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RAPPIN' Thomas Wyatt

Medal of Freedom

So, the House of Representatives impeached Donald Trump — again — on Wednesday; exactly one week before he is officially to be relieved of duty on the 20th this month. Ordinarily, that would be epic news. And to some, it might well be. However, these aren't epic times. This is almost par for the course considering what we've gone through over the past four years.

Moreover, Trump sought to give the Medal of Freedom to New England Patriots head coach Bill Belichick. Let me say that again: Bill Belichick.

The Presidential Medal of Freedom is awarded to people whom, among other things, have made an especially meritorious contribution to the security or national interests of the United States.

Bill Belichick couldn't name a single thing he has ever done in his entire life to be bestowed such an honor. Which is why I applaud him for declining this "honor" from Trump just hours after the insurrection brought upon by the president's supporters.

But I'll tell you who should receive that honor. Capitol Police Officer Eugene Goodman. Officer Goodman is credited with saving the lives of the members of congress on the day they were validating the electoral college vote in the favor of President-Elect Joe Biden.

I've watched countless videos of Officer Goodman's actions when confronted by a mob of raving insurrectionists. I couldn't believe what I was watching. I'm still impressed by his pure awesomeness in the eyes of such a threat to his own life.

But one YouTuber, asked the ultimate question: Could I have done what Goodman did in that very same situation? I've thought about it for hours.

To my own detriment, I must inform you, I doubt it; with every ounce of my being. Goodman didn't fire a single shot. I, however, would've unloaded the clip.

But the real question is: Why can't the police show that same restraint for us?

Analysis: Make Government Boring Again



Security for the opening day of the Texas Legislature's session was been ramped up after violence in Washington D.C. last week. Jan. 12, 2021. Credit: Jordan Vonderhaar for The Texas Tribune

BY ROSS RAMSEY | THE TEXAS TRIBUNE

(TXT) - The Texas Legislature is back, and on their opening day Tuesday, state lawmakers gave you no reason to stop what you're doing and pay attention.

That's almost a headline in itself.

Tuesday morning was bright and chilly in Austin. Except for the two dozen state troopers in riot garb at each of the four ground-level entrances, the Texas Capitol seemed as quiet as it was a week earlier.

The state police were there because of the uprising at the U.S. Capitol last week and because of threats and rumors of disruptive visits to state capitols between now and next week's inauguration of Joe Biden and Kamala Harris to succeed Donald Trump and Mike Pence.

But Texas government was operating outside the drama zone. Both chambers got a welcome-let's-get-to-work speech from Gov. Greg Abbott.

State Rep. Dade Phelan, R-Beaumont, was elected speaker of the House with only two dissents. There were no other candidates, no debates, no scuffles — no conflict. The Senate was even quieter, electing Sen. Brian Birdwell, R-Granbury, to the largely ceremonial posting of president pro tempore.

Not much to see here. What a relief.

Both chambers will vote on their operating rules this week and then disappear until Jan. 26. The first two weeks of the 20-week session will be all but over, just like that.

The opening calm started a day earlier. Comptroller Glenn Hegar, one of the first officials to say "recession" last spring as the pandemic spread across the state, made a surprisingly optimistic economic forecast on Monday. His early warnings that the current state budget could have a shortfall of \$4.6 billion shrunk to slightly less than \$1 billion — relative pocket change in a \$250 billion state budget.

And for the two years that follow the current budget — the two years that this new Legislature will write a budget to cover — Hegar predicted state



revenues will be about the same as they've been over the last two years. Budget folks would like to have more money to cover growth in the state population and inflation, but they'll take it. It's a forecast that will require some belt-tightening, but not the chainsaw budgeting that some had feared.

It's not the sort of news that sends social media into a noticeable swirl, or stirs the kind of citizen activism you'd expect if big cuts were being made to popular state programs or services, like public education. This is just plain government — important, worth debating about, consequential — and not a spark that ignites fringe groups with violence and vandalism in mind.

Sparks might fly as the session continues. Redistricting is on the agenda — drawing new political maps that put this or that neighborhood or city or county into this or that congressional or legislative district. It's dear to politicians. It's as partisan as any issue. And, given the growth of urban and suburban Texas, it will mean taking political power from rural Texans who already feel ignored in Austin and Washington.

