

# THE HOMELAND SECURITY *NEWS CLIPS*

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**TO: THE SECRETARY AND SENIOR STAFF**

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## **LEADING DHS NEWS**

### **Obama Immigration Actions Face Critical Day At High Court**

By Jordan Fabian  
[The Hill](#), April 16, 2016

Monday marks a critical day for President Obama's executive actions on immigration, as his legal team makes arguments to the Supreme Court to allow them to go forward.

In oral arguments, the Obama administration will ask the justices to lift a lower court injunction that blocked the implementation of the programs, which would allow millions of undocumented immigrants to live and work in the U.S. without fear of deportation.

A group of 26 states, led by Texas, will argue the injunction should be kept in place because Obama overstepped his authority and the programs would pose high costs on their governments.

The court is expected to hand down a ruling in June. But Obama and his allies are facing the possibility of a deadlock that would hand a victory to Texas and the states.

If the short-handed court splits 4-4, the lower court's ruling would be left in place, which would virtually guarantee the programs will not go into place before Obama leaves office.

"The 500-pound gorilla is the empty chair of Justice [Antonin] Scalia," said Josh Blackman, a constitutional law professor at the South Texas College of Law, who helped file a legal brief backing the lawsuit against Obama's programs.

"It has a significant impact on the outcome of the case. Because we're down to only eight justices, there is a distinct possibility of a tie."

Supporters of the program argue the eight-member Supreme Court might not have the final say on the programs.

If the justices cannot reach a majority decision, they say states, cities and activist groups could launch a new round of legal challenges in other courts to try to fight the injunction, imposed by U.S. District Judge Andrew Hanen of Texas and upheld by the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, known as the most conservative appeals court in the country.

"What happens then is what we call judicial chaos," said David Leopold, former president of the American Immigration Lawyers Association. "It would open the door to a floodgate of cases trying to challenge the injunction."

The states could argue that they would be deprived of economic benefits of the programs.

A coalition of 118 cities and counties, including New York City, filed a legal brief last month arguing they could miss out on around \$800 million in economic benefits to state and local governments if millions of large numbers of immigrants remain subject to deportation.

Other legal experts call that scenario farfetched, saying cities and states lack legal standing to bring such a suit based on potential lost benefits.

"It has no legal merit," said Blackman.

Immigrant rights groups are hopeful it won't come to that and are confident of a victory at the Supreme Court. They see Chief Justice John Roberts and Justice Anthony Kennedy as likely votes in favor of the Obama administration.

They are confident the justices, and Roberts in particular, will find that the states do not have the right to sue the federal government to block the immigration actions.

If the justices agree the states do not have standing, the case could be thrown out and the administration could start putting the programs in place.

Texas and its counterparts argue they would suffer high costs from issuing driver's licenses and providing other benefits to undocumented immigrants if that occurs.

"If any budgetary impact, no matter how speculative, on a state provides the opportunity to go to court and challenge any federal policy, then we would see the courts flooded with such cases," Thomas Saenz, president and general counsel of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF), told reporters this week.

"It could shut down the government and it is not an exaggeration to suggest that," added Saenz, who is arguing before the court on behalf of a group of undocumented immigrants who could be affected by Obama's actions.

Advocates cite Roberts' dissenting opinion in a 2007 case, arguing that Massachusetts and other states did not have standing to bring a lawsuit demanding the Environmental Protection Agency regulate greenhouse gas emissions.

Kennedy sided with the Obama administration in 2012, when he wrote the majority opinion that struck down the core of Arizona's controversial immigration law. He wrote that the federal government, and not the states, has the sole authority to write and enforce immigration laws.

At stake is Obama's Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents (DAPA) program, which would allow undocumented parents of U.S. citizen children to apply for a temporary reprieve from deportation.

The states also challenged an expansion of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) initiative, which has allowed more than 700,000 people brought to the U.S. illegally as children to remain.

Obama announced the programs after the 2014 midterm elections. But Hanen, the Texas federal judge appointed by George W. Bush, blocked them from taking effect in February 2015. A split panel of the Fifth Circuit upheld his ruling last November, arguing Texas is likely to succeed on the merits of the case.

The legal fight has generated intense interest. The court expanded oral arguments to 90 minutes to allow lawyers representing MALDEF and the Republican-controlled House of Representatives to join the administration and the states in making their case.

In addition to the costs associated with the programs, Texas and the other states argue Obama does not have the legal authority to shield large groups of undocumented immigrants from deportation.

"This case is about an unprecedented, sweeping assertion of executive power," Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton wrote in brief filed with the Supreme Court last month. "When Congress has established certain conduct as unlawful, the separation of powers does not permit the executive to unilaterally declare that conduct lawful."

Opponents of the plan say legal standing will be a major threshold issue but are confident they will offer a persuasive case on the merits if they can clear that hurdle.

While Kennedy ruled favorably for Obama in the Arizona case, they are hopeful he will reprise his role in the 2012 Obamacare challenge, when he scolded the 5-4 majority that upheld the law for "a vast judicial overreaching."

But they have also been scarred by the experience of seeing the Roberts court deliver victories for the president on his healthcare law and immigration in recent years.

"John Roberts breaks my heart every single June," said Blackman. "Maybe this will be the way he breaks my heart this year. But I don't know."

## High Court Takes Up Case For Shielding Immigrants From Deportation

By Michael Matza

[Philadelphia Inquirer](#), April 17, 2016

When the U.S. Supreme Court hears arguments Monday in the nation's most closely watched immigration lawsuit, Libia Rodriguez will be among the expected thousands of demonstrators at the court's white marble steps.

The case, *United States v. Texas*, could be a life-changer for Rodriguez, 31, an undocumented Mexican immigrant who lives in Coatesville with her husband, also here illegally, and their three U.S.-born children. Depending on the justices' ruling, the couple could put aside their worries of being sent back to Mexico. Or they could go on as they have for 13 years, uncertain of their family's future.

At issue are a pair of 2014 executive actions by President Obama, in response to congressional inaction on immigration reform. One would give limited protection from deportation to undocumented immigrants whose children are American citizens or permanent legal residents. The other would increase the number of undocumented youths, initially one million, who were protected under a 2012 executive action.

Between the Deferred Action for Parents of Americans (DAPA) and the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) plans, 4.9 million of the nation's 11.3 million undocumented immigrants would be shielded from deportation.

Both executive actions, however, were swiftly blocked. Twenty-six states (not including Pennsylvania or New Jersey) sued, arguing that Obama had exceeded his authority. In February 2015, a federal judge in Texas issued an injunction, which was upheld by a Fifth Circuit panel. The Department of Justice appealed, setting the stage for Monday's arguments before the high court. A ruling is expected by the end of June.

Rodriguez, a homemaker who hopes to one day get an outside job, and her husband, a cement contractor, would be covered by DAPA. They met during their trek across the Sonoran Desert, from which they entered Arizona illegally in 2003. Their children, having been born here, are U.S. citizens.

"I really need this," she said of DAPA, under which she'd be eligible for a work permit and driver's license. "Permission would change our lives."

Driver's licenses, among other services, are part of Texas' argument. The state, the lead plaintiff, contends that Obama's executive actions will cause harm by requiring Texas to spend millions of dollars to provide driver's licenses to the many immigrants who will be allowed to stay in this country.

More pointedly, the plaintiffs accuse Obama of exceeding his authority, usurping powers that they say belong to the legislature.

The federal government has responded that presidents for decades have issued executive actions on immigration and that Obama's are no different.

With immigration issues galvanizing the electorate this year, advocates for undocumented immigrants and supporters of mass deportations have a lot invested in the outcome.

Marshall Fitz, of the Center for American Progress, a left-leaning think tank in Washington, called the case "a political dispute dressed up as a lawsuit."

House Speaker Paul Ryan (R., Wis.) saw a power grab: "This executive amnesty is a direct attack on Congress' . . . powers under our Constitution."

More than 50 interest groups – including the AFL-CIO, the National Sheriffs' Association, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, the National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance, and a group of former Homeland Security officials – have filed friend-of-the-court briefs.

Buses carrying local advocates for immigrants will leave very early Monday from York, Reading, and Philadelphia.

Veteran court watcher Lyle Denniston, in a SCOTUSblog posting last week, said the case reflected the

partisan polarization of the nation. “It is a modern echo of what the Founders debated with great intensity,” he wrote. “How to divide up the powers of national and state governments?”

Recognizing the intense interest, the high court has allotted 90 minutes to the arguments, instead of the usual hour. The Department of Justice will share 10 of its 45 minutes with a lawyer for undocumented parents. Texas will give 15 of its 45 to a lawyer for the House of Representatives.

The justices told the parties to prepare to answer four fundamental questions:

Do the states have standing to sue?

Is the executive action “arbitrary, capricious, or otherwise not in accordance with the law”?

Did Obama bypass the “notice-and-comment procedures” in the Administrative Procedures Act?

Did he violate the Constitution’s “take care” clause, to “faithfully execute” laws as passed by Congress?

The federal government is expected to argue that Obama acted pragmatically, prioritizing some deportations and deferring others because Congress appropriates only enough funding to remove 400,000 undocumented immigrants a year.

Attorneys for Texas are expected to argue that Obama’s actions “grant lawful presence to aliens who would otherwise be unlawfully present.”

No one is sure how the court will align. Some observers say Justices John G. Roberts Jr. and Anthony M. Kennedy are the likely swing votes.

The death of Justice Antonin Scalia in February creates the possibility of a 4-4 ruling. A tie would leave in place the lower court’s injunction.

If the justices uphold the 2014 actions, the Obama administration would be left with just a few months to begin carrying them out. Democratic candidates Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders have said they would continue them, while the leading Republican candidates have promised to put the Obama actions on the chopping block in 2017.

Drexel University associate professor of law Anil Kalhan wrote about *United States v. Texas* for the *UCLA Law Review*. He criticized the District Court for basing its injunction on “the same incorrect claims about deferred action” heard in populist anti-immigration rhetoric.

“One of the big-picture things I’ve been struck by,” Kalhan said in an interview, “is the way the norms of political discourse, which are really toxic, charged and divisive, are bleeding into the litigation process. . . . The Supreme Court has an opportunity to draw a line.”

## **Family Of Immigrants, Only One A Citizen, Anxiously Awaits Supreme Court Ruling**

By Julia Preston

[New York Times](#), April 16, 2016

FAIRFAX, Va. — Jerry Pinto, an immigrant from Bolivia, has visions of opening a spacious carpentry workshop in this suburban city, with his name in bold letters over the door.

“I want a place where I can be visible,” he says wistfully. But for now he knows he has to lie low, because he is in the country illegally. He runs his carpentry business almost surreptitiously from the cramped garage behind his house.

Mr. Pinto is among more than four million unauthorized immigrants whose lives could be transformed by the Supreme Court. On Monday, the justices will hear oral arguments in a challenge brought by 26 states, led by Texas, to President Obama’s effort through executive action to give the immigrants legal work permits and protection from deportation.

Depending on the outcome, people like Mr. Pinto will have a chance to come out into the open or will remain, perhaps for years, in a twilight underground. And the stakes are high in this election year, since the two leading candidates for the Republican presidential nomination, Donald J. Trump and Senator Ted Cruz of Texas, have both said they would deport all 11 million foreigners in the country illegally.

The larger of the president’s programs before the Supreme Court would benefit immigrants who are parents of United States citizens and legal permanent residents, if they pass background checks and have no serious criminal records.

Most of those parents have families like Mr. Pinto’s: an immigration mix that leads to differing opportunities and limits, and to openness, secrecy and fear all within one family.

His wife, Elvira, 47, is from Mexico, and also here illegally. His daughter, Ambar, 22, and son Jerry Rodrigo, 15, were born in Bolivia but have grown up like American children in Virginia, although without legal residency. His youngest son, Christian, 8, is the American-born citizen who makes his parents eligible for Mr. Obama’s program, should it be affirmed.

Mr. Pinto was the first in the family to come. He and his wife, whom he met while they were studying in Mexico to be economists, were middle-class professionals in Bolivia before the economy collapsed in the 1990s. They returned to Mexico, and in 2004 he joined a tide of Mexicans running the border into the United States. He recalls being lost for four days without water in the Arizona desert in the heat of high summer, his feet so blistered he had to crawl.

He made his way to Virginia where he had relatives, and he quickly discovered the work available to him without legal papers or a Social Security number was in construction — outdoors. He soon added a second trade, learning plumbing to work two jobs at once. Then he learned another skill, making exterior moldings. Several years ago he

purchased an industrial saw that he installed in his garage and started his own company.

Still, Mr. Pinto said, "I can't think about anything more than survival and making sure my children have something to eat." Surrounded by the comforts of a well-to-do suburb, he sometimes could not pay rent and buy food.

His wife cleans houses to add to the family income. But even after more than a decade here, she is often reluctant to leave the house.

"I hear news on the radio of an immigration raid nearby," she said, "and it makes me think I might go out tomorrow morning and never return to see my children."

The Pintos know how the Supreme Court could change things for them because of what happened to Ambar. At first she was wary of signing up for an initiative by Mr. Obama in 2012, which gave a legal foothold to millions of young undocumented immigrants who came here as children, including authorization to work.

"I was giving my information to the government," Ambar recalled. "They are going to know my dad's and my mom's full names, our address." Eventually, she applied.

The impact was immediate. She got a secretarial job at a Washington law firm to help pay her college costs. Emboldened, she joined a campaign to persuade Virginia officials to let immigrant students in the program attend state colleges at the lower, resident tuition rates. Senator Mark Warner, a Virginia Democrat, was impressed by her zeal and invited her to be his guest at Mr. Obama's State of the Union address in 2013.

She was present — bursting into tears — when a new Virginia attorney general, Mark Herring, announced in 2014 that he would allow the immigrants to pay resident rates. After two years of community college, Ambar will move on this year to a state university, George Mason.

Mr. Pinto observed his daughter's gains with pride and a twinge of envy. "We have to stop having our own dreams and just think about the future of our children," he said.

Like the youth program, Mr. Obama's more recent initiative, known as Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents, also offered temporary deportation deferrals and work permits, but no lasting immigration status. The immigrants would be able to get driver's licenses in some states, to take out loans and own homes and businesses. The president also expanded the youth program, eliminating an upper age limit.

Like the Pintos, at least four-fifths of eligible parents have lived in the United States for a decade or more, according to a study by the Center for Migration Studies, a nonpartisan research center. About 94 percent are steadily employed. Roughly half say they speak English well or fluently.

The states that sued to stop the programs say Mr. Obama overstepped his powers and gave lawbreakers a

quasi-legal status that Congress never approved, one that would burden their budgets with costs of services for the immigrants. An injunction was imposed by a federal court in Texas in February 2015, and upheld by the Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit in New Orleans.

Sixteen states, including Virginia, and the District of Columbia submitted a brief to the Supreme Court supporting Mr. Obama, saying they expect to benefit through increased tax revenues from immigrants working legally and improved public safety.

Virginia officials are divided on the issue. "Do you go after gang members and drug dealers or spend those limited enforcement resources on breaking up families?" Mr. Herring, the Virginia attorney general who is a Democrat, asked in an interview. "To me, that's an easy call."

But Representative Robert W. Goodlatte, a Virginia Republican who is chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, signed a Supreme Court brief opposing the programs. "The lack of respect for our immigration laws on the part of government officials and unlawful immigrants is not conducive to promoting respect for the rule of law in general, for preventing crimes and promoting public safety," Mr. Goodlatte said. A decision from the court is expected in June.

The Pintos are waiting anxiously. Christian, the American citizen now in third grade, has understood for the first time what could happen if immigration agents came for the family. His father and siblings could be sent to Bolivia, his mother to Mexico, and he could be left in the United States.

"At first, like, I didn't even know what the word immigrant meant," Christian said. "Now I know that being a citizen means a lot to me because if I wasn't born here, I wouldn't be able to help my mom and dad live here."

If the Supreme Court upholds the programs, Mr. Pinto will rush to apply. He will get a Virginia driver's license (the one he has now is from Maryland). He will take out a loan to open his workshop, then go back for a mortgage to buy their home.

Hopeful, the family is already taking steps out of hiding, inviting a Democratic congressman, Representative Don Beyer of Virginia, to dinner earlier this month.

"I feel like an American," Mr. Pinto said. "This is my country now."

## U.S. Supreme Court Showdown Looms On Immigration

By Jeremy Redmon

[Atlanta Journal-Constitution](#), April 17, 2016

Gabriel Rodriguez Valladolid excitedly gathered with his family in front of the television two years ago to watch President Barack Obama announce sweeping executive

actions that could temporarily shield him and his wife from deportation.

It was November of 2014 and their Lawrenceville home was decorated for the holidays with snowmen figurines and brightly colored baubles. Obama's announcement felt like an early Christmas gift for them and their two young U.S.-born children.

But three months later a federal judge in Texas temporarily halted the Obama administration, siding with Georgia and 25 other states suing to stop the president's executive actions. A federal appeals court in New Orleans upheld the temporary injunction in May.

On Monday, the U.S. Supreme Court will hear arguments in the historic case, which tests the boundaries of presidential power. The outcome could help decide Obama's legacy as well as the fate of millions of immigrants without legal status like Rodriguez Valladolid, a native of Mexico, and his wife, Clara, who is from Guatemala.

"We hope we will get some good news," said Gabriel Rodriguez Valladolid, who illegally entered the United States more than two decades ago, bought his house in Lawrenceville and started his own flooring installation business.

Steve Ramey of Lilburn sees it differently. As he watched Obama announce his plan, Ramey, the co-chairman of the United Tea Party of Georgia, grew steamed. Illegal immigration, he said, depresses wages and drives up taxpayer costs for public schools. Those who are living in the U.S. without legal permission should be deported, Ramey added.

"We have enough illegals sneaking into this country," said Ramey. "They are a drain on us because they come here and they undercut the wages of most Americans."

A Donald Trump supporter who publishes an online career guide for college students, Ramey is concerned enough about the problem that he checked to ensure the man who does his yardwork has a green card.

"I'm bitter about it," Ramey said about illegal immigration. "I'm angry with our own politicians."

The president doesn't have the legal authority to do what he is trying to do, said Ramey, who is hoping the Supreme Court will uphold the injunction. Ramey sees Obama's actions as part of a pattern.

"He is trying to usurp the power of Congress and even the Supreme Court by doing what he does," Ramey said.

Expected by the end of June, the implications of the justices' decision in the case – United States v. Texas – are broad: It could reflect how the court feels about presidential executive actions and also tip the balance of power between Congress and the White House.

"I doubt the Supreme Court will rule on the general authority of executive actions and the balance of power between the president and Congress," said Cornell University

Law School professor Stephen Yale-Loehr, co-author of a 21-volume immigration law treatise. "But people involved in other controversies involving executive actions, such as gun control or environmental policy, will certainly review the oral arguments in United States v. Texas closely to try to determine how legal challenges in those areas might fare."

Coming before the presidential election, the ruling could also energize Hispanic voters and stoke the fires surrounding an issue that is red hot in the GOP primary. Trump, the Republican presidential frontrunner, is campaigning on deporting all the estimated 11 million immigrants living without legal permission in the U.S. In contrast, Democratic candidates Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders are pushing for a pathway to citizenship for immigrants without papers.

With the death of Justice Antonin Scalia in February, it's possible the court could split 4-4, which would leave the injunction in place. That could prompt federal lawsuits from other parties who want the executive actions to go forward, said David Leopold, past president of the American Immigration Lawyers Association. Last year, twelve other states and the District of Columbia filed court papers in support of Obama's actions, saying they could help boost their tax revenues and economies. It's possible one or more of them could sue, Leopold said.

"At a minimum, you'd see a lot of action in the courts all over the country," he predicted about a 4-4 split. "And it would create a chaotic situation."

Obama, who is set to leave office in January, fought unsuccessfully for bipartisan Senate legislation that would have overhauled the nation's immigration system. That bill stalled in the GOP-led House in 2013.

Citing inaction in Congress, Obama is now proposing three-year work permits and deportation deferrals for people who don't have legal status but do have children who were born here or are legal permanent residents. To be eligible for the program — called Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents or DAPA — they must have lived in the U.S. continuously since Jan. 1 of 2010 and submit to background checks.

More than 4 million people would be eligible nationwide. It's unknown how many of them are in Georgia. But in 2012 there were 116,000 immigrants living in Georgia without legal status but with U.S.-born children, according to the Migration Policy Institute, a Washington-based think tank that evaluates migration policies. Rodriguez Valladolid is among them.

Obama's plan would also expand a program granting temporary deportation deferrals and work permits to immigrants who were illegally brought here as children. The move eliminates the age cap in the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program — which was 31 — and requires them to have continually resided in the U.S. from Jan. 1 2010 to the present, a change from June 2007. It would also make

their work permits and deportation deferrals good for three years, up from two.

Led by Texas, the 26 states suing to stop Obama's plan say it would boost their costs for services and become a magnet for illegal immigration. Others say the case is more about complying with the Constitution. Georgia's two U.S. Republican senators have joined 41 of their GOP colleagues in the Senate in signing court papers in opposition to the president's actions.

"President Obama's attempt to circumvent Congress by executive order and grant legal status to millions is unconstitutional and unacceptable," U.S. Sen. Johnny Isakson said.

The Obama administration argues the executive branch has "unusually broad discretion in immigration." Meanwhile, Atlanta's mayor and police chief, Georgia's four Democratic congressmen and three immigrant rights groups based in the Peach State have filed court papers in support of Obama's plans. In March, Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed joined officials in more than 100 other cities and counties in filing a brief in support of the Obama administration's efforts. Reed predicted the Supreme Court will "come down on the right side of history by allowing this imperative step toward fixing our broken immigration system."

While Reed and other allies are lining up in support of Obama, the president is simultaneously feeling pressure on his left flank. Immigrant rights activists are planning to travel to Washington Monday to demonstrate outside the courthouse in favor of the president's plans, but also to lobby Congress in opposition to the Obama administration's recent immigration enforcement raids. Part of a nationwide crackdown against the waves of Central Americans immigrants illegally entering the country, the raids have ensnared hundreds of people in Georgia and other states this year, including teens who had enrolled in public schools here.

"We are putting pressure on the administration to not only implement DAPA but also to ensure that enforcement priorities follow our values," said Jacinta Gonzalez, field director for Mijente, a national political group that is collaborating with the Georgia Latino Alliance for Human Rights. "We don't stand with separating children from their families."

For Rodriguez Valladolid, the Supreme Court case is personal. He previously faced deportation for driving without a license. Immigration authorities have placed his deportation case on hold and approved a one-year work permit for him. But he lacks a driver's license. So does his wife, Clara.

If the court upholds the president's actions, he and his wife could potentially qualify for three-year work permits through DAPA and maybe even Georgia driver's licenses as a result, said his immigration attorney, Sarah Owings. Rodriguez Valladolid said a driver's license could allow him to expand his flooring business, hire more workers and pay

more state and federal taxes. Plus, he hopes, the DAPA program would allow him to visit his relatives in Mexico and legally return to his family in Lawrenceville.

"My grandmother passed away just last night" in Mexico, he said Tuesday. "I feel frustrated that I cannot go to Mexico to see my family."

## Pro-immigration Activists Going To Washington For Supreme Court Hearing

By Alfonso Chardy

[Miami Herald](#), April 16, 2016

Immigrants and pro-immigration activists will board a bus in Miami Sunday and travel overnight to Washington D.C., where the U.S. Supreme Court will hear arguments Monday about President Barack Obama's controversial effort to shield from deportation about five million undocumented immigrants.

"We're going to Washington to be there during Monday's hearing and show our support so that there is a relief against deportations that are brutally separating families," said María Rodríguez, executive director of the Florida Immigrant Coalition, one of groups organizing the trip to Washington.

Rodríguez spoke Wednesday during a news conference in front of the county government building in downtown Miami, where she announced the bus trip. The Miami group will join others from U.S. cities at a large rally on the Supreme Court steps to show support for Obama's executive actions.

The hearing marks the most important milestone in Obama's struggle to enact his plan to grant temporary protection from deportation for parents of children who are citizens or legal residents.

Obama announced his executive actions in November 2014. But a month later, in December 2014, Texas and 25 other states — including Florida — sued in federal court against the presidential plan.

In February 2015, a federal judge in Brownsville, Texas, ruled against the executive actions. The Justice Department appealed and the Supreme Court eventually agreed to review the case. A ruling is expected in June.

"I'm going to Washington," said Jorge Cortes, one of the immigrants who planned to board the bus Sunday, "because we are demanding justice for the rights of millions of families who deserve to enter the system."

Jacqueline Lopez, another immigrant traveling to Washington, said she wants undocumented immigrants to live in peace.

"We want an opportunity," she said, "so we can work and live in peace. We do not want to separate from our families and we do not want to live in fear anymore."



## Supreme Court Hears Case On Protecting Illegal Immigrants From Deportation

The case, known as **Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents**, is one of the biggest before the high court this year

By Miriam Jordan

[Wall Street Journal](#), April 17, 2016

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

## Pentagon Chief: US Eyes Ways To Step Up Islamic State Fight

By Lolita C. Baldor

[Associated Press](#), April 16, 2016

AL-DHAFRA AIR BASE, United Arab Emirates (AP) – U.S. Defense Secretary Ash Carter said he will talk with his commanders in the coming days to identify additional ways the U.S. can intensify the fight against Islamic State militants in Iraq and Syria, including more airstrikes, cyberattacks and American troops on the ground.

He said the United States wants to do more in the fight and is “only limited by our own ingenuity” and ideas. Carter expressed confidence that the White House will approve recommendations, saying nothing he has asked President Barack Obama for yet in the conflicts has been turned down.

Carter spoke to reporters at Al-Dhafra Air Base near Abu Dhabi, an important launching point for military operations against the Islamic State group in the region.

His visit comes as the U.S. is considering moves to boost the number of American troops in Iraq, as well as other steps to help the Iraqis take on IS.

Carter suggested the U.S. may consider shifting the nature of its military campaign against the extremists, adding there could be more rapid targeting of the enemy as intelligence on the ground improves.

“As we’ve learned more and are more on top of the enemy, you can do more dynamic targeting,” Carter said.

Late last month, U.S. Gen. Joseph Dunford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told reporters that he and Carter believe there will be an increase in U.S. forces in Iraq in the coming weeks. Any final decision would be worked out with the Iraqi government and require Obama’s approval.

It’s unclear whether the increase would force the White House to formally approve a higher cap on troop levels in Iraq, now set at 3,780.

The Pentagon says there are close to 3,400 U.S. troops there now. According to U.S. officials, however, there are actually as many as 5,000 American forces in the country, but some do not count against the cap because they are in Iraq on temporary duty.

Dunford and Carter have said that accelerating the fight against IS could mean using Apache helicopters for combat

missions, deploying more U.S. special operations forces or using American military advisers in Iraqi units closer to the front lines.

The U.S. also is likely to provide additional artillery fire and targeting help for Iraqi forces advancing on Mosul. Those American forces, however, would remain well behind the front lines.

Carter has said that Obama and other U.S. leaders will encourage other Gulf nations to contribute economically to the effort to rebuild Iraq once IS is defeated.

Obama and other U.S. officials are expected to attend the U.S.-Gulf Cooperation Council leaders’ summit next week in Saudi Arabia. The six member countries are Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the UAE, Qatar, Bahrain and Oman.

Carter said Saturday that the U.S. hopes that the Gulf nations will support Iraq politically as it tries to establish a more successful multisectarian government.

During his visit to the air base, Carter spoke with troops, including those who have been flying and supporting the airstrikes over Iraq and Syria.

Two large Global Hawk surveillance aircraft, an F-22 Raptor fighter jet and an F-15E strike fighter were arrayed in the hangar where Carter spoke.

U.S. Air Force Col. Johnny Barnes, the vice commander of the 380th Air Expeditionary Wing told reporters that Russian fighters in Syria haven’t impeded U.S. airstrikes. But he acknowledged that there were moments in northwest Syria when the Russian jets were an “inconvenience.”

Now that some have left the country, he said it’s been “less inconvenient.”

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## In UAE, Carter Eyes Ways To Escalate ISIS Fight

By Jessie Hellmann

[The Hill](#), April 16, 2016

Defense Secretary Ash Carter made a trip to the Middle East this weekend, saying he and his commanders will be considering more ways the U.S. can intensify the fight against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria.

The escalation may include more airstrikes, cyberattacks and more troops on the ground, Carter told reporters at Al-Dhafra Air Base in the United Arab Emirates, according to the Associated Press.

U.S. efforts against ISIS are “only limited by our own ingenuity,” he said.

The Pentagon says there are about 3,400 U.S. troops in Iraq now and any increase would need to be worked out with the Iraqi government and approved by President Obama.

Officials say the actual count is closer to 5,000, but many are not included in the Defense Department tally as they are on temporary duty.

Carter said the U.S. may change the nature of its military campaign against the terror group, saying there could be more rapid targeting of ISIS as intelligence on the ground improves.

The U.S. is also likely to provide additional artillery and target assistance as the Baghdad government moves to retake the key city of Mosul.

## **U.S. Plans To Step Up Military Campaign Against ISIS**

By Michael S. Schmidt And Eric Schmitt  
[New York Times](#), April 16, 2016

The Obama administration is preparing to broaden its military campaign against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria by increasing the number of Special Operations forces who advise Syrian rebels, and it is also considering the addition of Army attack helicopters to the fight against militants in Iraq.

The goal would be to accelerate what United States officials said on Saturday was momentum behind Iraqi security forces and American-backed rebels in Syria fighting the terrorist organization.

Inside Syria, the administration is prepared to add dozens of Special Operations forces to the 50 who now advise and assist Syrian rebels fighting the Islamic State, say three Defense Department and military officials. The additional trainers, who could total as many as 200, would be able to expand their instruction to Syrian Arab fighters, who are likely to play a pivotal role in capturing Raqqa, the Islamic State's de facto capital in Syria, the officials said.

The administration's plans for Iraq are more complicated.

Pentagon officials would like to increase efforts to advise and train Iraqi security forces for the anticipated assault on Mosul, Iraq's second largest city and the Islamic State's main stronghold in the country. The plan calls for shifting trainers who are already in the country to positions closer to Mosul, the officials said. They would also like to deploy Apache helicopter gunships — which are already in Iraq, but used only to protect American personnel — and order them to participate in the battle for Mosul.

But the government of Iraq's prime minister, Haider al-Abadi, has been battling internal political turmoil. His challenges include political opponents, rampant corruption and an economy weakened by low oil prices.

The military options under consideration — which could be announced in the next several days — were described by five Defense Department and military officials who spoke on the condition of anonymity because final decisions are pending in Washington and Baghdad. Administration officials said on Saturday that announcing or even proposing increased American assistance is a delicate diplomatic task that could further imperil Mr. Abadi's position.

Defense Secretary Ashton B. Carter made clear on Saturday that the administration will increase its military efforts to defeat the Islamic State, also known as ISIS or ISIL, but he did not discuss specifics.

“You should expect us, to see us, doing more,” he said at a news conference at the Al Dhafra air base as he opened travels in the Middle East. “It will be consistent with the same approach, but it'll be across all the domains, right up to cyber.”

Mr. Carter described the administration's approach as one that will use members of the American armed services to help accelerate the military campaign against the Islamic State, but will not replace Iraqi security forces or Syrian rebels.

There are roughly 5,000 American service members in Iraq, according to current Pentagon estimates, but the number often varies, sometimes daily, by hundreds.

Mr. Carter's comments come at a time when Iraqi militias and military forces have been making notable progress on the battlefield against the Islamic State, including seizing parts of Hit, a city in Anbar Province, this month.

Last Wednesday, Col. Steven H. Warren, the military spokesman in Iraq, said that the initial phase of the American-led campaign against the Islamic State, with the intent of degrading or weakening the fighters, was complete, and that allied forces were in the second phase of the operation.

“During this phase, we will enable our partners to dismantle the enemy, fragment his forces, isolate his centers of gravity and liberate the terrain he holds,” he said.

But even as the campaign against the Islamic State is showing gains in Iraq and Syria, the group's franchises in places like Libya, as well as its external operations in Europe, are increasingly lethal.

On Saturday, Mr. Carter met with American service members, including pilots, who are stationed at the Al Dhafra air base and are part of the air campaign over Iraq and Syria. He said that in the coming days he would be meeting with American commanders leading the efforts to defeat the Islamic State.

“We continue to look for, and identify ways of accelerating that, and as we find those we will do them,” Mr. Carter said, adding that the administration would seek the approval of Iraqi government there.

Mr. Carter said that gaining the support of President Obama to do more in Iraq has not been an obstacle.

"We've gotten approval from the White House every time the chairman and I have gone to ask for something that we've needed to accelerate going way back to last year," Mr. Carter said, referring to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Joseph F. Dunford, Jr., who will also be traveling in the region in the coming days. "So that isn't really the issue for us, the issue for us is yet identifying more ways to accelerate the campaign."

## **Pentagon Chief In Gulf To Seek Support For Iraq**

[AFP](#), April 16, 2016

US Defence Secretary Ashton Carter arrived in the United Arab Emirates on Saturday for a six-day Gulf tour aimed at galvanising support for Iraq as it battles the Islamic State group.

Washington is eager to see the Gulf Arab monarchies do more to help Baghdad at a crucial moment in its fight against the jihadists.

"The success of the campaign against ISIL in Iraq does depend upon political and economic progress as well," Carter said ahead of his visit, using another acronym for the jihadist group.

US Defense Secretary Ashton Carter will hold talks with regional leaders including Saudi King Salman and Abu Dhabi's Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan ©Ted Aljibe (AFP/File)

## **Washington Targets IS In Mideast Military, Diplomatic Talks**

By Carla Babb

[Voice of America](#), April 16, 2016

ABU DHABI—U.S. Defense Secretary Ash Carter compared the Islamic State group to cancer on Saturday, saying the insurgent group must be destroyed in Iraq and Syria because that is "where the whole thing arose."

He spoke during a visit to the United Arab Emirates, part of an effort to get Gulf nations to help Iraq as it fights the Islamic State. He said it would be vital to have a capable local force in place once IS was defeated to be sure someone "keeps them defeated."

Carter toured Al-Dhafra Air Base, where he was briefed by key U.S. military and diplomatic officials. The U.S.-led coalition has used the base to launch airstrikes against IS militants, as well as for intelligence, reconnaissance and surveillance missions.

This Middle East portion of a lengthy diplomatic trip by Carter will include talks with Gulf Cooperation Council defense leaders in Saudi Arabia.

President Barack Obama, who is to join Carter in Riyadh, will most likely ask for contributions to rebuild areas of Iraq damaged by the fight against IS when he speaks with

Gulf partners. "That's a global effort in which many countries can make a contribution," Carter said.

The secretary also plans to talk with GCC leaders about how to fight IS more effectively. "We're going to accelerate the military campaign" he said.

## **U.S. Looks To Gulf Allies To Help Iraq Rebuild Post-Islamic State**

By Yeganeh Torbati

[Reuters](#), April 16, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

## **Judge Seals Most Files In Court Case Over CIA Sex Case Leaks**

By Ted Bridis

[Associated Press](#), April 15, 2016

WASHINGTON (AP) — A U.S. judge has ordered the most sensational court records to remain sealed in the now-abandoned lawsuit over leaks in the investigation that led to the resignation of former CIA director David Petraeus.

The files include transcripts of sworn interviews with senior Obama administration officials about the sex scandal and its fallout.

U.S. District Judge Amy Berman Jackson late Thursday accepted objections by the Justice Department to keep the files private, saying government lawyers "have identified compelling confidentiality, privacy and law enforcement interests served by maintaining those records under seal that outweigh any need for public access."

The judge added, "No one has asserted any public need for the material." It was unclear whether Jackson intended to revisit her decision in the future, but she ordered that the "records will remain sealed for the time being."

Among the files were notes from confidential FBI interviews with Petraeus weeks before his resignation; his biographer, Paula Broadwell, with whom he was having an affair; and Jill Kelley, a friend to Petraeus and his wife. Kelley had complained to the FBI in June 2012 about harassing emails from an unknown person who turned out to be Broadwell.

The sealed records also include emails between Petraeus and Broadwell about Kelley — describing an incident at dinner with their spouses when Petraeus said he and Kelley had inappropriately touched each other's upper thighs — that Broadwell had forwarded to the FBI. Kelley has said nothing inappropriate happened. The harassing emails from Broadwell, accusing Kelley of "promiscuous and adulterous behavior," started shortly after Petraeus privately mentioned the incident to Broadwell.

In a barb aimed at Kelley, the judge allowed the release of one court filing that she said contained a “general description” of Kelley’s new book and her efforts to publicize it.

“The fact that plaintiff was advancing a public relations campaign and orchestrating the publication of her book at the same time that she was seeking discovery from the defendants in what she characterized as a lawsuit to protect her privacy can be a matter of public record,” the judge wrote.

Kelley said in a statement Friday that her lawsuit had been about holding political officials accountable and that unsealing the records would prevent it from happening again.

“It’s disappointing that the court confused what my lawsuit was about,” she said. “It was not about protecting my privacy. My privacy was already lost. My lawsuit was about holding the political officials accountable and sanctioning them so what happened to my family never happens to another innocent family.”

Government lawyers had said the files should remain sealed because they contained or described confidential statements provided to FBI agents, documents sealed by another court, or material that should be kept secret to protect the privacy interests of people connected to the case.

Kelley had objected to the release of some files that include copies of emails she sent to some of her lawyers or advisers, which she said should remain privileged, and files that described a draft proposal for a book, “Collateral Damage,” which Kelley published last month. The judge had cited a 2001 appeals court decision citing “a strong presumption in favor of public access to judicial proceedings.” But she said she was accepting Kelley’s request even though her legal arguments were “weak and largely unsupported.”

The case included FBI files and deposition testimony from or about such senior U.S. government officials as Petraeus; Defense Secretary Ashton Carter; former Defense Secretary and CIA Director Leon Panetta; Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson; Marine Gen. John R. Allen, then-commander of U.S. forces in Afghanistan; former Pentagon chief of staff Jeremy Bash; former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton aide Phillippe Reines; and former Pentagon and CIA press secretary George Little.

As the scandal was publicly unfolding, Pentagon officials acknowledged in depositions that they developed a “press plan” with members of an unspecified delegation from the White House in November 2012 to tell reporters that emails between Allen and Kelley were “potentially inappropriate” and to suggest that the two had a sexual relationship. Kelley denied this, and Allen later was exonerated by the Pentagon’s inspector general.

Kelley, along with her husband, Scott, had sued the government in June 2013 in Washington, alleging that officials violated the U.S. Privacy Act by disclosing information about them during the FBI’s investigation of

Petraeus. The former CIA director pleaded guilty to one misdemeanor charge of mishandling classified information relating to documents he had provided to Broadwell, who has not been charged with any crime.

The Kelleys’ civil lawsuit collapsed last month after her lawyers asked the judge to let them withdraw from the case. The lawyers cited irreconcilable differences, just weeks after the Justice Department declined a secret \$4.35 million settlement proposal.

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## **IMMIGRATION**

### **Immigration Politics At The Court**

[New York Times](#), April 16, 2016

On Monday, the Supreme Court will hear oral arguments in *United States v. Texas*, one of the most flagrant examples in recent memory of a naked political dispute masquerading as a legal one.

In this case, 26 Republican-led states brought suit against President Obama’s November 2014 executive actions to protect millions of immigrants from deportation. And once again, the prospect of a 4-to-4 split on the court threatens to spur widespread legal chaos by effectively giving these 26 states the power to set national immigration policy. But it need not come to that. If the justices follow their own precedent as well as longstanding practice, they should reject the plaintiffs’ absurd claim.

Mr. Obama’s challenged action, taken after years of waiting in vain for Congress to pass comprehensive immigration reform, is a sensible response to the issue of the more than 11 million undocumented immigrants living, working and raising families in the United States. It would be impossible to deport them all, so in 2014 Mr. Obama offered a three-year reprieve from deportation to more than four million undocumented parents of American citizens or permanent residents. (A previous executive action, in 2012, allowed young immigrants brought here as children to get work permits and be exempt from deportation.)

This is both smart politics and humane policy, and it falls well within Mr. Obama’s authority. As the Supreme Court reiterated in 2012, the federal government has “broad, undoubted power over the subject of immigration and the status of aliens.”

Presidents from Dwight Eisenhower to George W. Bush often wielded such power — which includes deciding whom to deport, and when — with virtually no opposition. And Mr. Obama has deported 2.5 million undocumented immigrants, more than any president in history. But Republican governors and state officials are infuriated with his 2014 executive

action, claiming it violates immigration law and is an unconstitutional overreach of his authority.

As a matter of law, this lawsuit should never have made it this far. The president's actions did not change anyone's legal status; it just allowed certain undocumented immigrants to temporarily seek work without the constant fear of being torn from their children and families. Besides, the states have no standing to bring the suit in the first place because, despite their contorted claims, they will suffer no demonstrable harm. If the states are allowed to prevail in this case, states conceivably could sue over almost any federal policy decision they oppose.

