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Partly cloudy

TRUMP VISITS SANTA FE

President Donald Trump met with the survivors of the Santa Fe shooting on the same day
Quinnipiac University released a poll of Texas voters and shifting stances on gun laws.

TEXAS, 5



Southwest Journalist

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN ■ DOW JONES NEWS FUND CENTER FOR EDITING EXCELLENCE ■ SOUTHWESTJOURNALIST.COM ■ FRIDAY, JUNE 1, 2018



Poll: Parents split on arming teachers

EMMA PLATOFF
Texas Tribune

Fifty-four percent of Texas parents who have children in public schools support arming teachers and other school officials, according to polling numbers from Quinnipiac University released Thursday.

Meanwhile, 49 percent of registered voters support stricter gun laws, according to the poll. That number is down from 55 percent who said they favored stricter gun laws in a previous Quinnipiac poll on April 19. Forty-five percent of voters oppose stricter gun laws —

up from 41 percent in April.

The new polling was conducted after a deadly school shooting May 18 at Santa Fe High School, south of Houston, left 10 people dead and 13 more injured. The data were collected before Republican Gov. Greg Abbott rolled out a school safety plan in a pair of televised appearances Wednesday. Much of Abbott's plan revolves around bolstering an existing state program for arming some school staff.

Abbott compiled the plan after three days of roundtable discussions on the issue last week. It in-

Texas voters:

"I support stricter gun laws."

April 19 | 49%
May 29 | 55%

"I oppose stricter gun laws."

April 19 | 41%
May 29 | 45%

The poll was conducted from May 23 to May 29. The university surveyed 961 registered voters. The margin of error was 3.8 percent.

cludes a slate of measures aimed at "hardening" schools to make them less vulnerable targets, as well as bolstering mental health screening programs with upped state funding. But Abbott also proposed a short list of gun-related measures, including promoting safe storage practices and studying the viability of a "red flag" law that would allow a judge to temporarily take an individual's guns if that person was considered an imminent threat.

In the new poll, support for imposing background checks on all gun buyers hovered relatively un-

changed around 93 percent.

The Santa Fe shooting suspect, 17-year-old Dimitrios Pagourtzis, used his father's guns in the massacre, authorities say, but the family will likely not be held accountable.

"The tragedy at the Santa Fe school south of Houston changed few opinions among Texas voters about gun control. Support for gun control in general is down slightly, while support for background checks for all gun buyers is virtually unchanged," said Peter A. Brown, assistant director of the Quinnipiac Poll.

Titanic exhibit first of its kind

CARL HOOVER
Waco Tribune-Herald

WACO — The tragic 1912 sinking of the luxury ocean liner RMS Titanic with the loss of some 2,200 passengers is a story that still captivates modern-day imaginations.

Within that story are countless stories, inspired by the passengers on board and the items recovered from the ship's ruins, as visitors to the Mayborn Museum will discover beginning Saturday as the nationally touring "Titanic: The Artifacts Exhibition" opens a seven-month run.

The exhibit features more than 150 objects found during deep-sea expeditions to the wreck site in the north Atlantic Ocean, supplemented by replica items, rooms, a frozen iceberg wall, videos and displays.

Visitors will start with the construction of the ship. They will relive the short few days on the inaugural voyage from Southampton, England, to New York, then witness its fatal collision with an iceberg, followed by the sinking in which only a third of the passengers survived.

"It's a Greek tragedy . . . a timeless story," said Alexandra Klingelhofer, vice president of collections for Atlanta-based Premiere Exhibitions, Inc. "It affects people in different ways."

The exhibit, one of several Titanic-related shows mounted and operated by Premiere Exhibitions, Inc., may set the Mayborn Museum on a voyage of its own. Mayborn officials consider it their first blockbuster exhibit — a subject of national interest, whose anticipated audiences are

requiring new procedures of timed tickets, advance purchases, entry line management,

"It's a Greek tragedy . . . a timeless story"

ALEXANDRA KLINGELHOFER

overflow parking and the like.

Tickets for specific dates and times can be purchased online, but tickets also can be purchased on site for the next available time, with a waiting area for those needing to wait until entry.

Many of the Mayborn's past

■ ARTIFACTS, Page 2

TEXAS TAKES NATIONAL SPELLING BEE



PHOTO / PUBLICATION

Fourteen-year-old Karthik Nemmani of McKinney, Texas wins the Scripps National Spelling Bee, where more than \$42,000 in cash and prizes were up for grabs. The finals began with 41 contestants, with the number slowly dwindling over five rounds. But there was never a mass exodus from the stage. At one point in the second round, 21

consecutive competitors spelled their words correctly. A record number of spellers went into the prime-time finals, meaning a late-night finish to a longer-than-usual week. The size of this year's bee field nearly doubled from prior years because of a new wild-card program. Texans from Flower Mound, McKinney, Frisco and Irving made the finals.

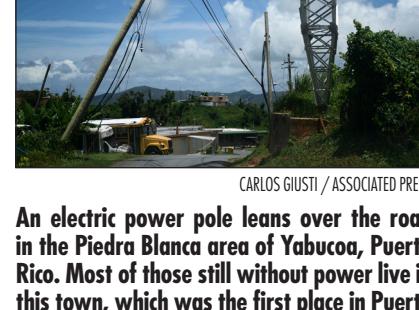
Puerto Rico power grid 'fragile'

Longest black-out in US history continues, despite \$3.8B in repairs

MICHAEL WEISSENSTEIN
Associated Press

CAIN ALTO, Puerto Rico — After months of darkness and stifling heat, Noe Pagan was overjoyed when power-line workers arrived to restore electricity to his home deep in the lush green mountains of western Puerto Rico. But to his dismay, instead of raising a power pole toppled by Hurricane Maria, the federal contractors bolted the new 220-volt line to the narrow trunk of a breadfruit tree — a safety code violation virtually guaranteed to leave Pagan and his neighbors blacked out in a future hurricane.

"I asked the contractors if they were going to connect the cable to the post and they just didn't answer," said Pagan, a 23-year-old garage worker.



CARLOS GIUSTI / ASSOCIATED PRESS

An electric power pole leans over the road in the Piedra Blanca area of Yabucoa, Puerto Rico. Most of those still without power live in this town, which was the first place in Puerto Rico struck by Hurricane Maria.

After an eight-month, \$3.8 billion federal effort to try to end the longest blackout in United States history, officials say Puerto Rico's public electrical authority, the nation's largest, is almost certain to collapse again when the next hurricane hits this island of 3.3 million people.

"It's a highly fragile and vulnerable system that really could suffer worse damage than it suffered with Maria in the face of another natural catastrophe," Puerto Rican Gov. Ricardo Rossello said.

Federal forecasters say there's a 75 percent likelihood that the 2018 Atlantic hurricane season, which begins Friday, will produce between five and nine hurricanes. And there's a 70 percent chance that as many as four of those could be major Category 3, 4, or 5 hurricanes, with winds of 111 mph or higher.

Despite the billions plowed into the grid since Maria hit on Sept. 20, 2017, Puerto Rican officials warn that it could take far less than a Category 4 storm like Maria to cause a blackout like the one that persists today, with some 11,820 homes and businesses still without power.

"The grid is there, but the grid isn't there. It's teetering," said Hector Pesce. ■ PUERTO RICO, Page 2

Census citizenship question sparks suit

ALEXA URA
Texas Tribune

The Mexican American Legislative Caucus and the Texas Senate Hispanic Caucus are suing the Trump administration in hopes of blocking the addition of a citizenship question to the once-a-decade census of every person living in the United States.

