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Governor eases virus school restrictions

SALEM (AP) — Gov. Kate Brown has set a target date of Feb. 15, 2021, for when more Oregon students, especially elementary level, will return to in-person learning.

The governor also announced Wednesday that beginning Jan. 1, 2021, the current statewide mandatory metrics for schools to reopen to students will be advisory and that "decisions to resume in-person instruction must be made locally, district by district, school by school."

"As 2021 approaches and we look to the remaining school

year just over the horizon, it is clear that the greatest gift we can give to Oregon's children this holiday season is to redouble our efforts to act responsibly and reduce the spread of COVID-19 in our communities," Brown said. "Our students' learning, resilience, and future well-being depend on all of us."

In an attempt to meet the target date the governor has directed the Oregon Department of Education and the Oregon Health Authority to implement several new policy initiatives,

which include on-site rapid testing and prioritizing teachers and school staff in the state's next round of COVID-19 vaccinations.

"As we continue to work toward stemming the spread of COVID-19 in our communities, getting our teachers and school staff vaccinated will help ensure we are making learning environments as safe as possible," Brown said during a press conference Tuesday.

Earlier this week lawmakers also played a part in the step towards students' returning to

in-person learning by voting in favor of a bill that protects schools from some coronavirus-related lawsuits.

"This bill is a needed first step to get schools reopened. Education for Oregon kids needs to be prioritized," Senate Republican Leader Fred Girod said.

The health authority and Department of Education will review the current metrics and announce updated guidelines before Jan. 19, 2021.

Based on data from the state's education department, in early

December around 9% of Oregon public school students have returned for in-person school or a hybrid schedule, a result largely of stringent metrics set by Brown, for school reopening.

Initially, schools weren't eligible to reopen their buildings, with some exceptions, unless the state's positivity rate remained for three consecutive weeks below 5% — a number the state has not met since early July.

New reopening metrics were announced in October, allowing counties to transition toward

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Republicans block Trump's request for \$2,000 checks

WASHINGTON (AP) -House Republicans shot down a Democratic bid on Thursday to pass President Donald Trump's longshot, end-of-session demand for \$2,000 direct payments to most Americans as he ponders whether to sign a long-overdue COVID-19 relief bill.

The made-for-TV clash came as the Democratic-controlled chamber convened for a pro forma session scheduled in anticipation of a smooth Washington landing for the massive, year-end legislative package, which folds together a \$1.4 trillion governmentwide spending with the hard-fought COVID-19 package and dozens of unrelated but bipartisan bills.

Instead, Thursday's unusual 12-minute House session morphed into unconvincing theater in response to Trump's veto musings about the package, which was negotiated by Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin on



City leaders are considering a proposal to put a managed campground on the site of the city's former wastewater treatment plant.

CB considers campground proposal

ZACK DEMARS

The World

COOS BAY — Coos Bay city officials may soon move forward with a plan to give some individuals experiencing homelessness a place to get back on their feet.

At a city council work session Tuesday, leaders from the Nancy Devereux Center shared a proposal they say could be the next step in helping the city's homeless residents: A staffed, referral-only community campground

The proposal asks the city council to allow the center to use a piece of city property for the campground, as well as set up water, electricity and possibly sewer service to the site. Operations would start with 12 managed campsites, and increase every three months, if successful, to up to 72 campsites at most.

We would provide 24-7 on-site security. Our admission would only be through the De-

vereux Center, with referrals from law enforcement and community partners," said Tara Johnson, the center's director. "We would provide on-site case management. and our clients would be required to participate in that case management.

After-hours admission wouldn't be allowed, and residents would be required to commit to community expectations like remaining nonviolent and a prohibition on drugs and alcohol.

Council members were supportive of the idea, but raised concerns about the proposed location. At the end of Fulton Avenue at the site of the city's former wastewater treatment plant, the space is both near a bay access point and adjacent to the bay on one side.

"The only thing about the location is that I know that's utilized a lot by locals and tourists who access the bay for different activities, whether that's clamming

or whatever it may be," Mayor Joe Benetti said during Tuesday's work session. "And so that would prohibit that activity, and I think that we would have some push back on that. So I would like to find a place that would be more accommodating, maybe.³

Councilor Stephanie Kilmer shared those concerns about the nearby waterfront access point, and mentioned the site's exposure to wind from the bay.

"There's a variety of issues I see with that site," Kilmer said. "It is exposed to the elements almost every day of the year just because of where it's located."

"I think we have to look for a better location," she added.

Johnson told the city council the Devereux Center picked the site for the proposal because it's not in the middle of a neighborhood, it's already fully fenced to provide a limited access point and is relatively close to the shower and laundry resources at the

center. Plus, she wasn't able to find any other suitable city-owned properties, she said.

Zack Demars, The World

"Again, I'm not set on any location, I'm set on doing it,' Johnson said. "If we can find a different location, a better location, great. I just have not yet been able to."

Councilor Drew Farmer held a different perspective than most others on the council, saying the proposed site has benefits.

"I do like that site, I would feel that there's a way we could make an access point for the community down to the area that we do use," Farmer said. "It's a lot easier to establish a controlled point of entry (to the campground) at that location."

Councilors Carmen Matthews and Phil Marler expressed support for the project, but said another location might be a better fit.

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Trump's behalf. House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, the No. 2 House Democrat, sought the unanimous approval of all House members to pass the bill, but GOP leader Kevin McCarthy, who was not present in the near-

ly-empty chamber, denied his approval and the effort fizzled If Trump were to follow through on his implied veto threat, delivered via video clip on Tuesday, the government would likely experience a brief, partial shutdown starting on Dec. 29. It would also delay delivery of the \$600 direct

payments that the bill does contain. The optics appear terrible for Republicans, who had lobbed praise at the hard-fought COVID-19 relief package, which passed on Monday by sweeping votes after the White House assured GOP leaders that Trump supported the bill.

