nation.

In civil times, a rational debate should be between the values of conservatism and progressivism. These are not civil times. So both terms have been demonized as "Trumpism" and "wokeness."

Trumpism is defined as the cynical pursuit of power no matter the cost. Other criteria essential to good governing, such as bringing able and honest officials into government; abiding by the rule of law; and following moral and ethical guidelines are subservient. Perhaps most dangerous, dismissing truth and fact that do not conform to contradictory ideas is inherent to Trumpism.

Wokeness embraces extreme social, political, economic and cultural views that demand bigger and more restrictive government to mandate public behavior. Big government then destroys individual freedom. This intrusion of wokeness is the greatest danger to democracy.

No matter the future of its founder, a substantial Republican base accepts "Trumpism," with or without Trump. Likewise, perhaps a similar proportion of Democrats hold "woke" cultural, economic, political and social diversity and equality views. But the majority of Americans are moderate and of the center. Yet, the center lacks the influence and political power of the extreme left and right wings.

The roots of the problem are deeply embedded in American society. Coarseness has always been present, as have incivility, intolerance and revolution from the Whiskey and Shays' rebellions to the Civil War and today's spike in violence. And the 1887 Electoral Count Act and the state of the primary system compound critical domestic political vulnerabilities. In the latter, as few people vote, extremes in both wings usually chose the candidates.

Candidates who are insufficiently Trump or woke loyalists are vulnerable to being "primaried," meaning a rival is selected whose ideology conforms with these constituents. In the Republican Party, fear of losing Trump's endorsement has maintained forced loyalty. Democrats do not have such a polarizing or influential individual. But primary challenges are not uncommon.

Since money has been declared "free speech," in reality no limits in campaign contributions exist, including for Political Action Committees. A lion's share of contributions goes to paid advertisements. Election consultants exact a percentage fee, probably worth billions, across local, state and federal elections. The financial incentives to maintain this system are self-evident. And "dirty tricks" are always present. In some cases, Democrats contributed to extremist Republican candidates to ensure a victory.

Fortunately, most Americans have common sense. While perhaps 3/4 of the public see the nation headed in the wrong direction -- and President Joe Biden has very low opinion ratings -- clearly, neutralizing "extremism" in any form was an important factor in this election. Sadly, not all the "crazies" lost. However, the trend is in the right direction.

That does not mean dissent, strong, contrary views and free speech should or will be curtailed. These are vital to a functioning republic. But racist, homophobic and otherwise grotesquely insane arguments must be detached from the political discourse.

Once a tiny segment of our existence -- a mere association with a group whose ideas align with ours on average -- political parties have evolved from simple associations into our primary identities. They have absorbed our perspectives, entered our daily conversation and permeated all forms of media. As more and more individuals become radicalized within their own parties, one must consider if party loyalty has gone too far.

It seems logical to me that there would be only a small number of individuals whose ideas perfectly match those of their party and its leaders. As we listen to the media and observe a rising number of real-life individuals who fit this criterion, it becomes evident that party loyalty has supplanted reasoning and individualism in the masses; it has become the mainstream, not the fringe.

It is difficult to fault anybody for embracing radical beliefs. Given the substantial sums poured into pushing political propaganda through mainstream and otherwise reputable outlets, it is easy to assume that the beliefs being promoted are the most reasonable, especially given that those advocating these views have access to more information than the average person.

Consequently, when the unusual ostensibly becomes the mainstream, an increasing number of people prefer to follow

without much thought. Fortunately, although their numbers are growing fast, there are considerably fewer ardent loyalists than sensible individuals. Despite this, the most irrational individuals are frequently the loudest, and our political leaders listen to the loudest individuals because they are the only ones who they can hear.

As a result of loyalists preaching as if they represent the majority, terrible policy decisions are made -- a sad reality. So frequently, we observe that party loyalists develop and advocate for policies that are both damaging and nonsensical.

This is absolutely true for both the Republican and Democratic parties. If a Democrat, for instance, believes that transgenders should be supported, this does not necessarily imply that they favor the radical measures, such as sex changes for elementary school-age children and drag performers in classrooms, that mainstream Democrats support. Likewise, the same applies to Republicans. If a majority of Republicans support curbing illegal immigration, it does not necessarily follow that they support erecting a wall or transporting migrants to

sanctuary states. For both parties, even if they do support certain positions, it is not necessarily the case that their support would be active, but only passive.

Despite the fact that the minority of every political party is typically the loudest and that the majority of any political party's members support only more beliefs than those of the other party, we rarely hold party loyalists accountable when they cause division and destruction for the rational.

To expose the underbelly of politics and deter people from succumbing to the compelling arguments of political leaders, accountability is absolutely essential if we desire a better nation and a better future. Without an unwavering commitment to embracing our own principles and believing in ourselves rather than our political leaders, we will be victimized by the propaganda-pushing serpents of their respective parties, who wish to victimize us and keep us in despair in order to maintain their stranglehold on our lives. We cannot become pawns for them to manipulate and maneuver as they see fit, nor can we become that small group of party loyalists who victimize the innocent.

Once people learn that they should be loyal to their own principles and not those of others, it becomes simple to teach them not to become victims. They can avoid falling prey to

groupthink and beginning a cycle of doubting their own ideas and discarding them in favor of those of others. And they can prevent themselves from being used to harm others in complex ways that they could not fathom.

When we were young children, before we were introduced to politics, our values were formed at home. Illegal immigration and transgenderism are not subjects that the older generation was taught in the classroom.

A person may or may not be religious. They may believe it is acceptable to lie, cheat and steal more often than others believe; they may have differing views on what is good, bad and fair. All of these qualities and more underpin virtually every political stance, yet so many individuals have become so rigid in their political views that they frequently lose sight of why they hold these beliefs. Tragically, these underlying principles are frequently used ex post facto to defend a person's viewpoint on a particular topic, rather than being the source of the belief itself.

Our nation stands at a crossroads. Will we choose to be loyal to our respective political parties, or to ourselves? I do hope that we choose the latter, that we realize that the only ones looking out for our best interests are our family, friends and, of course, ourselves, not our parties.

To expose the underbelly of politics and deter people from succumbing to the compelling arguments of political leaders, accountability is absolutely essential if we desire a better nation and a better future. Without an unwavering commitment to embracing our own principles and believing in ourselves rather than our political leaders, we will be victimized by the propaganda-pushing serpents of their respective parties, who wish to victimize us and keep us in despair in order to maintain their stranglehold on our lives.