In a lawsuit filed Thursday in a Maryland-based federal court, the Texas-based groups allege that the addition of the controversial question is unconstitutional because it will lead to a disproportionate undercount of Latino and Asian residents,

non-citizens and their family members.

That undercount would endanger billions of dollars tied to social services funding and deprive those individuals of equal representation in the U.S. House and during the redrawing of political boundaries that follows each census count, the plaintiffs allege.

The lawsuit against the U.S. Census Bureau and the U.S. Department of Commerce comes about two months after the Bureau announced it would add a question about citizenship to the 2020 census questionnaire. Since then, demographers, local

officials and community organizers have been sounding the alarm about the role the question would play in depressing response rates among Texas immigrants and their families.

Massive both in size and population, The lawsuit was filed on behalf of more than a dozen plaintiffs — including several Texas-based nonprofits that advocate for Latino residents and legislative Latino caucuses out of multiple states — who say they are seeking to "preserve the integrity" of the census count.

The Trump administration's "inclusion of

a citizenship question in the 2020 Census is arbitrary and capricious, an abuse of discretion, and otherwise not in accordance with law," the plaintiffs wrote in their filing.

The citizenship question violates the Constitution's Equal Protection Clause, according to the suit, because it is "motivated by racial animus" toward Latinos, Asians, non-citizens and immigrants and would amount to a violation of the Enumerations and Apportionment Clauses.

Texas has long been a hard-to-count

■ LAWSUIT, Page 2

Puerto Rico ill-equipped for future catastrophes

■ Continued from Page 1

quera, Puerto Rico's commissioner of public safety. "Even if it's a (Category 1), it is in such a state that I think we're going to lose power. I don't know for how long."

Federal officials and Puerto Rican leaders blame decades of mismanagement that left the island's power authority more than \$9 billion in debt after declaring bankruptcy last year. By the time Maria hit, wooden power poles were rotted, transmission towers had rusted through and overgrown trees menaced thousands of miles of power lines.

In many places across Puerto Rico, federal emergency funds allocated in the aftermath of the disaster made up for years of neglected maintenance, replacing decaying infrastructure with tens of thousands of new poles and hundreds of miles of power lines rushed from the U.S. mainland at a steep premium.

But in other areas, crews without adequate supplies patched together damaged poles and power lines in a desperate push to restore power. In the western highlands, power cables were spliced together and woven haphazardly through trees in blatant violation

of basic safety codes. In Pagan's town of Cain Alto and at least one other location, trees were used as makeshift power poles in the absence of proper equipment.

"We patched things up. We worked with the little material that was available and we recycled material," one power authority worker said, speaking on condition of anonymity for fear of retaliation from management. "We took the post that had fallen over or broken and we put it up somewhere else. A lot of the work is defective."

Fredyson Martinez, vice president of the power authority workers' union, said he estimates that roughly 10 to 15 percent of the repair work done during the last eight months did not meet basic quality standards.

Federal and Puerto Rican officials are preparing for another catastrophe. The Federal Emergency Management Agency is leaving some 600 generators installed in key sites such as hospitals and water pumping stations, more than six times the number before Maria. FEMA has stockpiled 5.4 million liters of water and more than 80,000 tarps, and is distrib-

uting them and other emergency supplies to towns across the island so they will be in place for the next disaster.

Power company director Walter Higgins said crews also are preparing to strengthen the power grid, a project he estimates will take years and could cost between \$5 billion to \$8 billion. He said within four months, crews in the nearby islands of Vieques and Culebra will start building the grid to modern standards.

"If a hurricane comes tomorrow it will leave the island completely without power again," said Juan Rosario, a community activist and former member of the power authority's board of directors.

The potential sale won't affect the federal government's decision to spend billions of dollars on repairing and improving the grid, said Byrne, the head of FEMA's operations in the Caribbean.

"I can't wait, because these are U.S. citizens that are at risk. U.S. citizens deserve every ounce of effort that I can bring to this, and that's what they're going to get," Byrne said.



RAMON ESPINOSA / ASSOCIATED PRESS

After an eight-month, \$3.8 billion federal effort to try to end the longest blackout in United States history, officials say the nation's largest public electrical authority is almost certain to collapse again when the next hurricane hits.



ROD AYDELOTT / ASSOCIATED PRESS

Jeff Huckaby readies a replica of a First-Class state room at the Titanic exhibit at Baylor University's Mayborn Museum in Waco, Texas. The tragic 1912 sinking of the luxury ocean liner RMS Titanic is a story that still captivates people. The exhibit features more than 150 objects found during deep-sea expeditions to the wreck site in the north Atlantic Ocean, supplemented by replica items, rooms, a frozen iceberg wall, videos and displays.

Artifacts, tour bring Titanic to life in Waco

■ Continued from Page 1

touring exhibitions were set up within a week of their opening, but installing "Titanic: The Artifacts Exhibition" took its crew 17 days, four of which were spent on installing trusses and lighting.

The artifacts were chosen to show passengers' experience on the White Star Lines' luxury liner as well as individual stories connected with specific items. To make that connection to individual stories, exhibit tickets resembling boarding passes will have a passenger's name.

A wall of survivors' names at

exhibit's end will allow visitors to see if their passenger was one of the 705 who survived.

"It just brings all that home," said Klingelhofer, overseeing the Mayborn installation.

A reconstructed First Class cabin features a standard sized bed, desk and chair, sofa, wooden table and chairs with electric lights in wall sconces, all done in Dutch Modern interior with dark red walls.

Missing from all is the name Titanic — rather than brand items for each of its three luxury liners, the Olympic, the Titanic and the Britannic, the steamship company put its name and logo on everything. "Nothing says Titanic. They were ordering for three huge ships," Klingelhofer noted.

The exhibit runs through Jan. 6.

Lawsuit attempts to block citizenship question

■ Continued from Page 1

state because of the millions of Texans who fall into the categories of people who pose the biggest challenges for the headcount — immigrants, college students, and children younger than 5 years old, to name a few.

In announcing the addition of the citizenship question back in March, Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross indicated the citizenship-related data were necessary for "more effective enforcement" of the federal Voting Rights Act.

Those working toward an accurate count said they were already working from behind even before the Trump administration announced it would add the citizenship question to the questionnaire. They said they were bracing for challenges both practical — Hurricane Harvey displacement, internet accessibility and fewer funds with which to knock on doors — and political — namely anti-immigrant rhetoric and fears that people would be too afraid to respond to a government questionnaire — that would make Texas even tougher to count.

The census determines how many representatives Texas is entitled to elect to Congress and serves as a roadmap for the distribution of billions of federal dollars to the state and local communities, including funding for low-income housing, medical assistance and transportation projects.

As they embark on preparations for the 2020 count, local



At the Texas Capitol, state Rep. César Blanco, D-El Paso, addresses the decision taken by the Trump Administration to add a citizenship question to the 2020 Census. A lawsuit against the U.S. Census Bureau and the U.S. Department of Commerce was filed Thursday in response to the proposed question.

officials have also stepped into the legal fight over the citizenship question in court. Earlier this month, three border counties — El Paso, Hidalgo and Cameron — joined a coalition of more than 30 states, cities and counties that has also sued to block the inclusion of the citizenship question.

Meanwhile, the state's Republican attorney general, Ken Paxton, has made clear he has no intention of fighting the question. In an op-ed published in March, Paxton chalked up concerns about the citizenship question as "partisan

uproar" that is not "being driven by the facts."

The Census Bureau is still waiting for congressional approval of the 2020 questionnaire that includes the citizenship question. The bureau has not asked all households about citizenship since the 1950 census, though it does ask about citizenship as part of annual surveys that only cover a sample of U.S. residents.