Chief Justice John Roberts Jr. likes to say that the court is above politics. This case, which has never been more than a highly politicized anti-immigrant crusade wrapped in legal briefs, gives him and the court a clear opportunity to reaffirm that principle and leave fights like these to the political process.

## **Court Should Consider Human Side Of Immigration Policies**

By Samuel Rodriguez

[Sacramento \(CA\) Bee](#), April 17, 2016

As the Supreme Court prepares to hear arguments Monday on the challenge to some of the Obama administration's executive actions related to immigration, we must remember the people and communities affected by our broken immigration system.

They should be the focus of the debate – not politics. That's why I joined fellow Californians across the political spectrum in a friend-of-the-court brief urging the court to allow these policies to take effect.

Too many people, on all sides of the debate, are reading the political tea leaves ahead of the arguments in *United States v. Texas* and the decision expected in June. That's if they're not outright playing the case for political gain.

I have witnessed too many such sacrifices at the altar of political expediency. Our concern should be restricted to the vulnerable people who love their adopted country, but are held back by outdated policies and targeted by hateful rhetoric.

God created every human being in his image. Every person has dignity. As so many try to use this case for political ends, we must look with compassion upon the families whose lives and futures are at stake.

A hard-hearted approach to immigrants and immigration will not help us move toward solutions.

Since Texas and other states filed suit more than a year ago against the Obama administration, the fate of expanded deferred action has been in limbo. But there can be no doubt that our enforcement-focused immigration system treats

family unity and God-given dignity, two of our highest principles as Christians, with contempt.

It is fair to argue that the solution must come from Congress – and indeed, eventually it must. But politics' stranglehold that has blocked legislative solutions is not about to end. In the meantime, we must have a better answer than an indefinite threat of deportation for families trying to build better lives here.

A survey last year found that 76 percent of Americans, including 67 percent of Republicans, supported the idea that parents here without authorization should be able to stay in the U.S. for a period of time if they pass a background check, have lived in the U.S. for at least five years and their children have legal status. Support was similarly strong (68 percent) among white evangelical Protestants.

More recently, data released March 29 indicate that similar percentages in all three groups back a way for these immigrants to earn legal status and/or citizenship, with majority support for citizenship.

The lawsuit has kept temporary relief from taking effect. But now we look forward to a ruling on the constitutionality of the administration's action.

The Supreme Court's decision will bring a degree of certainty. But if the administration's expanded measures are allowed to take effect, they will be temporary.

No matter how the court rules, we need both parties in Congress to step up and agree on long-term solutions. Congress has the ultimate responsibility to provide the greatest certainty in the form of an immigration process that respects individuals and families, strengthens the rule of law, builds our economy and makes us safer.

When our immigration policies allow people to come out of the shadows and fully contribute to our society, of which they already make up a crucial part, we will be on the right track. When we give more new Americans the opportunity to earn legal status or citizenship and reach their fullest potential, America as a whole will thrive.

For the millions of immigrants living in the shadows, we must shake off the yoke of politics, reject oppression and move beyond temporary answers.

I pray that compassion fills the hearts of our leaders in Congress, our president and the Supreme Court justices. Real people's lives and futures hang in the balance.

## **OFFICE OF HEALTH AFFAIRS**

### **CDC Screens Nearly 5,000 Travelers For Zika, Less Than 200 Test Positive**

By Debra Goldschmidt

[CNN](#), April 15, 2016

(CNN) The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention screened 4,534 people for the Zika virus between

January and March, according to a report published Friday. All of those screened either traveled to or moved from areas where the mosquito-borne disease is circulating. Just over 4% tested positive for the virus. More than 94% tested negative and another 1% had an unspecified virus in the same family as Zika, such as dengue or yellow fever, or may have been vaccinated against a related virus.

The report, published by the CDC's Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, sheds some light about the risk for travelers to the more than 40 countries and territories where the virus is circulating. An estimated 40 million people travel between the continental United States and areas infected with the Zika virus, according to Health and Human Services Secretary Sylvia Burwell.

It's not definitive, said Stephen Morse, professor of epidemiology at the Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health and director of the Infectious Disease Epidemiology Certificate Program. It does, however, offer a rough estimate for a returning traveler to know what the chances are of contracting the virus. "The fact that the risk of contracting it is less than you might think ... it might be somewhat reassuring," he said.

Of those who were screened, 3,335 (73.6%) were pregnant women. Twenty-eight (0.8%) tested positive for the virus. The CDC recommends all pregnant women returning from travel to areas where the virus is being transmitted be screened for the virus within two weeks, regardless of whether they are experiencing symptoms. (Before February 12 that recommendation only applied to returning pregnant travelers with symptoms.)

Symptoms include rash, fever, joint pain and conjunctivitis, or red eyes, and are present in 20% of those infected with the virus. Of the pregnant women with no symptoms who were screened as recommended, 99% of them were negative for the virus.

While this indicates the risk may be lower than thought, the effects of the disease are still devastating. It can cause severe birth defects in babies born to mothers who had the virus while pregnant.

"It is reassuring that the proportion of asymptomatic pregnant women with confirmed Zika virus infection in this report was low. However, because of the potential serious adverse pregnancy and neonatal outcomes associated with maternal Zika virus infection, health care providers should continue to offer testing to pregnant women with potential exposure to Zika virus, even if they do not have symptoms," the report said

The report has several limitations. It does not account for where the travelers visited, how long they were in the affected area, or details of their potential exposure to the virus, such as if windows were screened or if they were using mosquito repellent. Only results from tests performed at the CDC are included, not those performed by state health

departments. In addition, testing may have been delayed and therefore the individual screened may have forgotten that they experienced symptoms, an important consideration since those with symptoms were more likely to test positive than those who do not have any. The authors also caution that their findings do not apply to areas where there is active virus transmission.

Dr. Scott Lillibridge, an epidemiologist and professor at the Texas A&M Health Science Center School of Public Health, agreed with Morse that it's reassuring that the numbers are not higher. However, "this isn't anything to be taken lightly," he said, adding that it signals the need to worry about travelers who do not have symptoms.

## **First Sexually Transmitted Case Of Zika Virus Is Reported Between Gay Couple, CDC Warns**

By Lizzie Parry

[Daily Mail](#), April 15, 2016

The first case of sexual transmission of the Zika virus between two gay men has been reported in Dallas, health officials have revealed.

The case first came to light in January, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

An investigation was launched after officials in Dallas County identified a case of sexual transmission of Zika between a man who had recently traveled to a region where the virus is rife, and his non-traveling male partner.

Experts warn the case highlights how the virus can be transmitted through anal sex, as well as vaginal sex.

'Sexual transmission through both vaginal and anal sex is an emerging mode of Zika virus infection that might contribute to more illness than was anticipated when the outbreak was first recognized,' said the CDC.

Earlier this week CDC director Dr Tom Frieden announced there is no longer any doubt that Zika virus infection causes the birth defect microcephaly.

Confirming the worst fears of pregnant women in the US and Latin America health officials warned mother's who are infected with the virus are at risk of giving birth to babies with abnormally small heads and other severe brain defects.

Since last year, doctors in Brazil have been linking Zika infections in pregnant women to a rise in newborns with microcephaly, or an unusually small skull.

Most experts were cautious about drawing a firm connection.

But now the CDC says enough evidence has been gathered to draw a direct link.

Futhermore, the virus has also been linked to the condition Guillain-Barre syndrome, a condition where the immune system attacks the nervous system, which can cause temporary paralysis.

Two days after returning to Dallas following a one-week visit to Venezuela, the man, known as patient A, started to show signs of Zika infection.

He was complaining of a fever, a rash on his upper body and face, and conjunctivitis lasting around three days.

Both one day before and one day after the onset of his symptoms the man had unprotected sex with his partner, referred to in the CDC report as patient B.

Seven days later patient B began to develop a fever, headache and became lethargic.

Days later he developed a rash on his torso and arms, small joint arthritis of his hands and feet and conjunctivitis.

All the symptoms disappeared within the next week, the CDC report notes.

On the 11th day, patient B visited his doctor, who suspected Zika virus infection. And on day 24 semen, urine and saliva specimens were collected from both patients – 24 and 17 days after their respective onset of illness.

The CDC said patient A had regularly traveled to Central and South America for many years.

During his recent trip to Venezuela, he reported that many people in the area he visited were suffering symptoms consistent with Zika virus infection.

Furthermore, transmission of Zika had been confirmed in the country in late November last year.

The CDC note patient B had never traveled to an area where Zika transmission had been confirmed.

While Dallas is within the geographic range of the Zika-carrying *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, the temperatures in Texas at the time of infection were not conducive for mosquito activity.

The CDC said: 'Transmission of Zika virus to patient B by *Aedes aegypti* was unlikely based on environmental conditions.'

As a result, CDC experts concluded transmission from patient A to patient B, must have occurred during sex.

They note at least five other cases of sexually transmitted Zika virus, though note until now all have involved male-to-female transmission through vaginal sex.

The CDC adds: 'Such cases highlight the need for clinicians to remain vigilant for and continue reporting any suspected cases of Zika virus infection to their state or local health departments, including suspected infections in symptomatic persons without travel history, but who report unprotected sexual contact with a person who has traveled to an area with active Zika virus transmission.'

## **First U.S. Case Of Male-to-Male Sexually Transmitted Zika Virus Confirmed In Dallas**

By Merrill Hope

[Breitbart](#), April 15, 2016

"The present case report indicates Zika virus can be transmitted through anal sex, as well as vaginal sex," CDC researchers wrote in their *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* released April 14.

In February, Breitbart Texas reported on the nation's first case of male-to-female sexually transmitted Zika, which also happened in Dallas. Similarly, a male partner contracted the virus on travel in a Zika affected country, then infected his female partner through vaginal intercourse. Since that time, the CDC reports at least five more recent cases of male-to-female sexual transmissions involving infected males who traveled to Zika infested areas.

The male-to-male sexually transmitted case happened in January, according to the CDC report. It said two days after returning to Dallas from Venezuela, the man who contracted the virus developed characteristic mild Zika symptoms — fever, a rash on his upper body and face, and conjunctivitis which lasted three days. A local health care provider diagnosed the virus. Then, Dallas County Health and Human Services (DCHHS) investigated further, learning the man had unprotected sex one day before and one day after the onset of the symptoms. A week after first showing Zika symptoms, the man's partner exhibited similar symptoms. The CDC did not identify the couple, only saying they were in a monogamous relationship for more than 10 years.

Additional CDC testing confirmed the man, who traveled to Venezuela, contracted Zika and dengue, although his partner only became infected with Zika. The CDC report noted the man said multiple people living in the Venezuelan area he visited experienced Zika symptoms.

In response to this case, the report stated: "Sexual transmission through both vaginal and anal sex is an emerging mode of Zika virus infection that might contribute to more illness than was anticipated when the outbreak was first recognized."

In February, DCHHS Director Zachary Thompson voiced his concern that as high as 80 percent of those who contract Zika through sexual contact will not have any symptoms. That could lead to further spread of the virus. Health officials caution the next best thing to abstinence is protection. They recommend using condoms to prevent Zika and other sexually-transmitted diseases. Most people who contract Zika have few or mild symptoms.

Researchers do not know how long Zika stays in semen, but the CDC report suggests it could be for as long as 10 weeks. They say Zika survives in semen longer than in blood.

Breitbart News reported the CDC called Zika "a bit scarier than we initially thought." The group considered most at-risk from mosquito-borne transmissions are pregnant women. On Wednesday, after months of a speculated connection, the CDC concluded the virus was a threat to pregnant women as "a cause of microcephaly and other

severe fetal brain defects.” They continue to warn pregnant women to avoid travel to Zika affected countries.

There have been no reports of Zika locally transmitted by Dallas mosquitoes. The two types of Aedes mosquitoes that carry Zika also spread Dengue fever, prevalent on the Texas-Mexico border, and Chikungunya, which first entered the state in 2014, Breitbart Texas reported. These mosquitoes like to reproduce in standing water close to humans. Experts worry that Houston’s economically depressed areas could serve as prime breeding grounds.

In Texas, Gov. Greg Abbott folded Zika into a state infectious task force, Breitbart Texas’ Lana Shadwick reported. Dallas County hopes to tackle any potential mosquito-driven outbreak in an existing protocol that combats mosquitoes carrying the West Nile and Chikungunya viruses, and Dengue fever.

Dallas health officials pursued local lab testing to expedite the diagnostic process instead of sending suspect blood samples to the Atlanta-based CDC. The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston is working on research it hopes will lead to a vaccine. Brazil invested in this research. The University of Texas at Austin created an algae anti-mosquito bio-weapon that may be effective in controlling mosquito population, Breitbart Texas’ Bob Price reported. Breitbart News reported the Obama administration wants to reallocate \$510 million earmarked West African Ebola fighting funds to instead research Zika.

Zika is also linked to increased risk for Guillain-Barré syndrome, rare paralysis disease. Cases increased during the 2014 French Polynesia virus outbreak. The CDC suggested Zika may lead to hearing and vision problems.

Follow Merrill Hope on Twitter @OutOfTheBoxMom.

## **As Cases And Alarm Grow, Researchers Seek Ways To Understand And Stop Zika**

By Meredith Cohn

[Baltimore Sun](#), April 14, 2016

Alarm over the Zika virus is rising as cases surge in the United States and warmer weather looms, bringing with it mosquito season.

After the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention officially confirmed the link this week between the mosquito-borne virus and birth defects, the push intensified further for a drug to prevent or treat infections.

Almost 350 cases of Zika have been confirmed in the United States, including eight in Maryland, and researchers nationally and locally are exploring everything from the makeup of the virus to pharmaceuticals to stop its spread.

“I started three weeks ago,” said Matthew Frieman, an associate professor of microbiology and immunology at the University of Maryland School of Medicine. “In less than a

year, six to nine months, this could end with a drug that works in mice.”

Frieman is among the many researchers across the country waiting for approval of \$1.9 billion in emergency Zika research funding requested by the White House in February but stalled in Congress. Earlier this month, the Obama administration authorized the CDC and the National Institutes of Health to use more than \$500 million mostly intended for Ebola research for Zika preparation and research, and legislation passed this week in Congress to provide incentives for pharmaceutical companies to work on a vaccine.

Frieman squeezed funds from existing grants to get started on his Zika study but plans to rely on an online crowdsourcing site for scientists called experiment.com for an experiment that will scan existing drugs for one that may prevent Zika infections.

He is using a testing method he created for other infectious diseases such as SARS, MERS and influenza. Those studies are ongoing, but all have identified U.S. Food and Drug Administration-approved drugs that show promise in the lab.

Frieman said little is known about Zika, considered until last year to cause only benign infections. Most people don’t even know they are sick. Once Brazilian health authorities linked the virus to microcephaly last year and cases began to skyrocket, the World Health Organization declared it a global health emergency.

Researchers are beginning to make some inroads. Purdue University researchers, for example, said last month that they had decoded the virus’ structure, information that could help in development of antiviral treatments and vaccines, officials there said. Researchers from the University of California, Los Angeles said Thursday that they found the virus easily mutates, which may help explain how it has evaded the body’s immune response and become such a threat.

CDC researchers said more research is needed to determine the extent of the effects from Zika and what can be done to stop the infections.

“It is now clear that the virus causes microcephaly,” said Dr. Tom Frieden, the CDC director, during a news conference Wednesday to report that Zika is a definitive cause of microcephaly and announce a paper in the New England Journal of Medicine outlining the research.

“We are also launching further studies to determine whether children who have microcephaly born to mothers infected by the Zika virus is the tip of the iceberg of what we could see in damaging effects on the brain and other developmental problems,” he said.

The CDC officials wouldn’t officially say Zika causes Guillain-Barre syndrome, a rare neurological disorder that can



cause paralysis, but confirmed that the link is still strongly suspected.

Without many answers, public health officials have been working to inform the public about Zika prevention. The Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene said Thursday that it would hold a town hall meeting for agency employees April 20 and partner with local health departments on activities for the public April 24-30.

“The Zika virus — though a virus whose symptoms tend to be mild and whose infections generally pass from a person in about seven days — remains a serious public health concern because it causes birth defects and can be sexually transmitted,” state Health Secretary Van T. Mitchell said in a statement. “We want to make sure the general public remains well-informed on steps to take to minimize chances of infection.”

The advice is primarily aimed at pregnant women and those planning to become pregnant, though CDC officials said not all pregnant women infected with Zika will have babies with a birth defect. The CDC affirmed previous guidance to avoid mosquito bites and avoid travel to places with active spread of Zika, largely in South and Central America. The U.S. territory of Puerto Rico has become a new hot spot, with hundreds of Zika cases reported, the agency said.

Nearly all of the cases in the United States were identified in travelers, including all eight in Maryland. Seven of the U.S. cases were sexually transmitted; 32 were in pregnant women.

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists said it encourages women to abide by the CDC advice, and officials also made the case for more research.

“The message of the CDC paper underscores the importance of ongoing research into this outbreak,” Dr. Mark S. DeFrancesco, the group’s president, said in a statement. “We once again encourage Congress to act swiftly to pass emergency funding to enhance our public health preparedness and enable America’s researchers to lead the charge in the development of a vaccine or treatment for this virus. Ongoing support for Zika virus research will protect American families and, indeed, families around the world.”

That’s why Frieman is turning to crowdfunding to jumpstart his research, which uses ordinary baker’s yeast, the kind found in the grocery store and used to make bread or beer.

He breaks down viruses into proteins that as a whole make the virus function. Each protein — eight for Zika — is infused into the yeast to see which inhibit the yeast’s growth. Then drugs are mixed in to see which restore the yeast’s growth to normal. Frieman plans to test 14,000 drugs.

Those that work will be infused in the whole live virus to see if the results are the same. The drugs that slow growth again can then be tested in animals to see if they stop

infections. Frieman said the simple yeast study is likely to identify drugs that seem to prevent infections in the lab, though he’s less sure about animal tests.

“With every virus — flu, SARS, chikungunya — we’ve always found drugs that worked in the petri dish,” he said. “The harder step is getting them to work in animals. We may need chemists and pharmacologists to develop better versions of the drugs.”

## **Camden County Woman 8th In N.J. To Test Positive For Zika Virus**

By Michelle Caffrey

[New Jersey Local News](#), April 15, 2016

BLACKWOOD — A Camden County woman has tested positive for the Zika virus, making her the eighth travel-related case of the virus in the state.

The Camden County Health Department said it was notified by the state’s Department of Health and Human Services on Friday that the agency confirmed the woman was suffering from the illness.

The woman, who is not pregnant, had reported symptoms of fatigue, joint pain, a rash and fever to her health care provider on April 2. She reported she recently traveled to an country where the virus is currently transmitted through mosquitos. The county did not disclose the country, the woman’s age or where she resides in the county.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced this week its scientists have determined Zika is capable of causing severe birth defects such as microcephaly, or an unusually small head, in babies if their mother is infected while pregnant. It advises pregnant women avoid traveling to any area where the virus is actively spreading.

There have been no reported cases of the virus being acquired within the U.S. Michelle Caffrey may be reached at [mcaffrey@njadvancemedia.com](mailto:mcaffrey@njadvancemedia.com). Follow her on Twitter @ShellyCaffrey. Find the South Jersey Times on Facebook.

## **Another Irving Resident Has Zika Virus, The 6th Case In Dallas County**

By Liz Farmer

[Dallas Morning News](#), April 15, 2016

Dallas County Health and Human Services reported the sixth case of Zika virus in the county Friday morning.

The patient is a 41-year-old Irving resident who was infected during a recent trip to Jamaica. Officials don’t have confirmation that it was transmitted in any way other than by mosquitoes.

So far, all cases in Dallas County have been imported. The fifth patient who tested positive for the virus in Dallas County was also an Irving resident, officials confirmed two

weeks ago. The 67-year-old had recently traveled to Colombia.

Zika is quickly spreading across the Americas. The virus is primarily transmitted by mosquitoes, though sexual transmission is also possible. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention confirmed Thursday a case of male-to-male Zika transmission: a Dallas man who'd been to Venezuela and infected his partner through sexual contact.

The day before, the CDC confirmed what many have feared about the virus – that it causes severe birth defects.

Until Zika, “there has never been a mosquito-borne virus that could cause serious defects on a such a large scale,” said Tom Frieden, director of the CDC.

The most common symptoms are flu-like, which usually last a few days to a week. Scientists may have evidence that Zika can cause temporary paralysis, The Associated Press reported in February. Dallas County Zika virus cases:

1st and 2nd confirmed Feb. 2 One person may have contracted the virus through sexual contact while abroad. Patient 0 then transmitted the virus to another person when they returned to Dallas.

3rd confirmed Feb. 10 A 45-year-old Dallas resident showed symptoms after returning home from Honduras. The case marks the first time a sample tested positive in a local laboratory.

4th confirmed March 1 A 55-year-old DeSoto resident who had traveled to El Salvador got the virus.

5th confirmed April 1 A 67-year-old Irving resident, who had recently traveled to Colombia, got Zika.

6th confirmed April 15 A 41-year-old Irving resident was infected during a recent trip to Jamaica.

## **TERRORISM INVESTIGATIONS**

### **Saudi Arabia Warns Of Economic Fallout If Congress Passes 9/11 Bill**

By Mark Mazzetti

[New York Times](#), April 15, 2016

WASHINGTON — Saudi Arabia has told the Obama administration and members of Congress that it will sell off hundreds of billions of dollars worth of American assets held by the kingdom if Congress passes a bill that would allow the Saudi government to be held responsible in American courts for any role in the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

The Obama administration has lobbied Congress to block the bill's passage, according to administration officials and congressional aides from both parties, and the Saudi threats have been the subject of intense discussions in recent weeks between lawmakers and officials from the State Department and the Pentagon. The officials have warned senators of diplomatic and economic fallout from the legislation.

Adel al Jubeir, the Saudi foreign minister, delivered the kingdom's message personally last month during a trip to Washington, telling lawmakers that Saudi Arabia would be forced to sell up to \$750 billion in treasury securities and other assets in the United States before they could be in danger of being frozen by American courts.

Several outside economists are skeptical that the Saudis will follow through, saying that such a sell-off would be difficult to execute and would end up crippling the kingdom's economy. But the threat is another sign of the escalating tensions between Saudi Arabia and the United States.

The administration, which argues that the legislation would put Americans at legal risk overseas, has been lobbying so intently against the bill that some lawmakers and families of Sept. 11 victims are infuriated. In their view, the Obama administration has consistently sided with the kingdom and has thwarted their efforts to learn what they believe to be the truth about the role some Saudi officials played in the terror plot.

“It's stunning to think that our government would back the Saudis over its own citizens,” said Mindy Kleinberg, whose husband died in the World Trade Center on Sept. 11 and who is part of a group of victims' family members pushing for the legislation.

President Obama will arrive in Riyadh on Wednesday for meetings with King Salman and other Saudi officials. It is unclear whether the dispute over the Sept. 11 legislation will be on the agenda for the talks.

A spokesman for the Saudi embassy did not return a message seeking comment.

Saudi officials have long denied that the kingdom had any role in the Sept. 11 plot, and the 9/11 Commission found “no evidence that the Saudi government as an institution or senior Saudi officials individually funded the organization.” But critics have noted that the commission's narrow wording left open the possibility that less senior officials or parts of the Saudi government could have played a role. Suspicions have lingered, partly because of the conclusions of a 2002 congressional inquiry in the attacks that cited some evidence that Saudi officials living in the United States at the time had a hand in the plot.

Those conclusions, contained in 28 pages of the report, still have not been released publicly.

The dispute comes as bipartisan criticism is growing in Congress about Washington's alliance with Saudi Arabia, for decades a crucial American ally in the Middle East and half of a partnership that once received little scrutiny from lawmakers. Last week, two senators introduced a resolution that would put restrictions on American arms sales to Saudi Arabia, which have expanded dramatically during the Obama administration.

Families of the Sept. 11 victims have used the courts to try to hold members of the Saudi royal family, Saudi banks and charities liable because of what the plaintiffs charged was Saudi financial support for terrorism. These efforts have largely been stymied, in part because of a 1976 law that gives foreign nations some immunity from lawsuits in American courts.

The Senate bill is intended to make clear that the immunity given to foreign nations under the law should not apply in cases where nations are found culpable for terrorist attacks that kill Americans on United States soil. If the bill were to pass both houses of Congress and be signed by the president, it could clear a path for the role of the Saudi government to be examined in the Sept. 11 lawsuits.

Obama administration officials counter that weakening the sovereign immunity provisions would put the American government, along with its citizens and corporations, in legal risk abroad because other nations might retaliate with their own legislation. Secretary of State John Kerry told a Senate panel in February that the bill, in its current form, would “expose the United States of America to lawsuits and take away our sovereign immunity and create a terrible precedent.”

The bill’s sponsors have said that the legislation is purposely drawn very narrowly —involving only attacks on American soil — to reduce the prospect that other nations might try to fight back.

In a closed-door briefing on Capitol Hill on March 4, Anne W. Patterson, an assistant secretary of state, and Andrew Exum, a top Pentagon official on Middle East policy, told staff members of the Senate Armed Services Committee that American troops and civilians could be in legal jeopardy if other nations decide to retaliate and strip Americans of immunity abroad. They also discussed the Saudi threats specifically, laying out the impacts if Saudi Arabia made good on their economic threats.

Edwin M. Truman, a fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics, said he thought the Saudis were likely making an “empty threat.” Selling hundreds of billions of dollars of American assets would not only be technically difficult to pull off, he said, but it likely would cause global market turmoil for which the Saudis would be blamed.

Moreover, he said, it could destabilize the American dollar — the currency to which the Saudi riyal is pegged.

“The only way they could punish us is by punishing themselves,” Mr. Truman said.

The bill is an anomaly in a Congress fractured by bitter partisanship, especially during an election year. It is sponsored by Senator John Cornyn, Republican of Texas, and Senator Charles E. Schumer, Democrat of New York. It has the support of an unlikely coalition of liberal and conservative senators, including Al Franken, Democrat of

Minnesota, and Ted Cruz, Republican of Texas. It passed through the Judiciary Committee in January without dissent.

“As our nation confronts new and expanding terror networks that are targeting our citizens, stopping the funding source for terrorists becomes even more important,” Mr. Cornyn said last month.

The alliance with Saudi Arabia has frayed in recent years as the White House has tried to thaw ties with Iran — Saudi Arabia’s bitter enemy— in the midst of recriminations between American and Saudi officials about the role that both countries should play in the stability of the Middle East. Last month, The Atlantic published an article based on interviews with Mr. Obama, who told the author, Jeffrey Goldberg, that the Saudis need to “share the neighborhood” with their Iranian rivals.

But the administration has supported Saudi Arabia on other fronts, including providing the country with targeting intelligence and logistical support for its war in Yemen. The Saudi military is flying jets and dropping bombs it bought from the United States — part of the billions of dollars in arms deals that have been negotiated with Saudi Arabia and other Persian Gulf nations during the Obama administration.

The war has been a humanitarian disaster and fueled a resurgence of Al Qaeda in Yemen, leading to the resolution in Congress to put new restrictions on arms deals to the kingdom. Senator Christopher S. Murphy, Democrat of Connecticut, one of the resolution’s sponsors and a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said that Congress has been “feckless” in conducting oversight of arms sales, especially those destined for Saudi Arabia.

“My first desire is for our relationship with Saudi Arabia to come with a greater degree of conditionality than it currently does,” he said.

## **Report: Saudis Vow To Sell US Assets If Congress Decides Gov Was Involved In 9/11**

[Fox News](#), April 16, 2016

Saudi Arabia has reportedly told the Obama administration and congressional leaders that it will sell billions of dollars in U.S. financial assets if Congress passes a bill to make the Saudi government legally responsible for any role in the 9/11 attacks.

The administration has tried to stop Congress from passing the legislation, a bipartisan Senate bill, since Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir last month told Washington lawmakers his country’s position, according to The New York Times.

Al-Jubeir purportedly informed the lawmakers during a trip to Washington that Saudi Arabia would be forced to sell as much as \$750 billion in Treasury securities and other American financial assets on the world market, fearing the

legislation could become law and U.S. courts would then freeze the assets.

The revelations about the Saudis' ultimatum come several days after reports that President Obama will soon decide whether to declassify 28 pages of sealed documents suspected of showing a Saudi connection to the deadly 9/11 terror attacks.

Former Florida Democratic Sen. Bob Graham told Fox News on Tuesday that the White House told him a decision on whether to declassify the documents would be made within 60 days.

Graham helped lead a 2002 congressional inquiry into the attacks.

The Bush and Obama administrations have refused to unseal the documents, arguing their release would jeopardize national security.

Critics claim the reluctance is a calculated move to hide Saudi Arabia's involvement in the al Qaeda terror attack that killed almost 3,000 people on U.S. soil on Sept. 11, 2001.

Obama had come under renewed pressure to release the documents ahead of a scheduled trip next week to Saudi Arabia for a summit of Persian Gulf leaders.

Economists are purportedly skeptical about the Saudis making good on their vow to sell the assets, considering such a move would be difficult to execute and could severely hurt that country's economy, which depends on the U.S. dollar.

The separate 9/11 Commission essentially found no evidence that the Saudi Arabia government supported the attacks.

However, the commission's narrowly worded finding about having "no evidence that the Saudi government as an institution or senior Saudi officials individually funded the organization" has skeptics suggesting that lesser officials government operatives or were involved.

## **Saudi Arabia To Sell Billions In U.S. Assets If 9/11 Bill Passes: NYT**

By Carlos Barria

[Reuters](#), April 16, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

## **Saudi Arabia Threatens To Pull \$750B From U.S. Economy If Congress Allows Them To Be Sued For 9/11 Terror Attacks**

By Larry Mcshane

[New York Daily News](#), April 16, 2016

Saudi Arabia is threatening to sell off up to \$750 billion in U.S. assets if Congress passes legislation making its government liable for 9/11-related lawsuits, The New York Times reported.

Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir, in a Washington visit last month, informed U.S. lawmakers of the potential sale of treasury securities and other American assets, the Times said Saturday.

The move would be necessary to prevent U.S. courts from possibly freezing the assets due to legal action.

The dispute pits the Obama Administration against some lawmakers and 9/11 family members who believe Saudi officials were involved in the plot that killed nearly 3,000.

The administration is urging Congress to consider the financial and diplomatic fallout that would ensue with the longtime U.S. ally if the bipartisan Senate legislation is passed, the Times said.

New York Sen. Chuck Schumer, a Democrat, and Texas Sen. John Cornyn, a Republican, are the sponsors of the bill. Cornyn said last month that the legislation was critical to "stopping the funding source for terrorists."

The lingering tensions provide a backdrop for Obama's planned Wednesday trip to Riyadh for meetings with Saudi officials, including King Salman.

Any legislation would need the approval of both houses of Congress and the president.

The 9/11 Commission, in its official report, declared there was "no evidence" linking the Saudi government or senior Saudi officials to funding for the terrorist plot.

But a 28-page portion of the Senate's investigation into 9/11 remain classified, although people who have seen the documents say the Saudis were implicated in the devastating attack.

The attackers hijacked planes that were flown into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

Some families of 9/11 victims, in legal papers, accused Saudi agents of assisting the terrorists. Fifteen of the 19 hijackers were Saudi Arabian citizens.

Under current U.S. law, foreign nations are spared from such lawsuits under the Foreign Sovereign Immunity Act.

A federal appeals court and a Manhattan federal judge have both dismissed the 9/11 suit against Saudi Arabia.

The proposed new legislation would specifically allow legal action against other countries only in cases of an attack on American soil.

## **Report: Saudis Threaten To Sell Off US Assets Over 9/11 Bill**

By Jessie Hellmann

[The Hill](#), April 16, 2016

Saudi Arabia is warning the Obama administration of financial repercussions if Congress passes a bill that would allow the Saudi government be held responsible in American courts for any role in the 9/11 attacks, according to a Saturday New York Times report.

The government is threatening to sell off hundreds of billions of dollars' worth of American assets held by the kingdom if Congress passes the bill.

The Obama administration has lobbied against the bill, saying it would put Americans at legal risk overseas.

Saudi officials have long denied any role in the Sept. 11, 2001 plot and the 9/11 commission found no evidence the government was involved but critics say the vague wording left open the possibility that less senior officials or other parts of the Saudi government could have played a role, according to the Times.

And there are 28 pages of the 2002 congressional inquiry that still haven't been released by the public that reportedly cite some evidence that Saudi officials living in the U.S. had some hand in the plot.

President Obama will arrive in Riyadh on Wednesday for meetings with King Salman and other Saudi officials, but there's no word if the dispute over the legislation will be discussed.

## **Saudis Warn Of Economic Reprisals If Congress Passes 9/11 Bill**

By Tom Kludt, Elise Labott And Ted Barrett

[CNN](#), April 16, 2016

(CNN) Saudi Arabia is warning it will sell off billions in American assets if the U.S. Congress passes a bipartisan bill that would allow victims of 9/11 and other terrorist attacks to sue foreign governments.

Saudi foreign minister Adel al-Jubeir issued the warning to U.S. lawmakers last month during a visit to Washington, two senior State Department officials told CNN. A source with knowledge of the Saudis' thinking said investments would be put in jeopardy if this bill passes, so they are trying to protect themselves from risk.

The story was first reported Saturday by The New York Times.

The Obama administration has, in turn, applied heavy pressure on Congress to block the bill. Top officials from the State Department and Pentagon warned Senate Armed Services Committee staffers last month that the bill could bring economic risks to the U.S.

The Saudis did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Asked if President Barack Obama would veto the legislation if passed by Congress, a senior administration official told CNN that "rather than entertain a hypothetical, we believe there needs to be more careful consideration of the potential unintended consequences of its enactment before proceeding with legislation."

"We would welcome opportunities to engage with the Congress on that discussion," the official added.

In February, Secretary of State John Kerry said the legislation could "expose the United States of America to

lawsuits and take away our sovereign immunity and create a terrible precedent."

The bill, co-sponsored by Sens. Chuck Schumer, D-New York, and John Cornyn, R-Texas, opens the door for families of 9/11 victims to sue foreign states and financial partners of terrorism.

Former Sen. Bob Graham, the co-chair of the 9/11 congressional inquiry, told CNN's Michael Smerconish Saturday morning that he is "outraged but not surprised" by the warning from the Saudi government.

"The Saudis have known what they did in 9/11, and they knew that we knew what they did, at least at the highest levels of the U.S. government," Graham said on "Smerconish."

The government of Saudi Arabia, a longtime and key strategic U.S. ally in the Middle East, has never been formally implicated in the 9/11 attacks and Saudi officials have long denied any involvement. But 15 of the 19 hijackers were Saudi nationals, and in February, Zacarias Moussaoui, the so-called "20th hijacker" who pleaded guilty to participating in an al Qaeda conspiracy in connection to the 9/11 attacks, alleged members of the Saudi royal family supported al Qaeda.

Twenty-eight pages of the 9/11 Commission Report, which are said to focus on the role of foreign governments in the plot, remain classified. Saudi officials asked the U.S. to release the redacted 28-page section in 2003, saying this would give them the opportunity to defend themselves against claims of involvement.

But the Bush administration refused, saying the material would jeopardize their ability to gather intelligence on suspected terrorists. The Obama administration has carried on that policy.

Families of both victims and survivors in the 9/11 attacks filed a lawsuit against the Saudi government, but the suit was thrown out last year when a federal judge ruled that the kingdom had sovereign immunity in the case.

## **GOP Senator: Obama Wants Us To 'Chill Out' On Terrorism Fears**

By Mark Hensch

[The Hill](#), April 16, 2016

Sen. Tom Cotton (R-Ark.) on Saturday said that President Obama "minimizes" the threat of terrorism and downplays Americans' fears.

"We live in a dangerous world – and the dangers are ever increasing, particularly from radical Islamic terror," he said in the weekly GOP address.

"The attacks in Brussels, Paris, San Bernardino and across the world make this all too clear," Cotton said. "They are understandably fearful about their safety and security."

“But President Obama wants us to ‘chill out.’ He believes overreaction to terrorism is a graver threat than terrorism itself. He minimizes the threat of terror attacks, even as these savages cuts off the heads of Americans and inspire or direct radicals to blow themselves up in public places.”

Cotton said that Obama’s public behavior shows a leader who is unconcerned with the danger extremism poses.

“That’s why President Obama went to a baseball game and did the wave with Cuba’s dictator even as Americans were missing and murdered in the Brussels attack,” he said.

President Obama was on a trip to Cuba when the Brussels attacks took place and attended a baseball game with Raúl Castro, a move Republicans immediately denounced.

“The president defended this decision by comparing himself to ‘Big Papi,’ the Red Sox star who defiantly took the field after the Boston Marathon bombings,” Cotton said, referring to baseball player David Ortiz. “‘Big Papi’ is a great player, but his job is to hit homeruns. The president’s job is to keep Americans safe, and that requires leading from the front, not sitting in the stands.”

Cotton added that Obama belittles voters when he cites the long odds of becoming a victim of terrorism.

“President Obama reportedly likes to point out that more Americans die each year from bathtub falls and car accidents than from terrorism,” he said. “But bathtub falls aren’t spreading an apocalyptic ideology and car crashes can’t be weaponized against American cities. These aren’t communication mistakes by the president. They’re a feature, not a bug, of his foreign policy.”

## **Benghazi Panel Getting Close, May Release Report Before Conventions**

By Julian Hatter

[The Hill](#), April 16, 2016

The House Select Committee on Benghazi has quietly begun to draft its long-awaited report, and could release it weeks before this July’s political conventions.

Republican members of the committee insist that they have been diligently reviewing files and asking questions about the 2012 terror attack in the Libyan city, which killed four Americans.

The work comes even as the lawmakers try to escape allegations — from members of both parties — that the probe is exclusively focused on former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

“We’re getting close to wrapping it up,” Rep. Mike Pompeo (R-Kan.) told [The Hill](#) on Friday.

“We’re starting to begin to put together the report... We’re getting to the tail end of the investigative phase.”

The spotlight has faded after Clinton and other high profile witnesses such as former CIA Director David Petraeus

and ex-Defense Secretary Leon Panetta have come and gone.

And in its stead, criticism has mounted from both sides of the aisle.

Committee Chairman Trey Gowdy (R-S.C.) last year fought off friendly fire from Republicans who indicated the panel’s work was solely focused on Clinton. In March, GOP front-runner Donald Trump called the panel’s four open hearings “a total disaster.”

Democrats, meanwhile, have long since dismissed its work as a purely political hit piece on Clinton, the Democratic front-runner.

As a result, committee Republicans have hunkered down, creating an air of inscrutability.

“Because so many of our interviews are classified, behind-closed-door interviews, not open hearings, it has created a vacuum in which other members of Congress have commented on or speculated to what we’re doing or what our motivations are,” said one member of the committee, who asked for anonymity to speak candidly. “We remain committed to leaving no stone unturned.”

“I think the restlessness has come from the fact that there’s so much energy around Hillary Clinton’s interview,” the lawmaker added. “I think people in their minds, even members, made it so much so about her, neglecting the fact that we’ve done now over 70 interviews, [including] a lot of people who were there, who were on the ground, had never been talked to by any other committee of jurisdiction.”

Republicans blame the Obama administration for the protracted length of the probe, which will hit its two-year mark on May 2.

“This investigation could have been completed a lot sooner if not for the administration’s serial production delays,” Gowdy said in a statement. “So the real question is why have they dragged this into an election year?”

The committee still has roughly 10 people left to interview and is waiting for additional documents from the Obama administration, a committee aide said.

Rep. Lynn Westmoreland (R-Ga.) described the remaining witnesses as being “more to the military side.”

Just last week, a year after initial requests were filed, the committee received more than 1,100 pages of records from the State Department.

“We would have loved to finish it in a year. But when you don’t have the information, it’s impossible,” Westmoreland said.

Multiple members of the panel predicted that a public copy of the report would be released in June or July, butting up against the party conventions in late July.

For Democrats, the drawn-out nature of the committee is proof positive of what they have long said is a thinly-veiled politically-motivated plot to hurt Clinton.

"As we suspected, they're dragging this out as close to the election as they can without it being so patently obvious," claimed Rep. Adam Schiff (D-Calif.). "But we're stuck going along for the ride, as long as this taxpayer abuse goes on."

The two parties have long been at odds over the purpose of the committee, which Democrats initially considered boycotting. After internal debate in October, following the marathon hearing with Clinton, the committee's five Democrats decided against abandoning the panel's work.

In March, Republicans changed the panel's rules to limit Democrats' access to witnesses' transcripts, after Democrats declined to promise not to release portions of the interviews on their own. The new rules require that ranking member Elijah Cummings (D-Md.) and other Democrats review the transcripts under Republican supervision.

"We asked them to share the transcripts; they refused to do so," Cummings said.

Republicans note that Democrats are responsible for roughly one-third of the panel's \$6.6 million in spending, despite not requesting witnesses or asking for new documents. In the weeks since the fresh skirmish broke out last month, Democratic lawmakers have declined to inspect them in the GOP's offices, a committee aide said.