Mark Zuckerberg can sack 11,000 workers but shareholders can't dump him

By Mark
Humphery-Jenner
UNSW Sydney

"I want to take accountability for these decisions and for how we got here," tech billionaire Mark Zuckerberg told the 11,000 staff he sacked this week.

But does he really?

The retrenchment of about 13% of the workforce at Meta, owner of Facebook and Instagram, comes as Zuckerberg's ambitions for a "metaverse" tank.

The company's net income in the third quarter of 2022 (July to September) was \$4.4 billion -- less than half the \$9.2 billion it made in the same period in 2021.

That's due to a 5% decline in total revenue and a 20% increase in costs, as the Facebook creator invested in his idea of "an embodied Internet" -- where, instead of just viewing content, you are in it" and readied for a

post-COVID boom that never came.

Since he changed the company's name to Meta a year ago, its stock price has fallen more than 70%, from \$345 to \$101.

Selling is really all the majority of shareholders can do. They are powerless to exert any real influence on Zuckerberg, the company's chairman and chief executive.

If this had happened to a typical listed company, the chief executive would be under serious pressure from shareholders. But Zuckerberg, who owns about 13.6% of Meta shares, is entrenched due to what is known as a dual-class share structure.

When the company listed on the NASDAQ tech stock index in 2012, most investors got to buy "class A" shares, with each share being worth one vote at company general meetings.

A few investors were issued class B shares, which are not publicly traded and are worth 10 votes

each.

As of January, there were about 2.3 billion class A shares in Meta, and 412.86 million class B shares. But although class B shares represent just 15% of total stock, they represent 64% of the votes. And it means Zuckerberg alone controls more than 57% of votes -- meaning the only way he can be removed as chief executive is if he votes himself out.

Trend in tech stocks

Meta is not the only U.S. company with dual-class shares. Last year almost half of tech companies, and almost a quarter of all companies, that made their initial public offerings (stock exchange listing) issued dual-class shares.

This is despite considerable evidence of the problems dual-class shares bring - as demonstrated by Meta's trajectory.

Protection from the usual accountability to shareholders leads to

self-interested, complacent and lazy management. Companies with dual-class structures invest less efficiently and make worse takeover decisions, but pay their executives more.

Investors cannot vote Zuckerberg out. Their only real option is to sell their shares. Yet despite shares falling 70% in value, Meta's approach has yet to change.

It's a cautionary tale that should signal to investors the risks of investing in such companies -- and highlight to policymakers and regulators the danger of allowing dual-class structures. The Conversation

Mark Humphery-Jenner is an associate professor of finance at UNSW Sydney.

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Shooting

continued from page 1

On Tuesday night, officials identified the surviving victims as Marlee Morgan, who has since been released from the hospital; and Michael Hollins, a junior tailback on the team who was in serious but stable condition after having to be intubated to treat his injuries.

The gunfire erupted Sunday on a charter bus full of students that had just returned to the Charlottesville campus from a field trip in Washington D.C.

Jones, who remained a student after walking on to the school's football team in 2018, was among the those who traveled that day, school administrators later confirmed.

After the shooting, the suspect went on the run, sparking a 12-hour manhunt before Jones was arrested about 80 miles east in Henrico County.

On Tuesday, he was moved to the Albemarle-Charlottesville Regional Jail in preparation for a Wednesday bond hearing.

At least one witness on the bus said she observed a confrontation between Jones and one of the victims before shots rang out.

"[Jones] got up and pushed Lavel," Ryan Lynch told CNN affiliate KYW-TV. "After he pushed him, he was like 'You guys are always messing with me.' Said something weird like that, but it was very bizarre because they didn't talk to him the whole trip."

Before Sunday's shooting, Jones was under investigation by the university's judicial council over his alleged possession of a

firearm, which had been reported to the Student Affairs department as part of a hazing complaint, although Jones was not believed to be a threat at that time.

"In the course of their investigation, university officials spoke with Mr. Jones' roommate, who gave no indication of the presence of any weapons," said university spokesman Brian Coy. "University officials discovered that Mr. Jones previously had been tried and convicted of a misdemeanor concealed weapons violation in 2021, for which he received a 12-month suspended sentence and a small fine."

Facing disciplinary action, Jones refused to cooperate with the probe and would not answer questions that university officials posed to him about the gun and the charges that he faced previously.

The case was elevated to the school's judicial council on Oct. 27 after a threat assessment team recommended Jones should be punished for his actions.

The outcome of the case, however, was still pending, meaning Jones did not know his fate at the time of the shooting.

A campus hazing investigation turned cold after witnesses refused to come forward.

Jones, who is listed on the school's athletics website as a freshman member of the 2018 football team, did not play in any games that season due to a lingering injury.

"The young man was a student beginning in 2018 and was a walk-on or one semester with our football program," said UVA Athletics Director Carla Williams.

Rights

continued from page 1

government's disarming of Perez-Gallan did not sufficiently consider the historical context of domestic abuse law when revoking his Second Amendment rights. In September, the same judge ruled that it's unconstitutional to disarm somebody who has been indicted but hasn't been convicted yet. He said he found no such history for limiting access to guns for those charged but not convicted of felony crimes, though he acknowledged his search was "not exhaustive."

Counts' most recent opinion also pointed to the lack of historical record of domestic abuse law that limits access to firearms.

Eric Ruben, an assistant professor of law at the Southern Methodist University Dedman School of Law, said the recent opinions from Counts are a direct result of the Supreme Court's June ruling.

"The court said that the way that you've got to decide the constitutionality of modern-day gun laws ... is not by looking at modern policy considerations, but rather looking at historical laws and trying to analogize specific legal traditions from a very different time and place," Ruben said.

But the landscape around domestic violence and firearms has changed dramatically since the late 1700s when the Second Amendment was ratified.

Not only have firearms become much more deadly than the muzzle-loaded guns used in that era, but views about gender roles and domestic violence have

developed significantly, Ruben said.

The opinion does not bar the government from continuing to prosecute cases in Texas or elsewhere, but Ruben anticipates the federal government will appeal the case. If the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals sides with Counts' opinion, Ruben said the loosening of gun restrictions would have wide-ranging implications for gun access in the region.

