

The Washington Post

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Democracy Dies in Darkness

FRIDAY, JUNE 26, 2020 • \$2

House passes broad police overhaul bill



ALEX WONG/GETTY IMAGES

Speaker Nancy Pelosi (Calif.), right, and other House Democrats head to a news conference Thursday on the steps of the Capitol to tout the wide-ranging George Floyd Justice in Policing Act, which the chamber passed Thursday night — a day after Senate Democrats blocked a GOP-led bill. “It will save lives,” Pelosi said of the House measure. **Story, A8**

Poll: For black voters, racism is top concern

BY SCOTT CLEMENT,
DAN BALZ
AND EMILY GUSKIN

Black Americans say racism and police conduct are the most important issues in their choice of candidates for president, are sharply critical of President Trump on both matters and see increasingly high stakes in the outcome of November's election, a Washington Post-Ipsos poll finds.

Former vice president Joe Biden currently leads Trump by a not-unexpectedly lopsided mar-

gin among black registered voters, 92 percent to 5 percent. His supporters are about evenly split on whether they are casting an affirmative or negative vote, with roughly half saying they mainly “support Biden” and the other half saying they mainly “oppose Trump.”

Despite the overwhelming support he enjoys, Biden faces clear challenges in mobilizing younger black adults. This is a group that strongly disapproves of Trump but is also notably less enthusiastic about voting at all and is gener-

SEE POLL ON A10

Police chiefs confront bias within their ranks

BY RORY LAVERTY,
MARK BERMAN
AND TIM ELFRINK

WILMINGTON, N.C. — The police officers were discussing work when their conversations moved, as so many have recently, to the protests against racial injustice rippling across the country.

Their words quickly turned hateful. One officer used racist slurs to assail a black judge and a black woman he had arrested, while another described feeling like a civil war was coming and described his plans to go out and

buy an assault rifle.

“We are just going to go out and start slaughtering them f---ing n---s,” the officer said.

Their conversations in early June probably would have remained between them, except for a squad car camera that was accidentally activated and recorded the rhetoric. The private racial vitriol among officers in the public trust was discovered the next day by a department official.

On Wednesday, Wilmington Police Chief Donny Williams said his department had fired the three off-

SEE POLICING ON A8

CDC: Coronavirus may have infected 24 million in U.S.

DIRECTOR SAYS OFFICIAL TOTALS ARE LOW

92 to 95 percent of country could still be susceptible

BY LENA H. SUN
AND JOEL ACHENBACH

The number of people in the United States who have been infected with the coronavirus is likely to be 10 times as high as the 2.4 million confirmed cases, based on antibody tests, the head of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Thursday.

CDC Director Robert Redfield's estimate, shared with reporters in a conference call, indicates that at least 24 million Americans have been infected so far.

The antibody tests examine a person's blood for indicators that the immune system has mounted a response to an infection. The serological surveys are being done around the country as epidemiologists try to measure the reach of the virus to date. Redfield said he believes 5 to 8 percent of the population has been infected so far.

Significantly, that would mean 92 to 95 percent remain susceptible to a coronavirus infection. Experts say this is the critical data point showing that the pandemic remains in its early stages and people need to continue to try to limit the viral spread.

The CDC director's comments came as case counts continued to surge to record levels in many states, particularly in the South and West, during warm-weather months that many had hoped would provide a lull in the pandemic.

Alabama, Nevada and Missouri reported single-day records for new coronavirus cases, a day after the national total hit a single-day high of 38,173 cases.

Amid signs that Texas has lost control of the epidemic, Gov. Greg Abbott (R) announced the state would pause its reopening to try to halt the flow of infections. He

SEE CDC ON A13

How Arizona 'lost control of the epidemic'

BY JEREMY DUDA,
ISAAC STANLEY-BECKER
AND CHELSEA JANES

PHOENIX — A drive-up testing site equipped for several hundred people in West Phoenix was swarmed on Saturday by about 1,000 people, leaving some baking in their cars for hours.

A nearby testing station has already reached capacity for this weekend, appointments vanishing within minutes. Hospitals are filling up. Restaurants are again shutting down, more than a month after Arizona reopened its economy under the mantra “Return Stronger.”

Arizona has emerged as an epicenter of the early summer coronavirus crisis as the outbreak has metastasized, flaring across new parts of the country and, notably, infecting more young people.

Maricopa County, which includes Phoenix, is recording as many as 2,000 cases a day, “eclipsing the New York City boroughs even on their worst days,” warned a Wednesday brief by disease trackers at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, which observed, “Arizona has lost control of the epidemic.”