The path forward, including efforts to avert a government shutdown or perhaps even pass a lastditch extension of soon-to-expire jobless checks, remained unclear. Any shutdown would probably be brief, but nothing is certain.

"We're not gonna let the government shut down, nor are we going to let the American people down," Hoyer said. "There are continuing discussions going on between the speaker, and the secretary of the Treasury and the administration."

Senate Republicans, led by Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, have opposed larger \$2,000 checks as too costly and poorly targeted. Democrats are supportive of the direct payments and now plan to vote on the \$2,000 check proposal on Monday.

That measure would be lobbed to the GOP-controlled Senate, where it would likely die and create more Trump-related headaches for Georgia GOP Sens. Kelly Loeffler and David Perdue, who are fighting for their political lives — and for continued GOP control of the Senate — in a pair of Jan. 5 Georgia run-off elections.

Rather than take the victory of the sweeping aid package, among the biggest in history,

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Trump pardons Manafort and Charles Kushner

WASHINGTON (AP) -President Donald Trump pardoned more than two dozen people, including former campaign chairman Paul Manafort and Charles Kushner, the father of his son-in-law, in the latest wave of clemency to benefit longtime associates and supporters.

The actions, in Trump's waning time at the White House, bring to nearly 50 the number of people whom the president has granted clemency in the last week. The list from the last two days includes not only multiple people convicted in the investigation into the Trump campaign's ties to Russia but also allies from Congress and other felons whose causes were championed by friends.

Pardons are common in the final stretch of a president's tenure, the recipients largely dependent on the individual whims of the nation's chief executive. Trump throughout his administration has shucked aside the conventions of the Obama administration, when pardons were largely reserved for drug offenders not known to the general public, and instead bestowed clemency on high-profile contacts and associates who were key figures in an investigation that directly concerned him.

Even members of the president's own party raised eyebrows, with Republican Sen. Ben Sasse of Nebraska issuing a brief statement that said: "This is rotten to the core."

The pardons Wednesday of Manafort and Roger Stone, who months earlier had his sentence commuted by Trump, were particularly notable, underscoring the president's desire to chip away at the results and legacy of special counsel Robert Mueller's Russia investigation. He has now pardoned five people convicted in that investigation, four of them associates like former national security adviser Michael Flynn and campaign adviser George Papadopoulos, both of whom pleaded guilty to lying to the FBI.

"The pardons from this President are what you would expect to get if you gave the pardon power to a mob boss," tweeted

Andrew Weissmann, a Mueller team member who helped prosecute Manafort.

Manafort, who led Trump's campaign during a pivotal period in 2016 before being ousted over his ties to Ukraine, was among the first people charged as part of Mueller's investigation into ties between the Trump campaign and Russia. He was later sentenced to more than seven years in prison for financial crimes related to his political consulting work in Ukraine, but was released to home confinement last spring because of coronavirus concerns in the federal prison system.

Though the charges against Manafort did not concern the

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<u>eEdition</u>

Oregon goes over 105,000 total COVID-19 cases

THE WORLD

Oregon reported 1,000 new confirmed and presumptive coronavirus cases Wednesday, bringing the total since the start of the pandemic to 105,970

The Oregon Health Authority also reported another 21 deaths, leaving the state's death toll at 1.403.

Weekly report

The state had a slight drop in weekly cases from the previous week, but also a record number of deaths. OHA reported 8,745 new cases from Dec. 14-20, a 5% decrease from the previous week. It was the second straight week with a decrease in new cases.

There also was an 11% drop in the number of people hospitalized by the virus and the percentage of positive tests dropped by 6.3 percent. In all, 167,335 tests were conducted in the state during the week.

But the number of deaths was 186, a new high for the pandemic.

People age 20 to 49 have accounted for 55% of the total cases, while people 70 and over have accounted for 76% of the deaths. The state's COVID-19 Outbreak Report shows 4,567 active COVID-19 outbreaks in care facilities, living communities and long-term care facilities, with 296 deaths.

Cases

The new cases Wednesday were in the following counties: Baker (5), Benton (16), Clackamas (64),



Clatsop (18), Columbia (10), Coos (7), Crook (3), Deschutes (41), Douglas (10), Grant (1), Hood River (5), Jackson (48), Jefferson

(8), Josephine (17), Klamath (30), Lane (73), Lincoln (5), Linn (48), Malheur (20), Marion (127), Morrow (1), Multnomah (209),

Polk (28), Sherman (1), Tillamook (4), Umatilla (33), Union (2), Wasco (14), Washington (117), Wheeler (3) and Yamhill (32).

California at 2 million cases and r1s1ng

LOS ANGELES (AP) — California became the first state to record 2 million confirmed coronavirus cases, reaching the milestone on Christmas Eve as close to the entire state was under a strict stay-at-home order and hospitals were flooded with the largest crush of cases since the pandemic began.

A tally by Johns Hopkins University showed the nation's most populated state has recorded 2,010,157 infections since January. More than 23,000 people have died from the virus.

California's infection rate - in terms of the number of cases per 100,000 people — is lower than the U.S. average but its nearly 40 million residents mean the outbreak outpaces other states in sheer numbers.

The grim milestone comes as a COVID-19 crisis that health officials say stems from Thanksgiving gatherings strains the state's medical system. More than 18,000 people

are hospitalized and many of the state's intensive care units are filled.

The state has seen its number of cases climb exponentially in recent weeks, fueled largely by people who ignored warnings and held traditional Thanksgiving gatherings, health officials say. Soaring rates of hospitalizations and deaths have overwhelmed intensive care units and prompted hospitals to put emergency room patients in tents and treat others in offices and auditoriums.

Nearly the entire state is under a stay-home order that imposed an overnight curfew, shuttered many businesses and restricted most retail to 20% capacity. Restaurants may only serve takeout.