Democrats say they have been excluded from the Republicans' drafting efforts, and will likely write their own analysis rebutting most of the GOP conclusions.

"I suspect the first time we'll get to see what they even have in mind is when they release it in public, which I imagine it to be a repackaging of old news with new screaming headlines," said Schiff. "But the reality is, notwithstanding the number of interviews and documents they like to point to as an indicia of progress, they have uncovered nothing to alter the fundamental conclusions of the other eight investigations" into the Benghazi attack by Congress.

Republicans promise that their report will include new information about the 2012 violence, as well as the events leading up to it and the aftermath.

"There will be places where we draw some conclusions," said Pompeo.

"Equally important to that is trying to be the clearinghouse for all that we've learned — that is, to make sure that it is out there."

While Republicans insist that Clinton will not be a central part of the final report, she is likely to be at least prominently featured. And if she becomes the Democratic presidential nominee, the panel's conclusions are likely to haunt her on the campaign trail throughout the fall.

"The thing we do know is that the story Secretary Clinton told after the tragedy was very different, publicly, than what she said privately," Rep. Jim Jordan (R-Ohio) said. "I believe she did it for total political reasons.

"That will certainly be, I think, a highlighted part of the report."

## Outside The Wire: How U.S. Special Operations Troops Secretly Help Foreign Forces Target Terrorists

By Souad Mekhennet And Missy Ryan

[Washington Post](#), April 16, 2016

The armed men drove right into the nighttime ambush. The militants, led by a veteran jihadist blamed for a bloody attack on Westerners just 10 days earlier, were winding their way along a narrow desert road in central Tunisia.

When the elite Tunisian forces hidden in the surrounding hills opened fire, their tracers lit up the night sky, and some of the militants tried to flee. All nine suspects, including the senior militant, Khaled Chaib, were killed. An informant in the truck at the time of the ambush was wounded in the shoulder.

The March 2015 operation was a badly needed victory for Tunisia's fragile democracy, whose leaders were struggling to deliver on the promise of the 2011 revolution. Prime Minister Habib Essid called the ambush by Tunisian National Guard forces the crowning success of a growing counterterrorism capability. One newspaper headline proclaimed: "The country has been saved from catastrophe."

But what Tunisian leaders did not reveal was the pivotal role that U.S. Special Operations forces had taken in helping to design and stage the operation.

According to Tunisian and U.S. officials, American communications intercepts tracked down Chaib, an Algerian also known as Loqman Abu Sakhr, allowing the local troops to position themselves in the desert. An American team, made up of Special Operations commandos assisted by CIA personnel, helped the Tunisian forces craft and rehearse the ambush. And while the raid unfolded, an American surveillance aircraft circled overhead and a small team of U.S. advisers stood watch from a forward location.

Speaking by telephone, Gen. David M. Rodriguez, the head of U.S. Africa Command, praised the counterterrorism efforts of Tunisian forces but declined to comment on the operation in Tunisia's Gafsa region. The CIA also declined to comment.

The operation illustrates the central but little-known role that U.S. Special Operations troops can play in helping foreign forces plan and execute deadly missions against militant targets.

In recent years, U.S. forces have provided this kind of close operational support — a range of activities including what's known in military parlance as "combat advising" or "accompany" and "enabling" assistance — in a growing list of countries beyond the active battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan, including Uganda, Mauritania, Kenya, Colombia, the Philippines and Tunisia.

Those activities have taken on greater importance as the Obama administration has scaled back the direct combat

role of U.S. troops overseas and instead sought to empower local forces to manage extremist threats.

At the same time, the strategy, while low-risk to Americans, has done little to change the overall security picture in countries with deep political and economic problems. It is an approach that some analysts say may provide the partner forces — and the United States — with a false sense of security while having little lasting effect.

Much of this hands-on support has taken place in Africa, where the growth of militant groups, often allied with al-Qaeda or the Islamic State, has outpaced under-equipped and under-trained local militaries.

“There is still this misunderstanding that we have one mode which is combat, and another mode which is [training],” said Linda Robinson, a scholar at the Rand Corp. who tracks U.S. Special Operations activities. “There’s this whole spectrum in between, which is operational advise and assist.”

In that role, American forces help partner forces plot out risky operations, which are often enabled by U.S. hardware and intelligence, including spy planes and other advanced intelligence systems. U.S. aircraft have flown foreign forces to the site of an operation or stood by to evacuate casualties. In certain cases, U.S. troops are authorized to act as combat advisers, accompanying foreign forces into battle and stopping just short of the front lines.

The operations differ from the U.S. “direct action” missions such as the 2011 assault on Osama bin Laden’s Pakistan hideout or the 2014 raid to rescue American hostages in Syria.

In those operations, President Obama has proved willing to risk American lives to capture or kill a high-value militant or rescue hostages. But he has also instructed his military leaders to look for opportunities for indirect U.S. action, which puts both the risk and the glory on partners’ shoulders.

“This enables them to take those responsibilities themselves and reduces what are often very politically sensitive issues,” said a senior U.S. defense official who, like others, spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss delicate operations. “It reduces our footprint, our presence, and it gives credit to the [partner] country.”

William F. Wechsler, who was a senior Pentagon official overseeing Special Operations activities until last year, said that preparing foreign forces to carry out assaults, rather than a direct U.S. strike, involved a balance between long- and short-term objectives.

“It’s almost always easier for U.S. forces to do it directly,” Wechsler said. “But if your wider mission is to build up the capabilities of our partner, you accept some risk to mission and support local forces doing it.

“Done right, this becomes a virtuous cycle.”

The partnerships, which typically involve small Special Operations teams, are seen as a lower-risk, lower-cost

approach than the massive programs that former president George W. Bush launched to rebuild the militaries of Iraq and Afghanistan. Those experiences created lasting doubts at the Pentagon about the United States’ ability to transform foreign forces.

In Afghanistan, the shortcomings of local troops may prompt the White House to once again delay Obama’s troop withdrawal. In Iraq, the army that American troops trained at a cost of more than \$20 billion collapsed to advancing Islamic State fighters in 2014.

“This is one of the big debates right now: Does this work?” Robinson said. “A lot of people have been pessimistic about the U.S. ability to build partner capacity and whether it has been able to take care of the security threat.”

‘We’re a security blanket’

Military officials said the growth in programs providing hands-on support to foreign operations grew out of earlier experiences in places such as Mali, where U.S. Special Operations troops trained and did exercises alongside local forces between 2005 and 2009. After conducting training exercises, U.S. officials were disappointed to watch Malian troops stumble in battle.

“That was one of the lessons learned, that . . . we probably would be more effective if we stayed with them,” the defense official said. “You’re trying to bring guys from a pretty basic place in terms of their knowledge set and give them some advance skills, and then you’re tossing them into the deep end of the pool.

“So it sort of evolved, and we began to ask for the authorities to stay with them,” the official said.

Pentagon officials describe the ongoing U.S. mission in Somalia, where Special Operations forces are advising troops from the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), as a successful illustration of this kind of operational support.

Although the United States had trained AMISOM troops in their home countries in the past, officials realized those forces needed extra help when they faced the militant group al-Shabab. U.S. troops now help allied forces in Somalia plan and execute missions. They provide aerial surveillance and, under authorities that allow them to protect partner forces, conduct airstrikes against militants.

The African troops “do the bulk of the work, but we’ve been able to help them through particularly tricky problems they may have,” the official said.

While U.S. officials say the strikes reflect the increasing scope of AMISOM activities, the attacks also point to the continuing strength of al-Shabab fighters even after they were dislodged from major Somali cities.

Mark Mitchell, a former White House official and Green Beret who worked closely with local forces in Iraq, said that sending U.S. troops on missions with local forces allowed opportunities for training and mentoring, including on human rights. It also ensures efficient exploitation of evidence



obtained during operations, he said, and increases the confidence of local forces.

"They know Americans are not going to be left out to dry," he said. "So if things go badly, we're a security blanket for them."

But even missions that are not supposed to expose U.S. troops to combat can bring deadly risks.

The renewed U.S. mission in Iraq suffered its first combat casualty last year when a Delta Force soldier was killed during a mission accompanying Kurdish peshmerga troops. Although American forces were supposed to remain in a supporting role, Master Sgt. Joshua Wheeler became engaged in a firefight when he came to the defense of the Kurds.

#### Decline after U.S. departure

The broader effect of U.S. support, even if it can hone the skills of foreign counterterrorism forces, has at times amounted to little when assistance is too narrowly focused on small, elite units.

In Yemen, a long-running combat advisory mission was halted after the disintegration of the government at the end of 2014. After U.S. Special Operations troops departed abruptly several months later, the United States' ability to counter al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula was severely curtailed. U.S. officials were unable to account for hundreds of millions of dollars in fighting gear provided to local forces.

The experience with combat advising in Yemen highlights the risk that U.S. training may succeed in building up the tactical ability of those forces for a period of time but fail to shape the larger security organizations or political environments in which they operate. Without broader changes to military leadership, systems to equip and pay troops, or efforts to tackle corruption, the impact of U.S. help can quickly vanish.

"Here's where the downfall or flaw is," Mitchell said. "The minute we leave the organizations that we create . . . they have a half-life. After about a year, that capability we built is squandered, and it's back to square one."

Robinson said a long-running American advisory mission in the Philippines, where U.S. troops helped local forces plan missions against Abu Sayyaf and other militant groups, had managed to avoid that transition problem by spreading training across a wide array of Philippine units. That mission concluded in 2014.

"It was also pretty carefully done so U.S. forces wouldn't end up inadvertently in the front line fighting the fight," meaning local units were forced to gain their own skills, she said.

In Tunisia, officials were forced to grapple with intensifying security threats after the 2011 revolution. The security services that former dictator Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali had employed to keep tabs on Tunisians struggled to contain growing radicalization, which spread in the country's newly

permissive environment. Chaos in neighboring Libya allowed jihadist groups to gain strength.

"You have so many different types of threats that intersect in Tunisia, with limited resources to address it," said Haim Malka, a senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington. "It's overwhelming."

On March 18 last year, the costs of insecurity came into stark relief when a small cell of attackers stormed the Bardo, the famed national museum in Tunis. At the end of the siege, at least 20 people, mostly Western tourists, were dead.

The bloodshed at a beloved national monument was a stunning blow to the country's tourism industry and, since at least one of the gunmen was known to local authorities, an indictment of the government's ability to keep people safe.

Although the Islamic State claimed responsibility for the attack, the government pointed the finger at Chaib's group, al-Qaeda-linked Okba Ibn Nafaa, which had also launched repeated attacks on Tunisian forces.

After 2011, Tunisia's new democratic leaders knew they needed help. Officials asked allies, including the United States and Germany, to help tighten the border with Libya. U.S. military personnel, who number up to about 100 in the country at a time, are also training national guard and army special forces soldiers.

The United States arranged to provide ScanEagle surveillance planes to Tunisia; the Tunisian government is also waiting for Black Hawk helicopters that it purchased. In a recent interview in Tunis, President Beji Caid Essebsi said that U.S. support is valuable but that more is needed.

"If our friends are keen to help us, we will be happy," he said.

But officials there, mindful of Tunisians' feelings about foreign involvement, want to play down any perception of overt U.S. military involvement. "The Tunisian government has to be careful about being seen as working too closely with the United States," Malka said.

According to a Tunisian security official, the low-profile U.S. assistance was critical in staging the Gafsa mission. The Americans "provided the training and supported the operation" with intelligence and other means, the official said. U.S. forces also helped rig the vehicle that militants drove into the ambush.

The day after the raid, Tunisia's Interior Ministry hailed the operation, showcasing photos of the dead men, splayed in the truck or lying on the rocky ground.

"The operation was intended to kill them," the official said. "We did not intend to arrest them."

## **U.S. Judge Says Terrorism Convict Can't Be Deported To Pakistan**

By John Shiffman

[Reuters](#), April 16, 2016

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## European Parliament Drivers Had IS Propaganda: Report

By Emma Thomasson

[Reuters](#), April 16, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

## 9 Guantánamo Prisoners From Yemen Are Sent To Saudi Arabia

By Charlie Savage

[New York Times](#), April 16, 2016

WASHINGTON — The United States on Saturday transferred nine Yemeni detainees from its wartime prison at Guantánamo Bay to Saudi Arabia, completing a long-sought diplomatic deal ahead of a planned visit to Riyadh by President Obama in the coming week.

The effort to persuade the Saudi government to take the prisoners began in the Bush administration and finally resulted in an agreement in February. Current and former officials familiar with the negotiations called the timing of the transfer, which reduced the population at Guantánamo to 80 prisoners, a coincidence.

“There have been a lot of discussions with the Saudis over the last few years, and they have been emphatic that it was very important to close Guantánamo,” said Cliff Sloan, who served as the State Department envoy for negotiating detainee transfers in 2013 and 2014. “They wanted to help with that. But the one thing they weren’t willing to do for a long time was actually accept Yemenis. That’s why this is a major breakthrough.”

The military brought each of the prisoners from the Afghanistan War to the American naval base at Guantánamo about 14 years ago, soon after President George W. Bush’s administration opened the prison in early 2002. Later, the Bush administration decided to try to close it, a goal the Obama administration has shared.

But finding places to transfer the large number of lower-level Yemeni detainees there has been a significant obstacle. American officials have been reluctant to repatriate them because Yemen is chaotic and has an active affiliate of Al Qaeda.

But Saudi Arabia, which shares a border with Yemen, has a stronger government and security. It also operates a rehabilitation program for Saudis who have drifted into militant Islamism. The program tries to reverse their radicalization and help them reintegrate into peaceful society. It enlists their relatives to help and has a record of reducing

— though not eliminating — the risk of recidivism, officials have said.

In 2007, a leaked diplomatic cable shows, American officials toured the Saudi rehabilitation center, which is named for Prince Mohammed bin Nayef, a top security official, and raised the possibility of transferring Yemeni detainees with relatives living in the kingdom to the center. But Prince bin Nayef, who is now the crown prince, “said this would not be possible, primarily for domestic political reasons,” according to the document.

When Mr. Obama became president in 2009 and vowed to close the prison at the Guantánamo military base in Cuba, there were 242 detainees, 99 of them Yemenis. In separate trips to Saudi Arabia that spring, John O. Brennan, then Mr. Obama’s top counterterrorism adviser, and Robert M. Gates, who was the defense secretary, again raised the idea, according to another leaked cable and news reports. They were again rebuffed.

As Mr. Obama’s first term unfolded, the effort to close the prison ground to a halt as Congress imposed steep restrictions on transfers. But in 2013, amid a widespread hunger strike by detainees, he resumed his push for transfers — and renewed talks with the Saudis about the Yemenis.

At that point, officials said, the main focus was an effort, led by the United Nations, to build a rehabilitation center in Yemen, where security conditions briefly appeared to be improving. The Saudis offered to help pay for a center. But Yemen soon resumed its downward spiral.

In late 2013, officials said, Mr. Sloan gave a list of 10 Yemenis with families in Saudi Arabia to a representative of Prince bin Nayef, who suggested that the families petition the Saudi government to take them. The Obama administration passed the word on to the detainees’ lawyers.

The administration also began working on resettling Yemenis in other places, starting with Eastern Europe in late 2014. In May 2015, when leaders of several Arab states visited Camp David, Mr. Obama privately urged them to take some Yemenis, officials said. Oman has since taken 20, and the United Arab Emirates five.

In July, Lee Wolosky succeeded Mr. Sloan at the State Department. In one of his first acts, he commissioned a seven-page report about the detainees with relatives in Saudi Arabia, officials said. The State Department passed the report to Saudi officials in August.

The administration’s revived attempt to engage Saudi Arabia over the Yemenis was part of Secretary of State John Kerry’s broader efforts to repair diplomatic relations after disagreements and tensions in recent years; he has visited Saudi Arabia five times since early 2015. The effort also followed the death of King Abdullah in January 2015 and the crowning of his successor, King Salman, who shuffled Saudi leadership.

King Salman visited the United States in September. During a meeting in the Oval Office, officials said, Mr. Obama urged taking the Yemeni detainees who had relatives in Saudi Arabia. The new king indicated that he was willing to consider the idea, and Mr. Obama dispatched Mr. Wolosky to Riyadh, the Saudi capital, in October.

“Lee did amazing diplomatic work in making the argument to the Saudis that some of the key successes of their rehabilitation program exist for the Yemeni detainees — like strong family ties,” said Daniel J. Rosenthal, who then worked on Guantánamo issues at the National Security Council.

Later in October, Mr. Kerry visited Saudi Arabia again, but was told only that the Interior Ministry was still looking at the request, officials said. But a positive sign came from Brian Neff, a lawyer for one of the Yemeni men, Mashur al Sabri.

After a parolelike board approved Mr. Sabri’s transfer last April, Mr. Neff drafted a petition for his family to send to the Saudi government, asking it to take Mr. Sabri. In October, his relatives told Mr. Neff that Saudi officials had visited them to study whether that plan would work.

On Jan. 23, during another visit to Saudi Arabia, Mr. Kerry met with the king’s 30-year-old son, Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who is now the defense minister, and Adel al-Jubeir, the foreign minister. At that meeting, the prince said the Saudi government had decided to proceed with the American request.

Mr. Wolosky returned to Saudi Arabia in early February to settle the details. But a new hurdle arose when the Saudi government said it needed a letter of consent from Yemen’s government. Because the government was in disarray — it had been pushed into exile in Riyadh by Houthi rebels — it was not clear how long it would take to get such a letter.

But the Yemeni ambassador to the United States moved quickly, obtaining a letter signed by Yemen’s foreign minister and emailing it to Mr. Wolosky on Feb. 8. Mr. Jubeir was in Washington and already scheduled to go to the State Department later that day, and Mr. Kerry handed the letter to him, officials said.

By March, Defense Secretary Ashton B. Carter had notified Congress that he was satisfied with security arrangements and would transfer nine of the men, setting off a 30-day waiting period. Administration officials are still deliberating over the 10th Yemeni.

Mr. Neff said his client, Mr. Sabri, was “ecstatic” when he learned he would be sent to Saudi Arabia. “That is where his loved ones are, and everyone recognized that as the most appropriate living situation for him,” Mr. Neff said. “He is anxious to get on with living a peaceful life.”

The transferred detainees also included Tariq Ba Odah, a hunger striker whom the military has been force-feeding for years. Last summer, he filed a lawsuit asking a judge to order his release for medical reasons.

After an internal debate, the administration decided to fight that request. Omar Farah, a lawyer for Mr. Ba Odah, called it “unforgivable” that the Obama White House had refused to concede the case in court last year and said that “until the very end, Mr. Ba Odah doubted he would be freed.”

The other detainees were Ahmed al Hikimi; Abdul Naser; Ali al Raimi; Mohammed al Hamiri; Ahmed Kuman; Abdul al Qyati; and Mansoor Qattaa.

## **U.S. Transfers Nine Guantanamo Bay Prisoners To Saudi Arabia**

By Jeff Plungis

[Bloomberg News](#), April 16, 2016

Saudi Arabia has accepted the transfer of nine Yemeni prisoners from the military prison in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, the U.S. Defense Department said.

The decision to make the transfer came after six agencies reviewed the plan, Commander Gary Ross said in an e-mailed statement on Saturday. Defense Secretary Ashton Carter informed Congress of the intent to transfer the nine detainees, and that the transfers meet U.S. legal standards, according to the statement.

“The United States is grateful to the government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for its humanitarian gesture and willingness to support ongoing U.S. efforts to close the Guantanamo Bay detention facility,” the Pentagon said. The two nations coordinated “to ensure these transfers took place consistent with appropriate security and humane treatment measures.”

The prisoners have already arrived in Saudi Arabia, the Saudi-owned television network Al Arabiya reported. The men will be enrolled in a program where they will be “deradicalized” through discussions on religion, the network said.

President Barack Obama in February released a plan for closing the Guantanamo Bay prison. The proposal called for spending as much as \$475 million to transfer 30 to 60 of the detainees to facilities in the U.S., a suggestion quickly rebuffed by Republican lawmakers.

Some 80 detainees remain at Guantanamo Bay, the Pentagon said.

## **9 Guantanamo Bay Detainees, Including One Who Waged A Long Hunger Strike, Are Sent To Saudi Arabia**

By Max Ehrenfreund

[Washington Post](#), April 16, 2016

A detainee who had been on a hunger strike at Guantanamo Bay for nine years has been transferred out of the facility, the Obama administration announced Saturday.

According to a statement from the Defense Department, Tariq Ba Odah of Yemen has been transferred

into Saudi Arabian custody along with eight other detainees, bringing the total number at the U.S. military base in Cuba down to 80.

Military officials had been force-feeding Ba Odah daily, strapping him down and pumping a liquefied supplement through his nose to his stomach. He began his hunger strike in 2007 and had lost roughly half his body weight. At one point last year, the 37-year-old weighed as little as 74 pounds.

While the military has said that Ba Odah was clinically stable, his attorneys had submitted testimony from doctors warning that his hunger strike could have ended in his death.

“Ba Odah faces persistent, serious medical risk even without losing any more weight,” Sondra S. Crosby of Boston University said in a court filing.

The Washington Post reported on March 30 that Ba Odah would leave the facility. He was moved to Guantanamo in 2002 and had been cleared to be transferred out of the facility in 2009. Military documents published by the transparency organization WikiLeaks suggest that the Yemeni was a suspected member of al-Qaeda.

Ba Odah and the other detainees whose transfers were announced were all Yemenis, according to the Associated Press. The administration has been unable to send them home because Congress has barred transfers to Yemen.

The other eight names given by the Pentagon were Ahmed Umar Abdullah Al-Hikimi, Abdul Rahman Mohammed Saleh Nasir, Ali Yahya Mahdi Al-Raimi, Muhammed Abdullah Muhammed Al-Hamiri, Ahmed Yaslam Said Kuman, Abd al Rahman Al-Qyati, Mansour Muhammed Ali Al-Qatta and Mashur Abdullah Muqbil Ahmed Al-Sabri.

## **Inmate In Terror Case In Coma After Suicide Attempt**

By Jennifer Peltz

[Associated Press](#), April 15, 2016

NEW YORK (AP) — A man who admitted plotting to bomb New York City synagogues has tried to kill himself in prison after guards tormented him because of his terror case, his lawyers said.

Ahmed Ferhani, who is halfway through a 10-year sentence in a rare state-level terror case, is in a medically induced coma after trying to hang himself in New York’s Attica prison, according to his lawyers.

“He was neither protected nor acknowledged” in prison, lawyer Lamis Deek said, calling Ferhani’s treatment “an outrage.”

The state Corrections Department would say only that Ferhani, 31, has been taken from Attica to an outside hospital and officials were investigating, though the agency wouldn’t say what was being investigated. Deek said a Buffalo hospital

informed Ferhani’s family April 7 of what had happened, but details are unclear.

Ferhani’s suicide attempt is a somber afterword to a case freighted with the rise of homegrown terrorists, the legal legacy of Sept. 11, complaints about police tactics and questions about his mental health.

While most terror cases are handled by federal prosecutors, New York created its own anti-terror law days after 9/11. It had been used only once — against a gang leader who, appeals courts concluded, wasn’t truly a terrorist — before Ferhani and a co-defendant were arrested in May 2011.

An undercover investigator recorded Ferhani, an Algerian who came to the U.S. as a child, disparaging Jews and talking about attacking synagogues in retaliation for what he saw as the mistreatment of Muslims worldwide. Then Ferhani bought guns, ammunition and an inert grenade in a police sting.

The case showed “the threat of terrorism from these lone-wolf radicals is real,” Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance Jr. once said.

But officials faced questions about why federal authorities had declined to pursue the case.

Police said there was no doubt about its strength. But Ferhani’s lawyers accused investigators of entrapping a mentally ill man — hospitalized at least two dozen times before his arrest — to justify extensive surveillance of Muslim communities, a program illuminated in stories by The Associated Press. The New York Police Department has since disbanded a unit at the heart of the program but still uses informants and undercovers to hunt for terror threats.

A grand jury rebuffed a top terror conspiracy charge but indicted Ferhani and his co-defendant on other terror and hate crime charges with the potential for 32 years in prison.

Ferhani pleaded guilty in December 2012, in exchange for 10 years. At his sentencing, he said he’d “use this time to strengthen my mind and character.”

Ferhani and his lawyers say guards at Attica and another prison beat and taunted him because of his terror conviction. One attack left him needing 12 staples in his head, he said in a letter to The Nation, which first reported his suicide attempt.

Ferhani also recently wrote to U.S. Attorney General Loretta Lynch, saying he’d kill himself if guards’ abuse continued, Deek said. The Department of Justice couldn’t immediately say what became of Ferhani’s letters.

He wasn’t on suicide watch when he tried to take his life, though Ferhani has made prior attempts and has been on suicide watch before, Deek said.

Prison disciplinary records show Ferhani was assigned March 14 to 30 days of “keeplock” —confinement in his cell — for using an unspecified drug. Corrections Department

policy calls for not imposing such punishment on inmates if it's known that they are threatening to harm themselves.

The agency wouldn't discuss Ferhani's circumstances, citing its investigation.

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## **COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM**

### **US Attorney For Utah Visits Mosque, Reassures Muslims**

[Associated Press](#), April 16, 2016

WEST VALLEY CITY, Utah (AP) — U.S. Attorney for Utah John Huber says his office will do its best to protect the rights of the Muslim community.

Huber made the remarks while visiting Utah's largest mosque in West Valley City on Friday.

The Salt Lake Tribune reports (<http://bit.ly/1SK4DpY>) that Huber met with leaders of the Khadeeja Islamic Center and spoke to people taking part in prayers.

His visit is part of a nationwide effort by the U.S. Department of Justice to counter a backlash against Muslim, Arab, Sikh and South Asian Americans.

U.S. attorneys in other states are reaching out to Muslim communities and law enforcement.

Officials say Huber's visit was scheduled before anti-Muslim graffiti was found on posters at University of Utah.

Campus police are investigating the incident as a hate crime.

Information from: The Salt Lake Tribune, <http://www.sltrib.com>

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### **Combating Anti-Islamic Rhetoric Is Community's Job, Colorado Leaders Say**

**U.S. Attorney General's office joining in the efforts**

By Yesenia Robles

[Denver Post](#), April 16, 2016

Fighting against anti-Islamic rhetoric and an uptick in harassment and bullying cases, leaders, activists and people of different faiths met Saturday afternoon to learn more about Muslim culture.

About 60 people showed up to the Denver event and listened to an overview of Muslim beliefs, their long history in the U.S., and their current challenges.

Attorney Qusair Mohamedbhai described FBI agents showing up at random Muslim American houses following

overseas attacks, or prisoners not having access to religious leaders in jails.

A high school Muslim girl read a poem about her frustration turning to a desire to stand up for her beliefs after a man verbally attacked her on a light rail train.

"When I look at the history of racism in America, there's cause for a little hope," said Robert Price, a retired senior lecturer for the University of Denver. "The people in the affected communities organize and they struggle for their cultural and their political rights and their rights in the society. Essentially it's what the Islamic community is facing now."

Colorado's U.S. Attorney General John Walsh, gave a presentation on the work his office is doing — some as part of efforts with attorney generals across the country — to protect civil rights and combat violent extremism including training people to secure their houses of worship, and an anti-bullying effort in six schools where students will participate in a mock trial of a hate crime.

But the most important point people needed to know, he said, was that anyone can be radicalized.

"There is no single profile," Walsh said. "Violent extremism is not confined in any way, shape or form to people of a particular faith or particular ideology."

Walsh pointed out that in Colorado, violent acts of extremism have not been tied to Islam — listing the Aurora theater shooting, the Colorado Springs Planned Parenthood shooting and the murder of prison's chief Tom Clements as examples of other forms of extremist violence.

"The solution is not the federal government," Walsh said. "The solution has to be a community solution."

Mohamedbhai also said people of various communities need to work together because civil rights case law affecting Muslims today could affect others in the future.

"Case law doesn't change," Mohamedbhai said. "In order to create space for religious liberties and freedoms we have to fight the battles for other people. I encourage you all, take on a cause that is not your own."

## **NATIONAL SECURITY NEWS**

### **State Seeks To Pick Up Pace On Bringing Syrian Refugees To US**

By Kristina Wong

[The Hill](#), April 16, 2016

The State Department is hoping to bring an average of nearly 1,500 Syrian refugees to the United States per month in order to meet President Obama's target of settling 10,000 refugees in the country by September.

About 1,300 refugees have already been placed in the United States since Obama first made the commitment in September.

That's far fewer than those taken in by European countries such as Germany, who has dealt with an unprecedented wave of migrants fleeing Syria's civil war, as well as the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria.

Yet the settlement has provoked a significant backlash, mostly from Republicans, who argue it puts the U.S. at risk from terrorism.

"It's clear that ISIS wants to, has planned on attempting to infiltrate refugee populations. This is a problem. If one person gets through who is planning a terrorist attack in our country, that's a problem," House Speaker Paul Ryan, who recently returned from a trip to the region, said Thursday.

"The administration — whether it's Homeland Security or the FBI, cannot tell us that they can adequately screen people. There isn't really a Syrian to talk to on that end of the equation to vet people, so it is a problem," Ryan told reporters.

The State Department says it has fallen behind schedule in meeting Obama's goal partly due to a lack of personnel available to interview refugees.

It is now doing a "surge operation" in Amman, Jordan, that is designed to process the rest of the Syrian refugees in as little as three months and leave them enough time to get to the U.S. before September.

The State Department has devoted more staff in Amman to focus on processing Syrian refugees, as well as hired new employees, which the department says it needed anyway.

"By putting more officers in one place we can conduct more interviews. Partly we have a backlog because we don't have enough officers to interview people," Larry Bartlett, the State Department's director of the Office of Refugee Admissions, told The Hill in a recent interview.

"So part of it is a little bit of shifting. We've also done some new hiring, and it was hiring that was timely. Those were people we needed anyway but they came onboard in time for this surge operation," said Bartlett. He did not say how many staff were added in Amman.

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) has prioritized sending more refugees to the U.S. than other countries, he said.

So far, about 9,500 Syrians have been interviewed in Amman since February 1, and 12,000 interviews should be completed by April 28, according to a State Department spokesperson.

Republican critics argue that speeding up the process to as little as three months will make it easier for terrorists to slip through.

Rep. Ryan Zinke (R-Mont.), who co-authored a bill to pause and bolster the refugee screening process, called State's surge operation "unsecure" and said Obama should shut it down immediately.

"This will inevitably put our nation and our citizens at risk for future terrorist attacks," he said in a recent statement.

Zinke pointed to the Paris terrorist attacks in November, in which one of the attackers used a fake Syrian passport to pose as a refugee, possibly because his real identity was on a watch list.

He also accused administration officials of using "bait and switch tactics" to ease public concern and reassure that screening refugees takes at least a year.

Indeed, White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest told reporters after the administration announced the 10,000 figure that the screening process would take "12 to 18 months."

"That process typically takes 12 to 18 months. And the reason for that process is that the safety and security of the U.S. homeland comes first," he said on Sept. 10.

The State Department insists it is not cutting corners on security with its new program.

"The security screening in of itself doesn't take 18 to 24 months," Bartlett said. "The 18 to 24 month timeframe is what it would normally take us to process a case. And in this instance we've compressed the non-security portions of the case work so that it can be shorter.

"The security portions have not been compressed in terms of what they're looking at, and the standards that they're using to either approve or disapprove someone," he added.

Bartlett said that in order to meet the 10,000 goal, Syrian refugees will also continue to be accepted from other nations as well as Jordan, to include Turkey, Iraq and Egypt. He said the State Department has just started to re-interview refugees in Lebanon.

State Department officials have also said they are hoping to bring in even more than 10,000 Syrian refugees this fiscal year, since there is currently a ceiling of 85,000 refugees to the U.S., and it does not limit them by nationality.

However, the plan to bring in 8,700 more refugees in the next several months will face stiff opposition, especially if it gains attention in the presidential race.

GOP presidential frontrunner Donald Trump has called for a temporary ban on Muslim migrants and fellow candidate Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) has called for imposing a religious test on refugees.

But supporters of the program say the U.S. is doing the right thing. More than 4.7 million Syrians have registered with UNHCR.

"What the people of the United States should understand is that our intention is to help the most vulnerable people and to do it in a way that respects the security of our nation," Bartlett said. "This operation is consistent with that goal."

## Too Slow And Helping Too Few

[Washington Post](#), April 16, 2016

FORGET LEADING the way on Syrian refugee resettlement — the United States is barely making a dent in the worst refu-gee crisis since World War II.

As the region around Syria continues to buckle under the influx of 4.8 million refugees, the Obama administration is on track to fail to meet its initial target of admitting a mere 10,000 Syrian refugees by the end of the 2016 fiscal year. According to Human Rights First, as of April 5, halfway through the fiscal year, only 1,285 Syrian refugees had been resettled. This number represents a measly 12.9 percent of the 2016 goal. According to the report, understaffing in the Department of Homeland Security and other agencies and massive case backlogs have been hampering efforts to resettle more refugees.

A State Department spokesman told us that the “United States remains steadfastly committed to the president’s plan to resettle at least 10,000 Syrian refugees.” But while the administration says it is working to increase its capacity to interview refu-gee applicants in Lebanon and Jordan and shorten the processing time, it says that no changes will be made to the screening process.

The slow pace is a double failure. It’s not just that the United States is falling pathetically short of its own ideal of providing a haven to those fleeing persecution and violence. U.S. allies are in desperate need of help to share the burdens of the refugee crisis. Admitting more refugees would not only show U.S. leadership, but also help preserve the stability of the front-line societies.

Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon have accepted the most refugees, hosting 2.7 million, 638,000 and nearly 1.1 million, respectively. The arrivals are putting intense pressure on hospitals and schools. King Abdullah of Jordan said in February that his country was at a “boiling point,” adding: “Sooner or later, I think, the dam is going to burst.”

At a bare-bones minimum, the administration must do what is needed to meet its initial goal of 10,000, which represents just 0.2 percent of the overall Syrian refu-gee population of 4.8 million. But beyond that, it should dramatically increase its target goal so as to take in a fair share of the refugees fleeing the terror of the Islamic State and the Syrian civil war. In September, a bipartisan group of former U.S. government officials recommended that the United States increase its target to 100,000, closer to what an analysis by Oxfam concluded would be the U.S. “fair share” level of 163,392. Such a move would help relieve the suffering of desperate Syrians who are resigned to making life-threatening journeys across the sea into Europe, and send a needed signal to the rest of the world, and Europe in particular, about the urgency of fashioning Syrian refugee policies guided by compassion, instead of contempt.

As we have noted before, the United States has one of the most extensive refugee vetting processes. Homeland

Security is tasked with performing background checks and conducting interviews, and each case can take between 18 and 24 months. If DHS needs more resources and staffing to sort through the backlog, then so be it; the Obama administration must provide the necessary funding. A continued failure to assist vulnerable Syrians will erode U.S. moral leadership and will be judged harshly for generations to come.

## **Pope Francis Arrives On Lesbos In Visit Intended To Prick Europe’s Conscience**

By Griff Witte And Anthony Faiola

[Washington Post](#), April 16, 2016

MYTILENE, Greece — Pope Francis arrived Saturday morning on the Greek island of Lesbos in a highly symbolic and provocative visit that seems designed to prick Europe’s conscience over its treatment of refugees.

Lesbos has been the first port of call for hundreds of thousands of people seeking sanctuary in Europe over the past year as they fled war, oppression and poverty in Asia, Africa and the Middle East. But in the past two weeks, it also has been the scene of hundreds of deportations under a new plan by which Europe sends back those who reach its shores.

The centerpiece of Francis’s five-hour visit Saturday is a visit to the Moria detention facility, where he will have lunch with some of the 3,060 men, women and children who arrived on this sun-splashed speech of Europe harboring a dream that was shattered almost as soon as they made landfall. By crossing the barbed-wire threshold that walls the residents of Moria off from the world, the Pope will present European leaders with an unmistakable moral challenge.

Upon greeting Francis at the airport, Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras called his visit “historic,” saying that it came at a time when “some of our partners — even in the name of Christian Europe — were erecting walls and fences to prevent defenseless people from seeking a better life.”

As the Pope arrived at the detention facility, hundreds of people gathered at the gates to greet him. Many held signs welcoming Francis and pleading for his help.

For those being held at the facility, their experience of Europe has been defined by confinement. Instead of earning passage to a new, better life, they were locked up. Rather than finding a permanent home in a safe country, they were told they would soon be sent back to the instability and violence of where they started.

Detainees said in the lead-up to the Pope’s visit that they believed his arrival could give them one last shot at reprieve.

“If the governments of Europe respect the pope, they will listen,” said Abdul Hadi, an 18-year-old Afghan who spoke to a reporter from behind the facility’s imposingly high

fences as friends kept a wary eye out for police. “They will stop deporting refugees.”

It is far from clear that European leaders, satisfied by the falling arrival numbers that their policy has generated, will respond to the pope’s attempts at persuasion.

But by visiting Moria, and by breaking bread with people Europe is threatening to deport, the leader of the Catholic Church will be making his strongest statement yet on migrant rights, an issue he has made one of the biggest focuses of his revolutionary tenure.

“He is convinced that the mass displacement of people at this time is the most important moral choice facing Western countries,” said Francis biographer Austen Ivereigh. “Will we embrace the stranger in need or build new iron curtains? Will we offer migrants a new home or send them into the arms of the mafias and death at sea?”

In official visits, from Mexico to southern Italy, Francis has championed immigrants and migrants, calling the need to aid them, no matter their faith, a duty of all Christians. As recently as last month, even as Europe was closing its door, he seemed to make a political statement by washing the feet of migrants during Holy Week celebrations.

On Saturday, the pope will have the chance to speak out against Europe’s policies from the very harbor where people are being deported. He will do so even as an epic debate continues to roil the continent: What do you do about the historic number of people displaced by conflict, more than a million of whom sought sanctuary in Europe last year?

About half came through this Aegean island, Lesbos, on their way to points farther north. But last month, Europe abruptly shut down the pipeline, announcing that not only would people be barred from traveling onward from Greece, but all new arrivals would also be shipped back to Turkey.

Last week, Europe made good on its threat, sending 325 people back across the sea — despite protestations from human rights groups, and from Francis.

Europe’s leaders have shown little interest in reversing course. European Council President Donald Tusk acknowledged this week that he had “doubts of an ethical nature” about the deportation plan but defended it as necessary “to prevent political catastrophes.”

In January alone, he noted, there had been 70,000 new arrivals — a pace that has dropped precipitously since Europe began to block the path. “How many more would have come in April if we had not taken action?” he asked.

But rights advocates say it is disgraceful that Europe is turning away people in obvious need of protection, and they hope Francis’s visit can begin a reconsideration.

“This visit is an opportunity for Europe to come together and share the responsibility instead of leaving Greece to handle it on its own,” said Boris Cheshirkov, the Lesbos-based spokesman for the United Nations’ refugee agency, UNHCR. “It’s also a chance to remember what our values

should be. At a time when xenophobia is on the rise, we should remind ourselves that Europe is built on human rights, tolerance and diversity.”

Lesbos will give Francis a nearly ideal opportunity to deliver that message. Even as other, less-affected parts of Europe have shunned refugees, island residents have been consistently welcoming. That is despite the fact that the monthly arrival totals last fall occasionally surpassed the island’s entire population.

As the boats glided into shore by the dozens last year, residents waded into the surf to carry out rescues, offered new arrivals shelter in their homes and drove families across the island’s rugged interior to save them days of walking.

Residents say their compassion and empathy come naturally — many are descended from people who fled Turkey in the 1920s.

“These are the sons and -daughters of refugees,” said -Father Leon Kiskinis, the priest at Lesbos’s only Catholic church, a cramped but ornately decorated -19th-century building that with six wooden pews can nearly accommodate all 300 of the island’s Catholics. “Seeing these people now, it is the same pain, the same desperation. It’s the same story, repeated now.”

Most island residents are -Orthodox, not Catholic. In a sign of another major Francis initiative — reconciliation within the Christian faith — the pope was accompanied Saturday by Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I, the spiritual leader of the world’s Orthodox Christians, as well as by Greek Archbishop Ieronymos.

In addition to eating lunch with the migrants at Moria, Francis is expected to lead a public prayer in the island’s main harbor, and to publicly thank Lesbos residents for their hospitality. He and his fellow religious leaders will drop laurel wreaths in the sea as a memorial to those who have died making the perilous crossing.

In many respects, the Lesbos trip is part of a legacy in the making, further evidence that the pontiff is seeking to define his papacy on the issues of inequality, mercy and migrant rights.

In his first official trip as pontiff, in 2013, Francis highlighted the plight of refugees by hopping on a flight to the Italian island of Lampedusa. Back then, at the early stages of the migrant crisis, Italy was the primary entry point for migrants funneling into Europe. Shortly before his trip, a horrific shipwreck off the Libyan coast had left hundreds dead.

Last year, as the crisis escalated and the entry point shifted from Italy to Greece, Francis issued dramatic appeals to Europe’s Catholics, asking every parish, religious community, monastery and sanctuary to take in one refugee family. His call came as some of the region’s leaders, including Hungary’s Viktor Orban, were warning that waves of



mostly Muslim refugees would change the face of “Christian” Europe.