An accurate census is critical to the state.

DJ News Fund interns have promising futures

Eleven college students and recent college graduates are headed to copy editing internships after completing 10 days of intensive preparation at The University of Texas at Austin.

The interns are among a group of undergraduate and graduate students placed in internships in copy editing, sports copy editing, business reporting and digital journalism.

The highly competitive national program is operated by the Dow Jones News Fund. The more than 750 applicants had to take a test and complete an extensive application.

Newspaper professionals, visiting faculty and UT journalism faculty moderated the sessions in this 20th residency program at UT-Austin.

In the latter half of the pre-internship training, participants produced three issues of a model newspaper, the Southwest Journalist, as well as a companion online product, swjournalist.com.

The UT-News Fund interns serve internships of 10 to 12 weeks.

Grants from the News Fund and contributions from participating news organizations cover the participants' training, including housing, meals, transportation and instruction.

Participating newspapers also pay interns a weekly wage for their internship work. Students returning to their universities after the internships are eligible for a \$1,000 scholarship provided by the News Fund.

Beth Butler and Bradley Wilson served as co-directors of the workshop with assistance from Boyle, administrative manager of the UT School of Journalism.

Faculty included George Sylvie, associate professor at UT-Austin;

Mark Grabowski, associate professor at Adelphi University; and Linda Shockley, managing director of the News Fund in Princeton, New Jersey.

Students also had the opportunity to visit with John Cox and other staff members at Community Impact Newspaper in



MARC SPEIR / ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sorayah Zahir, Yelena Dzhanova, Isabelle D'Antonio, Laurel Foster, Anna Glavash; (middle) Emily McPherson, Brendan Wynne, Caroline Hurley, Noah Broder, Emily Burleson, George Roberson; (back) Bradley Wilson, Beth Butler, Heather Taylor Flugerville, Corrie MacClaggan and staff at the Texas Tribune, Dan Cunningham, retired senior editor of the Houston Chronicle; and Will Weisert, Associated Press Austin Bureau chief.



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INTERNATIONAL**Trudeau won't meet Trump after precondition set**

TORONTO — Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said he offered to go to Washington this week to complete talks on renegotiating the North American Free Trade Agreement, but that Vice President Mike Pence told him a meeting with President Trump would only happen if Trudeau agreed to put a sunset clause into the deal.

Trudeau said he refused to go because of the "totally unacceptable" precondition. He made the comment Thursday while outlining Canada's response to U.S. tariffs on steel and aluminum imports.

In a call to Trump May 25, Trudeau offered to meet because he felt they were close to an agreement.

Police: Nicaragua violence leaves 15 dead

MANAGUA, Nicaragua — More than a dozen people died in shootings that erupted around Mothers' Day protests in Nicaragua, but the government and human rights groups differed on who was to blame.

The Nicaraguan Center for Human Rights, which said it had members participating in Wednesday's march, said at least 11 people died when peaceful marches were attacked "by the repressive police and shock forces" loyal to President Daniel Ortega.

Francisco Diaz, the second in command of the national police, said there were 15 deaths nationwide, which he blamed on "criminal gangs." Foreign Minister Denis Moncada said the violence was generated by opposition political groups and denied government responsibility.

The marches were led by mothers of victims of earlier protests. But some ended with gunmen firing into crowds sending thousands of demonstrators running for cover.

The gunfire appeared to come from government supporters near the end of the march, but demonstrators armed with improvised bottle-rocket launchers also opened fire.

The country's Roman Catholic church hierarchy said in a statement the violence showed it couldn't yet resume a dialogue between protesters and Daniel Ortega's government.

Shortly before the attack, Ortega told supporters that he was committed to peace.

Protests began in mid-April in response to changes to the social security system, but expanded to call for Ortega's exit.

Africa's mountain gorilla population exceeds 1,000

KAMPALA, Uganda — A new survey shows the number of Africa's critically endangered mountain gorillas has exceeded 1,000 after conservation efforts, making them the only great ape in the world growing in number.

The World Wildlife Fund says the population increased to 604 from about 480 in 2010 in the Virunga Massif, an area encompassing parts of Rwanda, Uganda and Congo.

Combined with the latest published figures from the gorillas' other home, Uganda's Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, the overall population is 1,004. Ugandan officials say they expect a rise in the Bwindi population when the results of a recent, separate survey there are released.

The mountain gorilla's population dropped sharply in the past century because of poaching, illness and human encroachment.

Women take abortion pills in Northern Ireland protest

LONDON — Abortion rights campaigners took what they said were abortion pills outside a Belfast court Thursday, as pressure grows to ease Northern Ireland's ban on terminating pregnancies.

Northern Ireland is the only part of the U.K. where abortion is illegal in all but exceptional cases. Last week, the neighboring Republic of Ireland voted to remove a ban on abortions, putting pressure on the north to follow suit.

Campaigners used a small robot to distribute pills, before three women flanked by others swallowed the tablets.

Police officers seized the pills and robot, and attempted to lead one woman away.

Organizers didn't say whether the women were pregnant, noting it would be illegal to take the pills if they were. The robot was operated from the Netherlands to avoid breaching the law.

Eleanor Crossey Malone, who swallowed a pill, said she acted "in defiance of the extremely outdated, medieval, anti-choice laws that exist in Northern Ireland."

Some British lawmakers are calling on Prime Minister Theresa May's government to change Northern Ireland's abortion law. The government says that is a matter for Northern Ireland's administration, which is currently suspended amid a dispute between parties.

'Burqa Ban': Denmark bans face-covering garments

COPENHAGEN, Denmark — Denmark joined Austria, France and Belgium in deciding Thursday to ban garments that cover the face, including Islamic veils such as the niqab and burqa.

The government says the law, which was presented by the center-right governing coalition, is not aimed at any religions and does not ban headscarves, turbans or the Jewish skull cap.

However, the law is popularly known as the "Burqa Ban" and is mostly seen as being directed at the dress worn by some Muslim women.

Denmark's justice minister said it will be up to police to use their "common sense" when they see people violating the law. The law allows people to cover their face when there is a "recognizable purpose" like cold weather.

First-time offenders risk fines and repeat offenses could trigger jail sentences.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Spain government poised to fall

ARITZ PARRA
Associated Press

MADRID — Spain's conservative government appears doomed to lose a no-confidence vote in parliament Friday, with the center-left Socialist party poised to take over.

A Basque nationalist party's announcement that it would vote in favor of the motion spelled the almost certain end of Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy and foretold the stunning collapse of his minority government.

The impending downfall of Rajoy's government after ruling for nearly eight years came days after his party's reputation was damaged by a verdict that identified it as a beneficiary of a large kickbacks-for-contracts scheme.

The unexpected development injected a new element of tension into European Union politics and global financial markets, already unsettled by Italy's struggles to install a new government.

Under a law that prevents a power vacuum, Socialist leader Pedro Sanchez would immediately become the new leader of the eurozone's No. 4 economy and a prominent EU leader at a time when the bloc faces numerous challenges.

In the no-confidence debate, Sanchez called on Rajoy to step down over the kickbacks scandal.

"Are you ready to step down here and now? Resign and everything will end," Sanchez told the prime minister.



Spain's Socialist leader Pedro Sanchez addresses lawmakers during the first day of a motion of no-confidence session at the Spanish parliament in Madrid Thursday. Spain's opposition Socialists tried to persuade smaller parties to support a bid to oust Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy's conservative government as parliament opened a tense debate.

Rajoy responded by accusing Sanchez of a power grab.