Pleas to avoid social gatherings for the Christmas and New Year's rang with special desperation in Southern California. Los Angeles County is leading the surge, accounting for one-third of the state's

COVID-19 cases and nearly 40% of deaths.

"We know that this emergency is our darkest day, maybe the darkest day in our city's history," Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti said Wednesday, when the county reported its highest death toll and hospitalizations in a single day since the pandemic began — 145 deaths and more than 6,000 people in hospitals.

More than 9,000 people have died from the coronavirus in the county.

If LA County continues to see the same growth in COVID-19 infections in the next two weeks, hospitals may find themselves having to ration care because of a lack of medical staff, Garcetti said

'That means the doctors will be forced to determine who lives and who dies,' he said.

Medical workers are discouraged and outraged over scenes of crowded outdoor malls, packed parking lots,

and parents and children walking around without masks, county Health Services Director Dr. Christina Ghaly said.

Santa Clara County near San Francisco was down to 35 ICU beds, putting hospitals dangerously close to rationing care, said Dr. Ahmad Kamal, the county's director of health care preparedness. "We are talking about

people in gurneys without a bed to go to. We are talking about people not getting hospital care; we are talking about rationing what scarce resources our exhausted health system has left to those who would benefit the most," he said.

Overall, California on Wednesday recorded the second-highest number of deaths, at 361. The number of coronavirus patients in intensive care units nearly doubled in just three weeks, to 3,827 cases, while the state's ICU capacity fell to 1.1%, down from 2.5% just two days ago. The number

of hospitalizations jumped to 18,828 patients, more than double since Dec. 1, with 605 new patients in one day.

Yet there were slight but encouraging signs of hope.

The transmission rate the number of people that one infected person will in turn infect — has been slowing for nearly two weeks. The rate of positive cases reached a new high of 12.3% over a two-week period, but was starting to trend downward over the last seven days from a peak of 13.3% to 12.6%.

The state also has nearly 1,000 health workers assisting at 91 facilities in 25 of the state's 58 counties, and is opening a fifth alternative care site in San Diego County

The California National Guard was setting up about 200 beds on vacant floors of the Palomar Health Center near San Diego, within the existing hospital complex, said Brian Ferguson, a spokesman for the Governor's Office of Emergency Services. It could begin accepting patients Christmas Day, relieving overburdened hospitals particularly in nearby Imperial County.

California expects more federal medical workers to arrive by the weekend, and Gov. Gavin Newsom said he expects more of the 3,000 contract health care workers the state is seeking to arrive after the holidays.

The governor also said more than 128,000 doses of vaccines had been administered as of Tuesday, in another encouraging sign beyond the modest decline in the transmission rate.

But Newsom also warned that any progress could dissipate quickly, leading to the nearly 100,000 hospitalizations some models project in one month if people don't heed calls to avoid holiday gatherings, particularly indoors.

"This virus loves social events," Newsom said. "This virus thrives in that atmosphere."

Camp

From Page 1

"I'd like to see this council do everything in our power to help you move this project along. It's a great idea. I'm not totally sold on it either," Marler told Johnson. "One of my bigger concerns is the elevation that it sits at. If we have a natural disaster, if there's a flood or a tsunami or an earthquake, those are going to be the first people in peril." Still, finding another location could be a challenge "Currently, we don't own other properties, really, that are suitable for this," City Manager Roger Craddock told Johnson and the council. Instead, Craddock said city staff would look into state grants that might allow the city to purchase a piece of industrial property for the site, and come back

to the council with options for making it work.

Councilors asked that the plan go through the city's homeless workgroup, which has been on hold since the pandemic began. That could happen as soon as January, and Johnson hopes the campsite could

ground is operated by Rogue Retreat, a nonprofit that also operates several group housing, rent subsidy and tiny home programs for individuals facing housing challenges in the community.

The campground started over the summer, in response to an increasing number of people camping along the Greenway, a popular wooded biking trail, and the need for those individuals to have a place to stay healthy during the COVID-19 pandemic. "When they're out there along the Greenway or wherever they may be, they didn't have that sense of security," Justin Hon, who manages the campground, said in an interview Tuesday. To live in the campground, people have to be referred by Medford's Livability Team, a group of police officers and city staff who help resolve quality of life problems

and housing challenges. After committing to a few community rules, residents receive a tent site and safe place to store their belongings

Then, they meet with a case manager, who works with residents to navigate whatever barriers an individual might be facing. Those can be different for everybody, but Hon said it could include waiting for a housing benefit payment, accessing addiction treatment or finding mental health services. The important part is meeting residents where they're at, Hon said. "You don't want to overwhelm them, you don't want to push them into something they're not comfortable with," he said. In just the few months that it's been up and running, Hon said the campground's seen success. 228 people have lived in its now 51 campsites, and area residents have seen

some reductions in crime. "This campground is a godsend for a lot of people," Hon said. "It's not a

handout, it's a hand-up." Still, it took work to get there. Dealing with changing weather in an exposed setting and establishing and operating the campground required the

collaboration of a number

of different agencies, as

One of the key differences between the Devereux Center's proposal and the system in place in Medford is referrals to the program. Coos Bay only has one officer assigned to the kind of work the Medford Livability team does, meaning there's not enough manpower to make referrals. So, the proposal calls on the Devereux Center to be the gateway to a spot in the campground. In Medford, the Rogue Retreat campground isn't a permanent place to live, and residents stay anywhere between a few weeks to several months, depending on their needs to get into stable housing.

be up and running by April.

"I don't think there's anyone on this council that doesn't want this to happen. I think this is one step out of others that need to happen," Benetti said Tuesday.

The idea isn't a new one: Officials in Medford established a similar campground in July, and have already seen some successes. Johnson said she's toured that campground and has been using it to model the Devereux Center's proposal for Coos Bay

Using Medford as a model

In Medford, that camp-

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2 Days in The World,

and 5 Days in The World Online!

500

Governor

they have fewer than 200 new infections per 100,000 residents. But still, state officials said only about 20% of Oregon students would be eligible for in-person learning.