Legislation has already been filed to reform law enforcement practices and to enforce racial justice, problems that flared anew last summer with the killing of George Floyd in the custody of Minneapolis police and similar tragedies.

Some legislators want to leash the governor, after 10 months of executive orders addressing the economy and the pandemic — all without legislative input or consultation. That one will make news, too.

Texans from both parties want sweeping changes — not necessarily the same sweeping changes — in election law and in the ways we're allowed to cast our votes.

Those are some of the battles ahead in the Texas Capitol — a building designed, after all, for debating and settling fierce differences in opinion. Some will get heated, like they always do. But Tuesday's beginning, especially in light of what happened last week in Washington, D.C., was just what you'd hope for: Boring.



INSIDE



D.C. Mayor wants people to vacate Biden's inauguration. See **D.C.** Page 5



Texas strikes sprawling health care law. See **DISABLED** Page 6



Hero officer steers mob away from Senate chamber. See **GOODMAN** Page 7

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Church of Christ at East Side Learning Center Ground Breaking Ceremony

By Russell G. Clemons, Elder | Church of Christ at East Side



Pictured above (from left to right): Mike Deen, Elder • Curtis Brown, Design – Build Contractor, ASD Consultant, INC • Ed Davis, Elder • Ethan Williams, Elder • Max Hargrove, Deacon • Marlon McGhee, Elder • George Williams, Minister, Church of Christ at East Side • Emanuel Obi, ASD • Gail Williams, Project Manager – Church of Christ at East Side • Darien Brown, Project Manager – ASD • Sam Watson, Elder • Cranston Hardeman, Elder • Darryl Manor, Deacon • Curtis Sells, Deacon • Floyd Boozer, Elder • Russell Clemons, Elder • Ricky Sells, Deacon. (Photo by Sharal Brown)

(AUSTIN, TX) - There was a historic groundbreaking ceremony held by the church of Christ at East Side, located at 5701 E. MLK Jr. Blvd, Austin TX, on Sunday, December 27, 2020. East Side's minister, elders, and deacons along with the project managers, participated in this exciting and highly anticipated ceremony.

The groundbreaking is the first phase of the long-envisioned structure that will comprise a Learning Center and Family Life Center. The new multipurpose Learning Center will be a state-of-the-art facility. It will be used for Christian education, curriculum development, life-



Pictured above (left to right): Gail Williams – Project Manager, Church of Christ at East Side • Curtis Brown – Design – Build Contractor, ASD INC, • Darien Brown – Project Manager – ASD. (Photo by Sharal Brown)

skills (e.g., marriage classes, parenting, financial planning, etc.) and other events, activities,

and services beneficial for both the church and community. It will have 23 classrooms that will ser-

vice preschoolers through adults. In addition to the classrooms, the Learning Center will have other essential areas to help serve the church and the community.

The church has contracted with ASD Consultants, Inc. in Austin, Texas to design and construct this facility. Curtis Brown, ASD CEO and the Design-Build Contractor of this project anticipates the completion of the Center within the next 15 months. The congregation looks forward to sharing the formal Grand Opening with the community.

To God be the Glory – we give thanks to God from whom all blessings flow. Visit our website: www.eastsidecoc.com.

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By John Harris Jr. VILLAGER Sports Columnist

(VILLAGER) - If I was a Houston Texans fan, which I'm not, by the way, I'd put that sorry NFL franchise in my rear-view mirror so fast it wouldn't be funny.

It was bad enough that former Texans owner, the late Bob McNair, compared Black NFL players to prison inmates when making a point about Colin Kaepernick taking a knee during the national anthem, or that McNair hired a coach, Bill O'Brien, and gave him total control over all personnel decisions.

One of O'Brien's more controversial personnel moves involved trading star receiver DeAndre Hopkins for what amounted to some trinkets and beads and a handful of belly-button lint.

Fast forward to Cal McNair, who replaced his late father as team owner and actually solved one problem when he fired O'Brien. But Cal McNair created

Deshaun Watson is Unhappy With Texans



Deshaun Watson (#4) | NFL Quarterback | Houston Texans | Years Pro: 4

a bigger problem when he broke a promise he made to franchise quarterback Deshaun Watson.