"Everybody knows that Pedro Sanchez is never going to win the elections, and this is the reason for his motion, his urgency," Rajoy told lawmakers, reminding them that the Socialists lost two general elections under Sanchez's leadership and warning that a Socialist government would endanger the country's financial stability.

Sanchez promised to abide by a national budget recently negotiated by Rajoy and vowed to open talks with separatists in the Catalan regional government over

their demands for independence, which has dogged Spain for the past eight months.

While in power, Rajoy successfully steered Spain out of its worst economic crisis in decades and achieved some of the strongest economic growth in Europe.

But the strong economy wasn't enough, and Rajoy was undone by the corruption scandal. Last week, judges delivered hefty prison sentences to 29 business people and Popular Party members, including some elected officials.

The coming months could be difficult for Sanchez to navigate

if he takes over, with a minority Socialist government needing to please numerous parties to pass legislation. Rajoy has labeled that prospect a "Frankenstein government," while critics refer to Rajoy's government as "zombies."

Ciudadanos leader Albert Rivera said his center-right party would vote against the no-confidence motion Friday.

"I don't want a corruption-marred 'zombie government' but neither a 'Frankenstein government' with those who want to break Spain apart," Rivera said.



ALESSANDRA TARANTINO / ASSOCIATED PRESS

Italian President Sergio Mattarella addresses journalists at the presidential palace at the end of the second day of political consultations in Rome on April 5.

Italy's president affirms populist pick for premier

COLLEEN BARRY
Associated Press

MILAN — Italy's anti-establishment 5-Star Movement and right-wing League succeeded Thursday in forming western Europe's first populist government, which will be headed by a political novice whose first try was rejected four days earlier as too risky.

What changed was the willingness of 5-Star leader Luigi Di Maio and League leader Matteo Salvini to shuffle the proposed roster of government ministers amid a financial market scare.

After the fits, starts and financial turbulence of recent days, the coalition government put its populist posture on full display in Salvini's first public remarks.

"I want to make Italy a protagonist in Europe again. With good manners and without creating confusion," Salvini said to cheers in his home region of Lombardy.

Just a short time earlier, President Sergio Mattarella's office announced that the new premier, University of Florence law professor Giuseppe Conte, and his ministers would be sworn in Friday.

It was a stunning comeback from Sunday, when Conte — the premier-designate at the time — left a meeting with Mattarella empty-handed.

Emerging from a similar meeting with a different ending Thursday night, Conte read his Cabinet list and pledged to "work with de-

termination to improve the quality of life of all Italians."

The proposed Cabinet includes Di Maio, architect of the government's proposed basic income for struggling Italians, and Salvini — who has pledged to expel hundreds of thousands of migrants.

An inconclusive parliamentary election in March produced months of stalemate before Italian political machinery went into overdrive this week. After rejecting Conte's first attempt, Mattarella tapped a former International Monetary Fund official to head a possible interim government to see Italy to an early election.

But investors, fearing the vote would be a referendum on the euro, revolted, sending Italian stocks plummeting. Just the prospect of a political government calmed markets Thursday.

Analysts have raised questions about the potentially tough role Conte would play with the 5-Star and League leaders.

Lorenzo Codogno, a former Treasury official and economic analyst, said he predicts "trench warfare" between the government and Mattarella.

"Still," Codogno said, "it is well possible that the near-term financial market reaction is positive, as [the] breakthrough reduced the uncertainty and at least provides Italy with a much-needed government."

"That Canada could be considered a national security threat to the United States is inconceivable."

JUSTIN TRUDEAU

The duties will give a boost to U.S. steel and aluminum makers by making foreign metals more expensive, but U.S. companies that use imported steel will face higher costs. And the tariffs will allow domestic steel and aluminum producers to raise prices, squeezing companies — from automakers to can producers — that buy those metals.

Europe, Japan and other U.S. trading partners are contesting the tariffs with the World Trade Organization.

Critics say the tariffs would do little to address the real problem plaguing metals producers: massive overproduction by China that has flooded world markets.

House Speaker Paul Ryan was among several leading Republicans critical of Thursday's action. He said the decision "targets America's allies when we should be working with them to address the unfair trading practices of countries like China" and that he plans to work with Trump on "better options."

The EU earlier threatened to counterpunch by targeting U.S. products, including bourbon, blue jeans and motorcycles. Mexico said it will penalize U.S. various imports.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced plans to slap tariffs on \$12.8 billion worth of U.S. products, ranging from steel to toilet paper.

"That Canada could be considered a national security threat to the United States is inconceivable," Trudeau said.

DEATH AND GLITTER: GUCCI HOSTS FRANCE SHOW IN ROMAN RUINS

Models wear creations from Gucci's 2019 cruise fashion collection at the ancient site of Alyscamps in southern France Wednesday. Singer Elton John, rapper A\$AP Rocky and actresses Salma Hayek and Saoirse Ronan were among the spectators at the Italian powerhouse's itinerant annual spectacle. Guests gasped as the show opened with coordinated bursts of fire and a line of flames that ignited all the way down the center of the 100-meter-long runway.

CLAUDE PARIS / ASSOCIATED PRESS

Famous chef mentor dies

JANET MC CONAUGHEY
Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — Ella Brennan, who couldn't cook but played a major role in putting New Orleans on the world's culinary map, died Thursday. She was 92.

Brennan was credited with creating nouvelle Creole cuisine, was the matriarch of a family that owns nearly two dozen restaurants and, at Commander's Palace, cultivated many of the city's top chefs, including Paul Prudhomme and Emeril Lagasse. She won the James Beard Foundation's lifetime achievement award in 2009. "I had a barrel of fun and if anybody calls that work they're crazy," Brennan said in October 2015.

"She can't really boil water," Lagasse said that year. But, he said, "She's one of the greatest restaurateurs I've ever met. She has an incredible palate and an even more incredible mind."

Brennan started in the business as a high school kid working in the restaurant of her older brother Owen. Mostly, she taught herself, reading and asking questions of just about anyone else who crossed her path.

Her mentoring took many forms: weekly "foodie meetings," trips to New York and abroad to learn from restaurants, and notes. Lagasse recalled one handed to him during his early years at Commander's Palace: "When you come to work tomorrow, do me a favor and leave your ego at home." They'd often sit at her desk together on Saturdays to thumb through menus and cookbooks, discussing how to "creolize" dishes for Commander's customers.

The American Culinary Federation's New Orleans chapter named an annual award for her, stating, "Her talent for teaching and coaching young people with a passion for the restaurant business has led to a legion of chefs who named her as their mentor."

1 dead in Va. as Alberto turns creeks into raging rivers

JEFFREY S. COLLINS AND SARAH RANKIN
Associated Press

Heavy rains generated by subtropical Storm Alberto unleashed flooding in Virginia that washed out bridges, damaged homes, closed schools and transformed a normally peaceful creek into a raging river that swept away cars with people still in them. At least one person was killed and rescuers were searching for others.

In Albemarle County, two cars were swept into Ivy Creek around 9:30 p.m. Wednesday. The occupant of one car was able to swim to a safe location, police said in a news release.

But witnesses saw a man and woman get swept away as they exited their Toyota Prius, Albemarle County Fire Rescue Chief Dan Eggleston said at a news conference.

Rescue crews searching in and around Ivy Creek Thursday found the body of one of two occupants. "Ivy Creek is normally a very doc-



After heavy overnight rains, the Rivanna river flooded Thursday and covered the playground in Riverview Park near Charlottesville, Va. Connor Robins, 9, stands at the floodwaters' edge. Other rivers in the area flooded, sweeping away cars.

ile creek but with 8 to 10 inches (20 to 25 centimeters) of rain ... it turned into a swollen, raging river. And it just tossed and turned both of those vehicles," Eggleston said.