Since the start of the school year there has been a state statewide movement of parents calling for children to return to school in Oregon, which is one of only a handful

Closing and 8:30 a.m. quotes Stock Close 8:30 Intel 46.54 46.74 Kroger 31.40 31.59 Microsoft 221.02 221.96 Nike 141.78 141.87

MegaMillions Dec. 22 29-53-56-59-67 Megaball: 21 Multinlier x2 lacknot: \$352 million

Dec. 23 6-13-38-39-53 Powerball: 6 Multinlier: x3 Jackpot: \$341 million

Powerball

Skywest

Xerox

Starbucks

Weyerhaeuser

Umpgua Hldgs 15.19

NW Natural 45.52 45.46 40.61 40.01

Megabucks

Dec. 23

4-14-17-30-32-42

Jackpot: \$6.2 Million

102.06

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21.13 Levi Straus 20.78 Dow Jones closed at 30.128.22 NASDAQ closed at 12.771.64 S&P 500 closed at 3,689.72 Provided by Coos Bay Edward Jones

101.73 14.98 33.55 22.58

Win For Life Dec. 23 2-34-59-71

demanded that Oregon officials remove statewide barriers to in-person learning by Jan. 6 — the 300th day since the vast majority

The movement gained substantial traction as parents organized protests across the state, including one at the state Capitol in October that drew hundreds of people. They have submitted petitions with thousands of signatures, posted anecdotes on social media and written

Most recently the coalition of parent groups

of states that has required at least a partial closure of schools as long as local coronavirus infections remain above certain levels.

to state officials.

well as some support from community members, Hon said. Take the campground's meals, for example: The

sheriff's office has been providing breakfasts, while dinners are cooked by a local mission. For lunch, Rogue Retreat sometimes cooks, but often asks residents to go out to local churches or nonprofits.

"I've never seen such collaboration between organizations to support people," Hon said. "I'm very thankful for the community that we've got here.'

That'd be the same in the Coos Bay plan, Johnson said.

"The community campground is not their new home," Johnson said in an interview Monday. "It's a temporary place for case management to help get them to their next spot."

of students were last in a

said while schools must

safety protocols — when

decision making process

reopen, teachers, school

on whether or not schools

staff, parents and students

should be engaged in this

decision-making process.

continue to adhere to

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On Wednesday Brown

classroom.



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From Page 1 in-person learning once

Cedition Trump vetoes defense bill, setting up possible override vote

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump on Wednesday vetoed the annual defense policy bill, following through on threats to veto a measure that has broad bipartisan support in Congress and potentially setting up the first override vote of his presidency.

The bill affirms 3% pay raises for U.S. troops and authorizes more than \$740 billion in military programs and construction.

The action came while Trump was holed up at the White House, stewing about his election loss and escalating his standoff with Republicans as he pushed fraudulent conspiracy theories and tried to pressure them to back his efforts to overturn the results.

The House was poised to return Monday, and

the Senate on Tuesday, to consider votes to override the president's veto of the National Defense Authorization Act, or NDAA.

Trump's move provoked swift condemnation, with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi calling it "an act of staggering recklessness that harms our troops, endangers our security and undermines the will of the bipartisan Congress."

Sen. Jim Inhofe, R-Okla., chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, avoided any criticism of Trump, but called the NDAA "absolutely vital to our national security and our troops. ... Our men and women who volunteer to wear the uniform shouldn't be denied what they need — ever."

Long before issuing the veto, Trump offered a series of rationales for rejecting it. He has called for lawmakers to include limits on social media companies he claimed are biased against him — and to strip out language that allows for the renaming of military bases such as Fort Benning and Fort Hood that honor Confederate leaders. Without going into detail, he has claimed the biggest winner from the defense bill would be China.

In his veto message to the House, Trump cited those objections and stated that the measure "fails to include critical national security measures, includes provisions that fail to respect our veterans and our military's history, and contradicts efforts by my Administration to put America first in our national security and foreign policy actions. It is a 'gift' to China and Russia."

He also wrote: "Numerous provisions of the Act directly contradict my Administration's foreign policy, particularly my efforts to bring our troops home.

Both the House and Senate passed the measure by margins large enough to override a veto from the president. Trump had vetoed eight bills previously, but those vetoes were sustained because supporters did not gain the two-thirds vote needed in each chamber for the bill to become law without Trump's signature.

Sen. Mark Warner, D-Va., called Trump's veto "unconscionable" and said he would "look forward to overriding" it.

In advance of the veto, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., has said the bill would help deter Chinese aggression. Other GOP backers of the measure, including Sen. John Thune of South Dakota, the second-ranking Senate leader, and Rep. Mike Gallagher of Wisconsin, a member of the House Armed Services Committee, have tweeted that the bill would counter threats from countries such as China.

Sen. Jack Reed of Rhode Island, the top Democrat on the Armed Services Committee, said Trump's declaration that China was the biggest winner in the defense bill was false. Reed also noted the shifting explanations Trump had given for the veto. ly hasn't read the bill, nor does he understand what's in it," Reed said. "There are several bipartisan provisions in here that get tougher on China than the Trump Administration has ever been."

The measure guides Pentagon policy and cements decisions about troop levels, new weapons systems and military readiness, military personnel policy and other military goals. Many programs can only go into effect if the bill is approved, including military construction.

McConnell, in a rare break with Trump, had urged passage despite Trump's threat to veto it. McConnell said it was important for Congress to continue its nearly six-decade-long streak of passing the defense policy bill.

"President Trump clear-

Child, grandparents stranded in national forest are rescued

Associated Press

Authorities have found a 4-year-old girl and her grandparents who became stranded while looking for a Christmas tree in the Willamette National Forest in Oregon.

The Coast Guard said the child and her grandparents were found Wednesday after venturing into the forest on Monday.