“Facing the tragedy of tens of thousands of refugees — fleeing death by war and famine and journeying towards the hope of life — the Gospel calls, asking of us to be close to the smallest and forsaken. To give them a concrete hope,” Francis said.

Papal watchers said the pope’s Lesbos visit will offer a clear message to Europe and its leaders, one they may not welcome.

“Expect the usual bluster about the pope being naive and how each country has to decide what’s in its best interest,” Ivereigh said. “But most people will know he’s right and that Europeans will look back on this episode with deep shame. We didn’t take the Jews in 1930s Europe because they were too many and too different; now we refuse to take Muslims for the same reason. It takes the pope to point that out.”

## **Pope Brings 12 Syrian Refugees To Italy In Lesson For Europe**

By Derek Gatopoulos, Nicole Winfield And Elena Becatoros

[Associated Press](#), April 16, 2016

MORIA, Greece (AP) – In an extraordinary gesture both political and personal, Pope Francis brought 12 Syrian Muslims to Italy aboard his plane Saturday after an emotional visit to the Greek island of Lesbos, which has faced the brunt of Europe’s migration crisis.

Refugees on the overwhelmed island fell to their knees and wept at his presence. Some 3,000 migrants on Lesbos are facing possible deportation back to Turkey under a new deal with the European Union, and the uncertainty has caused heavy strains.

Francis decided only a week ago to bring the three refugee families to Italy after a Vatican official suggested it. He said he accepted the proposal “immediately” since it fit the spirit of his visit to Lesbos.

“It’s a drop of water in the sea. But after this drop, the sea will never be the same,” he said of his gesture, quoting one of Mother Teresa’s phrases.

During the five-hour trip, Francis implored European nations to respond to the migrant crisis on its shores “in a way that is worthy of our common humanity.” The Greek island just a few miles from the Turkish coast has seen hundreds of thousands of desperate people land on its beaches and rocks in the last year, fleeing war and poverty at home.

The pope visited Lesbos alongside the spiritual leader of the world’s Orthodox Christians and the head of the Church of Greece. They came to give a united Christian message thanking the Greek people for welcoming migrants

and highlighting the plight of refugees as the 28-nation EU implements a plan to deport them back to Turkey.

Francis insisted his gesture to bring the 12 refugees to Italy was “purely humanitarian,” not political. But in comments on the flight home, he urged Europe to not only welcome refugees but better integrate them into society, so they are not left in ghettos where they can become prey to radicalization.

Many refugees wept at Francis’ feet as he and the two Orthodox leaders approached them at the Moria refugee detention center on Lesbos, where they greeted 250 people individually. Others chanted “Freedom! Freedom!” as they passed by.

Francis bent down as one young girl knelt at his feet, sobbing uncontrollably. The pope also blessed a man who wailed “Thank you! Please Father, bless me!”

The Vatican said the three Syrian families, which including six children, who came to Rome will be supported by the Holy See and cared for initially by Italy’s Catholic Sant’Egidio Community. They were treated to a raucous welcome Saturday night in Rome, with drummers thumping, a crowd applauding and the three mothers receiving a single red rose.

“I thank you for what you have done,” Nour, a mother of a 2-year-old, said of the pope. “I hope this gesture has an effect on refugee policy.”

Nour and her husband, Hasan, are both engineers who lived in Zabatani, a mountainous area near the Lebanese border that has been bombed. Another family with two children hailed from Damascus and a third family with three children came from Deir el-Zour, a city close to the Iraqi border that the Islamic State group has been besieging for months, leading to malnutrition.

Two of the three had their homes bombed, said Sant’Egidio’s refugee chief, Daniela Pompei.

She said the three families had been given Italian humanitarian visas and would now apply for asylum. Francis said they were selected not because they were Muslim, but because their papers were in order. They had arrived on Lesbos before the EU deportation date.

“It’s a small gesture,” he said. “But these are the small gestures that all men and women must do to give a hand to those in need.”

In perhaps a first, a baby’s cry could be heard aboard the papal plane as Francis spoke. The 12 refugees sat right behind the papal delegation on the aircraft, and Francis greeted each one on the tarmac in Lesbos, again on the tarmac in Rome, and during the flight, said Pompei.

Francis seemed particularly shaken by the trauma the children he met at the detention center suffered as a result of their experiences. He showed reporters a picture one Afghan child gave him of a sun weeping over a sea where boats carrying refugees had sunk.

"If the sun is able to weep, so can we," Francis said. "A tear would do us good."

Hundreds of migrants have drowned so far this year in the waters between Greece and Turkey.

At a ceremony in Lesbos to thank the Greek people, Francis said he understood Europe's concern about the migrant influx. But he said migrants are human beings "who have faces, names and individual stories" and deserve to have their most basic human rights respected.

"God will repay this generosity," he promised.

In his remarks to refugees, Francis said they should know that they are not alone and shouldn't lose hope.

Human rights groups have denounced the EU-Turkey deportation deal as an abdication of Europe's obligation to grant protection to asylum-seekers.

The March 18 deal stipulates that anyone arriving clandestinely on Greek islands since March 20 will be returned to Turkey unless they successfully apply for asylum in Greece. For every Syrian sent back, the EU will take another Syrian directly from Turkey for resettlement in Europe. In return, Turkey was granted billions of euros to deal with the more than 2.7 million Syrian refugees living there and promised that its stalled accession talks with the EU would speed up.

During the visit, Francis, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I and the archbishop of Athens, Ieronymos II, signed a joint declaration urging the world to make the protection of human lives a priority and to extend temporary asylum to those in need. It also called on political leaders to ensure that everyone can remain in their homelands and enjoy the "right to live in peace and security."

"The world will be judged by the way it has treated you," Bartholomew told the refugees. "And we will all be accountable for the way we respond."

Francis and the two Orthodox leaders, officially divided from Catholics over a 1,000-year schism, lunched with eight of the refugees to hear their stories. They then went to the island's main port to pray together and toss floral wreaths into the sea in memory of those who didn't survive the journey.

Earlier, Francis met Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras at the airport and thanked him for the generosity shown by his people despite their own economic troubles. Tsipras said he was proud of Greece's response when other European nations "were erecting walls and fences to prevent defenseless people from seeking a better life."

Hours before the pope arrived, the European border patrol agency Frontex intercepted a dinghy carrying 41 Syrians and Iraqis off the coast of Lesbos. The refugees were detained.

The son of Italian immigrants to Argentina, Francis has made the plight of refugees, the poor and downtrodden the focus of his ministry as pope.

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Winfield reported from Rome and Becatoros from Athens.

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## **Pope Visits Lesbos, Will Bring 12 Muslim Refugees Back To The Vatican**

By Maria Petrakis

[Los Angeles Times](#), April 16, 2016

Pope Francis chided Europeans for their treatment of refugees from the Middle East and Africa in his visit Saturday to Lesbos, the Greek island on the front line of Europe's biggest refugee crisis since World War II.

In a pointed and unexpected gesture, he returned to the Vatican with 12 Muslims from Syria under his protection.

Accompanying the pope during the five-hour visit were the head of the Orthodox Church based in Istanbul and the head of the church in Greece. They met with refugees, praised Greeks for helping them and prayed for the thousands who have died in the Mediterranean Sea trying to reach the shores of Greece's islands.

"Wake us from the slumber of indifference, open our eyes to their suffering and free us from the insensitivity born of worldly comfort and self-centeredness," Francis said in Italian at the memorial for those lost at sea.

Earlier, at a registration center turned detention camp, he told residents: "I have wanted to be with you today. I want to tell you that you are not alone."

The visit — only the second by a pope to a Greek territory since 1054 — was meant to highlight the plight of about 50,000 migrants and refugees who fled war and poverty in the Middle East and Africa and are now stranded in Greece after countries to the north shut down their borders.

Squinting in the morning sun, Greece's prime minister, Alexis Tsipras, greeted the pontiff as he alighted from his plane.

In a short meeting in the airport, Tsipras said he was proud of how Lesbos and Greece had dealt with the influx of more than one million refugees over the past year, even as others, "indeed, in the name of Christian Europe," raised walls and fences against them.

Lesbos is now the focal point of a controversial deal between the European Union and Turkey that is meant to

deter any more people from crossing from the Turkish coast to the porous frontier of the European Union.

Since midnight on March 20, any migrant or refugee arriving on Greek islands is detained, quickly evaluated for asylum and, if not approved, returned to Turkey. Human rights groups have criticized the detention of women and children and others in need and the lack of healthcare, sanitation facilities and legal aid in the camps, as well as the policy of returning people to Turkey.

“We have come to call the attention of the world to this grave humanitarian crisis and to plead for its resolution,” Francis said. “May all our brothers and sisters on this continent, like the good Samaritan, come to your aid in the spirit of fraternity, solidarity and respect for human dignity that has distinguished its long history.”

Underlining the power of his role not just as a spiritual leader but as a head of state, Francis took three Muslim families back to the Vatican on his plane.

The families — two from Damascus and one from Deir Ezzor, in the area occupied by Islamic State militants — will be taken care of by the Vatican. All had lost their homes in bombings.

The gesture did not violate the new agreement. “These are all people who were already in camps in Lesbos before the agreement between the European Union and Turkey,” Vatican spokesman Federico Lombardi said in a statement.

Francis said Europe’s worries about the refugee influx were understandable and legitimate.

But he added: “We must never forget, however, that migrants, rather than simply being a statistic, are first of all persons who have faces, names and individual stories. Europe is the homeland of human rights, and whoever sets foot on European soil ought to sense this, and thus become more aware of the duty to respect and defend those rights.”

Petrakis is a special correspondent.

## **Pope Francis Visits Lesbos, Heart Of Europe’s Refugee Crisis**

By Jim Yardley

[New York Times](#), April 16, 2016

MYTILENE, Greece — Pope Francis landed in the heart of Europe’s refugee crisis on Saturday for a short visit to the Greek island of Lesbos, as he sought to bring attention and sympathy to the plight of migrants at a time when European attitudes and policies have hardened against them.

A deal between Turkey and the European Union has sharply reduced the number of refugees heading to Greece yet has also brought criticism that asylum seekers are mistreated and their civil rights compromised. Few, if any, global leaders are more passionate advocates for migrants than Francis — but his visit to Greece coincides with

deepening public anxiety across the Continent, often stoked by far-right, anti-immigrant political parties.

“He can certainly bring his moral authority,” said Leonard Doyle, the chief spokesman for the International Organization for Migration, in an interview on Friday. “We certainly look forward to some strong moral leadership.”

Speaking to reporters on the flight from Rome, Francis evoked the migrants’ suffering in emotional terms. “This is a trip marked by sadness and that’s important,” he said. “It’s a sad trip. We are going to meet so many people who suffer, who don’t know where to go, who were forced to flee, and we are also going to a cemetery — the sea, where so many have drowned.”

“We are going to encounter the greatest human catastrophe since World War II,” he said.

Francis is making a brief, if busy, visit to Lesbos, the island within eyesight of the Turkish coastline. Beginning last summer, hundreds of thousands of refugees, mostly from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan, arrived in Lesbos after paying smugglers in Turkey for passage aboard rubber rafts. The procession of these refugees through Greece and the Balkans toward Germany plunged the European Union into a political crisis last year.

But the arrivals in Lesbos have dropped significantly since the European Union and Turkey struck a deal last month under which refugees arriving in Greece can be deported back to Turkey. European leaders have argued that the deal was necessary to slow an uncontrolled flood of refugees reaching the Continent.

Francis was scheduled to visit refugees who are locked in a detention center near the village of Moria as they await their asylum claims to be processed or face deportation. He also was to join a group of eight refugees for lunch.

The Argentine pontiff has focused on migrants since the earliest days of his papacy three years ago. His first papal trip was to the Italian island of Lampedusa, where he drew attention to the desperate migrants coming out of Libya on smuggler boats. In January, Francis used his annual address to diplomats to describe migration as a “grave crisis” — if also something that dated to biblical times — while calling for people to overcome “the inevitable fears associated with this massive and formidable phenomenon.”

“Human history is made up of countless migrations, sometimes out of an awareness of the right to choose freely, and often dictated by external circumstances,” Francis told the diplomats. Today, he added, people “flee horrific wars, persecutions and human rights violations, or political or social instability, which often make it impossible for them to live in their native lands.”

Francis’ visit also was meant to focus global attention on struggles facing Greece. The pope has praised the Greek people for their welcoming response to the refugees and

expressed sympathy for the hardship faced by ordinary Greeks amid the country's long-running financial crisis.

Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras of Greece greeted Francis at the airport here in Mytilene and was expected to hold a private meeting with the pontiff, though not give a public address — underscoring the Vatican's insistence that the visit was not a political one.

But it carried symbolic resonance, as far as ecumenical outreach between the Eastern and Western branches of Christianity. Joining Francis in Lesbos were two leaders of Eastern Orthodox Christianity: Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, the spiritual leader of the world's Eastern Orthodox Christians, and Archbishop Ieronymos II, the leader of the Greek Orthodox Church.

The three spiritual leaders will offer prayers to refugees who have died trying to reach Europe and observe a moment of silence.

Carlo Pioppi, a professor of church history at Santa Croce University in Rome, said the joint appearance by the religious leaders was another small step forward in the decades-old efforts in ecumenical rapprochement.

"Seeing the three of them there is very important, a sign of the gravity of the problem and their wish to solve it together," Professor Pioppi said in an interview on Friday. He noted that by appearing together, the three leaders were putting aside doctrinal and theological differences to highlight their shared concern.

"Regular people will understand the sign these three religious leaders are sending," Professor Pioppi added. "To see them have lunch with refugees, all together, is a strong message of humanity."

The British charity Oxfam released a statement on Friday calling for a moratorium on deportations of refugees from Greece to Turkey until the authorities can guarantee that asylum processes are followed. The group also raised questions about new "fast track" processes to review asylum cases that the Greek Parliament recently approved under pressure from the European Union.

"Thousands are being held in squalid detention centers on the Greek Islands — this is the state of Europe in 2016," Farah Karimi, Oxfam's executive director, said in the group's statement. "Shame on the E.U. for prioritizing detention and deportation over people's rights to safety and dignity."

## **Pope Makes Migrant Visit, Returns To Rome With Three Families**

By Francis X. Rocca And Nektaria Stamouli  
[Wall Street Journal](#), April 16, 2016

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

## **Ukraine's President Consolidates His Control**

[Washington Post](#), April 16, 2016

Democratic governments in Ukraine have often been hamstrung by infighting, and the coalition that took power following the pro-democracy uprising of 2014 unfortunately was no exception. Now President Petro Poroshenko has moved decisively to consolidate his control, engineering the installation of a close ally as prime minister and filling other key posts with cronies. The result is that Ukraine's attempt to fend off Russian aggression, stabilize its economy and integrate into the democratic West will now rise or fall with a leader whose commitment to reform is questionable. Without robust intervention by Ukraine's Western allies, failure is probable.

Mr. Poroshenko and his new prime minister, Vladimiro Groysman, talked a good game as Mr. Groysman presented his cabinet to parliament last week. They said they were committed to continuing an International Monetary Fund program that is keeping Ukraine financially afloat, to fighting corruption and to rejecting the economic populism proposed by many in parliament. But neither man has a record of supporting the radical steps Ukraine needs, including a sweeping reform of the judiciary, big increases in energy prices for consumers, and an uncompromising assault on corrupt oligarchs and vested interests.

In recent months Mr. Poroshenko has blocked a necessary clean sweep at the state prosecutor's office, which has been protecting rather than prosecuting corrupt businessmen. Though he promised to sell his own business when he took office, Mr. Poroshenko did not do so, and the Panama Papers revealed that he had set up offshore accounts for his assets. For his part, Mr. Groysman put himself at odds with the IMF late last year by opposing a critical tax reform and delaying the adoption of this year's budget, according to Anders Aslund of the Atlantic Council.

While former prime minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk feuded with Mr. Poroshenko and protected oligarchs close to his own party, he presided over a cabinet seeded with capable technocrats from outside Ukraine. Now they are all gone, including American-born Natalie Jaresko, who oversaw negotiations with the IMF and a debt restructuring as finance minister.

The good news, perhaps, is that Mr. Poroshenko cannot afford to break with the IMF or with European Union governments that, together with the United States, are helping to finance Ukraine and — barely — restraining Vladimir Putin from resuming military aggression. IMF aid has been frozen since last October; to restart it, the government should be required to take reform measures it has been resisting, such as an increase in gas prices. E.U. governments will pressure Mr. Poroshenko to implement constitutional changes that are part of a stalled peace deal with Russia. However, a recent escalation of attacks along a cease-fire line by Russian-backed forces should push that issue to a back burner.

The Obama administration has pressed the cause of reform in Ukraine, correctly noting that 2016 could be a turning point for the country if it cleans up its government and establishes the rule of law. Vice President Biden visited Kiev in December and has been prodding Mr. Poroshenko and Mr. Groyzman with phone calls. According to a White House statement, he urged the new prime minister to move quickly on IMF commitments and the confirmation of a reformist chief prosecutor. Ukrainians can only hope their leadership was listening.

## **Iran Seeks EU Leverage To Get Financial Concessions From U.S.**

By Bozorgmehr Sharafedin And Julia Fioretti  
[Reuters](#), April 16, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

## **Raul Castro Presents Grim Portrait Of Cuban Reforms**

By Michael Weissenstein  
[Associated Press](#), April 16, 2016

HAVANA (AP) – Cuban President Raul Castro delivered a grim report on the state of the country on Saturday, acknowledging that the communist bureaucracy he oversees has failed to implement most of the hundreds of changes launched five years ago to stimulate the stagnant centrally controlled economy.

In a two-hour address to the twice-a-decade meeting of the Cuban Communist Party, Castro praised a new era of detente with the United States and an ensuing boom in tourism. He lamented that his government remained unable to address a series of deeper structural problems that have left millions of Cubans struggling to feed their families.

Cuba remains saddled by an overdependence on imports, slow growth, a byzantine double currency system, insufficient agricultural production and an inability or unwillingness among state employees to enact guidelines for change approved at the last party congress.

Citing a government statistic that only 21 percent of the 313 guidelines approved in 2011 have been carried out, Castro blamed the government's inability to turn goals into facts on the ground.

"The obstacle that we've confronted, just as we expected, is the weight of an obsolete mentality that takes the form of an attitude of inertia," he said.

There was some irony to Castro's complaints. As president of Cuba and head of the party, he maintains near-total control of the country. And the slowness he derided is an essential part of his own policy. Castro repeated Saturday that Cuba's reforms would be "with neither haste nor pause"

and that the country would never feel the "shock therapy" experienced by other socialist states.

But Castro is also confronting problems inherent to the system he helped create. When his brother Fidel Castro overthrew dictator Fulgencio Batista in 1959, he put in place a state in which virtually every aspect of economic and political life came under control of the Communist Party.

After taking over from Fidel in 2008, Raul Castro began shrinking the state and allowing a private sector to flourish. The number of Cubans working for themselves or other citizens has grown to include nearly a quarter of the working population, or roughly 500,000 people. And as the private sector has grown, members of Cuba's massive and powerful bureaucracy have begun to treat it as either a resource to be pillaged or a threat to livelihoods long guaranteed by the state.

Newly successful businesses find themselves hit by repeated inspections and long slowdowns in obtaining licenses and permits, problems often resolved with a quiet payoff.

Raul Castro directly addressed the tensions between the socialist state and its new private sector in his Saturday address.

"The recognition of the existence of private property has generated honest concerns among not just a few of the participants in discussions leading up to this congress, who expressed worries that doing so was taking the first steps toward the restoration of capitalism in Cuba," he said.

"I'm obliged to tell you that this is in no way the goal," Castro said. "Comrades, it's precisely about calling things by their name and not hiding in illogical euphemisms in order to hide the reality."

Many Communist Party members complained that this year's Seventh Party Congress was cloaked in secrecy and a series of proposals that will be considered over the next three days were not shared with the vast majority of the party's nearly 700,000 members. Castro and other top party officials said that was because the congress was simply evaluating progress in executing guidelines approved after lengthy internal party debate in 2011.

However, Castro offered a hint that this year's congress may contain important new measures to jumpstart reform of the economy, which grew 4 percent last year amid a nearly 20 percent surge in tourism and is expected to grow at half that in 2016. Castro said that of 268 measures under consideration, 31 were unchanged from 2011 and 44 were entirely new. He said that 193 had been "modified" but gave no indication about the extent of the changes.

He did speak at length about the need for unifying Cuba's two currencies and creating a legal framework for small and medium-sized businesses, both changes seen as urgent by outside observers.

Castro spent relatively little time addressing his decision to normalize relations with the United States. In a brief moment of attempted levity, he derided American democracy as a sham, saying he saw no difference between Democrats and Republicans.

"It's as if we had two parties in Cuba and Fidel led one and I led the other," he said, prompting laughter from the roughly 1,000 party delegates watching his speech, which was broadcast live on state television. Foreign and independent media were barred from the event.

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Michael Weissenstein on Twitter:  
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## **Raúl Castro Urges Cubans To Remain Alert To U.S. Efforts To Alter Communist System**

By Victoria Burnett

[New York Times](#), April 16, 2016

President Raúl Castro of Cuba on Saturday offered a somber assessment of his nation's economic advances and warned that the United States — despite the historic thaw in relations — was still intent on changing Cuba's communist system.

In a two-hour speech at the opening of the Cuban Communist Party's three-day congress, President Castro said that the United States, in promoting the island's small private sector, was using "other means" to undermine the system. Islanders needed to be "alert, more than ever," he said.

The comments, in a wide-ranging speech, amounted to a pushback against President Obama, who made a groundbreaking visit to Cuba less than a month ago.

"We are not naive," Mr. Castro said, adding that "powerful external forces" hoped to "create agents of change to end the revolution."

In a speech that veered between chiding those who resisted change and warning of the perils of moving too quickly, President Castro admitted that the government had completed only a fifth of the economic changes approved at the last congress in 2011, and that Cubans still struggled to get by on their paltry state salaries.

The country was being held back by "the weight of an obsolete mentality," he said, adding that the "worst that a revolutionary can do, whether they are a communist or not, is to cross their arms in the face of problems."

Half a million Cubans now work outside the government sector, but the country's economy is growing at less than 3 percent a year. Entrepreneurs have limited access to goods and are prohibited from exporting them.

The congress, the first since the United States and Cuba restored diplomatic relations last year after more than 50 years of hostility, will take stock of the economic reform program and elect the party's leadership for what will be the final years of President Castro's tenure.

Arturo López Levy, a lecturer at the University of Texas who for years worked for Cuban intelligence, said the slow rate of economic liberalization signaled a victory by the party's powerful conservatives over its reformers.

"They are organizing the reforms at their own pace," he said.

Younger Cubans, including members of the party, have expressed frustration in recent weeks about the lack of information about the congress's agenda and the party's overwhelmingly elderly hierarchy.

"Now is the moment for a generational change," said Harold Cárdenas Lema, a Cuban blogger. The process of passing the reins of the party from a group of octogenarians to people, say, 30 years younger, "should start now," he said.

## **Families Of Americans Held By Allies Say U.S. Is Keeping Its Gloves On**

By Kareem Fahim

[New York Times](#), April 16, 2016

In the United Arab Emirates, a Libyan-American father and son detained since 2014 on political charges said security agents tortured them in prison, with beatings and electric shocks.

In Egypt, a woman with dual Egyptian and American citizenship who started an organization to help street children has been imprisoned for almost two years after prosecutors accused her of abusing the youths, though the state produced no credible evidence, according to human rights groups.

In both cases, the families of the accused have complained of a lack of high-level attention from American officials — stemming, they fear, from the Obama administration's reluctance to confront the United Arab Emirates and Egypt, which the United States views as two of its strongest strategic partners in the Arab world.

Their frustrations illustrate the distinct challenges faced by Americans imprisoned by their government's allies. At home in the United States, their cases seem to stir less outrage than those of Americans detained by governments considered hostile, like Iran or North Korea, resulting in less pressure on the United States government.

And the notion that the detentions can be resolved in private, among friendly governments, can leave families confused about what role they should play.

As months of imprisonment have stretched into years for the detainees in Egypt and the United Arab Emirates, the relatives say, they have received little guidance from tight-lipped consular officials and avoided publicity out of concern it could undermine any negotiations.

Amal Eldarat, whose father and brother are in prison in the United Arab Emirates, said her family had kept quiet for months but decided to seek more publicity in the hope it might pressure the Obama administration to take more forcible action.

The treatment of her father, Kamal Eldarat, and her brother, Mohamed, “was a violation of every international law,” she said.

“The U.S. could be doing so much more,” Ms. Eldarat said.

State Department officials have said that they are closely following the trials in Egypt and the United Arab Emirates, and that they have raised concerns about the treatment of the Eldarats with senior Emirati officials.

The difficulties faced by the United States in freeing citizens from allied countries was highlighted last week when The National, a state-owned newspaper in the United Arab Emirates, said an American woman had been detained there for seven weeks on charges of “insulting the U.A.E. in public” — a misdemeanor, according to the newspaper.

The 25-year-old woman, who was not identified, told the court that the charges had arisen from her interaction with two men who “did not like the way she spoke to them,” though she also said that she had “refused to engage” with them and that she did not know why she was on trial, according to the report.

Nicholas McGeehan, a researcher at Human Rights Watch who has followed the cases of Westerners imprisoned in the Persian Gulf, said many of the families of the detainees faced a dilemma. The United States, as well as Britain and Canada, often advises families not to speak out because “private diplomacy is preferred,” he said.

“The concern we have is whether these countries are prioritizing their citizens’ interests, or their own strategic and business interests,” he added.

Efforts to free the detainees have been further complicated by increasingly fragile ties between the United States and some of its Arab partners.

American officials have worked since 2013 to repair their alliance with Egypt after initially criticizing the military’s ouster of Mohamed Morsi, the democratically elected president, as well as the deadly crackdowns on Mr. Morsi’s supporters that followed.

The United States has also had to assuage the United Arab Emirates and other Persian Gulf monarchies that were

angered by the Obama administration’s nuclear deal with Iran, the main regional rival of the gulf states.

The delicate approach to regional allies stands in sharp contrast to American efforts to free prisoners from Iran, Syria and Yemen over the last year.

In some cases, the negotiations have involved senior American officials, including Secretary of State John Kerry, and in others, the United States has called on foreign governments, like Oman, to act as intermediaries.

American officials say their lack of diplomatic relations with governments like Iran’s gives them fewer options for direct engagement than in Egypt or other friendly states, and requires a different approach.

The family of Aya Hijazi, the Egyptian-American, said American Embassy officials had visited her in prison and attended her court sessions.

Ms. Hijazi, a 29-year-old graduate of George Mason University in Virginia, was arrested in May 2014 with her husband and others who worked at Beladi, a nonprofit organization that Ms. Hijazi founded to care for Cairo’s street children.

The government accused Ms. Hijazi and the others of human trafficking and sexually abusing the children. A government forensic report showed that some of the children had been abused, but not when they were in the care of Ms. Hijazi’s organization, according to human rights groups monitoring the case.

A series of confounding procedural hearings have repeatedly delayed the start of the trial.

Rather, the arrest appears to be related to a wider government crackdown on nongovernmental groups that are regarded with suspicion in Egypt and accused of being front organizations for various foreign conspiracies.

Like the Eldarats, the Hijazis shunned publicity at first. The nature of the allegations made for explosive headlines, including some that referred derisively to Ms. Hijazi’s American citizenship.

Yet focus on the case faded in Egypt, and Ms. Hijazi’s family and friends have sought more attention, including by starting an online petition demanding that the State Department secure her release.

Brian Shott, a spokesman for the United States Embassy in Cairo, said officials were closely following Ms. Hijazi’s case and would continue to attend her court sessions.

In at least one other recent instance, the White House was successful in pressuring the Egyptian government to release an American citizen. But the detainee, Mohamed Soltan, was released only after he carried out a 16-month hunger strike, drawing international attention to his imprisonment.

Basel Hijazi, Ms. Hijazi’s brother, said European diplomats in Cairo had shown more interest than their American counterparts, who at one point gave the Hijazis a

switchboard number at the embassy to call for questions or concerns.

"We expected more pressure," Mr. Hijazi said.

Ms. Eldarat said her only contacts with the United States government had been with local consular officials in the months after her father and brother were arrested in the United Arab Emirates in August 2014.

The Eldarats were taken from their homes by Emirati security agents and kept from communicating with their family for months, she said. When her father finally spoke to his relatives, he described horrendous conditions in a state security facility where they were held.

"They electrocuted us, they deprived us of sleep, they beat us. These were the darkest days of my life," Ms. Eldarat quoted her father as saying.

The Emirati authorities denied torturing the men. The family said the charges appeared to stem from the Eldarats' humanitarian support of Libyan antigovernment groups during the uprising against Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi — support that placed them on the same side as the United States, which also backed the anti-Qaddafi rebels.

But as Libya descended into civil conflict over the last few years, Emirati officials backed an eastern Libyan faction and grew hostile to Libyans, including the Eldarats, associated with a rival western Libyan bloc, the family said.

The Obama administration has recently spoken out more robustly on the detentions. Mark Toner, a State Department spokesman, told reporters on April 7 that the United States was "concerned about several aspects" of the case, including allegations of abuse and a lack of American consular access after the arrests.

Washington had raised those complaints with the Emirati government, he said, adding, "We continue to call for an expeditious resolution to this case via a fair and transparent legal process in accordance with local law."

The Eldarats face a maximum sentence of 15 years of prison. A verdict is expected next month.

## **US Air Force Plane Intercepted By Russian Jet In 'Unsafe' Manner: Pentagon**

[AFP](#), April 17, 2016

A US Air Force reconnaissance plane was intercepted by a Russian SU-27 jet in an "unsafe and unprofessional" manner while in international airspace over the Baltic Sea, the Pentagon said.

"The US aircraft was operating in international airspace and at no time crossed into Russian territory," Laura Seal, a Pentagon spokeswoman, said of Thursday's incident.

It came shortly after Russian aircraft repeatedly buzzed the USS Donald Cook this past week, including an incident Tuesday in which a Russian Su-24 flew 30 feet (nine meters)

above the war ship in a "simulated attack profile," according to the US military's European Command.

Russia has denied the actions were reckless or provocative but they have been seen as exacerbating tensions between the rival powers.

"This unsafe and unprofessional air intercept has the potential to cause serious harm and injury to all aircrews involved," Seal said of the latest incident in a statement.

"More importantly, the unsafe and unprofessional actions of a single pilot have the potential to unnecessarily escalate tensions between countries."

The US aircraft in question was an RC-135 and the Pentagon said it had been flying a routine route.

"There have been repeated incidents over the last year where Russian military aircraft have come close enough to other air and sea traffic to raise serious safety concerns, and we are very concerned with any such behavior," the Pentagon said.

On Thursday, US Secretary of State John Kerry had strong words about the recent warship flyby.

"We condemn this kind of behavior. It is reckless. It is provocative. It is dangerous. And under the rules of engagement that could have been a shoot-down," Kerry told CNN Espanol in Miami.

Kerry added: "People need to understand that this is serious business and the United States is not going to be intimidated on the high seas."

"We are communicating to the Russians how dangerous this is and our hope is that this will never be repeated," he said.

The Russian maneuvers began Monday while the destroyer was located about 70 nautical miles from the Russian base in Kaliningrad, a Russian enclave on the Baltic Sea.

One US defense official called the actions of the Russian planes "more aggressive than anything we've seen in some time."

The destroyer's commanding officer Charles Hampton told journalists in Lithuania that "very low, very fast" flybys were "inconsistent with the professional norms of militaries in international waters or international airspace."

But Russia countered the criticism, insisting it had observed all safety regulations.

The US military's European Command (EUCOM) released video showing warplanes zooming so close past the Cook that one sailor can be heard saying: "He is below the bridge wing," meaning the plane was flying lower than the highest point of the ship.

Ties between Russia and the West have plunged to their lowest point since the Cold War over Moscow's 2014 annexation of the Crimean peninsula from Kiev and its support for separatist rebels in eastern Ukraine.



## Race For Latest Class Of Nuclear Arms Threatens To Revive Cold War

By William J. Broad And David E. Sanger  
[New York Times](#), April 16, 2016

The United States, Russia and China are now aggressively pursuing a new generation of smaller, less destructive nuclear weapons. The buildups threaten to revive a Cold War-era arms race and unsettle the balance of destructive force among nations that has kept the nuclear peace for more than a half-century.

It is, in large measure, an old dynamic playing out in new form as an economically declining Russia, a rising China and an uncertain United States resume their one-upmanship.

American officials largely blame the Russian president, Vladimir V. Putin, saying his intransigence has stymied efforts to build on a 2010 arms control treaty and further shrink the arsenals of the two largest nuclear powers. Some blame the Chinese, who are looking for a technological edge to keep the United States at bay. And some blame the United States itself for speeding ahead with a nuclear “modernization” that, in the name of improving safety and reliability, risks throwing fuel on the fire.

President Obama acknowledged that danger at the end of the Nuclear Security Summit meeting in Washington early this month. He warned of the potential for “ramping up new and more deadly and more effective systems that end up leading to a whole new escalation of the arms race.”

For a president who came to office more than seven years ago talking about eventually ridding the world of nuclear weapons, it was an admission that an American policy intended to reduce the centrality of atomic arms might contribute to a second nuclear age.

One of the few veterans of the Cold War in his administration, James R. Clapper, the director of national intelligence, told the Senate Armed Services Committee during his annual global threat assessment, “We could be into another Cold War-like spiral.” Yet it is different from Mr. Clapper’s earlier years, when he was an Air Force intelligence officer weighing the risks of nuclear strikes that could level cities with weapons measured by the megaton.

Adversaries look at what the United States expects to spend on the nuclear revitalization program — estimated at up to \$1 trillion over three decades — and use it to lobby for their own sophisticated weaponry.

Moscow is fielding big missiles topped by miniaturized warheads, and experts fear that it may violate the global test ban as it develops new weapons. According to Russian news reports, the Russian Navy is developing an undersea drone meant to loft a cloud of radioactive contamination from an underwater explosion that would make target cities uninhabitable.

The Chinese military, under the tighter control of President Xi Jinping, is flight-testing a novel warhead called a “hypersonic glide vehicle.” It flies into space on a traditional long-range missile but then maneuvers through the atmosphere, twisting and careening at more than a mile a second. That can render missile defenses all but useless.

The Obama administration is hardly in a position to complain. It is flight-testing its own hypersonic weapon, but an experiment in 2014 ended in a spectacular fireball. Flight tests are set to resume next year. As part of the modernization process, it is also planning five classes of improved nuclear arms and associated delivery vehicles that, as a family, are shifting the American arsenal in the direction of small, stealthy and precise.

“We are witnessing the opening salvos of an arms race,” James M. Acton, a senior analyst at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, last year told a congressional commission that assesses China’s power.

One fear about the new weapons is that they could undercut the grim logic of “mutual assured destruction,” the Cold War doctrine that any attack would result in massive retaliation and ultimately the annihilation of all combatants. While much debated and often mocked — in classics like the movie “Dr. Strangelove” — MAD, as it was known, worked. Now, the concern is that the precision and less-destructive nature of these new weapons raises the temptation to use them.

A key question that Mr. Obama addressed is whether America’s planned upgrades are helping drive this competition. Or are Russia and China simply using the American push as an excuse to perfect weapons they would build anyway?

Moscow and Beijing, analysts say, are testing space weapons that could knock out American military satellites at the beginning of a nuclear war. In response, Washington is launching space observation satellites meant to deter and help defeat such attacks.

Mr. Obama, speaking at the summit meeting’s closing news conference, acknowledged the tension stirred by the refurbishment of the nation’s aging nuclear arsenal. He noted, for example, that communication links between the weapons and their guardians needed better protections against cyberattack. But when asked if warhead miniaturization and similar improvements could undermine his record of progress on arms control, he replied: “It’s a legitimate question. And I am concerned.”

White House officials say they try to tamp down any worried reactions to the new developments. In an interview, Avril Haines, the deputy national security adviser, said, “When tensions develop, we take steps to avoid unnecessarily raising the temperature.”

Mr. Obama came to office in 2009 eager to “reset” relations with Moscow, reduce America’s reliance on nuclear

arms and move toward their elimination. He was the first president to make nuclear disarmament a centerpiece of American defense policy.

Russia initially cooperated, signing in 2010 the New Start treaty, which made modest reductions in strategic nuclear forces.

That year, Mr. Obama offered another olive branch: He ordered the American military to reduce the number of warheads atop its land-based missiles to one, from as many as three. That was a signal to show the missiles were more about defense than offense.

Moscow did not reciprocate. Instead, with treaty ink barely dry, it began deploying a new generation of long-range missiles that bore four miniaturized warheads. It continues such actions today, even while adhering to overall treaty limits.

At this month's summit meeting, Mr. Obama blamed Mr. Putin's return to the Russian presidency in 2012 for preventing further arms reductions, saying the Kremlin was "emphasizing military might over development."

William J. Perry, the defense secretary under President Bill Clinton and one of the most influential nuclear experts in the Democratic Party, said he worried that Moscow would soon withdraw from the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty of 1996 and begin perfecting new warheads in underground detonations. (The United States has abided by the treaty, but the Senate has never ratified it.)

For two decades, the main nuclear powers have observed a shaky global ban on testing, a central pillar of nuclear arms control.

"I'm confident they're working on a new bomb," Mr. Perry said in an interview, referring to Russian arms designers. "And I'm confident they're asking for testing."

"It's up to Putin," he added.

Advocates of the American nuclear modernization program call it a reasonable response to Mr. Putin's aggression, especially his 2014 invasion of Crimea.

Military experts argue that miniaturized weapons will help deter an expanding range of potential attackers. "The United States needs discriminate nuclear options at all rungs of the nuclear escalation ladder," said a report last year from the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a research group in Washington.

In February, the White House backed development of an advanced cruise missile. Dropped from a bomber, the flying weapon is to hug the ground for long distances and zip through enemy air defenses to smash targets.

In describing the atomic plans, the Pentagon explicitly calls the cruise missile and related nuclear arms essential for "countering Russian aggression" in Eastern Europe.

The administration is also developing a hypersonic warhead that would zoom ahead of Beijing's rush to perfect its own. The American version would be nonnuclear: The

goal is a weapon so fast and precise that it relies on the raw force of impact to destroy a fixed target, such as a missile silo.

While that fulfills the president's commitment to rely less on atomic weapons, it may prompt adversaries who cannot match the technology to depend more on nuclear arms.

Mr. Perry, the former defense secretary, argued that the diminished nuclear arms and the nonnuclear weapons that Mr. Obama is developing could make the unthinkable more likely.

"They make the weapons seem more usable," he said, "even if there's no credible plan for how you control escalation."

No major nuclear power is more threatened by the American advances than China, analysts say. A pre-emptive strike, they note, might easily do in its relatively small arsenal.

For a decade, Christopher P. Twomey, a national security expert at the Naval Postgraduate School, in Monterey, Calif., has helped run informal meetings between American and Chinese analysts, government officials and military officers.

Last year in testimony to the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, created by Congress, he reported that Beijing felt increasingly encircled. It sees Washington's hypersonic glider as a way to attack China without crossing the nuclear threshold, complicating its assessment of nuclear retaliation.

Dr. Twomey said Chinese leaders had similar apprehensions about growing numbers of antimissile interceptors on American warships in the Pacific as well as bases in California and Alaska.

Finally, he added, Beijing views Washington's nuclear modernization "with much trepidation." Specifically, he cited plans for a new guided bomb and the advanced cruise missile, as well as new delivery systems.

"Beijing has responded to these changes," Dr. Twomey testified, "and will likely continue to do so over the next decade."

China has already re-engineered many of its long-range missiles to carry multiple warheads, rejecting Mr. Obama's example — and following Mr. Putin's. The step troubled analysts because Beijing for decades has known how to miniaturize warheads and put two or more atop a single missile.

It turns out that Beijing is discussing an even more ominous step.

For decades, Washington and Moscow have kept their nuclear forces on high alert so that, in theory, military authorities can fire missiles if networks of radars, satellites and computers detect an incoming strike. The tactic is meant to dodge a crippling blow that might curb or eliminate a nation's ability to retaliate.

Critics see the “launch on warning” tactic as greatly increasing the risk of accidental war. In the past, they note, false alerts have repeatedly brought the world to the brink of disaster.

Last year, the Chinese military declared in an official document that the nation seeks to “improve strategic early warning” for its nuclear forces.

Early this year, the Union of Concerned Scientists, a private group in Cambridge, Mass., that backs arms control, published a report on the intensifying launch-on-warning debate. It said the Obama administration’s arms modernizations “are the most prominent external factor influencing Chinese advocates.”

Advocates of arms control say their field needs reinvention. They see the counting of warheads and delivery vehicles — the traditional levers — as unsuitable for arresting the development of the new weapons.