A search continued late in the afternoon for the second person, while farther north in Madison

County, the sheriff's office said rescuers were searching for a female reported missing in water the night before.

The storm, already blamed for at least four deaths in the U.S. earlier in the week, was pushing across the Great Lakes on Thurs-

day. But the National Weather Service said the potential for more rainfall and flash flooding would continue for the Southeast, the Ohio Valley and the mid-Atlantic through the end of the week.

Authorities also responded to at least 10 other water rescues and received reports of damage to homes, the extent of which wasn't immediately clear, Eggleston said.

Schools in the county were

closed due to poor road conditions.

Authorities throughout the

region posted photos of washed-

out roads and bridges, and they

warned people to avoid unnecessary travel.

Eggleston warned of the pos-

sibility of more flooding as soon

as Thursday evening, when there

was a chance of additional rain.

"Everything is just bubbling," he

said. "The streams are over-

flowing right now. Everything's at full

capacity, if not more. So any addi-

tional rain would just make them

swell again."

Puff, puff, plunge for pot prices in Ore.

GILLIAN FLACCUS
Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. — When Oregon lawmakers created the state's legal marijuana program, they had one goal in mind above all else: to convince illicit pot growers to leave the black market.

That meant low barriers for entering the industry that also targeted long-standing medical marijuana growers, whose product is not taxed. As a result, weed production boomed — with a bitter consequence.

Now, marijuana prices here are in freefall, and the craft cannabis farmers who put Oregon on the map decades before broad legalization say they are in peril of losing their now-legal businesses as the market adjusts.

Oregon's Liquor Control Commission on Wednesday announced they will stop processing new applications for marijuana licenses in two weeks to address a severe backlog and ask state lawmakers to take up the issue next year.

Experts say the dizzying evolution of Oregon's marijuana industry may well be a cautionary tale for California, where a similar regulatory structure could mean an oversupply on a much larger scale. "For the way the program is set up, the state (California) just wants to get as many people in as possible, and they make no bones about it," said Hilary Bricken, a Los Angeles-based attorney spe-

cializing in marijuana business law. "Most of these companies will fail as a result of oversaturation."

The oversupply can be traced largely to state lawmakers' and regulators' earliest decisions to shape the industry. They were acutely aware of Oregon's entrenched history of providing top-drawer pot to the black market nationwide, as well as a concentration of small farmers who had years of cultivation experience in the legal, but largely unregulated, medical pot program.

Getting those growers into the system was critical if a legitimate industry was to flourish, said Sen. Ginny Burdick, a Portland Democrat who co-chaired a committee created to implement the voter-approved legalization measure.

To encourage this transition, lawmakers decided not to cap licenses; to allow businesses to apply for multiple licenses; and to implement relatively inexpensive licensing fees.

The decision to stop processing

license applications comes after U.S. Attorney Billy Williams challenged state officials to address the oversupply. "In my view, and frankly in the view of those in the industry that I've heard from, it's a failing of the state for not stepping back and taking a look at where this industry is at following legalization," Williams told the AP in a phone interview.

Lawmakers also quickly back-

tracked on a rule requiring that marijuana businesses have a majority ownership by someone with Oregon residency after entrepreneurs complained it was hard to secure startup money. That change opened the door to deep-pocketed, out-of-state companies that could begin consolidating the industry.

Now, cannabis retail chains are emerging to take advantage of the shake-up. A company called Nectar has 13 stores around the state — with three more on tap — and says on its website it is buying up for-sale dispensaries too. Canada-based Golden Leaf Holdings bought the successful Oregon startup Chalice and has six stores around Portland, with another slated to open.

William Simpson, Chalice's founder and Golden Leaf Holdings CEO, is expanding into Northern California, Nevada and Canada. Simpson welcomes criticism that his business is to cannabis what Starbucks is to mass-market coffee. "If you take Chalice like Starbucks, it's a known quantity, it's a brand that people know and trust," he said.

Amy Margolis, the Oregon Cannabis Association's executive director, says capping licenses would only spur more consolidation in the long term. Margolis says, "I'm very interested to see ... how this market settles itself and (in) being able to do that from a little less of a reactionary place."



Cleveland Cavaliers forward LeBron James shoots against Golden State Warriors guard Klay Thompson and forward Draymond Green during the first half of Game 1 of the NBA Finals in Oakland, Calif., Thursday.

BEN MARGOT / ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cavs and Warriors meet in NBA Finals

BRIAN MAHONEY
Associated Press

As Round 4 of the record-setting rivalry begins Thursday night, has Warriors-Cavaliers become too much of a good thing?

"I don't think so," Golden State guard Klay Thompson said. "I think the rest of the NBA has got to get better. It's not our fault. The only people I hear saying that are fans from other teams, which is natural. I don't blame them. But as long as our fan base is happy, that's all that matters."

It's the first time in NBA, NFL, MLB or NHL history that the same teams are meeting four

straight times in the championship round, and intrigue in the teams hasn't waned yet. The NBA had its most-watched conference finals since 2012, as both teams had to rally from 3-2 deficits to win Game 7s on the road.

But if this series quickly becomes as lopsided as some fear — ABC analyst Jeff Van Gundy said he couldn't remember a bigger gap between finals teams and said any game the Cavs win is a huge upset — many of those people who have tuned in the last few years might be looking for something else to watch by the time the series switches to Cleveland.

"If James and the Cavaliers win Game 1, you know, the interest is going to skyrocket because they are going to have done what very few — except for them maybe — think they can do," Van Gundy said. "If they get blown out both games, it doesn't matter what we say. People aren't going to be as excited."

The players won't apologize for showing up again or worry that it hurts the NBA.

"I mean, it may not be as suspenseful as a lot of people want it to be or as drama-filled," Kevin Durant said, "but that's what you've got movies and music for."

NATIONAL

Trump pardons D'Souza, says more may come

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump on Thursday announced on Twitter that he is giving a full pardon to conservative provocateur Dinesh D'Souza and said he is considering action in two other cases, those of Martha Stewart and convicted former Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich.

Early Thursday, Trump tweeted he would pardon D'Souza, saying, "He was treated very unfairly by our government!" D'Souza pleaded guilty in 2014 to campaign finance fraud, for which he claimed selective prosecution. The judge who presided over his case ruled he had produced no evidence to back up that assertion.



D'Souza

His case has been a cause for some conservatives, who say D'Souza was targeted for his caustic, sometimes racist, criticism of former President Barack Obama and his wife.

Later, Trump said he was also considering pardoning Stewart, who was convicted in an insider trade case in 2004. He also said he might move to limit Blagojevich's sentence, indicating that he thought it was excessive. Blagojevich, a Democrat, was convicted of corruption for seeking to benefit from making a Senate appointment to fill the vacancy left after former Sen. Barack Obama became president.

Opioid maker seeks dismissal of Alaska lawsuit

JUNEAU, Alaska — The maker of the prescription opioid painkiller OxyContin is asking a judge in Alaska to dismiss a lawsuit that lays blame on the company for the state's epidemic of opioid abuse. The state sued Purdue Pharma and its affiliates last year, alleging deceptive marketing practices and saying Purdue developed "a well-funded and deeply deceptive marketing scheme that targeted prescribers and prospective patients and caused a sea change in how opioids were perceived and prescribed."

Purdue and other drugmakers are facing hundreds of lawsuits from governments claiming the companies played a role in sparking opioid addiction and an overdose crisis that killed 42,000 Americans in 2016. Motions to dismiss have been filed by manufacturers in other cases, with rulings pending in several of the lawsuits.