The girl's mother reported them missing on

Tuesday when she went to the grandparents' home in Eugene and found no sign of the group.

Investigators picked up cellphone signals indicating they were last in the area of Fall Creek and a Coast Guard helicopter crew began searching early Wednesday. After several hours, the crew spotted their vehicle, which the Coast Guard said was more easily seen because a blue tarp had been covering it. The aircrew

notified search and rescue teams on the ground, who found the family unharmed.

"After getting the family into a warm place with some food and water, we learned that their car got stuck in an area with downed trees and snow," the Lane County Sheriff's Office said later Wednesday on Facebook. "Thankfully, they had a blanket, some water, a tarp and snacks in the car, and were all wearing warm clothing."

Relief bill

From Page 1

Trump is lashing out at GOP leaders over the presidential election — for acknowledging Joe Biden as president-elect and rebuffing his campaign to dispute the Electoral College results when they are tallied in Congress on Jan. 6.

"It is Christmas Eve, but it is not a silent night. All is not calm. For too many, nothing is bright. And for too many, they are not sleeping peacefully," said Rep. Debbie Dingell, D-Mich. "I did a town hall from \$600 to \$2,000 for individuals and \$4,000 for couples splits the party with a politically painful loyalty test.

Republican lawmakers traditionally balk at big spending and many never fully embraced Trump's populist approach. Their political DNA tells them to oppose a costlier relief package. But now they're being asked to stand with the president.

On a conference call Wednesday House Republican lawmakers complained that Trump threw them under the bus, according to one Republican on the private call and granted anonymity to discuss it. Most had voted for the package and they urged leaders to hit the cable news shows to explain its benefits, the person said. Democrats were taking advantage of the Republican disarray to apply pressure for a priority. Jon Ossoff, Perdue's Democratic opponent, tweeted simply on Tuesday night: "\$2,000 checks now."

The relief bill Trump is criticizing would establish a temporary \$300 per week supplemental jobless benefit, along with a new round of subsidies for hard-hit businesses, restaurants and theaters and money for schools, health care providers and renters facing eviction.

Even though Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin represented the White Railing against a range of provisions in the broader government funding package, including foreign aid mainstays included each year, Trump called the bill a "disgrace."

Trump did not specifically vow to use his veto power, and there may be enough support in Congress to override him if he does. But the consequences would be severe if Trump upends the legislation. It would mean no federal aid to struggling Americans and small businesses, and no additional resources to help with vaccine distribution. To top it off, because lawmakers linked the pandemic relief bill to an overarching funding measure, the government would shut down on Dec. 29. The final text of the more than 5,000-page bill

was still being prepared by Congress and was not expected to be sent to the White House for Trump's signature before Thursday or Friday, an aide said.

That complicates the schedule ahead. If Trump vetoes the package, or allows it to expire with a "pocket veto" at the end of the year, Americans will go without massive amounts of COVID aid.

A resolution could be forced Monday. That's when a stopgap funding bill Congress approved to keep the government funded while the paperwork was being compiled expires, risking a federal Democrats announced they will force a roll call vote to pass Trump's proposal for \$2,000 checks, as well as a temporary government funding measure to avert a shutdown, Hoyer said Thursday.

The push for bigger payments to Americans drew rare common cause between Trump and some of the most liberal members of Congress. Pelosi and Democrats said they fought for the higher stipends during protracted negotiations only to settle on the lower number when Republicans refused.

The Senate cleared the huge relief package by a

last night that had people crying, people terrified of what is going to happen."

The president's push to increase direct payments for most Americans House in negotiations, Trump assailed the bipartisan effort in a video he tweeted out Tuesday night, suggesting he may not sign the legislation. shutdown.

The House is already set to return Monday, and the Senate Tuesday, for a vote to override Trump's veto of the must-pass defense bill.

92-6 vote after the House approved it by 359-53. Those votes totals would be enough to override a veto should Trump decide to take that step.

Pardons

From Page 1

central thrust of Mueller's mandate — whether the Trump campaign and Russia colluded to tip the election — he was nonetheless a pivotal figure in the investigation.

His close relationship to a man U.S. officials have linked to Russian intelligence, and with whom he shared internal campaign polling data, attracted particular scrutiny during the investigation, though Mueller never charged Manafort or any other Trump associate with conspiring with Russia.

Manafort, in a series of tweets, thanked Trump and lavished praise on the outgoing president, declaring that history would show he had accomplished more than any of his predecessors.

Trump did not pardon Manafort's deputy, Rick Gates, who was sentenced last year to 45 days in prison after extensively cooperating with prosecutors, or former Trump lawyer Michael Cohen, who pleaded guilty to campaign finance crimes related to his efforts to buy the silence of women who said they had sexual relationships with Trump. Both were also convicted in the Mueller probe.

New York City prosecutors, meanwhile, have been seeking to have the state's highest court revive state mortgage fraud charges against Manafort after a lower court dismissed them on double jeopardy grounds. A spokesman for District Attorney Cy Vance said the pardon "underscores the urgent need to hold Mr. Manafort accountable for his crimes against the People of New York."

Manafort and Stone are hardly conventional pardon recipients, in part because both were scolded by judges for effectively thumbing their nose at the criminal justice system as their cases were pending. Manafort was accused of witness tampering even after he was indicted and was accused by prosecutors of lying while trying to earn credit for cooperation.

Stone, who was convicted of lying to Congress about his efforts to gain inside information about the release by WikiLeaks of Russia-hacked Democratic emails during the 2016 campaign, was similarly censured by a judge because of his social media posts.

In a statement Wednesday, Stone thanked Trump and alleged that he had been subjected to a "Soviet-style show trial on politically-motivated charges"

Kushner is the father of Trump's son-in-law, Jared Kushner, and a wealthy real estate executive who pleaded guilty years ago to tax evasion and making illegal campaign donations. Trump and the elder Kushner knew each other from real estate circles and their children were married in 2009.