Mark Gubrud, a nuclear weapons expert at the University of North Carolina, has lobbied for the negotiation of a global flight ban on the testing of hypersonic arms. If work continues, he wrote recently, the maneuverable warheads are likely to become a global reality in the next decade.

“The world has failed to put the nuclear genie back in the bottle,” Dr. Gubrud said. “And new genies are now getting loose.”

## **IMF Panel Calls For ‘More Forceful’ Policies To Boost Growth**

By Andrew Mayeda

[Bloomberg News](#), April 16, 2016

Global finance ministers and central bankers pledged to step up their efforts to support growth, as chances rise of a broader slowdown and risks including refugee crises and a potential U.K. exit from the European Union threaten the world economy.

“Downside risks to the global economic outlook have increased since October, raising the possibility of a more generalized slowdown and a sudden pull-back of capital flows,” the International Monetary Fund’s top policy advisory committee said in a statement following a meeting on Saturday in Washington. To achieve strong global growth, “we will employ a more forceful and balanced policy mix,” the panel said.

The statement reflects policy makers’ concern that expansion will slow, after the IMF this week downgraded its global outlook again, warning that a prolonged period of slow growth has left the world economy at risk of slipping into stagnation.

Using all policy tools “is vital to stimulate actual and potential growth, enhance financial stability and avert deflation risks,” according to the communique from the panel, known as the International Monetary and Financial

Committee. The panel advises the board of governors of the 189-member nation IMF.

The Washington-based Fund said earlier this week that the world economy will grow 3.2 percent this year, down from a projected 3.4 percent in January, as weak exports and slowing investment dim prospects in the U.S., a consumption-tax hike saps growth in Japan, and a slump in the price of everything from oil to wheat hobbles commodities producers.

After a separate gathering at the IMF’s spring meetings in Washington, Group of 20 finance ministers and central bankers said on Friday that risks to the global recovery have stabilized even as threats to the outlook remain, including terrorism and the U.K.’s potential exit from the European Union.

In nods to emerging markets, the IMFC said the fund will discuss the reporting of official reserves in Special Drawing Rights, the IMF reserve-currency unit of account that’s adding China’s yuan to its basket this year. In addition, the IMFC said the fund’s next review of voting shares should be completed by late 2017, and should increase the power of emerging market and developing countries.

The latest governance change was approved in December by U.S. lawmakers. It gave more of a voice to emerging markets such as China and India in exchange for greater congressional oversight of the fund.

## **Finance Leaders Pledge Forceful Response To Boost Economy**

By Martin Crutsinger And Maria Danilova

[Associated Press](#), April 16, 2016

WASHINGTON (AP) – Finance officials on Saturday pledged a more forceful effort to stimulate a sluggish global economy.

The hope is that stronger growth can boost long-stagnant wages and combat a rising backlash against globalization.

The finance leaders said they will use all the policy tools available to them to promote “strong, sustainable, inclusive, job-rich and more balanced global growth.”

The commitment came in a joint statement from the policy-setting panel of the 189-nation International Monetary Fund at the end of its spring meeting in Washington.

Markets have stabilized after a chaotic start to the year, when fears were growing about a possible new global recession. But the IMF’s communique cited a long list of threats, from terrorist attacks and the Syrian refugee crisis to the shock to global confidence from a potential exit by Britain from the European Union.

“Against this backdrop, it is important to buttress confidence in our policies,” the IMF said.

The IMF discussions followed two days of talks among finance officials of the Group of 20 major economies.

Representing the United States were Treasury Secretary Jacob Lew and Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen.

The concern about economic growth was heightened at the beginning of this year by tumult in financial markets. Investors feared that China's economy, the world's second biggest, was slowing more than expected, raising the possibility of a global recession.

Agustin Carstens, the head of the Bank of Mexico and chairman of the IMF's policy panel, said finance leaders realized "there was no room for complacency" even though markets have stabilized.

New threats may imperil efforts to promote greater trade and capital flows between countries.

Many nations buffeted by the forces of globalization have lost jobs and workers' wages have stagnated. In the United States, this anger has propelled the presidential candidacy of Republican front-runner Donald Trump. In Britain, voters will decide in June whether to leave the European Union.

The finance leaders said they believed their actions would help stimulate growth and boost jobs and wages. But they acknowledged there was no time to waste in producing results.

"Clearly the question is how much is going to get done back home," IMF Managing Director Christine Lagarde said.

The IMF policy group and the G-20 leaders also worked on a stronger response to international tax evasion, stepping up efforts to penalize countries that do not share tax information.

This issue came under renewed scrutiny after the leak this month of 11.5 million confidential documents from a Panamanian law firm. The Panama Papers show how some of the world's richest people hide assets in shell companies to avoid paying taxes.

Iceland's prime minister resigned after it was revealed that he and his wife set up a company in the British Virgin Islands, a tax haven. British Prime Minister David Cameron was forced to release his tax returns for the first time after the papers raised questions about his family's affairs.

Even as the G-20 and IMF pledged greater cooperation, differences among nations remained.

Lew warned countries to avoid manipulating their currencies to increase trade. He urged countries with large trade surpluses to boost spending to bolster global demand.

But German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schaeuble said that uncertainty in financial markets warranted a "high degree of caution" and control of government spending.

In remarks to the IMF panel, Lew said at a time of "slow and uneven global growth, avoiding beggar-thy-neighbor exchange rate policies" was essential. The United States has in the past worried about currency manipulation by China and Japan to help their exports.

Schaeuble said Germany intended to stick to its plans for a balanced budget, warning that rising budget deficits can drag down growth.

World markets were rattled in January by a drop in the Chinese currency and by tumbling oil prices, potential signs of deep trouble for the global economy. Since then, the yuan and oil prices have stabilized. On Friday, China said its economy registered solid 6.7 percent growth the first three months of 2016.

Still, the IMF this past week downgraded its outlook for the economy this year and cited risks that could make things worse: conflict in the Middle East, the refugee crisis in Europe, Britain's possible exit from the EU, and the growing political backlash in the United States and Europe against international trade.

Japanese Finance Minister Taro Aso told reporters that financial markets are starting to regain "composure." But he expressed concern about risks from volatility in capital flows and foreign exchange rates.

Even China's solid first-quarter numbers raised fears that Beijing is backsliding on commitments to reform its economy. Critics worry it pumped up those figures by investing heavily in inefficient state-owned companies.

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Associated Press writers Paul Wiseman and Matthew Pennington contributed to this report.

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## **Calls For Shipping And Aviation To Do More To Cut Emissions**

By Henry Fountain

[New York Times](#), April 16, 2016

Even though commercial aviation and ocean shipping are significant sources of greenhouse gas emissions, they were excluded from the Paris climate treaty, to be signed by more than 100 countries this week at the United Nations in New York.

Now governments and advocacy groups are pressuring these industries to take stronger steps to curb pollution.

A coalition of European, North African and South Pacific nations is lobbying the International Maritime Organization, the United Nations agency that oversees shipping, to start discussing an emissions-reduction commitment at a meeting in London that will begin Monday.

"We need to do something and go beyond what we already have, and set some very specific targets," said

François Martel, the secretary general of the Pacific Islands Development Forum. The forum's members include the Marshall Islands and the Solomon Islands, two of six nations that have made a proposal, expected to be taken up at the meeting, that shipping contribute a "fair share" to reducing emissions.

Another United Nations agency, the International Civil Aviation Organization, has for years been considering a market-based strategy in which airlines could purchase "offsets," or emissions reductions from renewable energy or conservation projects, to cover at least some international flights.

Advocacy groups are pressuring the agency to adopt as strict a system as possible when it meets for its triennial assembly in Montreal this fall.

"If we're going to have offsets, then they actually have to deliver the tons of reductions they say they will," said Bill Hemmings, the director of aviation and shipping at Transport & Environment, an environmental group based in Brussels.

Nigel Purvis, the chief executive of Climate Advisers, a consulting group in Washington, said airlines were likely to increase spending significantly on offsets from forest conservation projects.

"Airlines know this sector and are ready to play," he said.

While some previous forest projects have been criticized for not delivering the reductions that were claimed, "now we have new rules about how to do forests in a way that as we scale up we maintain integrity," Mr. Purvis added.

Aviation and shipping each contribute a little more than 2 percent of annual worldwide human-produced emissions of carbon dioxide. Together that is more than the emissions from Japan, the world's fifth-largest emitter.

Both industries are expected to grow over the next few decades, and their percentages of worldwide emissions may increase significantly as emissions are reduced elsewhere. Environmental groups say steps the industries have already taken, including regulations to reduce emissions from new aircraft and ships, will not help much because they are tied to baselines for improvement that are too low.

Yet after being included in initial drafts of the climate treaty, a paragraph on limiting or reducing emissions from the two industries was eliminated from the final version, which was agreed upon in Paris in mid-December.

The treaty commits nations to setting emissions-reduction targets, with a goal of keeping global warming "well below" a target of 2 degrees Celsius, or 3.6 degrees Fahrenheit, above preindustrial levels.

Experts cite several reasons that aviation and shipping were not in the treaty, including a desire to keep the text as concise as possible to improve the chances of reaching an agreement. The issue also would have exacerbated disputes about the responsibilities of developed versus developing

nations that could have threatened the overall accord, they said.

Industry representatives and environmental groups alike say that despite the lack of any mention in the treaty, there is still momentum for action on emissions by both industries.

Simon Bennett, the director of policy and external relations for the International Chamber of Shipping, an industry group, said that there was a "misunderstanding" about the Paris accord and that "somehow that means shipping has escaped."

"That isn't the case," Mr. Bennett said. The chamber has filed its own proposal for the International Maritime Organization meeting; it uses language other than "fair share" but still calls for emissions-reductions targets.

But there are disagreements between the shipping industry and environmental advocates about the best ways to cut emissions. The industry generally favors a global fuel tax over carbon offsets, and notes that most ships have already reduced their emissions and that there is a maritime organization program in place, the Energy Efficiency Design Index, to reduce emissions from new ones.

Environmental groups, however, argue that the efficiency index program's improvement standards are too low, and that most ships built in the last several years already meet the standards for 2020.

"They need to come up with more stringent targets," Mr. Hemmings of Transport & Environment said.

The aviation industry also points out that it is not relying solely on so-called market-based measures like offsets to reduce emissions.

"The global offsetting scheme is just one aspect of the sector's climate action, albeit a crucial one," said Michael Gill, the executive director of the Air Transport Action Group, an industry organization.

Like shipping, aviation has adopted efficiency standards. The International Civil Aviation Organization approved them in February, and will limit emissions from jets built after 2023 from current designs, and from new models introduced after 2028.

Critics say that those standards are weak, and that most advanced jets being built already meet them. That makes adopting tough market-based measures more important than ever, they say.

"The level of the CO2 efficiency standard for new aircraft, set in February, was disappointing in its ambition," said Kat Watts, a global climate policy adviser with Carbon Market Watch, in Brussels. With aviation left out of the Paris treaty, she added, the International Civil Aviation Organization "was handed the baton for climate action for international aviation."

"Whether they run with, or drop, that baton will be decided in this October's assembly," she added.

In the United States, the Environmental Protection Agency has begun what is expected to be a yearslong process to develop emissions rules for aircraft, and has said the rules would be at least as strict as the international organization's standards.

But environmental groups have argued that the E.P.A.'s rules must be far more stringent. Last week, several groups, including Friends of the Earth, sued the environmental agency in an effort to compel it to move faster to develop the rules.

## **Saudi, Iranian Rivalry Imperils Doha Oil Deal**

**A day before oil world descends on Doha, Iran says it won't be sending a representative**

By Benoit Faucon And Summer Said

[Wall Street Journal](#), April 16, 2016

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

## **Saudi Prince Sticks To Oil Freeze Ultimatum As Iran Stays Home**

By Wael Mahdi

[Bloomberg News](#), April 16, 2016

Saudi Arabia won't restrain its oil production unless other producers, including Iran, agree to freeze output at a meeting this weekend in Doha, the kingdom's deputy crown prince said. Iran said it had decided to stay at home.

The world's biggest crude exporter would cap its market share at about 10.3 million to 10.4 million barrels a day, if producers agree to the freeze, Prince Mohammed bin Salman said during an interview April 14 at King Salman's private farm in Diriyah. Iran's oil minister, Bijan Namdar Zanganeh, said Saturday he won't attend the Doha talks and won't be a signatory to any deal as it would amount to self-imposed sanctions on the country which is restoring crude production after the removal of a ban on its shipments.

The comments from Saudi Arabia and its main rival in the Middle East will cast doubt on the outcome of Sunday's summit, where at least 15 oil ministers from the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and beyond will discuss freezing output to stabilize an oversupplied market. Crude oil has rallied more than 30 percent since an agreement was first mooted in February.

"If all major producers don't freeze production, we will not freeze production," said Prince Mohammed, 30, who has emerged as Saudi Arabia's leading economic force. "If we don't freeze, then we will sell at any opportunity we get."

Kuwait's acting oil minister, Anas Al-Saleh, said on Saturday that he was "optimistic" about the possibility of reaching an output freeze in Doha. A Russian official said it was possible to reach a deal, regardless of Iran whose crude shipments have risen by more than 600,000 barrels a day this month. That increase has added to the pressure on producer

nations to reach an agreement to prop up prices as economies from Venezuela to Nigeria reel from the market rout.

"A no-show by the Iranians is actually positive for the Doha talks as all know that they wouldn't agree at this stage," said John Sfakianakis, director of economics research at the Gulf Research Center. "A deal can be reached even if Iran for now is absent. The sentiment is still positive as global supply is falling. The Iranian participation issue is not significant and will be reconsidered down the road. There is enough momentum with the rest of the members now."

The meeting in Doha is only relevant if no deal is reached, prompting a sharp sell-off in the markets, according to Ed Morse, head of commodities research at Citigroup Inc.

The recent rebound in oil futures suggests that the 20-month sell-off could be hitting a bottom, amid efforts to reduce the supply glut, OPEC Secretary General Abdulla El-Badri said in a statement posted on Saturday on the website of the International Monetary Fund.

Ministers from Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, Ecuador, Algeria as well as OPEC's secretary-general and Iraq's representative, all arrived in Doha on Saturday. None wanted to comment on prospects for Sunday's meeting.

The credit ratings of more than 10 oil-producing nations in the developing world were placed on review in March for a downgrade by Moody's Investors Service, which cited the shock of depressed prices on these economies. The list includes Russia, Kazakhstan, Nigeria, Angola, Gabon and five of the six Gulf Cooperation Council nations – Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Qatar, according to Moody's.

Saudi Arabia's creditworthiness was downgraded by Fitch Ratings after the plunge in oil prices. The kingdom's rating was lowered one level to AA-, the fourth-highest investment grade, the ratings company said on April 12. It maintained a negative outlook for the credit, signaling the possibility of more downgrades.

"If prices went up to \$60 or \$70, that would be a strong factor to push forward the wheel of development," Prince Mohammed said. "But this battle is not my battle. It's the battle of others who are suffering from low oil prices."

Prince Mohammed also said that Saudi Arabia isn't concerned because "we have our own programs that don't need high oil prices."

The prince also outlined the amount of spare capacity that the kingdom could bring to the market, underlining its pivotal role in global oil markets.

Saudi Arabia could increase output to 11.5 million barrels a day immediately and go to 12.5 million in six to nine months "if we wanted to," Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who is also chairman of the Supreme Council of Saudi Arabian Oil Co., said in an interview Thursday. The country

pumped 10.2 million barrels a day last month, according to data compiled by Bloomberg.

Brent crude settled at \$43.10 a barrel Friday in London, having rebounded by more than 50 percent from a 12-year low in January.

After OPEC abandoned its efforts to boost oil prices in November 2014, focusing instead on protecting its market share, Saudi Arabia increased production to an all-time high of more than 10.5 million barrels a day, saying that customers were asking for more crude.

The meeting of oil producers in Doha on Sunday follows a gathering in February between Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Russia and Venezuela in which the quartet tentatively agreed to cap their production at January's level.

"There is hope" that producers will reach an agreement in Doha, Dmitry Peskov, the Kremlin's press secretary, said following the latest conversation between Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak and his Saudi counterpart. Novak spoke to Saudi Oil Minister Ali al-Naimi by phone on Tuesday to discuss prospects for a production freeze, a person with direct knowledge of the matter said.

When OPEC reaches a collective consensus, "I will support them," Prince Mohammed said.

## **Draft Doha Agreement Would Freeze Output Until October**

By Rania El Gamal

[Reuters](#), April 16, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

## **U.N. Says New Sex Abuse Allegations Against Peacekeepers In Congo**

By Aaron Ross

[Reuters](#), April 16, 2016

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## **Powerful Earthquake Kills At Least 28 In Ecuador**

By Gonzalo Solano

[Associated Press](#), April 17, 2016

QUITO, Ecuador (AP) – A powerful, 7.8-magnitude earthquake shook Ecuador's central coast on Saturday, killing at least 28 people and spreading panic as far away as the Andean capital of Quito as it collapsed homes and rattled buildings.

The U.S. Geological Survey said the shallow quake, the strongest in decades to hit Ecuador, was centered 27 kilometers (16 miles) south-southeast of Muisne, in a

sparsely populated area of fishing ports that's popular with tourists.

Vice President Jorge Glas said in a televised address that there were initial reports of 28 dead in the cities of Manta, Portoviejo and Guayaquil. Among those killed was the driver of a car crushed by an overpass that buckled in Guayaquil, the city's most populous city hundreds of kilometers from the epicenter.

On social media residents shared photos of homes collapsed, the roof of a shopping center coming apart and supermarket shelves shaking violently. In Manta, the airport was closed after the control tower suffered severe damages.

President Rafael Correa, who is in the Vatican after attending a papal conference, called on Ecuadoreans to show strength while authorities monitor events.

The Pacific Tsunami Warning Center said hazardous tsunami waves are possible for some coasts. While the government hadn't issued a tsunami alert, Glas urged residents along the coast to move to higher ground and towns near the epicenter were also being evacuated as a precautionary measure. An emergency had been declared in six provinces, he said.

"It's very important that Ecuadoreans remain calm during this emergency," Glas said.

In the capital, the quake was felt for about 40 seconds and people fled to the streets in fear. Quito is located about 170 kilometers (105 miles) from the quake's epicenter. The quake knocked out electricity and cellphone coverage in several neighborhoods in the capital.

"I'm in a state of panic," said Zoila Villena, one of many Quito residents who congregated in the streets. "My building moved a lot and things fell to the floor. Lots of neighbors were screaming and kids crying."

The USGS originally put the quake at a magnitude of 7.4 then raised it to 7.8. It had a depth of 19 kilometers.

Several aftershocks, some as strong as 5.6 on the Richter scale, continued in the hour after the first quake, which occurred at nightfall.

Guayaquil's international airport was also closed because of a lack of communications.

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## **Some Sleep In Cars After 2 Nights Of Quakes Kill 41 In Japan**

[Associated Press](#), April 16, 2016

The wooden home barely withstood the first earthquake. An even stronger one the next night dealt what might have been the final blow — if not to the house, then to the Tanaka family's peace of mind.

The Tanakas joined about 50 other residents of the southern Japanese town of Ozu who were planning to sleep in their cars at a public park Saturday after two nights of increasingly terrifying earthquakes that have killed 41 people and injured about 1,500, flattened houses and triggered major landslides.

"I don't think we can go back there. Our life is in limbo," said 62-year-old Yoshiaki Tanaka as other evacuees served rice balls for dinner. He, his wife and his 85-year-old mother fled their home after a magnitude 7.3 earthquake struck Saturday at 1:25 a.m., just 28 hours after a magnitude 6.5 quake hit the same area.

Army troops and other rescuers, using military helicopters to reach some stranded at a mountain resort, rushed Saturday to try to reach scores of trapped residents in hard-hit communities near Kumamoto, a city of 740,000 on the southwestern island of Kyushu.

Heavy rain started falling Saturday night, threatening to complicate the relief operation and set off more mudslides.

"Daytime today is the big test" for rescue efforts, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said early Saturday. Landslides had already cut off roads and destroyed bridges, slowing down rescuers.

Nearly 200,000 homes were without electricity, Japanese media reported, and an estimated 400,000 households were without running water.

Kumamoto prefectural official Riho Tajima said that more than 200 houses and other buildings had been either destroyed or damaged, and that 91,000 people had evacuated from their homes.

Hundreds of people lined up for rations at distribution points before nightfall, bracing for the rain and strong winds that were expected. Local stores quickly ran out of stock and shuttered their doors, and people said they were worried about running out of food.

Police in Kumamoto prefecture said that at least 32 people had died from Saturday morning's earthquake. Nine died in the quake on Thursday night.

More than half the deaths were in Mashiki, a town on the eastern border of Kumamoto city that was hit hardest by the first quake.

Japan's Kyodo news agency reported that four people were missing in Minamiaso, a more rural area farther east of Kumamoto where the landslides were triggered by the second quake.

One landslide tore open a mountainside in Minamiaso from the top to a highway below. Another gnawed at a highway, above a smashed house that had fallen down a ravine. In another part of the village, houses were hanging precariously at the edge of a huge hole cut open in the earth.

About 1,500 people were injured in the two earthquakes, said Yoshihide Suga, the Japanese government's top spokesman. He said the number of troops

in the area was being raised to 20,000, while additional police and firefighters were also on the way.

In Mashiki, where people were trapped beneath the rubble for hours, an unconscious 93-year-old woman, Yumiko Yamauchi, was dragged out from the debris of her home Saturday and taken by ambulance to a hospital. Her son-in-law Tatsuhiko Sakata said she had refused to move to shelter with him after the first quake Thursday.

"When I came to see her last night, I was asking her: 'Mother? I'm here! Do you remember me? Do you remember my face?' She replied with a huge smile filled with joy. A kind of smile that I would never forget. And that was the last I saw of her," Sakata said.

Japanese TV showed a collapsed student dormitory at Aso city's Tokai University that was originally two floors, but now looked like a single-story building. A witness said he heard a cry for help from the rubble. Two students were reported to have died there.

The area has been rocked by aftershocks. The Japan Meteorological Agency said the magnitude 7.3 quake early Saturday may have been the main one, with the one from Thursday night a precursor.

Tanaka, the man spending the night in his car with others in Ozu, had spent Friday starting to clean up the mess from the first earthquake, hoping the aftershocks would gradually subside.

"Then came the big one, which was so powerful I couldn't even stand on my feet. It was horrifying," he said, adding that when he left, his house was tilted at an angle.

David Rothery, professor of planetary geosciences at The Open University in Britain, said Saturday's quake was 30 times more powerful than the one Thursday.

"It is unusual but not unprecedented for a larger and more damaging earthquake to follow what was taken to be the main event," he said.

Rothery noted that in March 2011, a magnitude 7.2 earthquake in northern Japan was followed two days later by the magnitude 9.0 quake that caused a devastating tsunami that killed more than 18,000 people.

Volcanic Mt. Aso, near the village of Minamiaso, erupted Saturday for the first time in a month, sending smoke rising about 100 meters (328 feet) into the air, but no damage was reported. It was not clear whether there was a link between the quakes and the eruption. The 1,592-meter (5,223-foot)-high mountain is about a 90-minute drive from the epicenter.

The second earthquake seriously damaged historic Aso Shrine, a picturesque complex near the volcano. A number of buildings with curved tiled roofs were flattened on the ground like lopsided fans. A towering gate, known as the "cherry blossom gate," collapsed.



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## **More Than 40 In Japan Are Confirmed Dead In Earthquakes**

By Jonathan Soble

[New York Times](#), April 16, 2016

The death toll from two powerful earthquakes and a series of continual aftershocks on the Japanese island of Kyushu reached 41 on Saturday, the authorities said, as rescue workers searched for survivors under collapsed buildings and mountains of earth displaced by landslides.

The largest of the earthquakes struck the southwestern island early Saturday with a magnitude of 7.0, according to the United States Geological Survey, making it even more powerful than a 6.2-magnitude quake on Thursday night. The Japan Meteorological Agency said its measurements had registered the new quake at a magnitude of 7.3.

Saturday's quake, which occurred just before 1:30 a.m., toppled houses and apartment buildings, buckled roads and caused numerous landslides. Aftershocks shook the area throughout Saturday, more than 100 of them strong enough to damage buildings, the Meteorological Agency reported.

The police said 32 deaths were confirmed Saturday as a result of the quake and the aftershocks, adding to the nine deaths on Thursday. Many of those killed were older adults; some were trapped under collapsed buildings, and several died in fires and landslides in the mountainous region.

Rescue units were working to free people from more than 50 collapsed buildings, Yoshihide Suga, the government's chief cabinet secretary, said.

About 2,000 people were treated for injuries, NHK, the national public broadcaster, reported. Tens of thousands left their homes for school gymnasiums, community centers and other temporary shelters as power failures left more than 100,000 households without electricity.

Some people prepared to spend the night in their cars, deeming them safer than houses or apartments.

Television footage showed dark smoke rising from Mount Aso, a volcano about 20 miles east of the town of Mashiki, in Kumamoto Prefecture, where the centers of the strongest of the quakes have been clustered. Earthquakes and volcanic activity are closely associated, but the authorities said the eruption at Mount Aso, the biggest active volcano in Japan, was minor and did not pose an immediate threat.

Sections of a stone wall, centuries old, around Kumamoto Castle collapsed into the moat on Saturday morning. The castle had already sustained damage on Thursday. Several buildings at Aso Shrine, an ancient Shinto

site on the north slope of Mount Aso that is considered a national treasure, also collapsed.

The Meteorological Agency classified the quake that set the disaster in motion on Thursday as a "foreshock" of the even larger one Saturday. It warned that strong earthquakes could continue for days until the seismic fault line under the area settled. Heavy rain began to fall Saturday night, increasing the risk of more landslides.

In the town of Minami-Aso, east of Mashiki, landslides tore the moorings from a 670-foot suspension bridge, causing it to plunge into a valley, and buried more than a dozen homes, NHK said. Two students in a university agricultural program died after a dormitory building in the town collapsed, the network said.

The government said it was sending units from the Army, known in Japan as the Self-Defense Forces, and from police departments around the country to help with rescue efforts.

The earthquakes since Thursday have been concentrated along a cluster of fault lines that bisect the island of Kyushu from southwest to northeast. The island, somewhat larger than the state of Maryland, is home to 13 million people, though most of it is rural and sparsely populated.

The quake on Saturday was the strongest to strike Japan since a 9.0-magnitude offshore earthquake in 2011, which unleashed a tsunami that killed 18,000 people in the country's northeast and set off meltdowns at a nuclear power plant in Fukushima.

Kyushu is home to the only Japanese nuclear power station in operation, the Sendai Nuclear Power Plant, about 75 miles southwest of Mashiki. Ground vibrations there were comparatively mild and were not threatening enough to lead to an automatic emergency shutdown, the Kyushu Electric Power Company said. The plant continued to operate normally on Saturday, the utility said.

## **Greece's Creditors Weigh Extra Austerity Measures To Break Deadlock**

**Bid to bridge differences between Europe and IMF that threaten to unravel Greek bailout**

By Marcus Walker and Viktoria Dendrinou

[Wall Street Journal](#), April 16, 2016

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

## **France's Hollande Is So Unpopular That His Own Party May Not Support Him**

By James McAuley

[Washington Post](#), April 16, 2016

On Thursday, French President François Hollande submitted to a lengthy televised interview for the first time in

months. His mission: to convince those who elected him in 2012 — the young and the Socialists — not to abandon him in the presidential election next year.

Many already have. As the French unemployment rate hovers just over 10 percent, Hollande's approval levels have plummeted to a historic low of 17 percent, according to a poll last month. Despite a momentary boost in popularity after the November terrorist attacks in Paris, the Socialist incumbent is now increasingly scorned — especially by those in his own camp.

Many in his party now view their leader as a traitor who has increasingly inched to the right in the wake of the November attacks. Hoping to field a different candidate in next year's election, many leftist politicians and intellectuals have called for an open primary, a move with little political precedent in France.

Although whether this will happen remains unclear, Hollande's low approval ratings have made such a primary more possible.

Those who want Hollande replaced have criticized his attempt to pass a constitutional amendment that would have permitted stripping French citizenship from dual citizens convicted of terrorism and proposed labor reforms that would weaken protections for French workers. Both were seen as affronts to the fundamental values of the French left as the party of social equality.

Hollande's administration has been rife with internecine struggles that have paralleled the larger divisions outside the Elysee Palace. Christiane Taubira, Hollande's justice minister, resigned over the proposed nationality law in January, and Emmanuel Macron, the economy minister, has even launched his own political movement, conspicuously declining to rule out a bid for the presidency in 2017.

For Aurélie Filippetti, Hollande's former culture minister, the president has squandered the "national unity" he inherited in November, after terrorists affiliated with the Islamic State killed 130 and injured hundreds more in a series of coordinated attacks on a stadium, a concert hall and cafes across Paris.

"Unfortunately, he lost it with the *déchéance* and the *loi de travail*," she said in an interview, referring to the nationality law and the labor reforms. "These were absolutely catastrophic, and they have completely fractured the country."

Without a primary and, eventually, a different candidate, Filippetti said, "the left unfortunately risks *Le Pen*," referring to Marine Le Pen, the outspoken leader of France's far-right National Front party.

Patrick Weil, France's preeminent historian of immigration, said the nationality law in particular was a point of no return for many who had previously supported Hollande. "A lot of people are saying it's finished and that they'll never vote for him again," he said.

Initially perceived as a contradiction to the hallowed principle of equality before the law, the proposed constitutional amendment eventually came to represent little more than the political impotence of the sitting president. The measure was ultimately trounced in the French Parliament, and late last month even Hollande publicly withdrew his support for a provision that he had championed for months.

The president's televised appeal to the nation Thursday coincided with the country's largest popular protest in recent memory, the "Nuit Debout," sometimes translated as "Standing Up at Night." Centered in Paris's Place de la Republique and carried out at other sites across France, the protest is a loosely organized movement of hundreds of thousands of young people and union members without a clear platform but with a definite sense of dissatisfaction.

To some extent, the movement is France's answer to Occupy Wall Street — a group of predominately white youngsters suspicious of the government's perceived embrace of neoliberal policies and workers outraged by the prospect of reforms.

On Monday, the government tried to appease these protesters, promising subsidies for recent graduates as they look for work. But even after police cleared their temporary structures in the Place de la Republique this past week, the protestors showed no signs of stopping.

For Gérard Grunberg, a prominent historian of French socialism based at the Paris Institute of Political Studies, this widespread dissatisfaction with the current government is fundamentally existential rather than political.

France, in his analysis, is a nation that has historically required its leaders to demonstrate the public strength — and even the ego — that Hollande forfeited in his campaign, when he promised to be a "normal president" distinct from the larger-than-life characters that have run the country since 1958, the dawn of the Fifth Republic.

If Hollande was never a Charles de Gaulle or even a François Mitterrand, this, for Grunberg, was his "first mistake." "The spirit of the institution is that the president must be a real leader, able to decide," said Grunberg. "The French do not want a 'normal president.' They want a leader."

When he appeared in prime time Thursday evening, Hollande was greeted mostly with hostility. When he declared before millions of viewers that the French economy, the third largest in Europe, is "getting better," one of the journalists conducting the interview interrupted with a simple question.

"Is that a joke?"

## **A Challenge To Poland's Anti-Democratic Drift**

[New York Times](#), April 16, 2016

The conflict between the European Union and Poland's right-wing government went up a notch on Wednesday when the European Parliament passed a resolution calling on Poland's rulers to stop defying the country's top court.

Unfortunately, the resolution is not likely to sway Jaroslaw Kaczynski and his fellow nationalists in the ruling Law and Justice Party, who believe that it is their mission to zealously defend socially conservative Catholic values and Polish sovereignty against a secular E.U. and a multiethnic Europe — even if that means trampling on the rule of law.

Poland's government and its top court, called the Constitutional Tribunal, locked horns after Law and Justice came to power in national elections in October and, to ensure that the court could not block the government's right-wing agenda, began trying to reduce the court's powers by naming several new judges and then passing a law that would change the way the court functioned.

The court ruled that only three of the proposed judges could be legitimately seated and that the legislation was unconstitutional. The government refused to recognize the ruling, setting off a constitutional crisis. Since then, the European Commission and the Council of Europe, the continent's human rights organization, have assailed the government's actions and have demanded that Poland abide by the court's ruling.

The dispute between Warsaw and Brussels is an illustration of the culture gap within the E.U. Many of the union's new Eastern and Central European members chafe at the sense that they are being treated as second-class members. Reacting to the European Parliament's scolding, Prime Minister Beata Szydlo charged that Western European politicians feel superior to new members and "like to instruct others."

In fact, there is little the union can do to compel Poland or any other member to alter its conduct, even though the resolution passed by a vote of 513 to 142. The resolution is nonbinding, and any punitive measures would require unanimous support in the European Commission, the union's executive arm. Hungary's similarly nationalist government, for one, would not support any such measures. Too much overt pressure, moreover, would only harden Mr. Kaczynski's resentment of the union.

Yet it is incumbent on the European Union — and on the United States, which the Poles rightly see as their close ally and protector against Russia — to make clear to the Polish government that the rule of law is not a take-it-or-leave-it imposition by the "old E.U.," but a central tenet of the democracy Poland signed on to.

As Poland prepares to host a NATO summit meeting in July in the hope of landing large contingents of allied forces on its soil, Washington should remind Mr. Kaczynski that the alliance is, above all, one of shared values.

## **NATIONAL NEWS**

### **President Barack Obama, Stephen Curry Of Golden State Warriors Team Up On PSA**

[Associated Press](#), April 16, 2016

OAKLAND, Calif. — President Barack Obama has teamed with reigning NBA MVP Stephen Curry on a public service announcement calling for Americans to mentor youth in their community to make a positive impact.

The video was shown Saturday on ABC's "NBA Countdown" ahead of Curry's playoff opener with the defending champion Golden State Warriors against the Houston Rockets on Saturday.

Curry and Obama golfed together last August, and Curry also visited the White House with the Warriors in February, when Obama mentioned Curry "clowning" with defenders the way he had been shooting.

The PSA was done through "MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership" and motivated by Obama's "My Brother's Keeper" initiative, which raises awareness and calls for action to ensure all youth — including young men of color — reach their full potential.

Curry is active in the Bay Area community.

After a recent visit to Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary in inner-city Oakland, Curry said: "The opportunity, obviously the 15-20 minutes you're with them, I think goes a long way. ... Just having fun with them is the most important. It was very beneficial."

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### **Stephen Curry, President Obama Star In Mentoring PSA**

By AJ Neuharth-Keusch

[USA Today](#), April 16, 2016

Approximately 15 minutes before the Golden State Warriors tipped off their first-round series against the Houston Rockets on Saturday afternoon, the NBA Countdown on ABC aired a public service announcement featuring Stephen Curry and President Obama.

It was far from the first meeting between the two, but it may have been the most important.

The PSA focused on the importance of mentoring, and challenged viewers to make an impact on the life of a young person by taking the initiative to become a mentor. It was aired as a part of MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership's "In Real Life" campaign, which goes hand-in-hand with President Obama's "My Brother's Keeper" initiative, which also focuses on the the influence that becoming a mentor can have on keeping children on the right track.

The entire post can be seen on the official Facebook page for the White House.

Follow AJ Neuharth-Keusch on Twitter @tweetAJNK

## **Obama, Steph Curry Star In PSA On Mentoring**

By Jessie Hellmann

[The Hill](#), April 16, 2016

President Obama appeared Saturday in a public service announcement with National Basketball Association MVP Steph Curry to highlight the importance of mentoring young children in their communities.

The PSA aired on NBA Countdown on ABC and is available on the White House's homepage.

Curry's Golden State Warriors celebrated a record-setting 73rd season win this week and are the favorites to repeat for the NBA title.

In January, MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership launched the "In Real Life" campaign as a response to Obama's "My Brother's Keeper" initiative, a call to action to address opportunity gaps facing young boys and men of color, according to White House officials.

Obama's "My Brother's Keeper" initiative has brought in celebrities including Nicki Minaj, Busta Rhymes, Common and Janelle Monae to discuss criminal justice reform in the U.S.

Administration sources say Obama's initiative coordinates investments between businesses, foundations and community groups to create support programs that keep young people out of the criminal justice system and improve access to high education.

Obama launched the program in 2014.

## **President Obama & Stephen Curry Team Up For New PSA Focused On Mentoring**

By Tomikka Anderson

[San Francisco Chronicle](#), April 16, 2016

Saturday a PSA premiered that features President Obama and Golden State Warriors Stephen Curry on the ABC pregame show NBA Countdown.

The PSA was created in support of The National Mentoring Partnership campaign "In Real Life," which President Obama and My Brother's Keeper launched this past January. The video showcases the true definition of mentorship as President Obama mentors Stephen Curry in his academics and even his jump shot.

The "In Real Life," campaign includes four videos that feature NBA players Carmelo Anthony, Al Horford, Karl-Anthony Towns, and Marcus Smart who share the impact mentorship can have on a young person's life.

For more information on the program or how you can become a mentor please visit [www.mentor.gov](http://www.mentor.gov).

## **President Obama Helps Curry Out With His Jumpshot In 'The Mentorship'**

By Nick Martin

[Washington Post](#), April 16, 2016

President Barack Obama and Golden State Warriors guard Steph Curry took a moment before the NBA playoffs to remind viewers of two things: Mentors play vital roles in the lives of young children and you should always keep your elbow tucked in when you go up for a shot.

The segment, entitled, "The Mentorship," aired on NBA Countdown on ABC Saturday afternoon, ahead of the first-round matchup between the Warriors and Houston Rockets. In the video, the duo made use of several humorous bits to reiterate the importance of community role models in the lives of young children, including a shot of Obama helping Curry with his revered jumpshot.

The public service announcement was completed via "MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership," and was further supported by Obama's "My Brother's Keeper" initiative. "My Brother's Keeper" is an initiative by Obama to ensure that all children, especially young males of color, have the opportunity to be mentored and guided by a responsible community role model.

The video opens with Obama leaning over the reigning NBA MVP's shoulder at a White House desk to go over annotations the President made to Curry's resumé. Obama suggests to the 28-year old that being an "incredible dancer" may not help him secure the right job and that clip art is probably not appropriate for his resumé.

The pair go on to play Connect Four — Obama wins and, once again, roasts Curry by imitating the star player's signature celebration hop. They also build and test a papier-maché volcano and read aloud from the President's 2006 book, "The Audacity of Hope." Obama is shown helping out the sharpshooter with his jumpshot, reminding him to keep his elbow tucked before Curry suggests that he should "shoot lefty," a nod to the Commander-in-Chief's southpaw approach on the court. It might be of note that Curry finished the 2015-16 regular season with 402 made 3-pointers, the most in NBA history.

This is not the first time Curry and the Obamas have paired up — just 11 days ago, Curry and his wife, Ayesha Curry, were shown dancing alongside First Lady Michelle Obama in celebration of turnips being planted in the Kitchen Garden. Judging by the fact that Curry is wearing the same suit and watch in the PSA that he is in the turnip video, it would appear as though both videos were filmed during the family's February White House visit.

## **Obama Teaches NBA All-star Stephen Curry How To Play Basketball**

By Seth Fiegerman

[Mashable](#), April 16, 2016

President Obama took some time out of his packed schedule to help an aspiring young basketball player improve his shooting form, and even spruce up his resume in case his dream of being a professional athlete doesn't pan out.

The young player, named Stephen Curry, also learned how to — wait, hold up. What?

Curry, an all-star player with the Golden State Warriors, joined Obama for a funny video showcasing the importance of mentorship in America.

In the clip, Obama trounces Curry in Connect Four, helps Curry build a volcano science experiment and teaches the basketball star one of the most important lessons of his career: never put clip art on your resume.

It's a reminder that even the greats can use a little mentoring — and should definitely take time to do a little mentoring, too.

## **Watch Obama Help Steph Curry With His Jump Shot, Destroy Him In Connect Four**

By Sam Levine

[Huffington Post](#), April 16, 2016

Steph Curry and the Golden State Warriors may have both had a record-breaking season, but that doesn't mean the NBA superstar isn't above getting a little help.

In a video released by the White House Saturday, Curry got a little assistance from President Barack Obama on his résumé, a science project and even his jump shot.

But even though he president seems like he'd be a pretty good mentor, he wasn't above showing off a little bit for Curry. After beating him in a game of Connect Four, he mimicked one of Curry's signature dance moves — something Obama has previously described as "clowning."

The video was released to encourage Americans to mentor young people as part of Obama's "My Brother's Keeper" initiative, an effort the White House launched in 2014 to prepare youth for college and the workplace.

## **Steph Curry, Obama Team Up For Mentoring PSA**

By Daniella Diaz

[CNN](#), April 16, 2016

Washington (CNN) Credit Steph Curry with an assist in President Barack Obama's call to mentor young people.

The President and the Golden State Warriors point guard appeared alongside each other in a public service announcement released Saturday that highlights the importance of mentoring a young person.

The video is part of campaign by Obama's My Brother's Keeper initiative and MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership called "In Real Life," which aims to increase opportunity for minority youths.