The effort in Texas to expand protections for domestic abuse victims from gun violence has long faced obstacles. A small number of communities in the state have established programs to transfer firearms from people under a protective order to law enforcement, but these resource-intensive programs depend on federal and state laws that ban these individuals from possessing guns.

Nicole Golden, the executive director of Texas Gun Sense, said it's clear why the federal government bans several groups from possessing guns, but the court's decision goes against the crisis of gun violence and its threats to victims of domestic abuse.

A domestic violence victim's risk of death is five times higher if their abuser has access to a firearm, according to federal data.

"It's simply dangerous


to our public safety, for our women, our families and our police officers who often are at risk when they go into a domestic violence situation," Golden said.

Disclosure: Southern Methodist University has been a financial supporter of The Texas Tribune, a non-profit, nonpartisan news organization that is funded in part by donations from members, foundations and corporate sponsors. Finan-

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Former Trump Organization CFO begins tax evasion testimony



Former Trump Organization Chief Financial Officer Allen Weisselberg took the stand as a prosecution witness on Tuesday, as part of a tax evasion trial. **File Pool Photo by Seth Wenig/UPI**

By Simon Druker
UPI

Former Trump Organization Chief Financial Officer Allen Weisselberg took the stand as a prosecution witness on Tuesday, as part of a tax evasion trial.

Weisselberg is testifying in the case against two Trump entities, the Trump Corporation and the Trump Payroll Corporation.

Prosecutors contend executives from both companies were given alleged tax-free payments, apartments, cars and other perks,

including Weisselberg.

Weisselberg reached a deal with prosecutors in August. The long-time Trump family confidant agreed to plead guilty to tax evasion charges and serve about 100 days in custody, in exchange for testifying at the trial. He admitted to collecting \$1.7 million in untaxed bonuses or perks.

Former President Donald Trump is not charged in the case and is not expected to be called as a witness.

Weisselberg, 75, had worked for the Trump family since 1973 and was fac-

ing a maximum of 15 years in prison.

From the stand in a New York courtroom, Weisselberg on Tuesday acknowledged that he remained on the Trump Organization payroll for two months following his guilty plea. He collected an annual salary of \$640,000 and around another half million dollars in annual bonuses.

Bonuses and how they were paid out are a big part of the case.

Over a period of years, the companies paid bonuses to executives while

designating them as independent contractors for tax purposes, one of several ways the payments were transferred.

Prosecutors hope Weisselberg's evidence will prove that the tax-free payments benefited or were intended to benefit the two Trump companies, a key requirement in obtaining a conviction.

The Manhattan District Attorney's Office issued the indictment against Weisselberg, his fellow executives and both companies in July.



FBI, Homeland Security chiefs detail biggest U.S. threats at House panel hearing

By Simon Druker
UPI

The heads of the FBI and Department of Homeland Security on Tuesday highlighted several threats, both domestic and abroad, facing the United States.

The remarks came during the annual examination held by the House Committee on Homeland Security in Washington, D.C., which also included National Counterterrorism Center Director Christine Abizaid.

Attempts by Russia, China, Iran and North Korea to undermine the United States on the global stage top the list of external threats, Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas told lawmakers Tuesday. Mayorkas referred to those countries as "hostile nations."

"From cyberattacks on our critical infrastructure to increasing destabilizing efforts by hostile nation states, the threats facing the homeland have never been greater or more complex," Mayorkas said.

He stressed the threat of "evolving terrorism" also posed by "lone actors fueled by a wide range of violent extremist ideologies and grievances, including domestic violent extremists."

Mayorkas called domestic terrorists the greatest threat facing the United States. Wray said the risk posed by lone actors and small cells is more difficult to monitor.

"We have seen a trend over the last several years of people more and more in this country when they're upset or angry about something turning to violence as a way to manifest it. And that is a very, very danger-

ous trend," Wray said.

Congressmen questions Mayorkas about the situation at the southern border, primarily by the committee's Republican lawmakers.

"In the first two years of the Biden administration, we have seen a disturbing trend become a catastrophic humanitarian crisis at the border," the panel's top Republican, Rep. John Katko, R-N.Y. told the committee.

"Looking statistically, it seems like the border is getting worse," Rep. Michael Guest, R-Miss., told Mayorkas.

"The policies that you have put in place have failed and that they have failed miserably. We know that Commissioner Magnus recently was forced to resign from office, and I applaud you for removing him."

"I thought he did a terrible job. And I hope that there are other people that you will remove and that you will work with a Republican-controlled Congress to find a way to secure the border," he added, referencing former Customs and Border Protection Commissioner Chris Magnus, who resigned Saturday at the request of the White House.

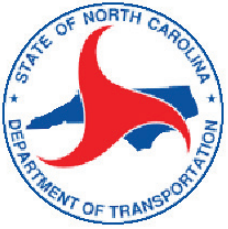
Rep. Jake LaTurner, R-Kan., then asked if Mayorkas had considered resigning, given the thousands of migrants who continue to attempt to cross the southern border.

"Have you had a conversation with anyone in the administration about stepping down from your current role?" LaTurner asked.

"I have not," Mayorkas replied.

"It's a very serious challenge ... that is not specific or exclusive to our southern border. This is a challenge that exists throughout the hemisphere."

U.S. border officials said they dealt with more than 77,000 migrants arriving from Venezuela, Cuba or Nicaragua in September alone.



NCDOT TO HOLD TWO PUBLIC MEETINGS REGARDING PITT COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN (CTP)

Greenville - The N.C. Department of Transportation will hold two public meetings regarding the Pitt County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP). CTPs are long-range multi-modal planning documents that identify transportation needs and develop long-term solutions for the next 25 to 30 years. The purpose of these meetings is to provide the public with an opportunity to comment on the draft plan.

The first meeting will take place on Monday, Nov. 14 at Pitt County Community Schools and Recreation located at 4561 County Home Road, Greenville from 5 - 7 p.m.

The second meeting will take place on Thursday, Nov. 17 at North Pitt High School's cafeteria located at 5659 N.C. 11 North, Bethel from 5 - 7 p.m.

The public may attend at any time during the hours mentioned above.

NCDOT and Pitt County representatives will be available to answer questions and listen to comments regarding the Pitt County CTP. The opportunity to submit written comments will also be provided at the meeting or via phone, email, or mail by Dec. 31, 2022. Comments received will be taken into consideration as the plan develops. Please note that no formal presentation will be made.