In court filings in the Alaska case, Purdue attorneys say the state is trying to hold the company liable while disregarding factors such as a doctor's judgment, a patient's decision on how to use the drug, and the state's decision on whether to cover drug costs through Medicaid.

St. Paul archdiocese to pay \$210M to abuse victims

ST. PAUL, Minn. — The Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis has agreed to pay \$210 million settlement with 450 victims of clergy sexual abuse as part of its plan for bankruptcy reorganization, an attorney said Thursday, making it the second-largest U.S. payout in the priest sex abuse scandal.

Victims' attorney Jeff Anderson said the settlement was reached with the survivors and the archdiocese and includes accountability measures. The money, a total of \$210,290,724, will go into a pot to pay survivors, with the amount for each survivor to be determined.

Archbishop Bernard Hebda said he was grateful to victims who came forward. "I recognize that the abuse stole so much from you, your childhood, your innocence, your ability to trust ... your faith," he said, adding that he hopes the settlement brings closure to victims.

Nebraska officials fear grain tower will collapse

SOUTH SIOUX CITY, Neb. — Authorities have not let northeast Nebraska residents who live near a grain elevator damaged in an explosion return to their homes, fearing the structure could collapse at any moment.

Tuesday's blast blew a gaping hole into the Andersen Farms elevator in South Sioux City, injuring two people. City Police Chief Ed Mahon told the Sioux City (Iowa) Journal that inspectors haven't identified the cause of the explosion.

The structural integrity of the 230-foot tower also remains uncertain, Mahon said. Engineers hope to tear down the elevator in a controlled fashion before it falls on its own.

The evacuation zone has been reduced, so some residents living near the grain elevator have gone back to their homes. Residents who are still restricted from their homes were permitted to return briefly to retrieve belongings.

Calif. to invest in friendly future for electric vehicles

LOS ANGELES — California utilities will invest \$768 million to expand a network of charging stations and other infrastructure for electric vehicles as the state moves toward a goal of 5 million zero-emission cars on the roads by 2030.

The California Public Utilities Commission voted 5-0 Thursday to pay for programs statewide over the next five years, with an emphasis on establishing facilities in disadvantaged communities where traffic and air pollution are often heaviest. The funding includes \$136 million by San Diego Gas & Electric Co. to provide rebates for up to 60,000 customers to install home charging stations. Pacific Gas and Electric will build 230 direct current fast-charging stations, for a total of nearly \$22.5 million. And Southern California Edison will lay out \$343 million for the electrification of almost 8,500 medium- and heavy-duty vehicles.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

OREGON WEED BY THE NUMBERS

1,000,000

pounds of marijuana

4,000,000

Oregon residents

50%

lower wholesale prices

\$7

less per gram

1,001

licenses granted

950

licenses pending

TEXAS AND SOUTHWEST**Body of Guatemalan shot by US agents returns home**

GUATEMALA CITY — The body of a young Guatemalan woman who was shot dead last week by a U.S. border agent near Laredo, Texas, arrived Thursday in her home country and was turned over to her grieving parents.

Lidia and Gilberto Gomez received the white coffin carrying their daughter Claudio Patricia Gomez in the Guatemalan capital. With the coffin cover partly lifted, they kissed and caressed the glass pane in which she was encased.

They were taking the body to her hometown of San Juan Ostuncalco for a wake and burial.

Gomez, 19, who studied forensic accounting, had sought admission to a state university but failed to pass three admission exams. Living in poverty and unable to find work, she left for the United States about a month ago.

On May 23 she died of a gunshot to the head in an incident that is still under investigation.

The U.S. Border Patrol initially said that the lone agent fired after being attacked "by multiple subjects using blunt objects." It later said the group had ignored his orders to get on the ground and "rushed him."

It initially described Gomez as "one of the assailants" but later revised that to say she was "one member of the group."

Three other Guatemalans were taken into custody during the incident.

Fearing metal, H-E-B chain recalls some ice cream

SAN ANTONIO — The H-E-B grocery chain has issued a voluntary recall for some ice cream distributed to stores in Texas and Mexico amid concerns about metal possibly in the products.

San Antonio-based H-E-B on Wednesday announced the recall for certain flavors and container sizes of EconoMax and Hill Country Fare ice creams and Creamy Creations sherberts.

H-E-B says broken metal was discovered in processing equipment during routine maintenance. No injuries have been reported.

The recall involves 19 products, ranging from single quarts to 4.5 quarts. Most recalled items have best-by-use dates of June 2019.

H-E-B says all recalled products have been removed from store shelves.

Customers who purchased the recalled items can return the products to an H-E-B store for a full refund, or contact H-E-B Customer Service at 855-432-4438.

Texas seminary terminates prominent Baptist leader

FORT WORTH — A Texas seminary has terminated a former head of the Southern Baptist Convention over his handling of a sexual abuse case at another institution.

The Star-Telegram reports that the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary released a statement saying that Paige Patterson will be removed from all of his positions and won't receive compensation.

The move follows allegations that Patterson made sexist and demeaning comments to women. He also suggested that some women should tolerate abuse.

The Fort Worth seminary named Patterson president emeritus on May 23 after pushing him out of his position as president. The board had also said that he and his wife could continue to live on campus as theologians-in-residence.

The executive committee revoked the former decision after confirming new information on how he handled a sexual abuse allegation against a student.

Hurricane-stricken areas to receive \$277M

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Transportation will provide more than \$277 million to help hurricane-damaged public transportation in Texas, Florida, Georgia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The funding announced Thursday is earmarked for response and rebuilding projects related to last year's hurricanes — Harvey, Irma and Maria — and emergency preparedness.

Harvey made landfall in South Texas on Aug. 25, leading to heavy rain that swamped parts of Houston. Irma and Maria came ashore in September in Florida and Puerto Rico, respectively.

The DOT's Federal Transit Administration says the bulk of the grants — \$223.5 million — will assist Puerto Rico. Parts of the island still lack power months after the hurricane.

Texas will receive \$23.3 million, while

Puerto Rico's share is \$22.8 million.

The federal money includes \$6.7 million for the U.S. Virgin Islands, plus \$187,000 for Georgia.

Suspect in deadly church bus crash pleads no contest

VALDEZ — Prosecutors in Texas say the driver of a pickup truck that struck a church minibus on a rural highway last year, killing 13 people, is not contesting manslaughter charges.

Jack Dillon Young will face up to 270 years in prison when sentenced in November.

Uvalde County District Attorney Daniel Kindred told the San Antonio Express-News on Thursday that Young pleaded to 13 counts of intoxication manslaughter and one count of intoxication assault. Only one person on the bus carrying members of First Baptist Church in New Braunfels survived.

Federal investigators have said the 21-year-old Young told them he had been taking prescription drugs and was checking his phone for a text message before the March 2017 crash near San Antonio.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Trump visits Santa Fe families

JONATHAN LEMIRE
Associated Press

HOUSTON — President Donald Trump spent over an hour Thursday offering private condolences to some of the families affected by this month's deadly Texas school shooting.

Meanwhile, Trump's newly formed school safety commission met outside Washington, part of the president's chosen solution to combat the rising tide of bloodshed after a brief flirtation with tougher gun laws.

Trump did not publicly share what he told the grieving families and local leaders during a meeting at a Coast Guard base outside Houston. Reporters were not permitted to witness the meeting, but Pamela Stanich, whose 17-year-old son Jared Black was among the eight students killed, was one of the parents who met with Trump, giving him a family



EVAN VUCIĆ / ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, greets President Donald Trump as he arrives to meet with Santa Fe families.

statement and her son's eulogy.