Stephen Curry joins Michelle Obama for #TurnipForWhat

In the video, Obama edits Curry's resume (which has basketball emojis in the header), beats him at Connect Four and then celebrates by "clowning" — Curry's teasing of his opponents on the court — and teaches him how to shoot a basket.

Curry is no stranger to the White House. The basketball star also helped with Michelle Obama's "Let's Move" campaign, joining the first lady with his wife, Ayesha Curry, holding turnips and dancing to the pop song "Turn Down for What" by DJ Snake and Lil Jon.

He also visited earlier this year with his team as 2015's NBA champions. Obama singled him out after he scored 51 points against the Washington Wizards during a game before the visit, saying he was a "pretty good shooter."

Obama teased Curry at the time for his on-court moves, saying, "For those of you who watched the game against the Wizards last night, it was, to use slang, he was 'clowning.' He was all jumping up and down."

## **Obama Likely To Sit Out Democratic Primary Altogether, White House Aides Say**

By Christi Parsons And Michael A. Memoli

[Los Angeles Times](#), April 16, 2016

President Obama is likely to sit out the entire presidential primary season amid concerns about the damage he could do by stepping too soon into a contentious Democratic contest running far longer than he expected.

Prominent fault lines have emerged in recent days in the Democratic race that threaten to permanently damage the party. But seeing no clear way for Obama to unify Democrats without alienating key voters, White House aides are gambling that the president will still have enough time to rally the party before the November general election even if both Democratic candidates stay in the race until the final primary votes are cast in June.

The risks are clear: If Obama jumped into the fray too early, he would jeopardize the loyalty of supporters of Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders. He also stands to be accused of acting in the interests of the establishment so deeply resented by large swaths of the electorate this campaign cycle. Both could cost votes in November.

But as both the party's leader and an outgoing president whose legacy relies so greatly on a Democratic successor, Obama must step in at some point if he is to prevent intraparty squabbling that can divide Democrats when unity is most crucial — amid a fiercely fought general election.

"As the leader of the party and as the incumbent two-term president who also happens to have among Democrats and independents the highest favorable and approval ratings

of any national elected official, unity is important,” said David Simas, the White House political director. “So that’s guided the way we’ve thought about this.”

Other Democratic leaders are largely lined up behind front-runner Hillary Clinton. She has the support of more than 450 super-delegates – elected officials and party bosses who can back the candidate of their choice – but Obama has, by tradition and practicality, stayed out of the race, not wanting to be seen as publicly influencing voters or trampling on the chances of lesser-known candidates, including Sanders, Clinton’s lone remaining rival.

While advisors won’t completely rule out a presidential endorsement in the primary, they say it is highly unlikely, at least until after the final primary votes are cast in June.

To be sure, Obama is working to help the party succeed in November even without endorsing. He raises money for party committees and has endorsed Democrats further down the ballot. Vice President Joe Biden has already begun campaigning with Democratic Senate hopefuls – even ones who are locked in competitive primaries with other Democrats.

Obama will also try to keep advancing policies that matter to Democratic voters, laying the foundation for an argument that the 2016 election is about moving forward on the course his administration has already set.

“We’re ready to put the president in action, whenever it’s the right time,” said another senior White House aide, demanding anonymity to discuss internal planning. “All of these things we can turn around very quickly when it’s needed.”

Even Democrats supportive of Clinton back Obama’s abstention. Letting the primary unfold on its own was “the wise choice,” said Rep. Xavier Becerra (D-Los Angeles), the chairman of the House Democratic Caucus.

Obama seems to sense “that there is an opportunity to reclaim the hearts and minds of the American people,” especially given the tenor of the Republican race, said Becerra, who joined Obama at a fundraiser last week in Los Angeles for congressional Democrats.

“When the window opens, we’ve got to be ready to jump,” he said. “He’s going to do everything he can to be ready to jump.”

No one in the White House wants to see an unsettled race into the party’s convention at the end of July in Philadelphia. Obama probably wouldn’t stay on the sidelines that long, according to advisors in on discussions with him.

Last week in Chicago, Obama expressed his confidence that Democrats would avoid the kind of scrapping that has defined the Republican Party recently, but also offered a gentle warning about the impulse to “cannibalize our own” for the sake of ideological purity.

“I don’t see that being where the Democrats go. But it’s always something that we have to pay attention to,” he said.

Democrats want time to make the case for their nominee and to put on a convention without distracting floor fights over delegates and super-delegates, but the presidential race has only become more rancorous in recent weeks, with Sanders and Clinton launching sharper shots at each other.

When Sanders said recently that he wasn’t sure she was qualified to be president, elected Democrats publicly complained. He then said in Thursday’s debate that while Clinton has the experience and intelligence to do the job, he still questions her judgment. That attack was another sign that he is not backing away from a vigorous campaign as Tuesday’s New York primary approaches.

The contest could be a pivotal moment in shaping the opinion of many Democrats about the race. A significant victory by Clinton – polls consistently show her ahead by double digits – could help cement a widespread view that her delegate lead is insurmountable. But a narrow outcome or even an unexpected Sanders win would buttress his argument for waging a vigorous campaign through California’s June 7 primary – and perhaps even to the convention floor.

But the vigor of Sanders’ campaign style lately suggests to observers in the White House that he may not be guided by the delegate count.

He may be more interested in keeping his ideas at the center of the conversation, a goal perhaps served by more time in the limelight – something a positive relationship with the president could offer.

“It’s our expectation that [Clinton and Sanders] are going to do what they need to do to bring their respective supporters together, and we will be there to help,” Simas said, citing as a model Obama’s and Clinton’s reconciliation in 2008 after a brutal primary.

“He comes to this with first of all a firsthand knowledge of what a hard-fought, closely contested primary looks like for president of the United States,” Simas said of Obama. “He’s been there.”

Clinton advisors claim no objections to Obama’s limited direct involvement thus far.

“He’s been doing what he needs to do as president, which is get his job approval rating up, and doing a great job,” said John Podesta, Clinton’s campaign chairman. When Obama has a chance to “intervene on specific things, like what Hillary brings to the table, the strength that she brings, the service that she rendered in his administration, he’s been fine.”

While Obama has remained officially neutral, he has at times weighed in on the race in ways that have been seen by some as a pre-endorsement of Clinton.

Obama has praised Sanders, too, though, and stopped well short of putting his stamp of approval on either.

“The president and vice president have been very fair to Bernie,” said Tad Devine, a top Sanders campaign strategist. “We understand that Secretary Clinton served in the administration. They know each other much better. But we don’t have any complaints about anything the president has said or done.”

Devine said that Sanders remaining in the race and continuing to draw new voters was good for the party and could benefit the nominee and down-ballot candidates in November.

“There are millions of people in states coming up – California’s the most conspicuous example of this – who have been part of our campaign,” he said. “We want to give those people a chance to vote now.”

“We think it’s best for everyone to allow this race to continue to the end. And then let’s see where we are,” he added.

Obama sees party unity as his duty, and aides say it is a “foundational” requirement to succeed in November. The 2012 election was the first in modern history in which both the Republican nominee and Democratic nominee received more than 90% of the vote among their respective party voters.

At the fundraiser in Los Angeles this month, Obama shared that he has often heard from Democrats questioning whether they will be as motivated in this election as they were for his two previous campaigns.

“And I say, I have no patience for that,” he said. “We cannot be complacent, and we cannot be cynical, because the stakes are too high.”

Staff writer Chris Megerian in New York contributed to this report.

## **U.S. Treasury Readies New Tax Rules As G20 Vows To Fight Evasion**

By David Lawder

[Reuters](#), April 16, 2016

Full-text stories from Reuters currently cannot be included in this document. You may, however, click the link above to access the story.

## **Poll: Americans Happy At Home, Upset With Federal Government**

By Tammy Webber And Emily Swanson

[Associated Press](#), April 16, 2016

CHICAGO (AP) – All that talk of an angry America?

An Associated Press-GfK poll finds that most Americans are happy with their friends and family, feel good about their finances and are more or less content at work. It’s government, particularly the federal government, that’s making them see red.

Almost 8 in 10 Americans say they’re dissatisfied or angry with the way the federal government is working, while

about the same proportion say they’re satisfied or enthusiastic about their personal lives. Republicans are far more likely to be angry – half of GOP voters, compared with about one-quarter of Democrats or independents – and those Republicans are much more supportive of Donald Trump, the front-runner for the party’s presidential nomination.

Still, anger isn’t so much driven by political ideology as it is by an overall disdain for a political system that doesn’t seem to be working, voters said in follow-up interviews. They’re upset with both parties, as well as career politicians and Washington insiders who, those surveyed said, don’t put their constituents’ interests first.

“There are too many lobbyists and people who are not really working for the people anymore. They’re working to line their own pockets,” said 37-year-old Greg Boire of Belding, Michigan, who works as a bank customer service representative and voted for Trump in that state’s Republican primary. “It happens on both sides. ... It’s just the whole government in general.”

John Santoro of San Jose, California, a 58-year-old market development manager for a company that makes semiconductor-related products, said he’s doing well financially but is angry about a lack of progress to lower the country’s debt.

He mostly blames President Barack Obama, but “politicians on both sides of the aisle are to blame because they just can’t get anything done. They just fundraise and get contributions from special interests.”

The AP-GfK poll showed that angry Republicans such as Boire and Santoro were much more likely than those who are just dissatisfied to have a favorable view of Trump, by 62 percent to 42 percent. Fifty-eight percent of dissatisfied Republicans, but just 36 percent of angry ones, have an unfavorable opinion of Trump.

Both men say they do support Trump – to a point. They believe he could shake up Washington, but worry about his rhetoric and lack of campaign organization.

Boire said he’s impressed that Trump is spending his own money and that what he says “is his opinion and not that of the lobbyists.” But Boire would be satisfied if the more politically experienced Texas Sen. Ted Cruz won the nomination because Trump “does not have the filter to shut off” negative comments.

Santoro said he might vote for Cruz in the California primary if Trump doesn’t “cinch things up” and run a more professional campaign.

Even so, Trump has harnessed anger toward the federal government to win many die-hard supporters, like 58-year-old Debra Waterson of Petoskey, Michigan. She supported Obama in 2008 and former Gov. Mitt Romney, R-Mass., four years ago.

She’s upset that the gun lobby has a strong influence in Washington and that the Senate won’t vote on Obama’s

nominee for Supreme Court. But she's even angrier about the economy and foreign trade deals, so she voted for Trump in the Republican primary.

"Up here in northern Michigan, there is so much unemployment and so many can't afford to eat or buy medicine," said Waterson, who said her family is getting by.

In the Democratic race against Hillary Clinton, Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders also has drawn support of voters who say they're fed up with the federal government.

Retired Miami postal worker Kenneth Olinsky, a Sanders supporter, said he's angry at Republicans in Congress for being "obstructionist" on legislation that could help working-class or low-income families.

"They haven't done anything for the people as much as they've done for the wealthy and for businesses," said Olinsky, 61. "There is a definite class system in this country; it's the haves against the have nots."

In the poll, people were slightly more likely to describe the economy as good than they were in February, 45 percent to 41 percent. Despite the current uptick, 54 percent describe the economy as poor.

Still, two-thirds or more of Democrats and Republicans say they're at least satisfied with their personal and family relationships, financial situations, careers, and work-life balance. Independents lag behind on each of those measures, but are still more likely than not to be satisfied with each.

But the vast majority of Americans – 71 percent – still think the country is headed in the wrong direction. Nearly half of Democrats, but less than 1 in 10 Republicans, think the country is headed in the right direction.

Christopher Ashby, 32, a stay-at-home dad in Albemarle, North Carolina, who describes himself as a very conservative Republican and firm Trump supporter, said he is angry about government handouts for people and corporations and the influence of lobbyists and special-interest groups.

"For everyone in politics at this moment, it's a career, and nobody is in this career to help the little person," said Ashby. "We need a complete whitewash of the system (because) politics should ... be something you do because you love helping the people."

The AP-GfK Poll of 1,076 adults was conducted online March 31-April 4, using a sample drawn from GfK's probability-based KnowledgePanel, which is designed to be representative of the U.S. population. The margin of sampling error for all respondents is plus or minus 3.3 percentage points.

Respondents were first selected randomly using telephone or mail survey methods and later interviewed online. People selected for KnowledgePanel who didn't have access to the Internet were provided access for free.

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Swanson reported from Washington.

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Online:

Poll results: <http://ap-gfkipoll.com>

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## **Poll: Americans Dissatisfied With Government**

By Jessie Hellmann

[The Hill](#), April 16, 2016

Almost eight in 10 Americans say they're dissatisfied or angry with the way the federal government is working, according to a new poll released Saturday.

Majorities of Americans told the Associated Press that they were satisfied with their personal lives and finances, but had sharp disdain for the political system.

In interviews, voters indicated anger with both parties, career politicians and Washington insiders.

Republicans are more likely to be actually angry with the government — half of GOP voters compared with about one-quarter of Democrats or independents, according to the AP-GfK poll.

These angry Republican voters are much more likely to have a favorable view of GOP presidential front-runner Donald Trump, compared to those who are just "dissatisfied" with the government, by 62 percent to 42 percent, the poll shows.

Fifty-eight percent of dissatisfied Republicans — compared to just 36 percent of angry ones — have an unfavorable opinion of Trump.

More than half of Americans, 71 percent, believe the country is heading in the wrong direction, while nearly half of Democrats, but less than one in 10 Republicans, think it is headed in the right direction.

The poll was conducted March 31-April 4 among 1,076 adults with a margin of error of 3.3 percent.

## **Inside Panama Papers: Multiple Clinton Connections**

By Anita Kumar

[McClatchy](#), April 16, 2016

Hillary Clinton recently blasted the hidden financial dealings exposed in the Panama Papers, but she and her husband have multiple connections with people who have used the besieged law firm Mossack Fonseca to establish offshore entities.



Among them are Gabrielle Fialkoff, finance director for Hillary Clinton's first campaign for the U.S. Senate; Frank Giustra, a Canadian mining magnate who has traveled the globe with Bill Clinton; the Chagoury family, which pledged \$1 billion in projects to the Clinton Global Initiative; and Chinese billionaire Ng Lap Seng, who was at the center of a Democratic fund-raising scandal when Bill Clinton was president. Also using the Panamanian law firm was the company founded by the late billionaire investor Marc Rich, an international fugitive when Bill Clinton pardoned him in the final hours of his presidency.

The ties are both recent and decades old, not surprising for the Democratic presidential front-runner and her husband, who have been in public life since the 1970s.

Each is listed in the massive leak of data from Mossack Fonseca, a law firm with expertise in registering offshore companies, which can have legitimate business purposes, but can also be used to evade taxes and launder money. Several heads of state were found in the leak, leading to the departure of the leader of Iceland and investigations in several other countries.

McClatchy Newspapers and about 350 other journalists working under the umbrella of the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists have searched an archive containing more than 11.5 million Mossack Fonseca documents, including passports, financial records and emails. After a series of articles earlier this month revealed how business owners and politicians used offshores, authorities raided the law firm's offices in Panama. The law firm has denied all accusations of wrongdoing.

Hillary Clinton condemned what she called "outrageous tax havens and loopholes that super-rich people across the world are exploiting."

"Now, some of this behavior is clearly against the law, and everyone who violates the law anywhere should be held accountable," she said, speaking at the AFL-CIO convention recently. "But it's also scandalous how much is actually legal."

The Clintons themselves do not appear to be in Mossack Fonseca's database, nor does it appear that their daughter, Chelsea, or her husband, Marc Mezvinsky, who co-founded a hedge fund, are listed. But Bill and Hillary Clinton's connections to people who have used offshores is fuel for her Democratic rival, Bernie Sanders.

Clinton has struggled throughout her campaign to show that she can relate to working Americans, while Sanders has cast her as a wealthy out-of-touch Washington insider who has accepted hefty paychecks for speeches and received millions of dollars in campaign contributions from those tied to big businesses. Her connection to the Panama Papers, even if indirect, could magnify that perception.

Lee Miringoff, director of the Marist Institute for Public Opinion in New York, said it would draw voters' attention

once again to Clinton's ties to big money. "It certainly would play into Sanders' narrative," he said.

Sanders said Clinton's support of a free-trade agreement between the U.S. and Panama – one that he claims has allowed the wealthy to avoid paying taxes – should disqualify her from being the Democratic nominee for president.

"I don't think you are qualified if you supported the Panama free trade agreement, something I very strongly opposed, which has made it easier for wealthy people and corporations all over the world to avoid paying taxes owed to their countries," Sanders said recently.

To be sure, a long life in politics has allowed the Clintons to accumulate relationships to wealthy people and businesses across the globe.

One such connection is to Jean-Raymond Boule, a one-time diamond miner from the volcanic island nation of Mauritius whose company was once based in Bill Clinton's hometown of Hope, Ark. In the mid 1990s, Boule was listed as a director of Auk Limited, a British Virgin Islands offshore company, and Gridco Limited, a Bahamas offshore company.

After two meetings with Boule, Bill Clinton, then-governor of Arkansas, signed legislation allowing his company to engage in exploratory mining in the state. Later, Boule and his wife attended Clinton's first inauguration. Boule's company did not respond to a message.

"Obviously there's no wrongdoing – it's a question of perception and values," said Meredith McGehee, policy director at the Campaign Legal Center, a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization. "They've been in public life so long; when you enter that sphere you have these connections."

Clinton campaign spokesman Brian Fallon declined to answer specific questions about her connections but referred to Clinton's earlier comments that criticized the behavior last week. Bill Clinton's office and the Clinton Foundation declined to comment.

Also among the Clinton connections is Fialkoff, now a senior adviser to New York Mayor Bill de Blasio and director of the city's Office of Strategic Partnerships. She, her brother, Brett, and her late father, Frank, are listed as shareholders of UPAC Holdings Ltd, a British Virgin Islands offshore company incorporated in June 2012.

Gabrielle Fialkoff said in an email that she has "no knowledge" of the company and referred questions to her brother.

Brett Fialkoff, who serves as chief operating officer at his family's business, Haskell Jewels, a New York-based designer, marketer and distributor of costume jewelry, initially told McClatchy he didn't know why his family would be in the documents. Later, he said that someone must have opened an account in their names.

Still, later, he said he set up an offshore company to export accessories from China to the United States. The

documents indicate the company's files are registered in Beijing.

But, he said, he abandoned the new business to give more attention to his family's jewelry company. He said there's no money in any bank account overseas and declined to provide details about his compliance with U.S. tax laws.

"I have news for you: There is no money," he said in a phone interview. "We're not like Vladimir Putin, trying to hide money."

The most recent Mossack Fonseca information of December 2015 shows the company remains active, registered on behalf of the Fialkoffs in the British Virgin Islands by a Hong Kong-based consulting company on June 6, 2012. Brett Failkoff acknowledged the company is still "legally alive" but said it does not – nor has it ever – conducted any business.

Gabrielle Fialkoff, a longtime friend of de Blasio, was finance director for Clinton's 2000 Senate campaign, which de Blasio managed. After serving as Haskell's president and chief operating officer, she chaired de Blasio's inauguration and led New York's unsuccessful bid to host the Democratic National Convention in 2016.

She has been a regular donor to Democratic candidates, including Clinton, according to the Center for Responsive Politics, which tracks money in politics. She also donated between \$250 and \$1,000 to the Clinton Foundation. Her father donated to Clinton as well. Her brother contributed money to Republicans, including presidential candidates Ben Carson and Rand Paul.

Another connection is Giustra, the director of UrAsia Energy Ltd, a British Virgin Islands offshore company registered in May 2005.

The company wanted to "conduct uranium exploration, development, production and marketing operations and related activities in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan," according to a draft of the shareholders' agreement.

UrAsia, based in British Columbia, Canada, finalized a deal in September 2005 to buy uranium mines for \$500 million in Kazakhstan, according to published reports.

The deal came after Giustra joined Bill Clinton in Kazakhstan for the launch of a Clinton Foundation health initiative and dined with him and Kazakhstan's president, among others. The timing prompted questions about whether Bill Clinton played any role in the agreement. Giustra denied that, saying it came after months of negotiations.

The following year, Giustra, who is also involved in filmmaking and founded Lionsgate Entertainment, made a donation of more than \$30 million to the Clinton Foundation, according to published reports.

In total, Giustra has committed \$100 million to the foundation, according to at least one report, though foundation records don't give an exact amount, saying only that he is one of the largest individual donors giving more

than \$25 million. In 2007, he started an affiliated charity that bears his name and initially kept its donors secret despite a 2008 agreement between the Clintons and the Obama administration to make public foundation contributors.

Bill Clinton has flown around the globe on Giustra's plane, sometimes with him, including to Kazakhstan.

Messages left for Giustra on his cell phone and by email and at several of his companies were not returned.

Former fugitive billionaire Marc Rich's name doesn't appear in the Panama Papers, but his company does. The Bahamas offshore Industrial Petroleum Limited was registered in 1992, established by the commodities firm Glencore International in Switzerland, inactivated in 2001.

The allegations against Rich, who died in 2013, ranged from tax evasion to trading with Iran despite bans to selling oil to South Africa's apartheid government. He fled to Switzerland in 1983, but before the pardon, his ex-wife Denise made a \$450,000 donation to Clinton's presidential library in Little Rock.

Rich's business partners appear in the data too. And they also give generously to the Clinton Foundation.

Sergei Kurzin, a Russian engineer and investor, appears in a draft shareholders agreement in partnership with Giustra in the British Virgin Islands offshore UrAsia Energy Ltd. Kurzin worked closely with Rich in the 1990s looking for opportunities in the former Soviet Union when it was opened to mining and oil investment.

Kurzin, who has given the Clinton Foundation between \$50,000 and \$100,000, appears in the Panama Papers as the director and chairman of various oil companies. Kurzin was also a partner in the uranium deal involving Giustra.

In a 2009 interview with Forbes, the British-Russian dual citizen boasted of giving generously to a Clinton-Giustra initiative, noting: "I wrote a check for a million dollars. I don't think you can call it a small amount."

Messages left for Kurzin were not returned this weekend.

Also in the Panama Papers is Ronald Chagoury, who along with brother Gilbert leads the Chagoury Group, a Nigerian family-run construction business. The brothers were associated with Nigerian dictator Sani Abacha, who died in 1998, and did business with Glencore and Rich, according to news reports.

Ronald Chagoury appears in the Panama Papers as the main shareholder of Echo Art Ltd. in the British Virgin Islands.

In 2009, the Chagoury Group pledged \$1 billion in coastal erosion projects to the Clinton Global Initiative, an offshoot of the foundation, according to the initiative's website.

The Chagoury Group is building Eko Atlantic, a peninsula city adjacent to Lagos that will be reclaimed from the Atlantic Ocean. The company's website cites the Clinton

Global Initiative's praise for it as an "environmentally conscious city" under construction.

Gilbert Chagoury's ties to the Clintons stretch back years. He has given to Bill and Hillary Clinton's campaigns and has donated between \$1 million to \$5 million to Clinton Foundation, foundation records show. In 2003 he organized a trip to the Caribbean where Bill Clinton was paid \$100,000 for a speech.

Messages left for the Chagourys were not returned this weekend.

Another businessman in the Panama papers, Ng, is listed as a shareholder of two British Virgin Islands companies – South South News International Group Ltd in May 2010 and GOLUCK Ltd. in 2004.

He leads a real estate development company in Macau, China, and is one of the world's wealthiest people. He was accused in 1996 of sending more than \$1.1 million to a Little Rock restaurant owner who then contributed hundreds of thousands of dollars to the Democratic National Committee, according to a 1998 Senate committee investigation.

The restaurant owner, Charlie Trie, pleaded guilty to violating campaign finance laws. Ng was not charged. Another congressional report criticized Ng and others for failing to cooperate during the investigation.

Published reports say Ng visited the White House 10 times from 1994 to 1996, had his photograph taken with Bill and Hillary Clinton, sat beside Bill Clinton at an event at a Washington hotel, and rode in an elevator with Hillary Clinton.

Last year, Ng was charged with bribing a United Nations official and lying about what he was doing with \$4.5 million in cash he brought into the U.S. over two years. Investigators say instead of spending it at casinos or on art, antiques or real estate, he used the money for bribes as he sought investments in Antigua and China. Another man listed in the same criminal complaint is president of the New York-based South South News, the same name of the British Virgin Islands company.

Ng's lawyer, Kevin Tung, has said that his charges are based on a misunderstanding. Tung, Benjamin Brafman and Hugh Mo, two others who are or have represented Ng, did not respond to requests for comment.

Editors: story can end here

In 2011, Sanders predicted in a Senate speech that the Panama trade deal would make it easier for the wealthy to hide their cash in Panama.

"I wish I had been proven wrong about this, but it has now come to light that the extent of Panama's tax avoidance scams is even worse than I had feared," he said in a statement earlier this month.

Hillary Clinton had opposed the deal in 2008 when she was running for president. But later, as secretary of state, she helped push the agreement through Congress. Her

supporters, however, say that the trade pact did not open the door to additional tax evasion.

A Democrat-controlled Senate approved the trade deal. In October 2012, then-Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus, D-Mont., lauded the deal's "strong language to crack down on tax evasion and money-laundering in Panama."

Both Clinton and Sanders have vowed to go after Americans who try to hide their wealth.

Clinton said she would shut down what she called the private tax system for the wealthy while Sanders has said he would end the trade deal with Panama within six months and investigate U.S. banks, corporations and individuals stashing their cash in Panama to avoid taxes.

"We're going after all these scams and make sure that everyone pays their fair share here in America," she said. "I'm going to hold them accountable, and we're going to have a special effort to track all these resources wherever they might lead."

Vera Bergengruen, Anna Douglas, Michael Doyle, Greg Gordon and Franco Ordonez in Washington contributed.

## **Pope: Sanders Encounter Sign Of Good Manners, 'Nothing More'**

By Ken Thomas

[Associated Press](#), April 16, 2016

ROME (AP) – Pope Francis said his brief encounter Saturday with U.S. presidential candidate Bernie Sanders was a sign of good manners, "nothing more," and hardly evidence of interfering in American politics.

The White House hopeful called it a "real honor" to meet "one of the extraordinary figures" in the world, a kindred spirit on economic inequality, which is a main Sanders' campaign theme.

Francis was on his way to Greece to highlight the plight of refugees and Sanders was wrapping up his trip to Rome when they met in the lobby of the pope's residence, the Domus Santa Marta hotel in the Vatican gardens. The Vermont senator had attended a Vatican conference Friday on economic inequality and climate change, and flew back to New York for campaign events on Saturday.

"This morning when I left, Sen. Sanders was there. ... He knew I was leaving at that time and I had the kindness to greet him and his wife and another couple who were with them," the pope told reporters traveling back with him to the Vatican.

"When I came down, I greeted them, shook their hands and nothing more. This is good manners. It's called good manners and not getting mixed up in politics. If anyone thinks that greeting someone means getting involved in politics, they should see a psychiatrist," the pope said.

Earlier, Sanders said in an The Associated Press interview that he told the pope that he appreciated the message that Francis was sending the world about the need to inject morality and justice into the world economy. Sanders said that was a message he, too, has tried to convey.

“We had an opportunity to meet with him this morning,” Sanders said. “It was a real honor for me, for my wife and I to spend some time with him. I think he is one of the extraordinary figures not only in the world today but in modern world history.”

Sanders said he had the chance to tell the pope that “I was incredibly appreciative of the incredible role that he is playing in this planet in discussing issues about the need for an economy based on morality, not greed.”

Sanders and his wife, Jane, stayed overnight at the hotel, on the same floor as the pope. Francis noted to reporters that members of the Vatican conference that Sanders had attended also were staying at the hotel.

Jeffrey Sachs, a Sanders foreign policy adviser, said there were no photographs taken of the pope and Sanders together. Sanders’ spokesman, Michael Briggs, said Francis was “100 percent correct that this was not a political meeting,” thanking the pope’s staff making the arrangements. He said Sanders and his wife “were advised the night before to be ready to meet the pope at 6 a.m.”

The Vatican is loath to get involved in electoral campaigns, and usually tries to avoid any perception of partisanship as far as the pope is concerned, although Francis in February rebuked Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump over Trump’s stand on immigration.

Popes rarely travel to countries during the thick of political campaigns, knowing a papal photo opportunity with the sitting head of state can be exploited for political ends.

But Francis has been known to flout Vatican protocol, and the meeting with Sanders was evidence that his personal desires often trump Vatican diplomacy.

“His message is resonating with every religion on earth with people who have no religion and it is a message that says we have got to inject morality and justice into the global economy,” Sanders said.

Sanders said the meeting should not be viewed as the pope injecting himself into the campaign.

“The issues that I talked about yesterday at the conference, as you well know, are issues that I have been talking about not just throughout this campaign but throughout my political life,” Sanders said in the interview. “And I am just very much appreciated the fact that the pope in many ways has been raising these issues in a global way in the sense that I have been trying to raise them in the United States.”

Sachs said Sanders saw the pope in the foyer of the domus, and that the encounter lasted about five minutes. Sanders later joined his family, including some of his

grandchildren, for a walking tour of St. Peter’s Basilica, one of the holiest Catholic shrines.

The trip gave Sanders a moment on the world stage, putting him alongside priests, bishops, academics and two South American presidents at the Vatican conference.

Sanders has been at a disadvantage during his campaign against rival Hillary Clinton, President Barack Obama’s former secretary of state, on issues of foreign policy. But Sanders was peppered with questions from academics and ecclesiastics during Vatican conference in a manner that might have been afforded a head of state.

The invitation to Sanders to address that session raised eyebrows when it was announced and touched off allegations that the senator lobbied for the invitation.

But the chancellor for the pontifical academy, Bishop Marcelo Sanchez Sorondo, said he invited Sanders because he was the only U.S. presidential candidate who showed deep interest in the teachings of Francis.

Once back home, Sanders was set to refocus on Tuesday’s pivotal presidential contest in New York, a state with a significant number of Catholic voters. Clinton holds a lead among the delegates who will determine the Democratic nominee, and Sanders is trying to string together a series of victories in upcoming contests to draw closer.

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Associated Press writer Nicole Winfield in Vatican City contributed to this report.

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## **Bernie Sanders Met With Pope Francis, Campaign Says**

By Yamiche Alcindor

[New York Times](#), April 16, 2016

Senator Bernie Sanders, the Democratic presidential candidate, met briefly with Pope Francis at the Vatican on Saturday morning before the pontiff’s trip to Greece, a spokesman for the senator’s campaign said.

“The senator and the pope met this morning as the pope was departing for Greece — the goal is to highlight the refugee crisis that affects this part of the world, and all over the world. They talked about that,” said the spokesman, Michael Briggs.

The meeting lasted about five minutes, said the economist Jeffrey D. Sachs, an adviser to the Sanders campaign who said he had been present. Mr. Sachs said the pope had thanked Mr. Sanders, who arrived Friday at the

Vatican for a conference on social and economic issues, “for coming to the meeting and for coming to speak about the moral economy.”

The senator’s wife, Jane Sanders, and Msgr. Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo, who organized the conference, were also present at the brief meeting, Mr. Sachs said. Mr. Briggs said no photos were taken, in accordance with rules at the Casa Santa Marta, the Vatican City guesthouse where the meeting took place and Francis lives.

The Vermont senator had hoped to meet with the pope during his short trip to Rome, for which he interrupted his campaigning for the New York primary on Tuesday. But as recently as Friday it appeared unlikely to happen, after the pope sent a note saying he would not be able to attend the conference because of his trip to the Greek island of Lesbos.

Mr. Sanders confirmed in an interview with The Associated Press that the meeting had taken place. “It was a real honor for me, for my wife and I to spend some time with him,” he said. “I think he is one of the extraordinary figures not only in the world today but in modern world history.”

Politically, a trip to Rome without a meeting with Francis would have been a blunder, Costas Panagopoulos, a political science professor at Fordham University who is currently teaching at Yale, had said Friday. “The point is to make sure you are going to get an audience with the pope,” he said. “Anything short of an actual visit will probably be a mistake.”

Mr. Sachs, who spoke with a Reuters reporter as journalists traveling with the pope in Greece listened on a speaker phone, said the meeting was “absolutely not political.”

“This is a senator who for decades has been speaking about the moral economy,” he said of Mr. Sanders.

## **Italian Media: Sanders Met Privately With Pope Francis**

By Anne Gearan

[Washington Post](#), April 16, 2016

ROME — U.S. Democratic presidential candidate Sen. Bernie Sanders met privately with Pope Francis during his overnight trip here, Italian media reported Saturday.

The meeting took place Friday night at the pope’s residence, the newspaper La Stampa reported, citing Vatican sources.

The Sanders campaign has not confirmed a meeting and has been vague about the senator’s itinerary here following his address Friday to a Vatican conference.

Sanders spokesman Michael Briggs did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the Italian news reports.

The Vatican press office also has not confirmed a meeting. Francis left Rome on Saturday for Greece, where he is visiting migrants stuck on the island of Lesbos.

The reticence about a Sanders meeting may be an attempt to avoid the perception that Francis is endorsing Sanders or otherwise involving himself in American politics.

Sanders was invited to address a Vatican seminar on income inequality and economic justice, and took an unusual break from the Democratic primary campaign trail to attend. He had said in a Washington Post interview last week that he admired Francis and hoped to meet him, but that nothing was set.

Sanders quotes Francis frequently in his address to the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, and told reporters afterward that the pope has had enormous influence in airing issues of wealth disparity and climate change.

## **Bernie Sanders Interrupts Campaign For Trip To Vatican And Manages To Meet Pope Francis**

By Tom Kington

[Los Angeles Times](#), April 16, 2016

Bernie Sanders railed against the inequalities of capitalism at a Vatican conference Friday during an unusual, lightning visit to Rome, days before the crucial New York presidential primary.

Pope Francis did not plan on meeting with Sanders, and news outlets including the Los Angeles Times reported Friday that he did not.

But on Saturday, Sanders told the Associated Press that he met Francis for about five minutes early that morning as the pope was leaving for a visit to Greece to address Europe’s refugee crisis.

Sanders and his wife were staying at the Casa Santa Marta, the Vatican guest house where the pope lives.

Although polls show Sanders trails rival Hillary Clinton in New York, which votes Tuesday, the Democratic senator from Vermont interrupted his insurgent campaign to cross the Atlantic to emphasize the same economic critique that has propelled his candidacy all year at home.

Denouncing a U.S. political system where “billionaires can buy elections,” Sanders told the conference that “speculation, illicit financial flows, environmental destruction, and the weakening of the rights of workers is far more severe than it was a quarter century ago.”

Addressing a small group in a frescoed villa in the Vatican’s manicured gardens, Sanders added, “In the year 2016, the top 1% of the people on this planet own more wealth than the bottom 99%.”

Sanders said, “Widespread financial criminality on Wall Street played a direct role in causing the world’s worst financial crisis since the Great Depression.”

Addressing delegates who included the presidents of Ecuador and Bolivia, Sanders added, “In my country, home of the world’s largest financial markets, globalization was used

as a pretext to deregulate the banks, ending decades of legal protections for working people and small businesses. Politicians joined hands with the leading bankers to allow the banks to become 'too big to fail.'"

Sanders arrived at Friday lunchtime with his wife and 10 family members, including four grandchildren. The conference commemorated the 25th anniversary of a teaching document by Pope John Paul II on social and economic justice at the end of the Cold War.

As Sanders entered the hall, a note sent by Pope Francis was read out in which the pontiff apologized for his absence, explaining he was preparing to visit the Greek island of Lesbos on Saturday, where he will visit a Syrian refugee camp.

"As you know, I had envisaged coming today, around 7 p.m., to greet the participants of the workshop," he wrote. "Yesterday I realized that today was going to be very complicated because of my trip to Lesbos."

He added, "Today I confirm this situation and would like to apologize for not being able to attend."

Sanders told Italian newspaper La Repubblica on Friday he was a "huge supporter" of the pope, even if he disagreed with Francis' opposition to same-sex marriage.

Sanders denied that he believed his invitation to the Vatican gave his campaign papal backing. Sanders aides have denied the trip was aimed at appealing to Catholic voters in New York.

The pope may have shunned a formal meeting with Sanders to avoid another plunge into this year's U.S. presidential campaign.

In February, Donald Trump called Pope Francis "disgraceful" after the pontiff suggested the Republican front-runner was "not a Christian" for his plan to build a wall along the Mexican border.

Left-wing Bolivian President Evo Morales did meet with the pope on Friday morning, raising eyebrows by handing him a book on the health benefits of chewing cocoa leaves.

Sanders has said he insisted on jumping off the campaign trail for 24 hours because of his fondness for Francis' critique of unbridled capitalism, which the pope has defined as the "dung of the devil."

After warning in 2013 that uncontrolled economies "kill," Francis has claimed that poor countries should not be forced to provide cheap labor for the rich West, prompting conservative commentator Rush Limbaugh to describe his views as "pure Marxism."

Sanders referred frequently to Francis' own stand against inequality in his speech, suggesting they shared a common cause.

"As Pope Francis has stated: 'Man is not in charge today, money is in charge, money rules,'" he said. "And the pope has also stated: 'We have created new idols. The worship of the golden calf of old has found a new and

heartless image in the cult of money and the dictatorship of an economy which is faceless and lacking any truly humane goal.'"

Sanders added that Francis has "called upon financial executives and political leaders to pursue financial reform that is informed by ethical considerations. He stated plainly and powerfully that the role of wealth and resources in a moral economy must be that of servant, not master."

Rather than giving in to the status quo, Sanders said Pope Francis was an example of someone fighting back.

"Pope Francis himself is surely the world's greatest demonstration against such a surrender to despair and cynicism," he said. "He has opened the eyes of the world once again to the claims of mercy, justice and the possibilities of a better world. He is inspiring the world to find a new global consensus for our common home."

## **Bernie Sanders Meets With Pope Francis During Vatican Visit**

By Chiara Albanese

[Bloomberg News](#), April 16, 2016

Bernie Sanders met briefly with Pope Francis at the Vatican Saturday before the pontiff left for a one-day visit to Greece and the Democratic presidential candidate returned to the campaign trail, days before a crucial vote in New York.

Francis, Sanders and his wife Jane met for about five minutes, a Vatican official confirmed via text message. The meeting took place in the reception area of the St. Martha hotel for visiting clergy and other guests, where Pope Francis resides, the official said.

The Vermont senator later told reporters he was honored to be received by the pope and appreciated Francis's message about the need to inject morality and justice into the world economy.

"I conveyed to him my great admiration for the extraordinary work that he is doing all over the world in demanding that morality be part of our economy," Sanders said during his flight back to New York from Rome, according to the New York Times.

Sanders and several family members headed to Rome, where he had a speaking slot at a Vatican conference on social and economic issues, after a raucous debate Thursday night with Hillary Clinton, with whom he's vying for the Democratic presidential nomination.

During his short speech on Friday, Sanders targeted "financial criminality" on Wall Street and quoted Francis's denunciation of the "worship of the golden calf."

As recently as Friday it seemed that Sanders would not manage to secure a meeting with Pope Francis, one of the most admired people in the world. Saturday's encounter also was short of a private audience with the leader of the world's 1.25 billion Catholics.

The trip came as Sanders trails Clinton in delegate-rich New York state. Recent opinion polls show Clinton ahead by 14 points, 53 percent to 39 percent, according to an average compiled by RealClearPolitics.

Sanders had said the detour to Vatican City was not political, although an association with the popular pontiff could theoretically help the Democratic insurgent boost support among New York's Latino voters.

## **Cruz Wins All 14 Wyoming Republican Delegates**

By Ben Neary

[Associated Press](#), April 16, 2016

CHEYENNE, Wyo. (AP) – Ted Cruz has nailed down all 14 Wyoming Republican delegates up for grabs at the state party convention Saturday, leaving Donald Trump facing yet another loss in a string of defeats in Western states.

Saturday's sweep follows Cruz's victory last month in Wyoming, when he scored 9 of 12 available delegates at county conventions.

Trump and Marco Rubio each won one delegate last month in Wyoming while one remained undecided.

Cruz was the only candidate to address the convention crowd in Casper on Saturday, promising to end what he called President Barack Obama's "war on coal" if he's elected. Cruz ran a well-organized campaign in the state.

Trump still leads the overall delegate race. The AP delegate count: Trump 744; Cruz 559; and Kasich 144. Needed to win: 1,237.

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## **Cruz Wins Wyoming Delegates In Weekend Convention Rout**

By David Weigel And Antonio Olivo

[Washington Post](#), April 16, 2016

CASPER, Wyo. — Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Tex.) continued his romp through the Republican Party's state conventions on Saturday, winning 14 delegates in Wyoming to complete a near-sweep of the state. At the same time, in conventions in Virginia, Georgia and South Carolina, Cruz-friendly activists won delegate slots in congressional districts that had voted for someone else in the primary.

The events capped off three remarkable weeks for Cruz in the sort of cloistered party meetings where grass-roots organizers can dominate. Cruz, the only Republican candidate to campaign in Wyoming, told delegates here that their votes could help him win "a battle in Cleveland," where the party may host its first contested convention in 40 years.