For those unable to attend either session, a virtual information session is available and comments can be submitted online. For more information and links, please visit:

<https://www.pittcountync.gov/852/20202022-Comprehensive-Transportation-PI>

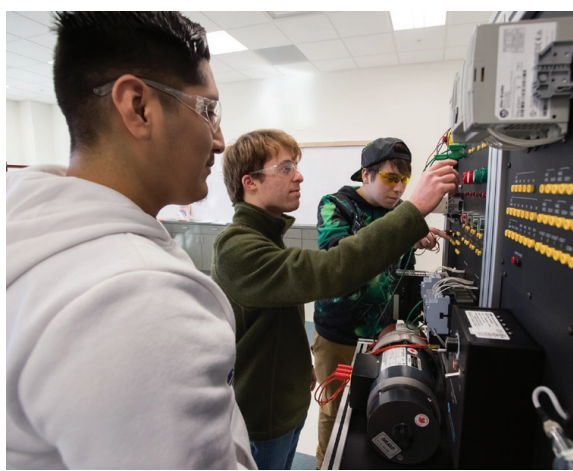
Maps, survey results, and additional information about the CTP can be found on the project website: <https://tinyurl.com/PittCTP>.

For additional information, contact Phil Geary, NCDOT Transportation Engineer via email: pageary@ncdot.gov, by phone: 919-707-0930, or by mail: 1554 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC, 27699.

NCDOT will provide auxiliary aids and services under the Americans with Disabilities Act for disabled persons who wish to participate in this meeting. Anyone requiring special services should contact Diane Wilson, Senior Public Involvement Officer via e-mail at pdwilson1@ncdot.gov or by phone 919 707-6073 as early as possible so that arrangements can be made.

Those who do not speak English, or have a limited ability to read, speak or understand English, may receive interpretive services upon request prior by calling 1-800-481-6494.

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NATO: Missile that struck Poland appears to be from Ukrainian defense system

By Clyde Hughes
& Patrick Hilsman
UPI

Polish officials and their NATO allies said Wednesday a missile that landed in Poland, killing two people, appeared to come from a Ukrainian air defense system fired against a Russian attack.

The missile hit the border Polish village of Przewodow and was originally thought to have been fired by Russia, which could have triggered a response from NATO. But an investigation revealed the missile was likely fired by Ukraine in defense of a wide-ranging missile attack by Russia.

"From the information that we and our allies have, it was an S-300 rocket made in the Soviet Union -- an old rocket -- and there is no evidence that it was launched by the Russian side," Poland's



NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg speaks during a press conference after a NATO ambassador meeting at Alliance headquarters in Brussels, Belgium, on Wednesday. Photo by Olivier Hoslet/EPA-EFE

President Andrzej Duda said in a statement. "It is highly probable that it was fired by Ukrainian anti-aircraft defense."

Filip Trzaskowski, a Polish photographer on the scene in Przewodów, Poland, told UPI in a phone interview he worried the

accident would harm the relationship with Ukraine.

"I am afraid and I hope that this situation doesn't change our situation between Poland and Ukraine because it's very good. ... I'm scared the right wing will say, 'They are coming here, they stole our jobs, right now there is a crisis in Ukraine and they dropped a missile on our lands.'"

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg in a meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Poland on Wednesday said that Ukraine was not at fault.

"Our preliminary analysis suggests that the incident was likely caused by a Ukrainian air defense missile fired to defend Ukrainian territory against Russian cruise missile attacks," Stoltenberg said in a statement. "But let me be clear: This is not Ukraine's fault. 'Russia bears ultimate respon-

sibility, as it continues its illegal war against Ukraine. In the meeting today, NATO allies offered their deepest condolences on the tragic loss of life. They expressed their strong solidarity with our valued ally Poland."

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov rejected any blame.

"As for the incident in Poland, Russia has nothing to do with it," Peskov said, according to the state-run news agency TASS. "Let us call things by their proper names. In fact, high-ranking officials in different countries were making statements without having any idea of what exactly happened or what the real cause was."

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky had initially said the rocket that hit Poland came from Russia, but U.S. officials stopped short of blaming Moscow on Tuesday.

Kevin McCarthy, GOP's choice for House speaker, faces challenge

By Joe Fisher
UPI

Rep. Kevin McCarthy earned the nod of House Republicans as their nominee for Speaker of the House, but not without a challenge within the party.

House Republicans met behind closed doors Tuesday to vote for a nominee while the party is one seat away from taking a slim majority in the House. Republican leader Kevin McCarthy won the nomination as expected. What was unexpected was the resistance he faced from the most right-winged members of his party.

Rep. Andy Biggs (R-Ariz.) announced late Monday that he would challenge McCarthy. Biggs

is a former chairman of the House Freedom Caucus, which is considered the most conservative bloc within the party. The vote favored McCarthy 188-31.

While McCarthy is now in line to take the gavel when the 118th Congress begins on Jan. 3, the 31 votes against him makes the matter far less certain. Biggs' challenge reveals a lack of unity within the party, which some Republicans suggest could stand in the way of capturing the 218 votes needed to win the speakership.

"If we don't unify behind Kevin McCarthy, we're opening up the door for the Democrats to be able to recruit some of our Republicans," said Rep. Marjorie Taylor-Greene (R-Ga.).

McCarthy has not been without his critics in the Republican House. The Freedom Caucus in particular is divided in its perception of his ability to lead in a direction it approves of, an anonymous McCarthy supporter said, according to Politico.

The Freedom Caucus' objections to McCarthy stem from its desires to see internal rules change. Some of the changes would weaken the position of the speaker and increase the power of individual members, according to The Hill.

"By December 16th, you'll have a pretty good idea whether Mr. McCarthy is for the job," Biggs said Tuesday on the War Room podcast, hosted by Steve Bannon.



Study finds more lung damage in marijuana smokers than tobacco users

By Cara Murex
HealthDay News

While marijuana legalization in some U.S. states and Canada may send a message that weed is harmless, that's not necessarily so, according to a new study that found lung damage was more common in marijuana smokers than tobacco users.

Research into marijuana's impact on the lungs is just getting started, because weed wasn't legal in many places until recently, but early indications are that it could do some serious damage.