"(Trump) met with us privately and showed sincerity, compassion, and concern on making our schools safer across the nation," she wrote in a Facebook post after the meeting.

"He spent time talking to the survivors and asking on what happened and what would have made a difference. Changes are coming for the good. Thank you Mr. Trump."

Rhonda Hart, whose 14-year-old daughter, Kimberly Vaughan, was killed at the school, also met with Trump. She said that Trump repeatedly used the word "wacky" to describe the shooter and the trench coat he wore.

Hart, an Army veteran, said she also suggested employing veterans as sentinels in schools. She said Trump responded, "And arm them?" She replied, "No," but said Trump "kept mentioning" arming classroom teachers.

Separately, Education Secretary Betsy DeVos, whom Trump put in charge of the school safety commission, announced a \$1 million grant to the Santa Fe school district to help with post-shooting recovery efforts.



LAURA SKELDING/TEXAS TRIBUNE

When Anita and Jim McHaney retired, they moved out to Berry Ridge Farm, intending to grow, process and sell their own fresh and pickled produce. But Texas' definition of "pickle," which only includes cucumbers, added so many extra costs to their operation that they were forced to stop selling.

Pickle law leaves farmers sour**Retired couple suing Texas to widen definition**

SHANNON NAJABADI
Texas Tribune

HEARN — When Jim McHaney retired in 2013, he and his wife, Anita McHaney, started growing at Berry Ridge Farm their first crops — kale, collard greens, beets — which they tied with twine and sold by the bundle at a Saturday morning market in Brazos Valley. With just the two of them tending the farm, it was physically exhausting work. Still, they had early success.

"We've been selling out every week,"

Anita McHaney told a local paper in 2014.

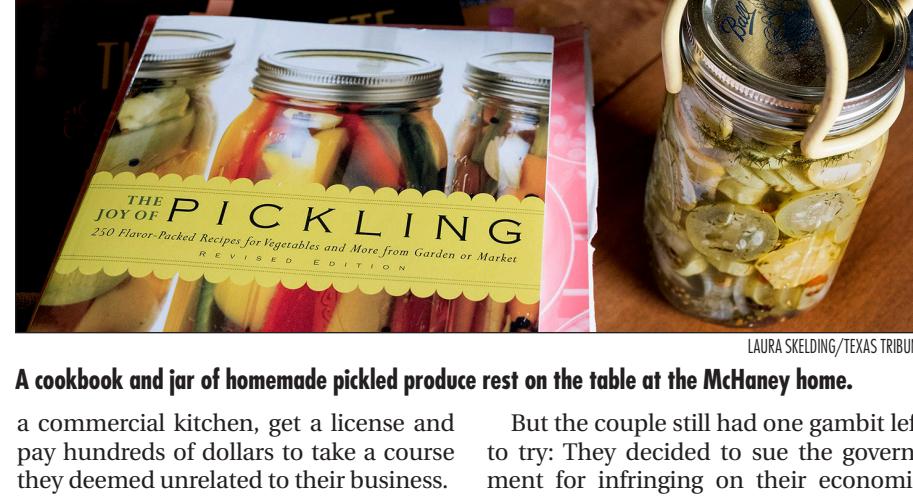
They found their land was particularly conducive to growing root vegetables — "you would not believe the beets we grew," Anita McHaney said. The only crop they struggled with, she noted, were cucumbers.

Selling pickled produce had always been part of the McHaneys' business plan. Pickles were a "value-added product," Jim McHaney explained, that could be sold on a schedule not tethered to the seasons. The couple wanted to sell pickled beets — maybe even pickled peaches, okra and carrots.

But as the McHaneys tried to set up their small-batch pickling operation, they realized there was a major obstacle. A recently-approved state regulation defines a pickle as one item and one item only: a pickled cucumber. Not pickled beets. Not pickled okra. And not pickled carrots.

In Texas, purveyors of pickled cucumbers can take an online course, meet a few other requirements and then set up shop at a farmers' market.

To sell any other kind of pickled fruit or vegetable, however, the McHaneys learned they would have to become licensed "food manufacturers" — a designation that would require them to install



A cookbook and jar of homemade pickled produce rest on the table at the McHaney home.

a commercial kitchen, get a license and pay hundreds of dollars to take a course they deemed unrelated to their business.

"It turns out it's just very difficult to meet all of the rules to make a pickled beet. You'd think that it would be easy, but it's not," said Anita McHaney. "Every time we thought we had figured out what we had to do to meet all the rules, we found another one."

By 2016, after three years of tending to their farm and selling fresh produce at the farmers' market, the McHaneys had had enough.

They sat on plastic chairs under the winged elm on their farm and thought, "We're working ourselves to death and not making any money," Jim McHaney remembers.

The McHaneys had been writing letters to bureaucrats and visiting with lawmakers, trying in vain to understand why the word "pickle" had been defined so narrowly in the state's administrative code.

But the couple still had one gambit left to try: They decided to sue the government for infringing on their economic liberty.

Last year, they presented their case to a public-interest law firm, the libertarian-leaning Institute for Justice, which connected the McHaneys to Dallas-based lawyers willing to work pro bono.

They've announced they'll file a lawsuit Thursday against the state health services department, accusing the agency of frustrating the financial viability of the McHaneys' farm and of violating the couple's constitutional right to "earn an honest living in the occupation of their choice, free from unreasonable governmental interference."

It's a matter of economic liberty, a draft of the petition says. "There is no reason to treat pickled beets differently than pickled cucumbers, and the Department has not even attempted to articulate its rationale for doing so."

Courts place online voting mandate on hold

ALEXA URÁ
Texas Tribune

Texas will not be required to meet a 45-day deadline to implement online voter registration for drivers — for now.

The 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals on Thursday temporarily blocked a lower court ruling that mandated a system that would enable drivers to register to vote when they renew their driver's licenses.

The requirement was part of U.S. District Judge Orlando Garcia's ruling that Texas was violating a federal voter registration law — also known as the "Motor Voter Act" — that's meant to ease the voter registration process.

Pointing to registration deadlines for the November election,

Garcia ordered the state to create the online system — the first mechanism for online voter registration in the state — in order to comply with the Motor Voter Act, which requires states to allow people to register to vote while getting their driver's licenses.

Last week, the state appealed, putting the ruling on hold, possibly for months, leaving uncertain whether the online system will be in place ahead of fall elections.

Texas drivers who renew their licenses in person can register at Department of Public Safety offices, but those who do so online are instead directed to a registration form that they must print out and send to their county registrar.

That disparate treatment vio-

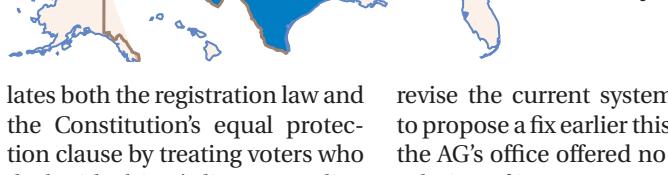
lates both the registration law and the Constitution's equal protection clause by treating voters who deal with driver's licenses online differently than those who register in person, Garcia ruled.

The state has been reluctant to

revise the current system. Asked to propose a fix earlier this month, the AG's office offered no specific solution of its own. Instead, it disputed the judge's ruling.

This article originally appeared in the Texas Tribune.