Prosecutors allege that after Kushner discovered that his brother-in-law was cooperating with authorities, he hatched a revenge and intimidation scheme. They say he hired a prostitute to lure his brother-inlaw, then arranged to have a secret recording of the encounter in a New Jersey motel room sent to his own sister, the man's wife.

Former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie has called it "one of the most loathsome, disgusting crimes" he ever prosecuted as U.S. attorney.

Trump's legally troubled allies were not the only recipients of clemency. The list of 29 recipients included people whose pleas for forgiveness have been promoted by people supporting the president throughout his term in office, among them former Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi, Newsmax CEO Christopher Ruddy and Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky.

One recipient was Topeka Sam, whose case was promoted by Alice Johnson, a criminal justice advocate whom Trump pardoned and who appeared in a Super Bowl ad for him and at the Republican National Convention.

"Ms. Sam's life is a story of redemption," the White House said in its release, praising her for helping other women in need.

Others granted clemency included a former county commissioner in Florida who was convicted of taking gifts from people doing business with the county and a community leader in Kentucky who was convicted of federal drug offenses.

DEAR ABBY By Abigail Van Buren

MOM FEELS BETRAYED BY FRIEND WHO SNITCHED ON HER DAUGHTER

DEAR ABBY: I have recently found out that someone I thought was a good friend is the person who snitched and got my daughter in serious trouble at school. Our daughters attended the same preschool, middle school and high school. Although they were friends, the friendship was more between us moms.

Before middle school graduation, the students had an outing at the beach. Some of the girls, my daughter included, decided to bring vodka and orange juice. A few days later, my daughter was called to the principal's office where she was thoroughly reprimanded. Any awards she was to receive were rescinded. I learned from one of the teachers that this "friend" is the person who turned her in.

Why didn't she come to me and tell me? I almost feel like she wanted my daughter to get in trouble. I have run into her a couple of times and have been cold and distant, but I want to confront her. I was going to write and tell her why. Do you think this is a good idea? -- FURIOUS IN FLORIDA

DEAR FURIOUS: I don't blame you for being upset, but an eighth-grader bringing alcohol to a school celebration is wrong on many levels. I do NOT advise putting anything in writing. Convey your message and get the answer you want by doing it directly, face to face.

DEAR ABBY: Thirty years ago, I dated a guy I'll call Allen. We had a child together. Our relationship ended when I found out I was pregnant. He married a woman he chose over me. I later married someone else, whose name is on my child's birth certificate.

Fast-forward 30 years. We are now back in each other's lives. I told my son about his biological father, and they are getting to know each other. Allen has children from his marriage, which lasted about 25 years. His wife is now deceased.

Allen's two other children and his parents and extended family know nothing about our son. He's afraid to tell them, although it was before they were born and before he was married. Do you think he should tell everyone? --SECRET KEEPER IN CALIFORNIA

DEAR SECRET KEEPER: Yes, I do. As you stated, this happened before his marriage to his late wife, and your (and his) son should not be regarded as a shameful secret. However, I cannot make this decision FOR Allen, and neither should you. If he isn't strong enough to stand up and stand by his first child, then you should reconsider your relationship with him.

DEAR ABBY: My wife and I have been married 50-some years. While we were discussing sex and the pandemic, she revealed that she could imagine having sex with someone while both of them were masked. I said no, the masks would become superfluous and would go just before the clothes. Who is right? --HYPOTHETICALLY SPEAKING

DEAR H.S.: Are you serious? Your wife gave you some valuable information that you are ignoring. Where is your sense of humor? Try it. You might like it and discover the masks stay on until, in the heat of passion, they slip off (or not).

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www. DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

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Pro Picks: Saints look to clinch NFC South

BARRY WILNER Associated Press

With the NFL opting not to play a Thursday game on Christmas Eve, it moved the primetime showcase to late afternoon Friday and sent Minnesota down to New Orleans.

The game doesn't have the same headline-grabbing potential with the Saints (10-4) unlikely to secure the NFC's only playoff bye, which Green Bay currently owns, and the Vikings (6-8) not going anywhere. Still, it provides some noteworthy viewing appeal.

Minnesota's Dalvin Cook and New Orleans' Alvin Kamara have had two of the most productive seasons of any running backs. Rookie receiver Justin Jefferson has been outstanding for the Vikings as the replacement

for the traded Stefon Diggs.

The Saints have been staunch on defense much of the year, and they have quarterback Drew Brees back — and presumably not rusty like he was in his return last week against the Chiefs.

You want to be playing your best football going into the playoffs," Brees says, noting that the Saints still need to clinch the NFC South ahead of Tampa Bay (9-5) and can do so with a win. "The most important factor right now is for us to win and win the division, right? And then, continue to kind of build on and ascend, going into the playoffs."

No. 18 Minnesota is a 7-point underdog at No. 4 New Orleans. Merry Christmas, Saints.

SAINTS, 27-16 KNOCKOUT POOL: The Titans kept us flowing with their romp past Detroit. Getting down to the end of available teams worth taking, but Pro Picks kept a good one: NEW ORLEANS.