But physicians, public health experts, advocates and local officials say the crisis was predictable in Arizona, where local ordinances requiring masks were verboten until Gov. Doug Ducey (R) reversed course last week. State leaders did not take the necessary precautions or model safe behavior, these observers maintain,

SEE ARIZONA ON A12

Behind Northam's statue push: A descendant of slaves

BY GREGORY S. SCHNEIDER

RICHMOND — It was an explosive question, delivered by text message, and Rita Davis was ready for it: Could the governor simply take down Richmond's divisive statue of Robert E. Lee?

As legal counsel to Gov. Ralph Northam, Davis had been researching that very topic for a year. Now it was being posed by her colleague, Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security Brian Moran, who had just watched a crowd angry about police violence against African Americans gather outside a state office building as Northam (D) held a news conference inside.

Moran was thinking of Charlottesville in 2017, when white supremacists rallied around a statue of Lee and a young counterprotester was killed. Richmond's even bigger monument was now the focal point of demonstrations. What if alt-

SEE LAWYER ON A11



JOHN MCDONNELL/THE WASHINGTON POST

Rita Davis, legal counsel to Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam and the first woman to serve in that role, helped devise the legal strategy for removing the Robert E. Lee monument in Richmond.

Syrian civil war combatants now clash in Libya's conflict

Many scorned at home as mercenaries who abandoned own fight

BY KAREEM FAHIM
AND ZAKARIA ZAKARIA

The Syrian fighter was a teenager when he joined his first militia and a veteran of two armed groups by age 25, a close relative said. He posted brooding photos of himself on Facebook wearing fatigues and posing with guns, proud to share his battlefield exploits.

But there are no posts about Mamdouh's most recent assignment, in Libya, where he joined a Russian-backed security force, according to the relative. The mission was supposed to be secret, but it also carried a whiff of shame. It transformed Mamdouh

from fighter to foreign mercenary and placed him on the battle lines facing other Syrians, former adversaries in their own country's civil war but now squaring off in someone else's.

When he called his family in Syria last week from Libya to ask for their prayers, his father called Mamdouh a dog and said he would refuse condolence calls if the fighter was killed, according to the relative, who lives in Turkey. The relative spoke on the condition that his name as well as Mamdouh's full name be withheld to prevent retaliation against the family.

Thousands of Syrian men have been recruited for the warring sides in Libya over the past year, coaxed to fight there by powerful foreign sponsors and promised lucrative salaries or other incentives, according to a Syrian human rights monitor, Syrian opposition members, and Libyan and

SEE SYRIANS ON A13

IN THE NEWS



MARK GARLUCK

New cosmic neighbors Astronomers have discovered at least two, and possibly three, planets orbiting a nearby star. A3

Stress tests The Federal Reserve moved to crack down on the nation's largest banks. A19

THE NATION Several service members' actions have come under scrutiny as the U.S. military grapples with white supremacy in its ranks. A2
The Trump administration has proposed removing protections for a tract of public land in Alaska to allow oil and gas drilling. A3
Campaign aides want President Trump to focus on Wisconsin. A6
Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms's honesty about her experiences has made her a leading voice in the national de-

bate over policing. A9

THE WORLD Afghan security officials report high rates of suspected coronavirus cases among troops, hindering their ability to fight the Taliban. A14

THE ECONOMY Unilever said the company would stop promoting skin “whitening” or “lightening” and rebrand its “Fair & Lovely” cream. A15

The government reportedly sent coronavirus stimulus payments

totaling nearly \$1.4 billion to almost 1.1 million dead people. A18
The “Hamilton” movie's premiere on Disney Plus next month marks a test for the streaming service. A24

THE REGION D.C. lawmakers advanced measures to cut \$15 million from the police department budget, a move activists criticized as insufficient and the police chief warned would lead to a hiring freeze. B1

Protesters gathered in the District to denounce a statue of Abraham Lincoln that depicts the former president standing

over a kneeling African American man. B1

The presidents of three of Virginia's largest public universities have asked the state to set aside \$200 million to increase coronavirus testing. B1

The now-acting chief of the U.S. Park Police asked twice for the dismissal of criminal cases, a report says. B1

OBITUARIES Sergei Khrushchev, former Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev's son who grew disillusioned with the communist system and became a U.S. citizen, died at 84. B5

INSIDE



WEEKEND Dating at a distance
Ten ideas to connect with a partner, whether in person or online.

STYLE Relationships' preexisting conditions
Familiar problems crop up during a unique crisis. C1

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