"The main message is that it may not be as safe as people think it is, and we need more information," said study co-author Dr. Giselle Revah, a cardiothoracic radiologist and assistant professor at the University of Ottawa in Canada. "This is sort of just the opening. I want people to be aware that it may cause problems."

Revah said it's possible to

see that someone is a heavy or longtime cigarette smoker just by looking at their CT scan. She wondered if marijuana, the second most commonly smoked substance after tobacco, would show similar results. She was surprised to find little information existed.

For this study, the researchers compared chest CT results from 56 marijuana smokers, including some who also used tobacco, with 33 who smoked only tobacco and 57 nonsmokers.

Roughly 75% of the weed smokers had emphysema compared to 67% of the tobacco-only smokers and 5% of nonsmokers.

The chief type of emphysema found in marijuana smokers was paraseptal, which damages tiny ducts connecting air sacs in the lungs. Marijuana smokers also had more airway inflammation.

And some men who smoked weed had a surprising side effect: 38% had enlarged breast tissue. That

compared to 11% of tobacco smokers and 16% of nonsmokers.

Researchers found no difference in calcium buildup in the heart's main arteries between the two smoking groups. But they called the lung findings worrisome.

In emphysema, toxins deposited in small air sacs of the lungs that are responsible for the exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide cause damage and create irreversible holes.

"You can't ever get normal lung tissue back there and that essentially impairs that gas exchange function," Revah said. "Early on patients may not have any symptoms, but over time as that emphysema progresses, then patients will start to have symptoms: coughing, wheezing, difficulty breathing."

While a majority of people with emphysema smoked at some time, not all smokers get emphysema.

About 20% will, and the more someone smokes, the

more the risk rises. It is also affected by genetics and environment, Revah said.

So, why would marijuana smokers' lungs show more damage?

Chalk it up at least in part to differences in how weed and tobacco are used.

Tobacco cigarettes are often filtered, while marijuana is typically smoked without filters. As a result, more particles may be deposited in the airways, Revah said. Weed smokers also tend to take a bigger puff and hold it in longer before exhaling.

"That can lead to micro-trauma to those air spaces," she said.

Determining marijuana's impact on emphysema rates will require large, population-based studies, Revah said.

"There's a public perception that marijuana is safe, that it's safer than cigarettes, and this study raises concern that this may not be true," she said. "It could be more harmful than people realize. It may even be causing irreversible

damage, but ultimately before we can make any big conclusions, we really need more robust studies."

Edible marijuana shouldn't cause any lung damage, Revah said, but whether it affects other parts of the body hasn't been studied.

Dr. Albert Rizzo, chief medical officer for the American Lung Association, said the study confirms suspicions that smoking marijuana damages airways and air sacs. Rizzo was not involved in the study.

"We know that marijuana smoke contains the same carcinogens and toxins and tar that cigarette smoking does, but we really don't have long-term studies that are similar to tobacco-related studies because marijuana has not been able to be studied because of its illegal nature, the fact that many people don't admit to what they're smoking and many people smoke both marijuana and tobacco," Rizzo said. "So, it's hard to sort out what

is causing what."

Even as states legalize marijuana, some people will get it from sources other than a legalized dispensary and that may have contaminants, Rizzo said.

He noted that many people use marijuana for medical reasons. For his own patients, he recommends alternatives to smoking it -- or anything else. People who find they get more relief by smoking should do so only under a doctor's care and supervision, he said.

"We may not know for 10, 15, 20, 30 years whether or not smoking marijuana by itself leads to lung cancer," Rizzo said. "We didn't know that for tobacco for a long, long time and that's the concern that we would have."

The findings were published Tuesday in Radiology.

More information

The U.S. National Library of Medicine has more on emphysema.

Thanksgiving dinner 20% more expensive this year

By Simon Druker
UPI

With Thanksgiving just over a week away, the cost of providing that holiday feast will cost more this year, according to a survey released on Wednesday by the American Farm Bureau Federation.

On average, feeding 10 people at a Thanksgiving table will cost 20% more than last year, according to the bureau's annual survey.

The AFBF pegs the cost of a 10-person holiday meal at \$64.05, or less than \$6.50 per person.

That figure equates to an overall \$10.74 increase over last year's average cost of \$53.31, according to the survey.

For survey purposes, an average Thanksgiving meal comes with turkey, stuffing, sweet potatoes, rolls with butter, peas, cranberries, a veggie tray, pumpkin pie



The cost of providing a Thanksgiving feast will cost on average 20% more this year, according to a survey released on Wednesday by the American Farm Bureau Federation. **Photo by Bill Greenblatt/UPI**

with whipped cream, and coffee and milk in quantities sufficient to serve a family of 10 with plenty for leftovers.

"General inflation slashing the

purchasing power of consumers is a significant factor contributing to the increase in average cost of this year's Thanksgiving dinner," AFBF Chief Economist Roger Cryan

said in a news release.

"Other contributing factors to the increased cost for the meal include supply chain disruptions and the war in Ukraine. The higher retail turkey cost at the grocery store can also be attributed to a slightly smaller flock this year, increased feed costs and lighter processing weights."

The bureau conducted its price check for the survey from Oct. 18-31, before most grocery stores started stocking whole frozen turkeys at much lower prices, which would affect the final number.

Frozen turkey prices have dropped since the beginning of the month, according to the Department of Agriculture's most-recent national retail report.

The average per-pound price for frozen turkeys dropped to 95 cents for the current week, down from \$1.11 the week of Nov. 3, representing a 14% drop.

During the same period, the percentage of grocers across the country offering frozen turkeys at or near that price climbed from 29% to 60%.

It's a different story if you're looking for a fresh Thanksgiving bird.

A fresh Thanksgiving turkey will cost 6.5% more this year, \$1.14 per pound compared to \$1.07 last year, according to USDA data.

The USDA turkey price data shows regional differences in prices, with the birds in the Northeast, South Central states and Alaska going for as high as \$1.99 a pound and up to \$2.99 per pound in Hawaii.

Part of that is due to an outbreak of avian flu, which also hit hard, killing millions of turkeys and chickens. According to USDA data, more than 50 million birds across 46 states have been affected.

Senate advances bill to protect same-sex, interracial marriage

By Pamela Manson
UPI

The U.S. Senate on Wednesday advanced a bill that would codify federal protections for same-sex and interracial marriages while also protecting religious liberty rights.