Buffalo (minus 5) at New England, Monday night: The Bills' chance to further erase some of that recent ugly history vs. the Patriots ... BEST BET: BILLS, 28-19

Philadelphia (minus 1 1/2) at Dallas: Both teams will be eliminated in NFC East if Washington wins ... UPSET SPECIAL: COWBOYS, 27-24

Carolina (plus $2 \frac{1}{2}$) at Washington: How sweet for Ron Rivera, clinching the division against the team that fired him ... WASHINGTON, 17-16

Indianapolis (minus $2 \frac{1}{2}$) at Pittsburgh: The sky is falling in Steel City ... COLTS, 19-17 Los Angeles Rams (plus 1

1/2) at Seattle: What was that

last Sunday from the Rams? They will show up this time ... RAMS, 20-17

Tennessee (plus 3 1/2) at Green Bay: Lambeau in January? The Packers are having sweet dreams of staying home for the playoffs ... PACKERS, 26-24

New York Giants (plus 11) at Baltimore: Suddenly, the Ravens are rolling and look dangerous for January ... RAVENS, 30-16

San Francisco (plus 5) at Arizona, Saturday: The Cardinals are creeping closer to the postseason ... CARDINALS, 27-20

Miami (minus 3) at Las Vegas, Saturday: So are the Dolphins, maybe a year ahead of expectations ... DOLPHINS, 28-22

Tampa Bay (minus 9 1/2) at Detroit, Saturday: The Lions can score just enough to keep this close without winning ... BUC-

CANEERS, 27-20

Atlanta (plus 12) at Kansas City: The Falcons can score just enough to keep this close without winning ... CHIEFS, 33-23

Cleveland (minus 9 1/2) at New York Jets: Sorry, J-E-T-S, we're just not buying another shocking victory ... BROWNS, 31-10

Cincinnati (plus 8) at Houston: Seems like a lot of points for such a weak team to lay, even against another tail-ender ... TEXANS, 22-16

Chicago (minus 7 1/2) at Jacksonville: Now that Trevor Lawrence can go house-hunting in Jacksonville ... BEARS, 22-13

Denver (plus 3) at Los Angeles Chargers: The QB choices alone, Justin Herbert and Drew Lock, have us leaning to ... CHAR-GERS, 33-18

Blazers routed by Utah in NBA season opener

PORTLAND (AP) — Rudy Gobert had 20 points and 17 rebounds in a dominant season-opening performance, leading the Utah Jazz to a 120-100 victory over the Portland Trail Blazers on Wednesday night.

Gobert controlled the inside and got plenty of support from the outside as Utah shot 19 of 50 from the 3-point line.

'It's fun when we play the way we played tonight," Gobert said

Mike Conley, Donovan Mitchell and Bojan Bogdanovic all made four 3-pointers and Joe Ingles and Jordan Clarkson knocked down three apiece. Mitchell also scored 20 points.

Damian Lillard was scoreless in the first half and finished with only nine points and seven assists for Portland.

"They came out from the

third quarter. Perhaps no play summed up the night for Portland better than a 3-on-1 break that left Lillard wide open with 31 seconds left, before Lillard took a hesitation dribble and missed the 3-pointer with nobody around him.

The frustration extended to his backcourt mate CJ McCollum, who picked up a late technical foul arguing a call in the fourth quarter. McCollum led the Blazers with 23 points.

"I don't think it was for a lack of effort. I think we played hard, we just didn't play well on both sides of the ball," McCollum said.

Utah's held the Blazers to barely 40% shooting and had a 59-40 rebounding advantage. It wasn't just Gobert, but the Jazz had four other players who grabbed at least six rebounds, including Clarkson with seven

Celtics tip Bucks with help from missed free throw

BOSTON (AP) - Jayson Tatum banked in a fallaway, go-ahead 3-pointer in the final second, and Giannis Antetokounmpo missed the potential tying free throw with 0.4 seconds left, allowing the Boston Celtics to escape with a 122-121 victory over the Milwaukee Bucks on Wednesday night in the teams' season opener.

Tatum scored 30 points and Jaylen Brown had 33 for Boston, which entered the fourth quarter leading by 17 points. The Celtics trailed 120-119 when Tatum dribbled the clock down from 8.9 seconds before lofting a high-arcing 3 over Antetokounmpo from the left side that kissed the glass on its way down.

The ensuing inbounds pass was thrown at the rim and Antetokounmpo tried to tip it in, but he was fouled. The two-time reigning NBA MVP made the first foul shot, but bounced the second off the front of the rim. Antetokounmpo scored 18 of his 35 points in the fourth quarter, and Khris Middleton had 27 points and 14 rebounds for Milwaukee. The Bucks had the best record in the NBA in each of the past two seasons but didn't make it out of the

Eastern Conference finals.

Milwaukee led by nine points, 48-39, midway through the second quarter before Boston rolled off 10 straight points and 19 of the next 23. Boston led 101-84 after three, but Antetokounmpo outscored the Celtics 10-2 over a two-minute span midway through the fourth to cut a 10-point Celtics lead to 109-107.

SUNS 106, MAVERICKS 102: Devin Booker scored 22 points, Mikal Bridges added 18 and Phoenix beat Dallas.

KINGS 124, NUGGETS 122, OT: Buddy Hield tipped in Harrison Barnes' miss at the buzzer, lifting Sacramento past Denver in overtime.

PELICANS 113, RAPTORS

107: Joel Embiid scored the go-ahead basket with 1:09 left and had 29 points and 14 rebounds to help Philadelphia spoil Russell Westbrook's triple-double Washington debut.

SPURS 131, GRIZZLIES 119: DeMar DeRozan had 28 points and nine assists, Dejounte Murray added 21 points and San Antonio overcame Memphis star Ja Morant's 44-point game.

CAVALIERS 121, HOR-NETS 114: Collin Sexton scored 27 points, Darius Garland added 22 and Cleveland won its first home game in nearly 300 days.

HAWKS 124, BULLS 104: Trae Young scored 37 points and revamped Atlanta pounded

jump and they were blitzing and trapping. I wasn't really expecting that," Lillard said. "But I just didn't play a good offensive game."

Utah started quickly from outside and pushed its lead to 52-33 with 6:29 left in the first half. The Jazz led by as much as 23 before taking a 64-44 lead at halftime.

Lillard was held scoreless in a half for the first time in six seasons. Lillard broke the drought with a layup early in the boards off the bench.

Wednesday was the first game for Portland newcomers Robert Covington and Derrick Jones Jr. Both players are starters for the Blazers. Jones Jr. had a good night shooting the ball, hitting 3 of 5 3-pointers. Covington was 0 for 3 from the field and scoring only one point.