TEXAS AMONG 12 STATES THAT LACK ONLINE VOTER REGISTRATION



No online voter registration



Due to a new wild-card program that gave an alternative path for spellers who didn't win their highly competitive regions, this year's Scripps National Spelling Bee nearly doubled in size with 519 contestants, including these six. TOP: Aisha Randhawa, Ranitha Kumarasinghe and Adom Appiah react after spelling a word correctly. BOTTOM: Paul Hamrick, Tobi Shorunke and Natalie Lutz react after spelling a word incorrectly.

BEWUSSTSEINSLAGE

Misspelling German word, Frisco student places second

BY BEN NUCKOLS
Associated Press

Naysa Modi did attend the festive Memorial Day barbecue that kicks off the week for competitors in the Scripps National Spelling Bee. But she left on the first bus available to return to the convention center outside Washington where the bee is staged. She blew off that evening's opening ceremonies, too, feeling like she'd seen it all before.

For the record, the word Naysa missed means "a state of consciousness or a feeling devoid of sensory components."

Naysa, who first competed in the bee as a cherubic 9-year-old, is now a poised and accomplished speller in her fourth appearance, with a businesslike approach to match.

"I know what to expect now. I'm not that overwhelmed," said Naysa, whose outgoing personality masks a fierce competitive drive.

"I try not to think about it," she added, "but I know inside I have expectations for how I'm going to do."

The 12-year-old seventh-grader from Frisco, Texas, was one of 16 spellers who advanced to Thursday's prime-time finals after surviving five rounds that stretched over 4½ hours and were never quite difficult

enough for the unflappable group onstage. At the end of the night, she placed second.

Naysa was one of three spellers who finished in last year's top 10 who had a chance to equal or improve upon that feat. The others were 12-year-old Shuthrika Padhy of Cherry Hill, New Jersey, and 13-year-old Erin Howard of Huntsville, Alabama. All three are seventh-graders, which means they have one more year of eligibility.

That's not the case for this year's only five-time speller, Tara Singh of Louisville, Kentucky, who made the prime-time finals for the first time. The 13-year-old is in eighth grade and this was her last shot.

Five of the 16 finalists were in the bee for the first time, including the youngest remaining speller, 11-year-old Abhijay Kodali of Flower Mound, Texas.

Twelve-year-old Aisha Randhawa of Corona, California, has something in common with Jairam Hathwar, the champion from two years ago; both are avid golfers who find some common ground among the solitary pursuits of golf and spelling.

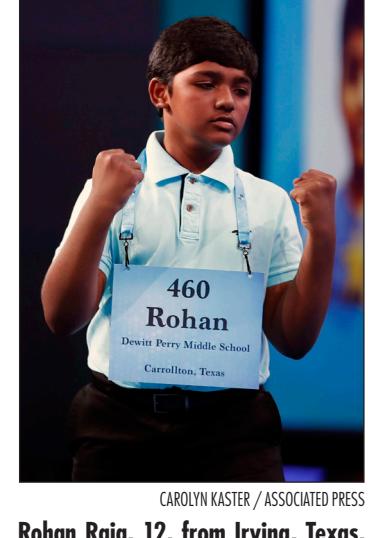
"You have to have focus and determination and enjoy yourself," Aisha said, "which are the same things you have to have as a speller."

Aisha was one of three finalists who got the highest score on the bee-opening spelling and vocabulary test, and her assessment of the morning finals shows how deep Scripps will need to dig in the dictionary to determine a champion. She said she only heard one word she didn't know.

Naysa never appeared rattled. Her focus only wavered during commercial breaks, when she chatted with fellow spellers on stage and accepted hugs from former competitors and her mom. She got big cheers every time she nailed a word, having formed close friendships over four years of competitive spelling.

"I just know there's people that are going to be with me even if I get that word wrong," Naysa said. "That takes away a lot of stress."

NAYSAYA MODI



CAROLYN KASTER / ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rohan Raja, 12, from Irving, Texas, reacts to spelling word correctly during the final round of the Scripps National Spelling Bee in Oxon Hill, Md., Thursday.

Who were the Texans in the final round?

- **Karthik Nemmani**, a 14-year-old from McKinney. This is his first Scripps National Spelling Bee. He is the 2018 champion.
- **Naysa Modi**, a 12-year-old from Frisco. This is her fourth Scripps National Spelling Bee. In 2017, she tied for seventh place.
- **Rohan Raja**, a 12-year-old from Irving. This is his first Scripps National Spelling Bee.
- **Abhijay Kodali**, an 11-year-old from Flower Mound. This is his first Scripps National Spelling Bee.

Who are some other Texans who won?

- **Nihar Saareddy Janga**, 2017 co-champion from Austin
- **Ansun Sujoe**, 2014 co-champion from Fort Worth
- **Sai Guntri**, 2003 champion from Dallas
- **Blake Giddens**, 1983 champion from El Paso
- **Barrie Trinkle**, 1973 champion from Fort Worth
- **Robin Kral**, 1972 champion from Lubbock



CAROLYN KASTER / ASSOCIATED PRESS

Naysa Modi, 12, from Frisco, Texas, reacts to spelling a word correctly during the final round of the Scripps National Spelling Bee in Oxon Hill, Md., Thursday.

All in: Kid spellers consider vocabulary a junior career

STRETCHED THIN

Some spellers devote years to studying the dictionary, word roots and language patterns. Then there's Rebekah Zeigler.

The 13-year-old from Polo, Illinois, is certainly an accomplished speller. She's competing for the fourth time, although she's never made the finals.

That may be because she also competes in tumbling, volleyball, soccer, softball, basketball, cheerleading, and track and field. Next month she'll be at the U.S. Trampoline and Tumbling Association national championships.

"I don't have a lot of free time," Rebekah said.

UNUSUAL REPRIEVE

Reagan Remmers of Missoula, Montana, was heading to lunch with her mom after she misspelled "balacalava."

Or so she thought.

"My mom got a phone call that told her I was reinstated," Reagan said. "I was like, 'Oh, sweet!'"

Turns out, the spelling Reagan gave — "Balaklava" — is a city in Ukraine. Since the judges didn't warn her that her word had a homonym and because Reagan didn't ask for the definition — a garment covering the head and neck except for parts of the face — her spelling was deemed correct after further review.

DEAD AIR

Considering how far he had to travel to get to the bee, Daniel Doudna can be forgiven for taking his time at the microphone.

Daniel lives in Fairbanks, Alaska, one of three spellers from the state. But the 4,100-mile trip to Washington is nothing new for the 14-year-old: This is his second time in the bee.

When Daniel starts spelling, he's more deliberate than most, pausing after each letter and letting silence hang in the air. His word on Wednesday was "quietude," and he created some.

"I made too many mistakes by going fast," he said. "After each letter, I mentally review the word to see what the next letter is."

What were the winning words in past Scripps National Spelling Bees?

2017: Marocain ■ 2016: Feldenkrais/Gesellschaft ■ 2015: Nunatak/Scherenschnitte ■ 2014: Feuilletone/Stichomythia ■ 2013: Knodel ■ 2012: Guetapens ■ 2011: Cymotrichous ■ 2010: Stromuhr ■ 2009: Laodicean ■ 2008: Guerdon ■ 2007: Serrefine ■ 2006: Ursprache ■ 2005: Appoggiatura ■ 2004: Autochthonous ■ 2003: Pococurante ■ 2002: Prosopilence ■ 2001: Succedaneum ■ 2000: Demarche ■ 1999: Logorrhea ■ 1998: Chiaroscuroist ■ 1997: Euonym ■ 1996: Vivisepulture ■ 1995: Xanthosis ■ 1994: Antediluvian ■ 1993: Kamikaze ■ 1992: Lyceum ■ 1991: Antipyretic ■ 1990: Fibranne