"If you don't want the convention in Cleveland to hand the election to Hillary Clinton — which is what a Donald

Trump nomination does — I ask you to support this slate," Cruz said.

These conventions came after Trump had spent much of the week panning Colorado for using a similar system to award 34 total delegates. As in Wyoming, activists had gathered at little-hyped local conventions, won places at the state convention, then voted for the national delegates — all while giving Cruz nine of the Wyoming delegates available in March 1's county caucuses.

The front-runner complained that the contest had been "rigged" against him, a charge that Colorado Republican leaders strongly denied, noting that they'd been using the same system since the 2004 presidential elections.

"Look at what happened in Wyoming," Trump told supporters in Syracuse, N.Y., while 475 Republicans in Casper's Parkway Plaza convention center were marking their ballots. "Look at what's happening in Colorado, where the people never got a chance to vote and they're going nuts out there. They're angry — the bosses took away their vote."

Trump's campaign was late to realize the importance of the state conventions, much less the local contests that determined who could vote at them. In Wyoming, that effectively meant that Trump's supporters were arriving at a marathon where Cruz had already run the first 25 miles.

On Thursday, Sarah Palin canceled a planned trip to speak on Trump's behalf in Casper. On Friday night, Palin called a pro-Trump delegate candidate, Clara Powers, and encouraged her to take the slot. She did so, getting a polite reception and closing with a poem about how the party establishment would try to steal the vote in Cleveland.

"We know how Wyoming is going to go," Trump senior advisor Paul Manafort conceded in an interview before the vote.

Manafort said that the Cruz campaign's success in winning delegate assignments "confuses the issue" of Trump's overall lead in the GOP nomination race. "There are places where we're going to make up for what we're losing — in terms of bodies, not votes," Manafort said.

It was a different story in Virginia's 10th Congressional district. Both the Cruz and Trump camps ran slates of national delegate candidates who pledged their support on the second vote in Cleveland. While the district had voted for Sen. Marco Rubio, the Florida Republican's subsequent collapse left the convention open to conservative activists and reluctant anti-Trump voters, disappointed in the choices they had left.

William E. Wilkin, a history teacher at the high school that was hosting the convention, voiced the frustration of many Republicans who've watched their candidates fall one by one during a nasty primary season.

His allegiances have shifted from Carly Fiorina to Rubio to, now, Cruz, Wilkin said during his campaign speech as a national delegate.

But he wasn't hopeful about the looming show down in July.

"Frankly, ladies and gentlemen, Cleveland will be a train wreck," Wilkin said, eliciting jeers from the crowd.

Wilkin missed out on a delegate slot, while Cruz endorser and state Sen. Richard H. Black (R-Loudoun) won. Black, who has a formidable political operation in Loudoun County, also worked to ensure the conference was stacked with Cruz supporters. An ultra-conservative who is often at odds with the state Republican Party establishment, Black marveled at the level of enthusiasm for Trump or Cruz in a congressional district that Rubio won handily during the state's primary election in March.

"If there's anyone that the RNC would like to see lose, it would be Ted Cruz or Donald Trump," Black said. "I'm sure there are members of the establishment that would want something to happen to either one of these candidates along the way."

In South Carolina's 1st District, carried narrowly by Trump in February's primary, Cruz supporters won three delegate slots. In Georgia, early results from the state's 14 congressional districts showed that Cruz had succeeded in picking up delegates in corners of the state that Trump won in the primary. Across the state, Republicans began meeting at 10 a.m. and some gatherings stretched until mid-afternoon as Trump and Cruz supporters clashed over the credentials of people seeking delegate seats.

Georgia's 11th Congressional District perhaps best embodied Trump's struggles on Saturday. He won the district with 35 percent of the vote, so he will get two of the district's votes in the first round of balloting at the convention and Rubio will get the other. But two Cruz supporters — his Georgia chairman, Scott Johnson, and former congressman Robert Barr — won two of the three delegate slots.

In the first round of balloting in Cleveland, Georgia Republicans will cast 42 votes for Trump, 18 for Cruz and 16 for Rubio, who has exited the race. If there are subsequent rounds, Cruz supporters required to vote for Trump could switch to the senator from Texas.

In Wyoming, Trump's local operation was clearly outmatched, even though a number of attendees said they supported him. Six Trump supporters ran for delegate slots, but Our Principles PAC, the best-funded anti-Trump group, piled a table with more anti-Trump brochures than there were voters who could read them. As they navigated the halls, some Republicans could be heard grouching that the "fake" Trump literature was more plentiful than the actual Trump merchandise sitting near Cruz's hospitality suite.

From that suite, Cruz's state chairman, Ed Buchanan, had a hard-win and pleasant task: Making sure just 14 of the many Cruz-supporting Democrats won the delegate slots. The campaign distributed an 8-by-11 sheet with Cruz's image and the names of its preferred 14 delegates. Later in the day,

the conservative Gun Owners for America released another brochure, with the same slate. The Cruz slate's main competition came from pro-life groups and an unaligned "Wyoming first" push, which proposed their own slates, not necessarily bound to anyone. In the end, 12 members of Cruz's official slate prevailed, and the remaining two delegates separately pledged to support the senator from Texas, according to Buchanan.

The third remaining Republican candidate for president, Ohio Gov. John Kasich, put up only token efforts in Wyoming in Virginia. In Casper, his campaign was represented by Gov. Butch Otter (R-Idaho), an early endorser, who spent more time talking about the needs of Western states than about Kasich himself. Cruz and Kasich had staffers monitoring the slow Wyoming vote count; Kasich did not.

But midday Saturday, his campaign announced via Twitter that it had won a plurality of delegates assigned by Indiana's state convention — an even more opaque process, closed to the news media. "Our team outthusted the other campaigns," Kasich tweeted.

## **Ted Cruz Wins All Delegates Up For Grabs At Wyoming Convention**

**Texas senator gains 14 delegates; Donald Trump complains about system**

By Patrick O'Connor

[Wall Street Journal](#), April 16, 2016

Full-text stories from the Wall Street Journal are available to Journal subscribers by clicking the link.

## **Cruz Sweeps Wyoming GOP Convention**

By Harper Neidig

[The Hill](#), April 16, 2016

Republican presidential candidate Ted Cruz swept Wyoming's remaining 14 delegates at Saturday's state convention.

The Texas senator now holds a total of 23 of Wyoming's 26 delegates after the county conventions last month, which awarded just one delegate to Donald Trump and one to Marco Rubio. The remaining delegate has not pledged support for any candidate.

The strong showing comes just a week after Cruz cleaned up at Colorado's state convention, ultimately claiming all 34 of the state's delegates.

"We had a tremendous show of grassroots support that resulted in a critical victory at today's Wyoming Republican Convention. The victory continues a momentum shift that started in Utah and carried through Wisconsin, North Dakota and Colorado. Grassroots are rising up," Cruz said in a statement after his win was announced.

Cruz gave a speech at the Wyoming convention on Saturday that sought to paint himself as the only alternative to



Trump and the best chance to defeat Democratic front-runner Hillary Clinton in a general election.

Twelve of the winning delegates at the convention were from Cruz's official slate.

Trump on Saturday was focusing his efforts on his home state of New York, which he is expected to win by a large margin. Trump supporter Sarah Palin was scheduled to speak in Wyoming on his behalf but canceled just a few days before the convention.

## **Ted Cruz Poised To Win Wyoming Republican Presidential Primary Contest**

By Ginger Gibson

[Reuters](#), April 16, 2016

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## **Cruz Sweeps Wyoming Delegates**

By Kristen East

[Politico](#), April 16, 2016

In a repeat of last week's events in Colorado, Ted Cruz swept all of the remaining delegates in Wyoming during the state's Republican convention on Saturday.

The Texas senator won all 14 of the delegates available. He was the only candidate to show up in Wyoming.

Former Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin was expected to attend the convention as a surrogate for Donald Trump, whom she supports, but abruptly canceled earlier in the week.

## **Updated: Cruz Wins Most Of Wyoming's Delegates**

By Laura Hancock

[Casper \(WY\) Star-Tribune](#), April 16, 2016

Updated: Cruz wins most of Wyoming's delegates

GOP presidential hopeful Ted Cruz said Saturday his policies will restore coal jobs in Wyoming and help Western states claim public lands — words that resonated with Wyoming Republicans, who overwhelmingly chose delegates supporting the U.S. senator from Texas.

Cruz picked up all 14 of the state's delegates who were up for grabs Saturday at the State GOP Convention at the Parkway Plaza in Casper. The Wyoming Republican Party's presidential selection process involves several steps, but after Saturday's vote, Cruz had ultimately garnered at least 24 of the state's 29 delegates.

To win the GOP presidential nomination, a candidate needs 1,237 delegates nationally.

The GOP convention featured hundreds of Republicans from throughout the state. People wore Cruz 2016 stickers and brown and gold T-shirts that said "Cowboys for Cruz."

Many tables were adorned with gold balloons that said "Ted Cruz: Cruzin Cowboys."

Wyoming is reeling from job losses in oil, gas and coal — all of which are experiencing a decline that most Wyoming Republicans blame on President Obama's plans to combat climate change.

Key to rebooting the state's economy is cutting federal regulations, Cruz said Saturday. He is the only remaining presidential candidate to visit Wyoming. It was Cruz's second time in Wyoming. He first visited in August.

Wyoming Republican Clara Powers spoke on behalf of Trump. Ohio Gov. John Kasich sent Idaho Gov. Butch Otter in his stead.

"We've seen for seven years a war on coal," Cruz said. "Barack Obama promised when he got elected he would bankrupt every coal-fired power plant in America."

That is the only campaign promise he's fulfilled, he noted.

"America is the Saudi Arabia of coal and we are going to develop our resources," Cruz said, to claps and cheers.

He said Democratic front-runner Hillary Clinton will also continue to destroy the industry.

Cruz spoke to sagebrush rebels, who want Wyoming to manage or own large swaths of land currently controlled by the feds. They feel permitting for minerals extraction is too slow and cattle grazing fees and rules are too burdensome.

"When it comes to federal land, why on earth is the federal government the largest landowner in the United States of America?" Cruz asked.

He said he would lead the effort to "return land to the states and the people."

In Texas, only 2 percent of land is public.

"We think that's 2 percent too much," he said.

Cruz wants to repeal the Affordable Care Act and replace it with what he described as common sense health care reform that is affordable, portable if a person moves and flexible.

"We're going to pass a simple flat tax," Cruz said.

He said he would get rid of the Internal Revenue Service and rein in the authority of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

He criticized Trump as a candidate who has supported Democratic politics for 40 years.

"We're seeing the party uniting," he said. "We have got to unite. We have got to come together and stand as one."

Cruz said he will not compromise on religious liberty, the Second Amendment and support of Israel.

The military will be strong under a Cruz administration. Cruz will target the Islamic State.

"We will utterly and completely destroy them," he said.

Lynne Cheney, wife of former Vice President Dick Cheney, introduced Cruz.

“He is attuned to our values — protecting free speech, making sure the Second Amendment is an individual right and the government has no part in it,” she said. “He knows, too, it’s not only wrong-headed but unconstitutional for a president to regulate the fossil fuel industry out of business.”

In addition to 14 national delegates selected at Saturday’s state convention who will support Cruz, nine of 12 delegates selected at county conventions last month are for the senator. Additionally, Wyoming will send to the national GOP convention in Cleveland three automatic delegates, made up of party leadership — with at least one who will support him.

GOP Chairman Matt Micheli said he would not specify Saturday who he was supporting. The party’s National Committeeman Greg Schaefer said he was leaning toward Cruz and Kasich. National Committeewoman Marti Halverson said she would support Cruz.

Miriam Hampton, of Lander, said she likes Cruz’s reading of the U.S. Constitution and his Christian faith. Cruz has proven he’s not afraid to stand up to power, she said.

In 2013, Cruz led a 21-hour filibuster to oppose the Affordable Care Act, which helped create a 16-day government shutdown. Many dislike him in Congress, and that’s a good thing, Hampton said.

“He’s already been bucking the system,” she said.

Follow political reporter Laura Hancock on Twitter @laurahancock.

## **Poll: Trump Set To Trounce In NY**

By Jessie Hellmann

[The Hill](#), April 16, 2016

Donald Trump could trample his opponents in Tuesday’s Republican New York primary, according to a new poll.

The GOP front-runner leads by 29 points among likely primary voters in New York state with 54 percent support, followed by Ohio Gov. John Kasich at 25 percent and Sen. Ted Cruz (Texas) at 16 percent, according to an NBC News/Wall Street Journal/Marist Poll released Friday.

“Donald Trump is well-positioned to carry New York handily and is likely to acquire a sizeable number of New York’s delegates as a result,” said Lee Miringoff, director of the Marist College Institute for Public Opinion.

Fourteen delegates in the New York primary are awarded proportionally based on the statewide vote. Should any candidate receive more than 50 percent of the vote — something only Trump appears capable of doing — he will claim all of those delegates.

The remaining 81 delegates are divided among the state’s 27 congressional districts, with three delegates up for grabs in each. Candidates who receive more than 50 percent of the vote in any district take all three of the delegates within it.

The results are similar to the same poll released earlier this week in which Trump had 54 percent support among New York’s GOP voters, but support for Kasich grew slightly while support for Cruz dropped a few points.

“If there’s someone to watch in the closing hours, closing days, it’s Kasich,” Miringoff said.

## **Trucks Are Getting More Dangerous And Drivers Are Falling Asleep At The Wheel. Thank Congress.**

By Michael McAuliff

[Huffington Post](#), April 16, 2016

WASHINGTON – Illinois State Trooper Douglas Balder sat in his squad car, its red and blue lights strobing into the frozen night of Jan. 27, 2014. He was about to be set on fire.

Balder had stopped to assist a Chicago-bound big rig that had stalled out in the rightmost lane of the Ronald Reagan Memorial Tollway. A heavy-duty tow truck and a bright yellow Tollway assistance vehicle were also pulled over, attending to the stranded semi.

Balder, a Navy reservist and father of two, had his heater cranked against minus-30-degree wind chill. He had positioned his 2011 Crown Victoria behind the Tollway vehicle and switched on his flashers. There were also flares sputtering on the pavement, and the Tollway truck was flashing a large blinking arrow and its amber hazard lights. Visibility on that clear, cold night was excellent – around 10 miles.

Renato Velasquez, who was barreling toward the stopped vehicles in a flatbed big rig loaded with three massive rolls of steel, didn’t see Balder’s flashers. He didn’t see the pulsing arrow or the flares. He didn’t change lanes or take any evasive action until far too late. Velasquez was falling asleep, a court would find later. His truck rammed into Balder’s squad car at 63 miles per hour, according to the National Transportation Safety Board investigation into the accident.

The impact crushed the Crown Vic’s trunk, exploding the gas tank and catapulting the patrol car into a roadside ditch. The three 14,580-pound steel coils chained to Velasquez’s trailer bed burst their restraints. One of the massive rolls struck the cab of the Tollway vehicle, instantly killing its 39-year-old driver Vincent Petrella and injuring Agron Xhelaj, the driver of the stalled truck who was seated beside him.

Balder had lost consciousness when his face hit the steering wheel.

“I woke up a short time later on fire,” he said. “Literally on fire. Burning alive.”

In that moment, Balder didn’t know exactly what had happened. His squad car was half collapsed. The detonated gas tank was spraying fuel and flames through his cab. His

only clear thoughts were of survival and of his wife of 14 years, Kimberlie. He yelled out her name.

"A certain degree of that was emotion at the moment, knowing that I might die, screaming to the last person you might love," he said.

Balder needed to find a way to escape if he was ever going to see his wife and kids again.

He tried to start his engine, then tried to radio for help. Fire was spreading from around the partition behind him, burning his back, head and legs. He couldn't open his door or window. He tried the switches on his armrest, and the passenger window miraculously cranked down.

"As that cold air came in and swirled that air around, adrenaline set in, and I flew out," he said. "The only other choice was to sit there and die."

He tumbled out on the roadside, rolling in the snow to extinguish the flames that had already scorched more than a third of his body. By the time he stumbled around the back of the wreck and back up to the road, local police were arriving to help.

"You got this guy walking up with his skin hanging off his arm," Balder said. "My pants were all burned off to the skin."

He spent six weeks in a medically induced coma, three months in the hospital, and needed 10 surgeries and extensive, ongoing rehab to recover.

Illinois State Police Balder's patrol car was completely burned in the accident.

#### Increasing Carnage On Our Highways

In the two years since the accident, Balder has had plenty of time to think about what happened to him – and why. On the simplest level, it happened because a criminally negligent driver pushed too hard and crashed. But it is also part of a broader trend of declining safety on the roads after decades of progress – a trend that the United States Congress has aided and abetted by loosening safety rules even as both truck drivers and trucks are being pushed to their limits, just like Renato Velasquez.

Truck-related deaths hit an all-time low during the economic doldrums of 2009, when 2,983 truck accidents killed 3,380 people. But as the economy has recovered, the carnage has been on the rise. In 2013, the most recent year for which finalized statistics are available, 3,541 wrecks killed 3,964 people – an increase of 17.3 percent in just four years. In 2014, the number of deaths resulting from truck accidents was down slightly, but the total number of crashes and injuries increased.

At the same time, Congress has been caving, very quietly, to lobbying from trucking interests that want to roll back, block or modify at least a half-dozen important safety regulations. Significant parts of the hauling industry have long opposed many of the federal rules governing working hours, rest periods, size and weight limits, and safety standards.

When the Great Recession began in 2008, profit margins for shippers shrank and bankruptcies rose, prompting a desperate industry to step up its lobbying effort.

Perhaps, the trucking companies' lobbyists suggested to Congress, trucks could haul loads heavier than the federal 80,000-pound limit, which would allow them to deliver more goods with each truck. Maybe they could have longer double trailers, increasing the limit from 28 feet for each unit to 33 feet – turning each rig into an 80-foot-long behemoth, as long as an eight-story building is tall. Or they could let truck drivers be more flexible with their rest breaks, which would allow them to work up to 82 hours a week instead of the already-exhausting limit of 70. Maybe trucking firms could reduce labor costs by hiring lower-paid drivers, younger than 21 – as young as 18. Maybe they could stop federal regulators from raising insurance requirements that were set during the Reagan administration. Maybe the federal motor carrier safety ratings for unsafe trucking companies could be kept secret.

Indeed, the trucking industry is trying to do all of those things. If they are successful, these changes would amount to the most significant overhaul of highway safety rules in decades. But most people don't know such sweeping revisions are even being considered.

#### Asleep At The Wheel

The latest round of congressional wrangling started with a fight over snoring, or, more specifically, the obstructive sleep apnea that causes it.

For decades, mounting evidence has shown that sleep apnea, a common disorder, can cause perilous levels of fatigue in drivers, pilots, train engineers and others who need to remain alert at work. The airways of people who suffer from apnea close repeatedly while they sleep, interrupting their breathing dozens of times an hour. They often don't notice the interruptions, but it leaves them exhausted and prone to doze off during the day. Behind the wheel of a large, speeding vehicle, the results are predictably catastrophic.

It's not just a problem for truckers. As investigators sorted through a Dec. 1, 2013, Metro-North commuter train derailment in New York that killed four people, they found the engineer at the controls, William Rockefeller, had fallen asleep. His shift had recently been changed, which can cause sleep problems in itself, but he also had undiagnosed sleep apnea.

Since 2008, experts with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, which regulates the trucking industry, have recommended that drivers get checked for the condition and treated if necessary. The NTSB lists sleep apnea as a problem across the transportation industry, and often points to the Metro-North wreck as evidence of why the trucking industry in particular needs better regulation – its rules are the weakest of the major transportation sectors.

The risk of apnea rises dramatically with weight gain, and approximately two-thirds of all truck drivers are believed to be obese, according to a recent federal survey.

Other studies have also found that truckers are much more likely to be overweight than workers in other fields. And extensive research links sleep deprivation to heightened crash risks; even moderate tiredness can impair a driver as much as being legally intoxicated. A recent Harvard study found truck drivers with obstructive sleep apnea are five times more likely to crash than their fellows.

To do a better job dealing with the issue, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration floated a proposal in April 2012 that would have required overweight truckers to get checked for sleep apnea. The industry was livid. Some drivers claimed there was no evidence that sleep apnea raised the risk of crashes, while others alleged the proposal was a scheme to enrich sleep doctors.

Independent truckers are especially loath to admit a problem because treatment can take them off the road for a month or more. And sleep tests and treatment cost thousands of dollars for people with inadequate or no health insurance.

Despite acknowledging the problem and the need to deal with it, FMCSA backed off its push to update the apnea rules. Just a week after posting the proposal, the agency withdrew it, claiming it was published in error.

#### Going After Congress

The trucking industry did not let the matter drop, though. Instead, its lobbyists launched a pre-emptive strike.

Normally, when an agency like FMCSA targets a specific issue, it uses its existing authority to propose binding guidance. Taking this route – which the agency started to do with apnea – is easier than embarking on a full federal rulemaking process, which can take years, requires even more extensive input from the public and industry, and often triggers long legal battles.

Rather than taking the chance that FMCSA might resurrect its proposal on apnea screening, industry lobbyists approached allies in Congress to write a law that would require the agency to follow the longer, more cumbersome formal rulemaking course.

Trucking industry lobbyists sold the bill as a safety enhancement. In their telling, it sounded like truckers were asking regulators to come up with a way to screen for dangerous apnea, not blocking an effort to enhance screenings.

Members of Congress bought the spin. “I can only hope that the agency, which has a long docket, in fact gets to this rulemaking,” said Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-D.C.) in a brief discussion on the the House floor. “I’m not sure why the agency was going to do guidance instead, but this is a very important issue. There have been accidents attributed to sleep apnea.”

Then-House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) allowed the bill’s sponsors to bring it to the floor on Sept. 26, 2013, when the country was focused on the prospect of a looming government shutdown in the next four days. Safety advocates had little opportunity to raise objections. The bill passed with no opposition and was sent to the Senate. It passed the upper chamber a week later, in the middle of the shutdown, with no debate or even a roll-call vote. The legislation was slipped into a string of unanimous consent requests, lost among resolutions supporting democracy in Venezuela and recognizing Danish Holocaust survivors. President Barack Obama signed the law on Oct. 15, without comment, just before the government shutdown ended.

Less than two months later, the Metro-North engineer took a curve along the Hudson River in the Bronx at 82 miles per hour – 52 mph over the limit – while he dozed at the controls. Seven cars derailed. Three of the four people killed were ejected from the train. No one noticed that Congress had just made it more difficult to screen truckers for similar sleep disorders.

Eugene Gologursky via Getty Images In December 2013, a Metro-North commuter train engineer with undiagnosed sleep apnea fell asleep and caused a derailment that killed four people.

#### Congress Waters Down Safety Rules

Horrifying crashes have a way of focusing Congress’ attention on safety – at least while the headlines are bold and the corpses are fresh. The rest of the time, lawmakers tend to listen to industry groups, which warn of job losses and higher costs if their demands aren’t met. These conversations happen inside the cloister of legislative process, shielded from scrutiny. If what business wants doesn’t put health or safety first – and it often doesn’t – politicians try to meet the demand by adding provisions to much larger legislative vehicles, where they may be impossible to dislodge, if they are even discovered at all.

Consider this example.

In July 2013, the FMCSA enacted a regulation modifying an existing rule that says drivers must take 34 hours off after they hit certain maximum time limits working and driving. The new restriction mandated that truckers include two nights in that break, with no driving between 1 a.m. and 5 a.m. The new rule effectively cut the maximum hours drivers could work from 82 per week to 70. Studies show that humans get the best, most restorative rest while slumbering at night, and truckers face especially tough schedules, so the restriction forced drivers to have two restful, overnight periods in their break, which is known as a “restart.”

But trucking lobbyists argued that making drivers sleep at night was more dangerous because it would put more trucks on the road in the morning hours, with commuters and school buses. The industry pointed to data that shows more accidents occur when there are more vehicles on the roads

during the day. The lobbyists neglected to mention data showing that the rate of fatal accidents actually more than doubles during the overnight hours, even with vastly fewer automobiles on the roads.

As soon as the updated regulation went into effect, trucking groups demanded changes, but FMCSA, which had spent years working on the rule, wasn't listening. That left the industry with the choice of pursuing an uncertain challenge in the courts, or appealing to Congress for relief.

By law, Congress can vote to disapprove a new executive agency regulation, such as the sleep rule, within 60 work days of the rule's publication. If Congress doesn't pass a disapproval resolution, lawmakers can propose specific legislation undoing the new rule, and hold hearings on the proposal in the relevant committee – in this case, the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation.

Going through either of those processes is the transparent, above-board approach. But that path does not often get the trucking industry what it wants. For years, the late New Jersey Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D), a member of the commerce committee, blocked anything that he thought eroded highway safety, as did other safety-conscious members on the committee. Lautenberg's successor, Sen. Cory Booker (D), has sought to take up that mantle.

The trucking industry needed a detour. It looked for an alternate route through the Senate Appropriations Committee, and found Republican Sen. Susan Collins, who represents the trucking-friendly state of Maine. Collins added a provision temporarily barring FMCSA from spending any money to enforce its new rule and requiring additional study of the issue to a \$54 billion transportation bill during an untelevised legislative markup in June 2014.

The under-the-radar move might have been the end of the new rule. But unlike with the apnea bill a year before, a headline-grabbing tragedy caught the nation's attention shortly before the appropriations bill made it to the full Senate. Two days after Collins got her amendment included, an exhausted Walmart truck driver speeding along the New Jersey Turnpike slammed into comedian Tracy Morgan's limo. The wreck killed Morgan's friend James McNair and left Morgan and four others severely injured.

NTSB Tracy Morgan's limo van was crushed by a truck whose driver fell asleep at the wheel.

The crash generated headlines around the world, and once again focused the nation's attention on the dangers of sleep-deprived drivers behind the wheels of 80,000-pound vehicles.

When the transportation spending bill came to the Senate floor on June 19, Booker was waiting with his own amendment to block that of Collins. He took up his microphone and delivered a blistering speech against the provision, forcing Collins to defend the measure. But before the bill went to a vote, Senate leaders pulled the measure

from consideration, in part because of the sudden controversy.

Collins didn't give up, though. When the nation was again facing a government shutdown in the winter, she managed to slip her sleep-rule provision into the so-called CROmnibus, a huge, unwieldy spending measure that needed to pass by Dec. 13 to keep the government open. No one outside of Congress knew that the trucking provision had been attached to the bill until lawmakers shoved their shambling creation into the light on Dec. 9, four days before it needed to pass. At that point, the measure could not be blocked, as it had been in the aftermath of Tracy Morgan's crash. Like the sleep apnea rule a year before, it passed under the cover of a funding battle, much to the disappointment of safety advocates, including Morgan's lawyer, Benedict Morelli.

"I don't understand how in good conscience anybody could be pushing to relax the federal rules," Morelli said. "The reason that they've been put in place is to make sure this doesn't happen – and it happens a lot."

#### Shocking Headlines, Shockingly Often

Morelli is right: Accidents like those that nearly killed Balder and Morgan happen with startling regularity. For instance, last spring while Congress was again quietly targeting trucking regulations, a string of crashes showed vividly the consequences of overtired truckers pushing past their limits.

On April 22, 2015 a truck driven by John Wayne Johnson barreled through a line of cars backed up by an earlier truck crash on Interstate 16 in Georgia. Johnson killed five nursing students from Georgia Southern University headed to their last training shift of the year. Lawsuits filed over the wreck say he had sleep apnea and a history of falling asleep at the wheel. He also may have been looking at pornographic pictures.

On May 19, witnesses saw a tractor-trailer drifting between lanes as it neared a construction zone on that same Georgia interstate, near I-95. The driver, David Gibbons, 61, smashed his rig into the stopped cars and also killed five people.

On June 25, Benjamin Brewer, 39, spent 50 hours at work and was allegedly high on meth when he approached construction traffic on I-75 in Chattanooga, Tennessee. He was going so fast, his truck careened on for 453 feet after impacting the first car, according to the NTSB. He killed six people.

On July 23, trucker Ruslan Pankiv failed to notice traffic backed up at a construction zone on I-65 near Lafayette, Indiana. He plowed through the stopped vehicles, killing five people, including a mother, her two young sons and himself. Again, police suspected fatigue.

Those are just cases for which drowsiness was explicitly stated as a possible cause. Most independent

experts believe fatigue-related wrecks are significantly undercounted since there is no roadside exam or blood test for drowsiness, and drivers are often reluctant to admit they were nodding off.

In the case of Renato Velasquez, he insisted he hadn't dozed off, but he could come up with no other explanation his wreck. By the time the scientifically careful NTSB released its final report on Velasquez's accident, on Feb. 9, 2016, he'd already been convicted and sentenced to three years in prison for driving while fatigued, ignoring federal rest rules, driving too fast and failing to yield.

What's beyond debate is that hauling loads across America's highways is a draining, exhausting existence. And it's only gotten tougher since President Jimmy Carter and Congress deregulated the complex rules governing the economic side of the industry in 1980, making it much easier for new companies to get into the business and setting off a surge in competition.

The change was good for consumers, who saw shipping prices drop as lower-cost carriers pushed out unionized firms. And safety did not immediately suffer, because technology improved and both the government and carriers grew more conscious of the practices that reduce the risk of crashes.

But as unions vanished and the need for productivity and efficiency rose, pay for truck drivers plummeted. They now make less than they did in the late 1970s when wages are adjusted for inflation. And there are now tens of thousands of small, poorly financed new trucking companies that have great incentive to push drivers as hard as they can.

Those drivers, who are often independent and own their own rigs, have to cope with managers' demands and all the safety rules that still exist, even as the close-to-the-bone industry leaves little room for error. Unpredictable hours, uncertain traffic, long stretches spent sitting alone behind a wheel, and meals that depend on roadside greasy spoons take a toll on drivers' health. All that adds up to a circumstance that encourages drivers – especially the growing number who have strict drop-off and pick-up times set in their contracts – to take chances. And they do, frequently ignoring rest rules to make their schedules. Drivers for smaller outfits are especially likely to break the rules.

Renato Velasquez is a case in point.

His daughter Yesenia told NTSB investigators that her father had dreamed of driving big rigs. He had been a bus driver in rural Mexico, transporting workers to farms back in the '80s. He immigrated to the United States, and in 2007 earned his commercial driver's license in Illinois. His first job driving flatbeds was at a company called M&A, where his brother worked, and where he learned the federal safety rules.

Velasquez told the NTSB he took a job with another firm, DND International, in 2011, after meeting the company's

manager, Dimitar Dimitrievsky. The company, one of thousands of small-time shipping operations that have proliferated since deregulation, employed 49 drivers. Those drivers logged 5.4 million miles in 2013, the year before Velasquez's crash.

Velasquez seldom saw the boss, or any other workers, and was dispatched remotely, according to his interview with federal investigators. He and another driver said they would drop off their logbooks and other records at a box outside Dimitrievsky's house once a week. There appeared to be little oversight or enforcement at the company, the NTSB concluded. Although Velasquez said he never got safety training from his employer, records say that he received at least a little, and the company did possess some of the required safety training materials. But DND also possessed a terrible, albeit remarkably common, safety record.

In the two years before the crash, DND drivers had been subjected to 289 inspections, according to federal records. Its drivers had been ordered off the roads 27 times, most often for hours-of-service violations – driving more than the legal limit. The vehicles themselves were found to be in violation 26 times in 131 inspections, a failure rate of 20 percent. The company racked up seven crashes between March 2012 and January 2014, causing one fatality and four injuries. Those stats meant that DND had alerts in two Behavior Analysis and Safety Improvement Categories (BASICS) that the FMCSA uses to rate companies and identify dangerous carriers. BASIC serves as the foundation for the agency's Safety Measurement System – a system that the trucking industry despises. DND had poor scores in the BASIC standards for safe driving and driver fatigue. The chances of a firm being involved in a fatal crash jump by 93 percent when it has an alert on unsafe driving and by 83 percent when it has received a warning for excessive hours-of-service violations, according to agency data. And firms with two alerts have crash rates that are double the average among companies with no alerts.

Independent drivers like Velasquez and his colleagues are paid by the load, not by the number of hours they work. A decent living requires good loads. To get good loads, a trucker needs a strong relationship with his trucking company's dispatchers, who take orders from shipping brokers and route them to available tractors. Trips that are longer, more time-consuming or force the driver to return empty – hauling "flying canaries" or "dispatcher brains" – can even cost a driver money. A DND driver named Stanford Dean told NTSB investigators that his loads weren't even dispatched in the United States. They came from someone based in Macedonia.

"Do you know how difficult it is to make money?" Dean asked investigators who confronted him over discrepancies in his logbooks. "I'm a safe guy, but there's issues sometimes,"

Dean added. "There's so many obstacles. If anybody tells you they roll 100 percent by the book, they're lying to you."

On Velasquez's fateful run, he had a decent assignment from the dispatchers, hauling power cables approximately 450 miles from Illinois to Nebraska, for a \$1,600 fee. On the way back he would stop in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, to pick up three steel coils that he would haul a little more than 200 miles back toward home, for a fee of \$550. After gas, tolls and DND's 20 percent cut, he would pocket about \$1,000 for the out-and-back.

According to Velasquez's logbook for the trip that killed Vincent Petrella, he followed safety rules. It says Velasquez left Hanover Park at 11:45 a.m. on Sunday, Jan. 26, carrying a 6,707-pound load of cable to the Omaha Public Power District in Elkhorn, Nebraska. The entries say he reached Des Moines, Iowa, at about 5:30 p.m., took a 45-minute break, then motored on to Elkhorn by 9 p.m., keeping his driving time well inside the 11-hour limit and his on-duty hours within the 14 permitted in a day.

But Velasquez's logbook was a work of fiction.

Investigators would later learn how badly things went wrong for Velasquez, and how severely he broke the rules, leading to his deadly exhaustion.

Velasquez's cell phone and toll records showed he didn't set out on the trip until nearly six hours after the time he recorded in his logbook, and he kept driving well past the time that he claimed he had settled in for a night's rest.

The problem was that this was a trip across the Midwest in the dead of winter, with a brutal deep freeze, snow, fog and whipping winds along the way. Ahead of Velasquez on I-88, two other trucks crashed at 9:43 p.m. in whiteout conditions, shutting down the highway for four hours. Velasquez wasn't even out of Illinois at that point, and that traffic jam may have been his only rest in 37 hours. According to the truck's engine records retrieved by the NTSB, the longest it was idle that Sunday night and early Monday morning was for less than three hours.

Velasquez couldn't just pull in for some extra rest after the long night. A requirement of the delivery contract with the Omaha Public Power District was a punctual drop-off at 8:30 in morning. The driver logged in at the drop-off at 8:45 a.m. Records showed Velasquez departing at 9:20 for a 300-mile run to Cedar Rapids, where his pickup window for the three steel coils began at 4 p.m. He left at 5:15 with another 200-plus miles and four hours left to reach home.

But about an hour before he got that far, a truck that hauled containers from railways broke down ahead of him in Aurora, Illinois, just shy of Velasquez's destination. It was owned by a firm called Michael's Cartage that had alerts in four of the FMCSA's troubling categories, including maintenance. Its drivers falsified work logs more than half of the time, according to an NTSB review. Just like with DND International, the numbers suggested the carrier was more

than twice as likely to wind up in a crash. In this case, the Cartage truck became the hazard that Velasquez failed to avoid.

He never wrote down his final stop, at 9:20 p.m. – when he dozed off at the wheel and forever changed Doug Balder's life.

#### Paying For Influence

The leader of the trucking industry's campaign to tilt federal regulations in its favor is an alliance of the nation's largest shippers called the Coalition for Efficient and Responsible Trucking, or CERT. Its most prominent members are FedEx and UPS.

Members of CERT have donated more than \$13 million to federal election campaigns since 2012, and spent \$80 million on well-connected lobbyists, according to a Public Citizen study from 2015 using data from the Center for Responsive Politics, as well HuffPost's analysis of more recent congressional lobbying reports through the rest of the year. The American Trucking Associations, which advocates on behalf of the industry, spent another \$8 million on lobbying and \$2.4 million on elections. The Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association, another industry group, has chipped in \$3.5 million for lobbying and \$790,000 on campaigns. It amounts to more than \$20 million spent each year, solely to influence Congress.

Trucking industry lobbyists have the kind of access to decision-makers that safety advocates can only imagine. Among FedEx lobbyists alone, 37 of 51 previously worked in government, according to CRP.

Those influence brokers have been exceptionally busy and effective, securing victories on apnea screening in 2013 and the roll-back of sleep rules in 2014. In 2015, they aimed for much more. In the House, industry-friendly lawmakers were persuaded to add several policy riders to the annual transportation funding bill for 2016 in May, again bypassing committees and hearings, as Sen. Collins did with sleep rules.

#### Bigger And More Dangerous

Perhaps the most controversial of those measures was a scheme to take away the ability of states to set their own standards for the maximum lengths of double trailers. A federal law passed in 1982 required all states to allow doubles, with each of those trailers up to 28 feet long. Many states, particularly in the West, allow longer trailers. The new measure would have raised the federal limit to 33 feet for each trailer, and forced all states to accept them.

Companies such as FedEx and UPS have long sought to extend the length of trailers, because they often fill the 28-foot model with packages before hitting the 80,000-pound weight limit. Carrying more with each rig means greater efficiency, lower cost and more profit.

But larger, heavier trucks also mean more wear and tear on highways and bridges that are already poorly

maintained. Weigh stations and other facilities handling trucks would also need to be renovated and expanded, often at taxpayers' expense.

Law enforcement and safety advocates also warn that double trailers are already more dangerous than regular semis, with an 11 percent higher crash fatality rate.

"From a safety perspective, double 33-foot trailers are basically a disaster," said Robert Mills, a Fort Worth, Texas, police officer who spent 13 years as a roadside safety inspector and is a member of the Motor Carrier Safety Advisory Committee, which recommends rules to the federal government.

Many truckers are not so pleased with the giant double trailers either, dubbing them "wobble wagons" and "widow makers." Some haulers, including the smaller conglomerates Swift and Knight, joined with the Coalition Against Bigger Trucks to oppose their larger brethren's push to extend trailer lengths.

Even crashes of doubles where there are no injuries in the initial impact leave dangerous scenes for other drivers when they're sprawled out across multiple lanes of traffic, said Balder, who is now working with the coalition.

But CERT, the coalition of shippers, is determined to get approval for larger trucks, and was behind a push in 2012 requiring the Department of Transportation to study the impacts of size and weight increases. The industry coalition believed, or at least argued, that those impacts would be negligible; research proving that would help their case. But before that study was even completed, the coalition got its provision allowing longer trucks added to the House's version of the 2016 transportation spending bill. The DOT study, released in June 2015 two weeks after the House released the transportation bill, recommended against allowing larger trucks, saying the safety issues remained unresolved.

Handout Lisa Shrum lost her mother and stepfather, Virginia and Randy Baker, when their car was torn in half at an accident where a double-trailer blocked the road.

There were several other industry requests in that funding bill for 2016, including a measure that aimed to extend the suspension of sleep rules that Collins had won just six months earlier. Her suspension lasted a year and required regulators to look into the effectiveness of requiring two nights of sleep and whether there was any case for the trucking industry's position. But rather than see that process through, the new provision changed the study mid-stream and called for gathering even more data — including the regulation's impact on the longevity of drivers. Studying workers' lifespans, of course, takes entire lifespans. That provision was signed into law with the 2016 spending bill that ultimately passed.

"They just basically want to stall this forever," said Rep. David Price (N.C.), the top Democrat on the appropriations subcommittee that deals with transportation.

Another measure the industry pushed last year aimed to short-circuit federal regulators' efforts to evaluate raising insurance requirements for trucking companies. Currently, carriers have to maintain the same \$750,000 policies they did in the '80s. The industry's argument is that independent operators would not be able to afford higher premiums — and indeed, DND's margins were so close it shut down when its insurance company raised rates after the Balder crash. The industry argues that 99 percent of truck accidents do not generate such high damages. But \$750,000 doesn't begin to cover the costs a serious semi wreck incurs. For instance, a widower whose wife was killed and children severely injured by a dozing driver in 2010 won \$41 million in damages. The family of James McNair, the comedian who died in the Tracy Morgan crash, settled for \$10 million in March last year. A somewhat weakened version of the measure did pass, requiring regulators to evaluate a number of different factors before they adjust the insurance requirements.

Another industry-backed provision aimed to hide the BASIC safety measurements for trucking companies from public view, and bar their use in lawsuits. The lawsuit provision was dropped from the spending bill during negotiations, but the BASIC scores were in fact hidden and removed from the agency's website. The industry used a Government Accountability Office study that found the safety system could do better in some respects to justify its position, but the two firms involved in the Velasquez crash had exactly the sort of poor safety scores that the BASIC system predicts make them more likely to be involved in accidents.

Despite the fact that these provisions will likely have an impact on the safety of nearly 11 million large trucks registered in America, they were all buried in legislation that Congress had to pass to avoid a government shutdown, with little to no debate about whether they were a good idea.