The vote to begin debate of the Respect for Marriage Act was 62-37, with all Democrats and 12 Republicans voting in favor.

"Today, the Senate made it clear that we stand with the American people by voting to move forward with the #RespectForMarriageAct," Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Wis., the main sponsor of the bill, said in a tweet. "This is a HUGE win and we are one step closer to ensuring same-sex and interracial couples have the same rights & freedoms as everyone else!"

The bill requires the federal government to recognize marriages between two individuals that are valid in the state where they are entered into and guarantees that valid marriages will be recognized, regardless of the couple's sex, race, ethnicity or national origin. The bill would not require a state to issue a marriage license contrary to state law.

The vote was scheduled after a bipartisan group of senators, including Baldwin, crafted an amendment to the legislation that confirms non-profit religious organizations will not be required to provide any services or goods for the solemnization or celebration of a marriage.

In addition, the amendment clarifies the bill does not require or authorize the federal government to recognize polygamous marriages.

The legislation also would repeal the Defense of Marriage Act, a 1996 law that defines marriage for federal purposes as the union of one man and one woman and allows states to refuse to recognize same-sex marriages granted under the laws of other states.

In addition to Baldwin, Sens. Susan Collins, R-Maine, Rob Portman, R-Ohio, Kyrsten Sinema, D-Ariz., and Thom Tillis, R-N.C., helped write the amendment.

The House passed the bill 267-157 in July, with the support of all Dem-



Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Wis., was the main sponsor of the Respect for Marriage Act in the Senate. **Photo by Bonnie Cash/UPI**

ocrats and 47 Republicans. If passed with the amendment, the legislation would return to the House for another vote.

The bill is a response to the U.S. Supreme Court's opinion in June that struck down the landmark Roe vs. Wade decision that legalized abortion. Justice Clarence Thomas, who joined the majority, wrote in a concurrence that the court should reconsider some of its previous rulings, include decisions allowing same-sex marriage and access to contraception.

Religious liberty advocates and faith groups are divided on the Respect for Marriage Act, with opponents arguing the bill is an attack on people who have a traditional view of marriage as the union of one man and one woman. Some said the bill could lead to unions involving minors and adults or open marriages.

But other religious organizations said the right to marry is a matter of human dignity. Some faith groups - including The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints - supported the bill while also saying their doctrine on traditional marriage remains unchanged.

"We are grateful for the continuing efforts of those who work to ensure the Respect for Marriage Act includes appropriate religious freedom protections while respecting the law and preserving the rights of our LGBTQ brothers and sisters," the

LDS Church, formerly known as the Mormon Church, said in a statement Tuesday. "We believe this approach is the way forward. As we work together to preserve the principles and practices of religious freedom together with the rights of LGBTQ individuals, much can be accomplished to heal relationships and foster greater understanding."

Sen. Mitt Romney, R-Utah, a member of the LDS Church, said in a tweet the legislation provides important protections for religious liberty. He cited Obergefell vs. Hodges, a 2015 Supreme Court decision that said same-sex couples have a fundamental right to marry.

"While I believe in traditional marriage, Obergefell is and has been the law of the land upon which LGBTQ individuals have relied," Romney said. "This legislation provides certainty to many LGBTQ Americans, and it signals that Congress -- and I -- esteem and love all of our fellow Americans equally."

Sen. Mike Lee, R-Utah, who also is an LDS Church member, voted against the bill and called the religious freedom protections "severely anemic."

"The bill significantly enhances the risk of religious institutions losing their tax-exempt status," Lee tweeted. "While it may appear at first glance to protect against that, closer scrutiny reveals that it does not."



The Space Launch System (SLS) rocket carrying an Orion spacecraft lifts off on the maiden flight of NASA's Artemis Program from Complex 39-B at the Kennedy Space Center on November 16, 2022. **Photo by Joe Marino/UPI**

Artemis I captures new images of Earth, the moon and Orion spacecraft

By Doug Cunningham
UPI

Cameras on board NASA's Artemis I began capturing images Wednesday with new views of Earth, the moon and the Orion spacecraft.

After several delays Artemis I blasted off early Wednesday morning from the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Fla. Before returning to Earth, NASA's Artemis I will travel 40,000 miles beyond the moon collecting engineering data.

Four of the 24 cameras on the rocket and spacecraft will enable a selfie view of the spacecraft with Earth or the moon in the background, according to NASA.

The images are expected to produce new perspectives on Earthrise.

"A lot of folks have an impression of Earthrise based on the classic Apollo 8 shot," Melendrez said in a statement. "Images captured during the mission will be different than what humanity saw during Apollo missions, but capturing milestone events such as Earthrise, Orion's farthest distance from Earth, and lunar flyby will be a high priority."

The pictures will provide a new look at the spacecraft exterior as well.

"Each of Orion's four solar array wings has a commercial off-the-shelf camera mounted at the tip that has been highly modified for use in space, providing a view of the spacecraft exterior," Melendrez said.

A technology demonstration called Callisto on the spacecraft will use three in-cabin cameras to test video conferencing capabilities during Orion's flight.

The Artemis mission "will land the first woman and first person of color on the moon," according to NASA.

It will pave the way for a long-term lunar presence, which in turn will serve as a "steppingstone" to send astronauts to Mars.

Mitch McConnell re-elected Senate minority leader, beating Sen. Rick Scott

By Doug Cunningham
UPI

Sen. Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., beat challenger Sen. Rick Scott, R-Fla., to be re-elected as Senate minority leader Wednesday. The vote was 37-10.

The failure of Republicans to generate their expected "red wave" in the midterm elections has roiled the party.

McConnell said at a news conference Wednesday that the Republican Party's failure to pick up seats and win the majority in the Senate can be blamed on too much chaos and too much negativity by Republican candidates.

"Here's the problem," McConnell

said. "We underperformed among voters who did not like President Biden's performance, among independents and among moderate Republicans who looked at us and concluded too much chaos, too much negativity, and we turned off a lot of these centrist voters, which is why I never predicted a red wave to begin with."

McConnell's secret ballot win over Scott happened after a motion by 16 GOP senators to delay the leadership election was defeated.


As GOP senators called for auditing the National Republican Senatorial Committee, Sen. Scott accused former committee chair Sen. Todd

Young, R-Ind., of paying unauthorized and improper bonuses to committee staff in 2020.