UP NEXT

Jazz: Hosts Minnesota on Saturday. Trail Blazers: Host Houston

on Saturday.

99: JJ Redick converted a four-point play with just over a minute remaining and finished with 23 points, Brandon Ingram had 24 points, and New Orleans overcame an 11-point deficit and beat Toronto.

MAGIC 113, HEAT 107: Evan Fournier gave Orlando the lead with a late 3-pointer, converted a three-point play in the final minute and scored 25 points in the Magic's victory. 76ERS 113, WIZARDS

Chicago, spoiling Billy Donovan's debut as Bulls coach.

TIMBERWOLVES 111, PISTONS 101: Malik Beasley scored 23 points and Karl-Anthony Towns had 22 points, 11 rebounds and seven assists, leading Minnesota past Detroit.

PACERS 121, KNICKS 107: Domantas Sabonis scored a career-high 32 points and Victor Oladipo added 16 of his 22 in the second half, leading Indiana past New York.

Memphis beats Florida Atlantic 25-10 in Montgomery Bowl

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (AP) — Brady White already held several Memphis career records, but he left another mark in his finale.

White passed for 284 yards and three touchdowns to lead the Tigers to a 25-10 victory over Florida Atlantic on Wednesday night in the Montgomery Bowl, snapping a five-game bowl losing streak.

The Tigers (8-3) built a big halftime lead, withstood a third-quarter rally and ended coach Ryan Silverfield's first season with a second straight win

"They'll go down in history for their fight and everything they did this season," Silverfield said, adding that his team ended up playing with 53 scholarship players.

Meanwhile, Willie Taggart's debut season with Florida Atlantic ended at 5-4 after the offense sputtered much of the way.

The game was created to replace the canceled Fenway Bowl. Cramton Bowl will also host the Camellia Bowl on Christmas Day. This one ended in a driving rain.

White, who was named game MVP, completed 22 of 34 passes with three short touchdowns while also throwing an interception, having a big game even with a quiet night from star receiver Calvin Austin III.

"Another piece of history was made tonight for myself and for this team," White said. He cited "this whole weird year" that included two canceled games in September because of COVID-19 issues.

More importantly, he said: "We finished it off right."

Redshirt freshman receivers Tahj Washington and Javon Ivory both had big games against a defense that came in ranked 11th nationally in passing defense.

Washington caught eight passes for 105 yards while Ivory gained 126 yards on seven catches with a TD. Austin had 28 yards on three catches, with a TD.

Auburn transfer Asa Martin ran for 96 yards on 15 carries for Memphis.

Nick Tronti completed 16 of 32 passes for 146 yards with a touchdown and an interception for Florida Atlantic. Charles James ran for 82 yards.

"I felt like we didn't' take advantage of opportunities that we got in this football game," Taggart, whose team ended with a three-game

losing streak, said. "The defense did a great job getting three takeaways, and only getting three points off those takeaways is not good enough against a team like Memphis."

Memphis capped the first half with a big man touchdown and a sizable lead that would shrink in the third quarter.

The Tigers took an 18-0 lead with 22 seconds left in the first half on White's 2-yard pass to moonlighting defensive lineman Joseph Dorceus. It was the 277-pounder's first touchdown catch and was followed by a two-point conversion.

'When Coach called the play, my eyes already lit up," Dorceus said.

White completed all 10 of his pass attempts on the first two touchdown drives.

Florida Atlantic cut it to 18-10 in the third quarter with help from a fumbled kickoff return. Tronti passed for 38 yards in the first half and 46 on his initial drive of the second.

White answered right back with a 7-yard touchdown to Austin, a drive kept alive by Ivory's 51-yard catch on third and 10.

Georgia Southern routs Louisiana Tech in the New Orleans Bowl

NEW ORLEANS (AP) - Georgia Southern quarterback Shai Werts kept his team in suspense until pregame warmups.

That's when he started getting geared up emotionally the way he normally does on game days - which teammates and coaches understood to mean that their offensive leader wasn't going to let his shoulder injury sideline him for what was likely his final game with the Eagles.

"It really energized our team," coach Chad Lunsford said. "The guys fed off that for sure."

Werts had three touchdown runs and threw a 65-yard scoring pass to help Georgia Southern beat Louisiana Tech 38-3 in the New Orleans Bowl on Wednesday.

"Going into the week, I really didn't know if I was going to be able to play," insisted Werts, who missed Georgia Southern's previous two games. "When the time came for me to make a decision, I felt good."

Werts scored one of his touchdowns on a designed QB run that covered 37 yards. His two other rushing TDs came from a yard out.

"It definitely feels good to go out on top with my guys," Werts said. "You're only as good as your last game, and if this is my last game, then I feel good about it."

Georgia Southern (8-5) came up with four interceptions — including two near its own goal line in the

first quarter. Safety Justin Birdsong intercepted two passes — the first against Louisiana Tech starter Aaron Allen and the second against reserve JD Head in the third quarter.

"It was a big game for us," said Birdsong, noting that his team was motivated by hearing that Louisiana Tech (5-5), which is in Conference USA, had won 18 straight against current Sun Belt Conference members. "It was definitely a statement to go out there and do what we did."

The Eagles came in averaging 262 yards rushing and finished with 322 against Louisiana Tech.

Malik Murry broke off a 43-yard run on the opening drive to set up Werts' first short TD run. Gerald Green's 55-yard run in the fourth quarter highlighted his 108-yard, one-TD performance. Werts finished with 71 yards rushing.

"I didn't want Shai to have to go out with an injury and I don't think he wanted to either," Lunsford said. "Super proud of him, proud of how he was able to end his career here."

The Bulldogs were trying to win a bowl for the seventh straight season, but could not overcome three interceptions thrown by Allen inside the Georgia Southern 30 in the first half.

"He did not play very well," Louisiana Tech coach Skip Holtz said. "He certainly hasn't played that way so far this year ... but he had a hard night tonight."