"The advocates of relaxing the rules or eliminating the rules, they see that and think this is their train to catch. ... Not just wait on the normal process, or count on something as pedestrian as actual hearings or discussion, but to make a summary judgement and latch it on to an appropriations bill," Price said.

There's something else all the industry-backed measures have in common: They are deeply unpopular.

The Huffington Post and YouGov surveyed Americans on four of the proposals the industry has been pursuing through the backdoor: teen drivers, longer trucks, heavier trucks, and the relaxed hours-of-service rules. In every case, respondents to the survey opposed the moves — by large margins.

Indeed, when proposals to weaken trucking safety do get a up-or-down vote on their own, they generally fail. When the Senate's version of the transportation funding bill came up for debate in November and October, an attempt to include the House's requirement for states to accept 33-foot



trailers across the nation was voted down each time. Similarly, an attempt in the House last November to amend the highway construction bill to hike truck weight limits failed convincingly, 187 to 236.

The trucking industry is certainly still trying, though. The backdoor approach is the easiest way for the industry to get around the safety restrictions that most Americans support. One initiative that it backed down on in 2015 was a bid to block states from enforcing regulations on rest and pay that are tougher than the federal government's. Large haulers got the preemption added to the House's highway construction bill, but couldn't get senators to consent.

The trucking industry is back at it this year, adding a provision that would override state rest and overtime pay rules to a House bill reauthorizing the Federal Aviation Administration, which is currently operating on a stopgap measure that expires in mid-July. The Senate is working on a dramatically different version of that bill, which almost guarantees a situation where trucking lobbyists have thrived – a rush to finish a must-pass bill behind closed doors with a looming deadline and little ability to alter deeply buried provisions.

#### A Problem He Can't Forget

For Douglas Balder, crashes are not just a byproduct of business and politics. His own near-fatal encounter is burned into his flesh and his memory.

While he can't forget it, he also doesn't want to. He's read most of the 5,000-page NTSB investigation of his crash, and he still looks at the pictures of his destroyed squad car every couple of weeks. He said he doesn't know why he wants to keep replaying that night.

"I've been asked that question before, and I can't answer it," he said.

But he does have an answer, really.

Balder joined the Navy reserves right after graduating high school in 1994 and has served tours overseas, including in Iraq and North Africa. He is the sort of person who walks in the St. Jude's parade and donates blood. And he now has another reason to keep trying – a third child who was conceived and born after he was nearly killed on the side of that highway.

"We all take an oath to make things better in the long run," he said. "And it's got to be our focus now. I could easily have shriveled up in a ball and stayed at home and wasted away, but that's not my mindset. That's the military in me: You gotta move on – pick up and move on – and try to make a difference for the future. And I have to remind myself of what happened."

### Why Americans Can't Vote

[New York Times](#), April 16, 2016

The state of the nation's underfunded, patchwork election system and obsolete balloting machinery may not

arouse voters the way candidates can with charges of rigged elections. But voters in Arizona who lined up for the state's presidential primaries last month learned just how difficult and unfair voting can be even without criminal malfeasance.

Maricopa County, the state's most populous, had slashed the number of polling places to 60, from 200 in 2012, claiming a need for budget savings and leaving thousands of voters waiting long hours into the night, with some giving up in despair.

The Justice Department is investigating this electoral disaster, including charges that minority voters were particularly harmed. Critics blame the Supreme Court for weakening the Voting Rights Act, which used to subject regions with a history of discrimination, Maricopa County among them, to prescreening by the Justice Department before they could make major changes in voting procedures. Had that provision remained operational, the Maricopa fiasco might have been averted.

Arizona's problem is a good early warning of troubles to come in deeply flawed voting systems everywhere in the country. Come Tuesday in New York, untold numbers of primary voters interested in crossing party lines will discover that it's too late, that they should have switched parties by last Oct. 9, a little publicized deadline under "closed primary" voting procedures that serve to guard the major parties' power.

This is but one of many confusions, Common Cause New York, a government watchdog group, warns. Politicians in Albany scheduled four separate balloting days this year for state and federal offices. New York lags behind more electorally advanced states in its refusal to allow voters the convenience of same-day registration, early voting and easier absentee balloting. The Republican ballot names the candidates while the confusing Democratic ballot asks voters to choose a candidate as well as delegates pledged to either of the two candidates.

Beyond New York, newly restrictive election laws enacted in 17 states have imposed tighter procedures for identification, registration and early voting. In Wisconsin this month, primary voters were arbitrarily rejected or forced to endure a maze of three separate waiting lines for registration, identification and balloting. Similar restrictions elsewhere will be facing their first test in November.

Aside from bad laws, frayed infrastructure and limited funding also afflict the voting process. Unconscionably long lines in the 2012 election led to an investigation by the bipartisan Presidential Commission on Election Administration, whose report contained recommendations on cutting a voter's wait to no more than 30 minutes. That remains a distant ideal in a crazy-quilt voting system variously managed and mismanaged by the 50 states and some 8,000 local jurisdictions.

Shortchanging election budgets is a big part of the problem. The presidential commission warned of an “impending crisis” as voting machines bought after the hanging-chad debacle of 2000 become obsolete and break down. There are 43 states using computerized machines 10 to 15 years old that are increasingly unreliable and insecure, according to a study by New York University School of Law’s Brennan Center for Justice. With limited money to replace outdated machines, poorer counties and urban centers, often with more minority voters, will suffer longer delays and critical breakdowns.

Solutions to obvious voting obstacles aren’t hard to grasp: online registration, early voting, more and better trained poll workers, and modern technology like paper ballots backed by scanners, set to national standards.

The Brennan Center says it might cost upward of \$1 billion in the next few years to replace aging machines. This seems a bargain compared with the \$1 billion-plus that the presidential candidates have already raised. Voters will be judging the state of democracy in November when they line up, for better or worse.

## **272 Slaves Were Sold To Save Georgetown. What Does It Owe Their Descendants?**

By Rachel L. Swarns

[New York Times](#), April 16, 2016

The human cargo was loaded on ships at a bustling wharf in the nation’s capital, destined for the plantations of the Deep South. Some slaves pleaded for rosaries as they were rounded up, praying for deliverance.

But on this day, in the fall of 1838, no one was spared: not the 2-month-old baby and her mother, not the field hands, not the shoemaker and not Cornelius Hawkins, who was about 13 years old when he was forced onboard.

Their panic and desperation would be mostly forgotten for more than a century. But this was no ordinary slave sale. The enslaved African-Americans had belonged to the nation’s most prominent Jesuit priests. And they were sold, along with scores of others, to help secure the future of the premier Catholic institution of higher learning at the time, known today as Georgetown University.

Now, with racial protests roiling college campuses, an unusual collection of Georgetown professors, students, alumni and genealogists is trying to find out what happened to those 272 men, women and children. And they are confronting a particularly wrenching question: What, if anything, is owed to the descendants of slaves who were sold to help ensure the college’s survival?

More than a dozen universities — including Brown, Columbia, Harvard and the University of Virginia — have publicly recognized their ties to slavery and the slave trade. But the 1838 slave sale organized by the Jesuits, who

founded and ran Georgetown, stands out for its sheer size, historians say.

At Georgetown, slavery and scholarship were inextricably linked. The college relied on Jesuit plantations in Maryland to help finance its operations, university officials say. (Slaves were often donated by prosperous parishioners.) And the 1838 sale — worth about \$3.3 million in today’s dollars — was organized by two of Georgetown’s early presidents, both Jesuit priests.

Some of that money helped to pay off the debts of the struggling college.

“The university itself owes its existence to this history,” said Adam Rothman, a historian at Georgetown and a member of a university working group that is studying ways for the institution to acknowledge and try to make amends for its tangled roots in slavery.

Although the working group was established in August, it was student demonstrations at Georgetown in the fall that helped to galvanize alumni and gave new urgency to the administration’s efforts.

The students organized a protest and a sit-in, using the hashtag #GU272 for the slaves who were sold. In November, the university agreed to remove the names of the Rev. Thomas F. Mulledy and the Rev. William McSherry, the college presidents involved in the sale, from two campus buildings.

An alumnus, following the protest from afar, wondered if more needed to be done.

That alumnus, Richard J. Cellini, the chief executive of a technology company and a practicing Catholic, was troubled that neither the Jesuits nor university officials had tried to trace the lives of the enslaved African-Americans or compensate their progeny.

Mr. Cellini is an unlikely racial crusader. A white man, he admitted that he had never spent much time thinking about slavery or African-American history.

But he said he could not stop thinking about the slaves, whose names had been in Georgetown’s archives for decades.

“This is not a disembodied group of people, who are nameless and faceless,” said Mr. Cellini, 52, whose company, Briefcase Analytics, is based in Cambridge, Mass. “These are real people with real names and real descendants.”

Within two weeks, Mr. Cellini had set up a nonprofit, the Georgetown Memory Project, hired eight genealogists and raised more than \$10,000 from fellow alumni to finance their research.

Dr. Rothman, the Georgetown historian, heard about Mr. Cellini’s efforts and let him know that he and several of his students were also tracing the slaves. Soon, the two men and their teams were working on parallel tracks.

What has emerged from their research, and that of other scholars, is a glimpse of an insular world dominated by

priests who required their slaves to attend Mass for the sake of their salvation, but also whipped and sold some of them. The records describe runaways, harsh plantation conditions and the anguish voiced by some Jesuits over their participation in a system of forced servitude.

“A microcosm of the whole history of American slavery,” Dr. Rothman said.

The enslaved were grandmothers and grandfathers, carpenters and blacksmiths, pregnant women and anxious fathers, children and infants, who were fearful, bewildered and despairing as they saw their families and communities ripped apart by the sale of 1838.

The researchers have used archival records to follow their footsteps, from the Jesuit plantations in Maryland, to the docks of New Orleans, to three plantations west and south of Baton Rouge, La.

The hope was to eventually identify the slaves’ descendants. By the end of December, one of Mr. Cellini’s genealogists felt confident that she had found a strong test case: the family of the boy, Cornelius Hawkins.

There are no surviving images of Cornelius, no letters or journals that offer a look into his last hours on a Jesuit plantation in Maryland.

He was not yet five feet tall when he sailed onboard the Katharine Jackson, one of several vessels that carried the slaves to the port of New Orleans.

An inspector scrutinized the cargo on Dec. 6, 1838. “Examined and found correct,” he wrote of Cornelius and the 129 other people he found on the ship.

The notation betrayed no hint of the turmoil on board. But priests at the Jesuit plantations recounted the panic and fear they witnessed when the slaves departed.

Some children were sold without their parents, records show, and slaves were “dragged off by force to the ship,” the Rev. Thomas Lilly reported. Others, including two of Cornelius’s uncles, ran away before they could be captured.

But few were lucky enough to escape. The Rev. Peter Havermans wrote of an elderly woman who fell to her knees, begging to know what she had done to deserve such a fate, according to Robert Emmett Curran, a retired Georgetown historian who described eyewitness accounts of the sale in his research. Cornelius’s extended family was split, with his aunt Nelly and her daughters shipped to one plantation, and his uncle James and his wife and children sent to another, records show.

At the time, the Catholic Church did not view slaveholding as immoral, said the Rev. Thomas R. Murphy, a historian at Seattle University who has written a book about the Jesuits and slavery.

The Jesuits had sold off individual slaves before. As early as the 1780s, Dr. Rothman found, they openly discussed the need to cull their stock of human beings.

But the decision to sell virtually all of their enslaved African-Americans in the 1830s left some priests deeply troubled.

They worried that new owners might not allow the slaves to practice their Catholic faith. They also knew that life on plantations in the Deep South was notoriously brutal, and feared that families might end up being separated and resold.

“It would be better to suffer financial disaster than suffer the loss of our souls with the sale of the slaves,” wrote the Rev. Jan Roothaan, who headed the Jesuits’ international organization from Rome and was initially reluctant to authorize the sale.

But he was persuaded to reconsider by several prominent Jesuits, including Father Mulledy, then the influential president of Georgetown who had overseen its expansion, and Father McSherry, who was in charge of the Jesuits’ Maryland mission. (The two men would swap positions by 1838.)

Mismanaged and inefficient, the Maryland plantations no longer offered a reliable source of income for Georgetown College, which had been founded in 1789. It would not survive, Father Mulledy feared, without an influx of cash.

So in June 1838, he negotiated a deal with Henry Johnson, a member of the House of Representatives, and Jesse Batey, a landowner in Louisiana, to sell Cornelius and the others.

Father Mulledy promised his superiors that the slaves would continue to practice their religion. Families would not be separated. And the money raised by the sale would not be used to pay off debt or for operating expenses.

None of those conditions were met, university officials said.

Father Mulledy took most of the down payment he received from the sale — about \$500,000 in today’s dollars — and used it to help pay off the debts that Georgetown had incurred under his leadership.

In the uproar that followed, he was called to Rome and reassigned.

The next year, Pope Gregory XVI explicitly barred Catholics from engaging in “this traffic in Blacks ... no matter what pretext or excuse.”

But the pope’s order, which did not explicitly address slave ownership or private sales like the one organized by the Jesuits, offered scant comfort to Cornelius and the other slaves.

By the 1840s, word was trickling back to Washington that the slaves’ new owners had broken their promises. Some slaves suffered at the hands of a cruel overseer.

Roughly two-thirds of the Jesuits’ former slaves — including Cornelius and his family — had been shipped to two plantations so distant from churches that “they never see a Catholic priest,” the Rev. James Van de Velde, a Jesuit who visited Louisiana, wrote in a letter in 1848.

Father Van de Velde begged Jesuit leaders to send money for the construction of a church that would “provide for the salvation of those poor people, who are now utterly neglected.”

He addressed his concerns to Father Mulledy, who three years earlier had returned to his post as president of Georgetown.

There is no indication that he received any response.

African-Americans are often a fleeting presence in the documents of the 1800s. Enslaved, marginalized and forced into illiteracy by laws that prohibited them from learning to read and write, many seem like ghosts who pass through this world without leaving a trace.

After the sale, Cornelius vanishes from the public record until 1851 when his trail finally picks back up on a cotton plantation near Maringouin, La.

His owner, Mr. Batey, had died, and Cornelius appeared on the plantation’s inventory, which included 27 mules and horses, 32 hogs, two ox carts and scores of other slaves. He was valued at \$900. (“Valuable Plantation and Negroes for Sale,” read one newspaper advertisement in 1852.)

The plantation would be sold again and again and again, records show, but Cornelius’s family remained intact. In 1870, he appeared in the census for the first time. He was about 48 then, a father, a husband, a farm laborer and, finally, a free man.

He might have disappeared from view again for a time, save for something few could have counted on: his deep, abiding faith. It was his Catholicism, born on the Jesuit plantations of his childhood, that would provide researchers with a road map to his descendants.

Cornelius had originally been shipped to a plantation so far from a church that he had married in a civil ceremony. But six years after he appeared in the census, and about three decades after the birth of his first child, he renewed his wedding vows with the blessing of a priest.

His children and grandchildren also embraced the Catholic church. So Judy Riffel, one of the genealogists hired by Mr. Cellini, began following a chain of weddings and births, baptisms and burials. The church records helped lead to a 69-year-old woman in Baton Rouge named Maxine Crump.

Ms. Crump, a retired television news anchor, was driving to Maringouin, her hometown, in early February when her cellphone rang. Mr. Cellini was on the line.

She listened, stunned, as he told her about her great-great-grandfather, Cornelius Hawkins, who had labored on a plantation just a few miles from where she grew up.

She found out about the Jesuits and Georgetown and the sea voyage to Louisiana. And she learned that Cornelius had worked the soil of a 2,800-acre estate that straddled the Bayou Maringouin.

All of this was new to Ms. Crump, except for the name Cornelius — or Neely, as Cornelius was known.

The name had been passed down from generation to generation in her family. Her great-uncle had the name, as did one of her cousins. Now, for the first time, Ms. Crump understood its origins.

“Oh my God,” she said. “Oh my God.”

Ms. Crump is a familiar figure in Baton Rouge. She was the city’s first black woman television anchor. She runs a nonprofit, Dialogue on Race Louisiana, that offers educational programs on institutional racism and ways to combat it.

She prides herself on being unflappable. But the revelations about her lineage — and the church she grew up in — have unleashed a swirl of emotions.

She is outraged that the church’s leaders sanctioned the buying and selling of slaves, and that Georgetown profited from the sale of her ancestors. She feels great sadness as she envisions Cornelius as a young boy, torn from everything he knew.

Mr. Cellini, whose genealogists have already traced more than 200 of the slaves from Maryland to Louisiana, believes there may be thousands of living descendants. He has contacted a few, including Patricia Bayonne-Johnson, president of the Eastern Washington Genealogical Society in Spokane, who is helping to track the Jesuit slaves with her group. (Ms. Bayonne-Johnson discovered her connection through an earlier effort by the university to publish records online about the Jesuit plantations.)

Meanwhile, Georgetown’s working group has been weighing whether the university should apologize for profiting from slave labor, create a memorial to those enslaved and provide scholarships for their descendants, among other possibilities, said Dr. Rothman, the historian.

“It’s hard to know what could possibly reconcile a history like this,” he said. “What can you do to make amends?”

Ms. Crump, 69, has been asking herself that question, too. She does not put much stock in what she describes as “casual institutional apologies.” But she would like to see a scholarship program that would bring the slaves’ descendants to Georgetown as students.

And she would like to see Cornelius’s name, and those of his parents and children, inscribed on a memorial on campus.

Her ancestors, once amorphous and invisible, are finally taking shape in her mind. There is joy in that, she said, exhilaration even.

“Now they are real to me,” she said, “more real every day.”

She still wants to know more about Cornelius’s beginnings, and about his life as a free man. But when Ms. Riffel, the genealogist, told her where she thought he was buried, Ms. Crump knew exactly where to go.

The two women drove on the narrow roads that line the green, rippling sugar cane fields in Iberville Parish. There was no need for a map. They were heading to the only Catholic cemetery in Maringouin.

They found the last physical marker of Cornelius's journey at the Immaculate Heart of Mary cemetery, where Ms. Crump's father, grandmother and great-grandfather are also buried.

The worn gravestone had toppled, but the wording was plain: "Neely Hawkins Died April 16, 1902."

## After A Blistering Report, What's Next For The Embattled Chicago Police?

By Mark Berman And Mark Guarino

[Washington Post](#), April 16, 2016

Before the Chicago City Council voted unanimously to confirm Eddie Johnson as the city's police superintendent this week, some of the aldermen representing Chicago's wards spoke about him.

"This city is clearly in need of healing," said James Cappleman, alderman for the 46th Ward. "I believe that Superintendent Eddie Johnson is the person to do that." Another alderman called Johnson "a great man," and still another said police "spoke the world of him."

One of the officials who spoke pointed to a harsh document about the police that was about to go public and highlighted the road ahead for Johnson and the embattled department. "We have a lot of work to do," Alderman Emma Mitts of the 37th Ward said to Johnson. "Everything is riding on you right now."

Johnson, a veteran of the Chicago Police Department, was approved Wednesday by a City Council vote of 50-to-0. That same day, a task force assembled by Mayor Rahm Emanuel (D), who named Johnson as his interim superintendent last month, released a scathing report that decried the Chicago police for "systemic institutional failures going back decades that can no longer be ignored."

The task force offered a bleak assessment of how the department treats people of color. In their report, the task force members recounted how residents said officers treat minorities poorly and then paired this with police department data that "gives validity to the widely held belief the police have no regard for the sanctity of life when it comes to people of color."

This report came at a pivotal moment for the city and its police force, the country's second-largest local law enforcement agency, which is being investigated by the federal government and confronting declining morale and levels of crime unseen for years.

In Chicago, the police department is facing unrest and issues both local and national. As the task force report said, "racism and maltreatment at the hands of the police have

been consistent complaints from communities of color for decades." In recent years, a series of high-profile episodes across the country has prompted a debate over how police use force, particularly against minorities.

Chicago's department came under even more scrutiny after a video was released last November showing a white police officer firing 16 rounds into Laquan McDonald, a 17-year-old. The officer was charged with murder and arrested.

This footage prompted a flood of protests and, over the days and weeks to follow, a flurry of activity: The Justice Department launched a "pattern or practice investigation" to see whether the department violates the Constitution or federal law. An increasingly embattled Emanuel ousted Garry F. McCarthy, his police superintendent, in December amid the outcry over the shooting, while prosecutor Anita Alvarez was decisively ousted by voters last month in an election where the McDonald case played a major role. Meanwhile, the city is seeing a spike in bloodshed, as murders and shootings far outpace the violence seen in recent years.

"It was already clear, prior to when the report came out, that Chicago was facing some significant challenges on all fronts," said Chuck Wexler, executive director of the Police Executive Research Forum. "On the accountability front, on the use of force front and from the crime front."

"The groundwork had already been set in terms of the need for change," Wexler said. "What this report does is simply underscore that need."

On Dec. 1, the same day he said he was dismissing McCarthy, Emanuel announced that he had created a task force to review how the department handled police accountability, oversight and training. This task force said the McDonald shooting and video were a tipping point that "gave voice to long-simmering anger" in the community.

In its report, the task force members described how they consistently heard about how some city police officers are racist. They also provided statistics, saying that three-quarters of the more than 400 people shot by police from 2008 to 2015 were black; about a third of the city's residents are black. Looking at street stops and traffic stops found that black people were also overrepresented there as well, the task force said.

For the energized activist community in Chicago, this report offered a sense of validation — and some surprise — at seeing these issues scrutinized by the mayor's own task force.

"I was pretty shocked," said Ja'Mal Green, a high-profile activist. "Maybe we are at a time now that people just want to see change. So much has been going on in the city ... maybe everybody wants to wake up."

Green said he and another activist are meeting with Johnson — a Chicago native who has been with the police department since 1988 and was, most recently, its chief of

patrol — next week for a gathering the new superintendent requested.

The report itself was only a starting point for what comes next, others said. Trina Reynolds-Tyler, communications co-chair of the reform group Black Youth Project 100, said that even though the task force's statements about racism were surprisingly blunt, activists need to remain focused on what comes after.

"People will take this as a win, and I think there is a shimmer of light that comes with the acknowledgment of systemic racism, but when we think of the reform and changes that need to happen in this city, it doesn't involve investing more of city dollars in training for police officers," she said. It must mean giving community members more involvement in the policing process, Reynolds-Tyler said.

Lamon Reccord, a 17-year-old organizer and activist, said he wanted to see more accountability and transparency for officers who shoot people. He said he had arranged a meeting with Johnson and John Escalante, who served as interim superintendent between McCarthy and Johnson.

"I see a change in the future. I see activists like me sitting down with Eddie Johnson and working together collectively," Reccord said. "Protesting is a good thing, but if people aren't sitting down and writing policy to make a change, nothing is going to happen."

The Rev. Ira Acree said he was "stunned" that a task force picked by Emanuel would produce such a report.

"Never in a million years would I have anticipated such a blistering report with so much truth in it," said Acree, pastor of Greater St. John Bible Church on the city's west side.

Acree he said he was optimistic because the task force's findings included "courageous and bold recommendations."

That list of recommendations is long, and it includes beefing up oversight, creating an inspector general for public safety, releasing more reports and adding more body cameras. But right now, these are just recommendations, not new policies, said Acree, who chairs a social justice group in the city.

"It's easy to go here and cherry-pick the lower hanging fruit," Acree said of Emanuel. "But he needs to do something bold. For a weakened mayor, this is actually an opportunity to do a couple of things."

Before the task force's report was released, Emanuel had said he would be open to the group's recommendations. He spoke on Wednesday, before he was briefed by the task force, and has not commented publicly on its conclusions or recommendations since then.

"The task force put a lot of thought and time into developing more than 100 recommendations, and the mayor is going to give the report the review it deserves," Stephen Spector, a spokesman for Emanuel, said in a statement Friday.

Emanuel and his office have pointed to other actions he has taken to try to restore the community's shaken trust in the police, including agreeing to release videos from police shootings more quickly, improving deescalation training for police officers and expanding the use of body cameras on officers.

His office also highlighted efforts to diversify the police department, citing Johnson's ascension to superintendent and saying that half of the city's police chiefs and deputy chiefs are black, while an increasing number of minorities recently applied to join the police force.

Acree said the report gives Emanuel a chance to make changes on his own, "rather than waiting on the DOJ that is already in town to make you do it."

The conclusion of the Justice Department's investigation is "the next shoe that's going to fall" in Chicago, Wexler said.

"Many of the things identified in this report are a prelude to what you can expect" from the federal probe, Wexler said. He said Chicago should keep making its own changes and not wait for the other probe to finish. "You can expect that the Department of Justice report will be a formal mandate for change," he said.

The Justice Department said in a statement that it would "review both the task force report and any changes the department makes during the course of our investigation."

This inquiry is ongoing, and the department has dispatched investigators to the city as part of its work, officials said.

"Chicago, we're well into it now," Attorney General Loretta E. Lynch said in an interview with The Post this week. "We've sent a team out there. We're having community meetings ... because we have to have community input into our reviews. That is where we get a lot of information that's very important."

Speaking with police departments is also vital, Lynch said, because when federal investigators look into departments after particular incidents, they often find that "officers have never really been given appropriate training in how to handle those situations or deescalate those situations."

Another official familiar with the Justice Department's investigation said the task force report can be viewed in some ways as "a little bit of a preview" for federal government's investigation because similar issues will be covered in both.

Still, the federal probe will inevitably produce a more detailed report, said the official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because of the investigation is ongoing. "It's parallel, but it's definitely different," the official said. While the task force's report was thorough, the official said, Justice Department would cover much more ground.

A police spokesman did not respond to requests for comment. Johnson has said since the report came out that he does not think that it properly depicts his department.

"No, I don't think it's a true representation," Johnson told NBC Chicago. "I think we have racism in this country, I think we have racism in Chicago, so it only follows that we would have some racism within the CPD."

"But we're not like any other organization," he added. "So the challenge is to root it out, because misconduct of any kind just simply can't be tolerated."

When Emanuel named Johnson as his appointment, he ignored recommendations from the city's police board, drawing criticism from activists who said he circumvented the normal process.

But Emanuel said he felt Johnson was "the right person" to help reduce violence, restore the community's trust in the police and improve morale in the department. Since the McDonald video was released, morale has reportedly worsened in the department, and the task force's findings could further add to that.

"I think the challenge is you do have officers who are not racist, who are not brutal, who will feel tarnished by this," Wexler said. "The key is to support them as you move forward. ... You've got to try to find out how you can support the good cops in Chicago that are trying to do their job. I've worked there and I know, there are decent, hard working cops who are absolutely miserable about a report that kind of tarnishes them in the process."

Experts say the harsh task force assessment, released amid an ongoing federal probe, could help Johnson pursue new reforms even before the Justice Department finishes its investigation.

"It gives a foundation for a new administration to require change," said Franklin E. Zimring, law professor and criminologist at the University of California at Berkeley. "The enemy of reform in Chicago policing is the status quo."

This status quo is also complicated by the spike in violence, Wexler said. Through Sunday, there were 154 murders so far this year, up from 95 at the same point last year, a 62 percent jump, according to police data. The number of shootings also skyrocketed to 744 from 418, a leap of 78 percent. Sexual assaults, robberies and batteries were all up as well.

The city is on pace to have more than 500 killings this year — far below than the annual death toll recorded in the early 1990s, criminologists point out, but still higher than most recent years.

"At the very moment you're expecting your officers to step up and move forward, you have a report that has really identified some institutional challenges," Wexler said.

Experts said in some ways, the situation in Chicago echoes what was seen in Los Angeles, where the police department was investigated and the Justice Department

pushed reforms after officers in an anti-gang unit were accused of beating and framing people. The agreement took more than a decade and cost about \$300 million, but the department was eventually transformed.

"When you looked at Los Angeles, it really in many ways seemed equally daunting," Wexler said. "You had crime issues, and you had morale issues. And yet, what did happen ... those hurdles and obstacles were overcome by leadership, good management and a willingness to put the resources in that were needed."

A city going through what Chicago is facing now often goes through a series of stages as it approaches reform, Wexler said. First comes a report with brutal findings, then an agreement that change is needed. After that, there needs to be a combination of good leadership and resources to pull the community and the police together, he said.

Guarino reported from Chicago. Matt Zaposky in Washington contributed to this report.

Further reading:

Force reforms, mixed results: Here's happens when the Justice Department steps in

Why did police say Laquan McDonald lunged at police

Chicago police drop legal objection to releasing video in shooting

## Chicago's Lawless Police Culture

[Washington Post](#), April 16, 2016

IT IS much easier to condemn police wrongdoing than it is to fix it. How, for example, do you reform a Chicago Police Department that suffers not from a few bad apples but from a rotten culture of racist policing and official impunity? A city task force empaneled by Mayor Rahm Emanuel (D) attempted an answer in a report made public last week.

The depth of the problem came to national attention with the outrageous killing of Laquan McDonald, an African American man whom police shot 16 times. Officers told a false story about the threat that Mr. McDonald posed. Video that contradicted their account was withheld by the city for a year. Prosecutors were slow to act.

The independent review board meant to investigate police abuse turned out to be little more than a rubber stamp run by former law enforcement officials. It examined roughly 400 officer-involved shootings since 2007 — and found problems in precisely one case. The review board and the police Bureau of Internal Affairs failed to fully investigate nearly half the complaints they received between 2011 and 2015. Collective bargaining agreements, which discourage officers from reporting on each other and which give officers 24 hours to get their story straight with partners before making statements, "essentially turned the code of silence into official policy," the panel found.

This broken accountability system has enabled terrible practices. Three-quarters of police shootings between 2008

and 2015 killed or injured African Americans. Chicago police stop people, the vast majority black, at a much higher rate than do police in other major cities. In 2013, Chicago police searched African American drivers at four times the rate of whites, even though they found contraband twice as often on white drivers. Unsurprisingly, the panel found that the Chicago Police Department suffers from widespread mistrust, particularly in the African American community.

Better training is no doubt part of the solution, but hardly enough. The task force recommends creating and adequately staffing a new civilian oversight board and an inspector general's office to provide another layer of independent oversight. It proposes publication of data on arrests, stops and other police behavior. Collective bargaining agreements must also be revised. Noting that many of the people police pick up are unaware of their rights and legal protections, the panel wants arrestees to be able to call lawyers or family members within an hour of being detained. The task force also recommends expanding the city's body camera program and monitoring young officers to spot and correct improper conduct early.

A federal investigation of the Chicago police continues. The Justice Department should demand wide-reaching reforms, particularly if the city does not move swiftly to implement the task force's recommendations.

## **L.A.'s Effort To Equip Officers With Body Cameras Stalls**

By Kate Mather And David Zahniser  
[Los Angeles Times](#), April 16, 2016

Los Angeles' much-touted plan to equip thousands of police officers with body cameras has stalled amid controversy at City Hall over the program's price tag and whether the Police Department got the best deal possible.

Delays have derailed Mayor Eric Garcetti's pledge to provide nearly every officer with a camera by the end of this year, an ambitious proposal that garnered national attention and would make the LAPD the largest law enforcement agency in the country to use the devices on a widespread scale.

LAPD officials do not expect to finish outfitting 7,000 officers until the fall of 2017 at the earliest. And a new proposal, they say, could push the completion date back another year.

The head of the council's public safety committee now wants the LAPD to start over and accept new bids from camera manufacturers.

"This is too big to get wrong," said Councilman Mitch Englander, who told *The Times* he plans to introduce a formal proposal next week. "It's more important that we get it right and not just do it quickly."

Despite the initial fanfare, the camera plan came under scrutiny at City Hall over its costs — \$57.6 million over five years — with one council member saying he was experiencing "sticker shock." In addition, competing technology companies complained they were unfairly left out of the LAPD's selection process, which relied in part on a separate search for body cameras for the much smaller Kern County Sheriff's Department.

Body cameras have been hailed as a key tool for improving oversight of officers and building community trust in police. Garcetti unveiled his initiative in late 2014 following nationwide protests over the way police officers use force, particularly against African Americans.

Three of Garcetti's appointees on the Board of Police Commissioners voiced alarm about Englander's proposal, saying the LAPD had already followed proper contracting procedures and found the best product at a good price.

"This is not good for police transparency, accountability or keeping a commitment to our police officers and community members," commission President Matt Johnson said.

Commissioner Steve Soboroff, a longtime advocate for the camera technology, said city lawmakers are "horribly underestimating the ramifications" of delaying the body camera initiative. Having the LAPD ask camera companies to send in new proposals could drag out the process further, resulting in years of additional challenges and procedural delays by competing firms, he said.

"This is an unequivocal disaster for public safety in Los Angeles," Soboroff said.

Garcetti struck a more diplomatic tone, saying through a spokesman that he hoped the council would act "as quickly as possible."

The LAPD already has about 860 cameras, purchased through private donations. Last year, the LAPD negotiated a contract with Taser International to provide thousands more as well as replacement equipment, digital storage of the recordings and thousands of Tasers.

Weeks later, the council balked at approving the \$31.2-million contract with the Scottsdale firm, sending the proposal back for more deliberations amid concerns over the initiative's overall cost. Council members voiced dismay that the initiative would require scores of LAPD officers to review camera footage, ensure officers were using the devices properly and other tasks. (The LAPD later revised its plan to include more civilian staffers.)

A new vote was never scheduled, and on Friday, council members voted to temporarily use some of the city's camera funds for housing programs.

Englander, perhaps the biggest champion of the body camera program on the council, repeatedly argued last year that the council should push ahead with the Taser contract. But he came under fire from critics who said he should not



have accepted \$8,400 in campaign contributions from a dozen donors affiliated with the company.

On Friday, Englander said his decision to change course had “absolutely nothing to do” with those donations. Starting a new competitive process, he said, would allow the city to answer the complaints of rival companies who say they were excluded from the LAPD’s search.

The market, he said, has “changed dramatically” in recent years. He said he also wanted the city to analyze the effect body cameras could have on costly police-related litigation.

“We will be the biggest department in the country to deploy them, and making sure and ensuring we do that openly, transparently and correctly is important,” he said.

Council President Herb Wesson — who sets the agenda for when and how major issues are decided — said he was comfortable with Englander’s approach.

“This allows us to start anew, or fresh, if you will,” he said. “The only thing I would insist is that we try to fast-track this. Because the commitment is there to make sure we have body cameras in place.”

Wesson said through a spokeswoman that he hoped a search for a camera vendor would last three to six months. But an LAPD official said it would probably take longer, even if the effort was accelerated.

Maggie Goodrich, the LAPD’s chief information officer, said the process of seeking bids, negotiating a deal and finalizing a contract typically takes a year. The department might be able to shave one to three months off because officials already know what they’re looking for in a body camera, she said.

If the council requires new bids, Goodrich said, the complete rollout of the cameras could be delayed until the end of 2018.

LAPD Chief Charlie Beck said he expected officers to eventually get the body cameras. But starting the contract process over, he said, was “not ideal”

“If that’s what we need to do to get this through, then that’s what we’ll do,” he said.

The delays are reminiscent of the problems the LAPD has faced when putting cameras in the department’s patrol cars, a decades-long effort hampered in part by a lack of funding. The LAPD launched its most recent attempt to install those cameras in 2008, but is still working to complete the citywide installation.

Police Commissioner Robert Saltzman said he worries the same could happen to the body camera program if the contracting process was restarted.

“I fear a delay in implementation of the on-body cameras now will begin another troubling and unnecessary multi-year process that will be similarly embarrassing for the city,” he said. “Delaying it now will undermine its likelihood of success and would be regrettable.”

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## Mpls. Shootings Are Up Sharply This Year, Particularly On North Side

By Libor Jany

[Minneapolis Star Tribune](#), April 16, 2016

DeVon Nolen looked up from her work Monday night to count the number of gunshots outside her bedroom window — five, maybe six, all coming from the direction of Newton Avenue N.

She leapt out of bed to check on her 17-year-old niece and 8-year-old daughter, who had been awakened by the gunfire, Nolen later recalled, even though the sound of gunfire was nothing new to her. It’s an all-too-familiar soundtrack for this time of the night, in this part of Minneapolis.

“And if it’s not gunshots, it’s sirens,” Nolen said.

A few hours later, a 23-year-old man stumbled into Methodist Hospital in St. Louis Park, telling staff he’d been shot earlier that night near Newton Avenue N.

The late-night shooting last week in north Minneapolis’ Jordan neighborhood, as recounted by Nolen and in a police report, underscores the renewed violence that is surging across the city and has left police puzzling over how best to tackle the problem.

As of April 11, 74 people had been shot in the city, an 85 percent increase over the 40 shot during the same period last year. Eleven neighborhoods spanning the city saw violent crimes such as rape, robbery or arson showing increases in 2015 compared to a five-year average.

Criminologists caution against reading too much into early month crime statistics, and police say that in some respects, not much is different about this current surge in gun violence. Most shootings are clustered around fast-food restaurants and convenience stores, along busy transit corridors and anywhere where open-air drug dealing thrives. Although the uptick in violence has affected some neighborhoods in the city’s south and northeast sections that are rarely visited by crime, areas that have been persistent pockets of crime continue to see most of the shootings.

Sasha Cotton, youth violence prevention coordinator for the city, said that Minneapolis, like other large U.S. cities, is starting to address violent crime as a public health crisis, focusing on the “long-term systemic problems” that cause crime rather than the “symptoms” of it.

“We have to unravel why kids are not plugged into the community, plugged into the schools,” Cotton said.

Minneapolis police did not respond to multiple requests for comment.

### Gangs still a problem

The past two weeks alone claimed multiple young shooting victims across Minneapolis, some of which appear to be gang-related incidents. A 19-year-old man was caught in crossfire between rival crews and shot in the foot April 8. Three days later, a young woman was shot after someone fired at the vehicle she was sitting in. She was hospitalized in critical condition but expected to survive. Another man was struck in the thigh in the parking lot of the Hennepin County North Regional Library after witnesses say he ventured into enemy gang territory. The shooting resulted in an arrest after a witness identified the alleged shooter as a member of the Tre Tre gang.

Since the beginning of the year, at least 55 people have been shot in north Minneapolis compared with 21 in that same period last year, according to department figures. Last fall, police launched the Violent Crime Investigations Team to speed up prosecutions of violent offenders. The department also has several investigators who specifically focus on gun crimes.

Authorities have rounded up dozens of gang members in the past few years, part of a broad federal-state effort to cripple the two largest gang factions in north Minneapolis — Young N’ Thuggin’ (YNT) and Taliban and their rivals, the 1-9 Dipset and Stick Up Boys gangs — by targeting their leaders. Federal agencies have also taken aim at other crews such as the 10z and the Black Disciples.

But that violence isn’t limited to North Side gangs. Neighborhoods scattered across downtown and south Minneapolis saw increases in crime, particularly along the Hiawatha corridor.

Jibril Afyare says that residents of south Minneapolis’ Somali community are stepping up to do more to keep the streets safe. One of the initiatives that has sprung up in recent months, dubbed the Somali American Citizens League, has long had patrols to escort female employees to their cars at night. He said the community has had a big challenge with neighborhood youth joining street gangs, but that community leaders have started working closely with police to curb the problem.

### Multiple factors

Special agent Martin Siebenaler, a spokesman for the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms’ St. Paul office, said the proliferation of guns on the streets, which often end up in the hands of repeat violent offenders, is also part of the problem. In an effort to stem the flow of guns into the city, Siebenaler says, his agency and others have aggressively gone after straw buyers, who buy guns at the behest of criminals.

“We’re kind of a state where firearms and hunting is part of our culture,” Siebenaler said. “Guns are just unique: They can be lawfully owned items and an hour later they can be illegal.”

Lt. Bob Kroll, president of the Police Officers Federation of Minneapolis, blames the crime surge on a shrinking police force and greater scrutiny of police that has left some officers disengaged. The slowdown in policing has been noticeable.

Through April 11, police in north Minneapolis’ Fourth Precinct made 3,706 proactive stops, compared with 7,732 in the same period last year. Citywide, there has also been a dramatic decline in traffic stops and arrests for serious crimes.

Police say they are trying to get more their officers to get out of their cars as often as possible and walk their beats, and also reviving the so-called JET patrols, a three-year-old partnership with the Hennepin County Sheriff’s Office, the State Patrol and Metro Transit police, that revolves around the idea of saturating high-crime hot spots with officers during the summer months, when crime tends to rise. The department has also proposed assigning more cops to parts of downtown, “where crime mapping and safety perception has indicated a need for extra police presence.”

Neighbors in some of the hardest-hit communities scoff at official assurances that the city is still as safe as it’s ever been, with violent crime hovering near historic lows.

Nolen said that while the shooting outside her house left her angry and jittery, she is hopeful that things will get better.

Crime prevention, she contends, sometimes comes from outside-the-box thinking. For example, community organizers and police found that crime dropped significantly within a one-block radius of a Friday evening farmers market at the corner of Broadway and DuPont avenues N. Pop-up parks around the community have had a similar deterrent effect.

“It’s really about the creation of public spaces and giving people an alternative to violence,” she said.