Citing a letter Scott sent to GOP senator's seeking their votes, NBC News said Scott told them it's time for Senate Republican conference to be "far more bold and resolute that we have been in the past."

Rep. Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., was nominated by his party to be House speaker as the GOP was one seat short of winning a majority in the House. But the 188-31 nomination vote was short of the 218 votes he will need to actually become House Speaker.

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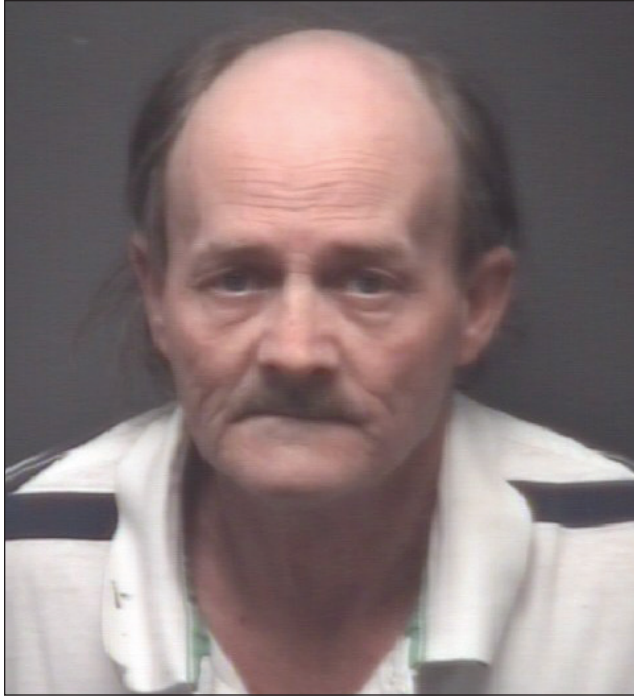
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ROBBERY WITH DANGEROUS WEAPON — FELONY
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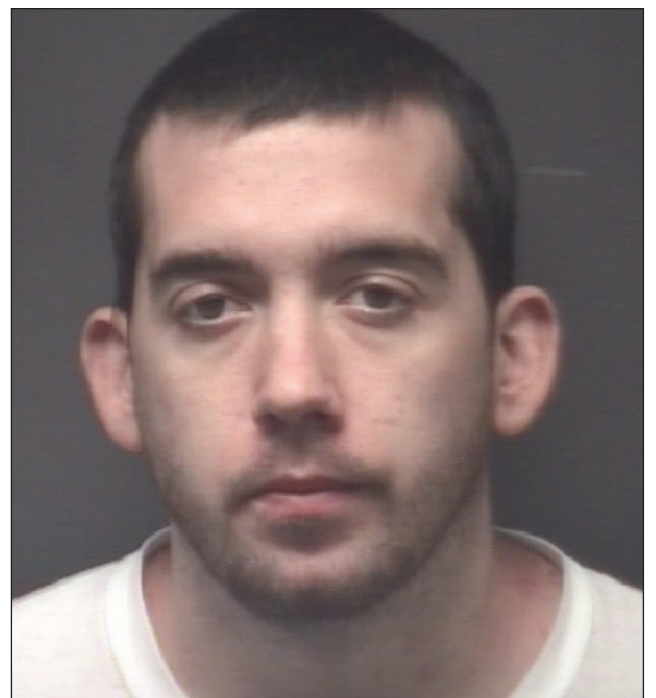
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Rams WR Cooper Kupp to have ankle surgery, out for at least 4 weeks

By Alex Butler
UPI

Los Angeles Rams wide receiver Cooper Kupp will undergo surgery on his injured right ankle and will miss at least four weeks, coach Sean McVay announced Tuesday.

McVay told reporters that Kupp's high-ankle sprain will require surgery Wednesday in Los Angeles. He also will be placed on injured reserve.

Kupp sustained the ankle injury in the fourth quarter of the Rams' 27-17 loss to the Arizona Cardinals on Sunday in Inglewood, Calif.

Kupp, who led the NFL in catches, receiving yards and receiving touchdowns last season, leads the Rams with 75 catches for 812 yards and six scores in nine games this season.

Allen Robinson, Van Jefferson, Brandon Powell, Tutu Atwell, Ben Skowronek and Lance McCutcheon are the other wide receivers on the Rams roster.

McVay also said Rams right guard Chandler Brewer sustained a knee injury Sunday and underwent surgery Tuesday. He will be out for up to six weeks. McVay said left tackle Alaric Jackson is out for the season due to blood clots.

The Rams (3-6) will face the New Orleans Saints (3-7) at 1 p.m. EST Sunday in New Orleans.



Los Angeles Rams wide receiver Cooper Kupp (R) is tackled by Arizona Cardinals linebacker Zaven Collins on Sunday at SoFi Stadium in Inglewood, Calif. Photo by Jon SooHoo/UPI

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College football: Virginia cancels game vs. Coastal Carolina after shooting

By Alex Butler
UPI

The University of Virginia canceled its game Saturday against Coastal Carolina after the on-campus shooting Sunday that killed three football players, the school has announced.

Virginia said in a news release that no decision has been made about the Cavaliers' final game against Virginia Tech on Nov. 26 in Blacksburg, Va.

After gunfire erupted Sunday onboard a charter bus filled with students on the Charlottesville, Va., campus, junior linebacker D'Sean Perry and wide re-

ceivers Devin Chandler and Lavel Davis Jr. were killed. The bus had just returned from a field trip in Washington, D.C.

Officials later identified Marlee Morgan and junior running back Michael Hollins as additional victims. Morgan has been released from the hospital, while Hollins remains in serious but stable condition after two surgeries.

"The decision was made following the shooting of five students on [campus] grounds Sunday night," Virginia said in a news release Wednesday.

Christopher Darnell Jones Jr., 22, made his first

appearance in Albemarle General District Court on Wednesday via video link to hear charges against him.

He faces three counts of second-degree murder and two counts of malicious wounding. He also faces at least three counts of using a firearm to commit a felony.

The court ordered him held without bail. Jones was listed as a freshman member of the Cavaliers football team in 2018-19. In court Wednesday, Jones' criminal history was revealed -- charges from 2021 that included concealed weapons and reckless driving. Sentences for those were suspended.



Blue Jays trade All-Star OF Teoscar Hernandez to Mariners

By Alex Butler
UPI

The Toronto Blue Jays traded All-Star outfielder Teoscar Hernandez to the Seattle Mariners in exchange for pitchers Erik Swanson and Adam Macko, the teams announced Wednesday.

"We began our off-season with the intent to add impact and length to our lineup," Mariners president of baseball operations Jerry Dipoto said in a news release. "In adding Teoscar to an already solid foundation, we feel we've become a far more dangerous offensive club."

Hernandez, 30, hit .267 with 25 home runs and 77 RBIs in 131 games last season for the Blue Jays. The 2021 All-Star selection hit a career-high .296 with 32 homers and 116 RBIs two seasons ago.

Hernandez made his MLB debut in 2016

for the Houston Astros. The Astros traded Hernandez and outfielder Nori Aoki to the Blue Jays in 2017 in exchange for pitcher Francisco Liriano.

Hernandez is eligible for arbitration this off-season. He owns a career .262 batting average, with 133 home runs and 380 RBIs in 651 games.

Swanson, 29, went 3-2 with a 1.68 ERA in 57 games last season for the Mariners. The right-handed relief pitcher posted a 4-12 record with a 4.13 ERA and six saves over four seasons for the Mariners.

Macko, 21, was a seventh-round pick by the Mariners in the 2019 MLB Draft. The left-handed pitcher logged a 3.98 ERA with a 2-7 record in 26 appearances in three seasons at the minor league level. He was the No. 8 prospect in the Mariners organization, according to MLB Pipeline.

Nets hire Jacque Vaughn as head coach

By Alex Butler
UPI

The Brooklyn Nets hired Jacque Vaughn as their head coach, the team announced Wednesday. Vaughn was named interim coach last week after the Nets fired Steve Nash.

"Jacque's basketball acumen, competitiveness and intimate knowledge of our team and organization make him the clear-cut best person to lead our group moving forward," Nets general manager Sean Marks

said in a news release.

"He has a proven ability to get the best out of our players, hold them accountable and play a cohesive, team-first style of basketball."

Vaughn was named interim coach Nov. 1 to temporarily replace Nash. Under Vaughn's helm, the team has a 2-2 record.

Vaughn was in his seventh season as a Nets assistant. He also led the Nets to a 7-3 record in 10 games as Nets head coach during the 2019-20 season.














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La Voz Latina

Court gives Biden administration 5 weeks to end Title 42 rule expelling migrants

By Patrick Hilsman
UPI

A federal court has given the Biden administration until Dec. 21 to wind down its use of Title 42 to expel migrants after striking down the provision on Tuesday.

The policy was instituted by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) under the Trump administration at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic to slow the spread of the disease.

Title 42 has been used 2.5 million times to expel migrants at the U.S.-Mexico border, with 80% of the expulsions taking place under the Biden administration.

The removal of migrants under the policy was classified as "expulsion" rather than a "deportation," meaning arrivals removed under Title 42 were not allowed to appeal the decision or be seen by a judge. Advocates argued it was used arbitrarily as a pretext to expel migrants without due process.

"We have said all along that using Title 42 against asylum seekers was inhumane and driven purely by politics. Hopefully this ruling



A federal court has given the Biden administration until Dec. 21 to roll back Title 42, a policy that allowed the expulsion of migrants based on COVID-19 health concerns. File Photo by Ariana Drehsler/UPI

will end this horrific policy once and for all," ACLU attorney Lee Gelernt said in a statement.

In April the Biden administra-

tion announced plans to roll back Title 42, but they were blocked by a federal judge in Louisiana.

Nearly 6,000 Venezuelan mi-

grants were expelled in October after the Biden Administration expanded Title 42 to include migrants from the troubled nation.

U.S. District Judge Emmet Sullivan ruled that Title 42 was "arbitrary and capricious in violation of the Administrative Procedure Act," which gives federal courts oversight of all agency actions. Sullivan also faulted the CDC for using the policy at a time when COVID-19 was already prevalent in the United States.

After Title 42 was struck down, the Biden administration requested a stay to give them time to implement the change. In its filing the Department of Justice said the Department of Homeland Security "will need to move additional resources to the border and coordinate with stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations and state and local governments, to help prepare for the transition."

Sullivan announced on Wednesday that he would, "with great reluctance," allow five weeks for the policy to be rolled back.

The ruling means that after Dec. 21 migrants can no longer be expelled under the pretext of COVID-19-related health concerns.

Astros' Justin Verlander declines option, becomes free agent

By Alex Butler
UPI

Houston Astros pitcher Justin Verlander, a finalist to win the American League Cy Young Award, declined his \$25 million player option for 2023, the Major League Baseball Players Association announced Thursday.

The nine-time All-Star, former MVP, two-time Cy Young Award winner and two-time World Series champion becomes one of the most prized players in this off-season's free agency pool.

Verlander, 39, won an American League-best 18 games and logged an MLB-best and career-low 1.75 ERA in 28 starts this season. He allowed just four hits and one run over five innings to help the Astros beat the Phillies last week in Game 5 of the World Series.

Verlander, the No. 2 overall pick in the 2004 MLB Draft, made his MLB debut in 2005 for the Detroit Tigers. The Tigers traded Verlander to the Astros in 2017.

The right-handed ace ranks 56th all-time with 244 career victories. He ranks 23rd in MLB history with 9.1 strikeouts per nine innings. He also ranks 12th

all-time with 3,198 strikeouts.

The players union also said Thursday that New York Mets pitcher Mychal Givens, Baltimore Orioles pitcher Jordan Lyles and Boston Red Sox outfielder Tommy Pham will all become free agents after their teams declined 2023 options.

Lyles, 32, went 12-11 with a 4.42 ERA in 32 starts last season for the Orioles. He owns a career 5.10 ERA over 321 appearances. Givens, 32, went 7-3 with a 3.38 ERA in 59 appearances last season, which he split between the Chicago Cubs and Mets. He owns a career 3.40 ERA over 419 appearances.

Pham, 34, hit .236 with 17 home runs and 63 RBIs in 144 games last season for the Red Sox and Cincinnati Reds. He has a career average of .259, with 114 home runs and 97 stolen bases in 876 games.

Eligible MLB players became free agents Sunday. Finalists for 2022 regular-season awards were announced earlier this week. Most contract option decisions were due Thursday. Free agents were allowed to negotiate new deals and sign with new teams Thursday.



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