According to media reports, Cal McNair opened the door for Watson to be included in the team's search for a new general manager and possibly who the next head coach will be. That didn't happen, however, as McNair hired former New England Patriots personnel chief Nick Caserio without consulting Watson - as promised.

Additionally, after Watson recommended Kansas City Chiefs offensive coordinator Eric Bieniemy, who is Black, as a potential head coaching candidate, the Texans didn't interview Bieniemy, further alien-

ating and angering Watson.

That led to a couple of interesting responses from Watson on social media, including this telling gem: "Big Bro told me when they painted you a picture, don't let them paint you another picture."

I'm not a mind reader, but something tells me that Watson isn't happy with the Texans owner, or the team's decision to renege on its promise to involve him in potential hires.

That said, now the word on the street is that Watson is so unhappy that, despite signing a whopping four-year, \$156-million contract extension, he would actually consider waving his no-trade clause and force a trade

to the Miami Dolphins, who could ship quarterback Tua Tagovailoa and their 2021 first-round draft pick that the Dolphins received from the Texans for tackle Laremy Tunsil, back to Houston.

You see why I'm no fan of the Texans?

And can you understand why Watson feels like he's wasting some of the best years of his NFL career with the dysfunctional and racially/socially blind Texans?

Maybe Watson will change his mind and decide that Houston is the best place for him, after all.

But don't count on it. The damage has been done, the horse is out of the barn, and the Texas, for lack of a better explanation, are still the Texans.

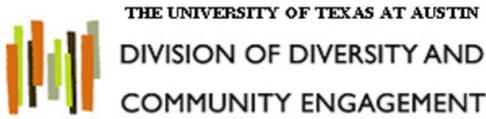
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Youth of Today
Hope of Tomorrow



National Day of Service During COVID



Lacey Johnson
Connally High School

With the National Day of Service approaching and my desire to increase my community service hours, I have been seeking projects or activities that can be performed virtually. Monday, January 18 is the 26th anniversary of the day of service that celebrates the Civil Rights leader's life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King. This holiday is observed each year on the third Monday in January as "a day on, not a day off". All Americans are encouraged to volunteer to improve their communities. I also learned that because of COVID some colleges are also waiving some of their focus on community service as part of the college admissions process. Before conducting research, I completed my first virtual project by sending Christmas cards and "Thinking of You"

cards to members of my church on the sick and shut-in list.

During my research I discovered several projects that teens can perform without leaving home. Three projects really sparked my interest. The DOROT organization will match you with an older adult for weekly phone conversations for a four week period. The Boston Library is seeking volunteers to transcribe anti-slavery manuscripts from the 19th century and the Bookshare project will allow you to contribute your skills and passions to help people with print disabilities read by scanning, proofreading and describing images.

As we approach the 2021 National Day of Service, I hope each of us will reflect back on 2020 and make the time and effort to commit to service. My Jack and Jill Chapter will be supporting Souper Bowl Sunday by volunteering at the food bank and making financial donations. Souper Bowl of Caring is a national grassroots effort that uses Super Bowl weekend to raise funds and food to help tackle hunger. The needs in our community are great, and if we all do something, we can make a difference during these harsh times.

Domestic Terrorist Attack at the Capitol



Sarah Robertson
Connally H. S.

On Wednesday January 6, 2021 Trump supporters and white supremacist raided the capitol when Congress held a joint session to finalized the votes for President-Elect Joe Biden. The reason behind this attack is because Trump supporters believe that this election was "rigged" and "stolen" from them, even though that is not the case. I remember waking up for school seeing this news all over my social media.

Even though this terrorist attack/coup didn't come as a surprise for me, the way that security and police officers handled this situation was more shocking. See-

ing the police treat these terrorists compared to the Black Lives Matter protesters in June was night and day. In June, there were many violent police attacks on peaceful protest and even the national guard was surrounding the Capitol to keep protesters out.

This past Wednesday, those same guards and police were nowhere to be found. Due to this attack the House has issued another letter of impeachment towards Donald Trump in hopes of getting him removed from office by the 25th amendment. Donald Trump has also been permanently banned from various social media accounts including Twitter, Google, Tiktok, etc, due to his incitement in these riots. As we move forward in the coming weeks, President-elect Joe Biden inauguration is to be held on January 20, 2021 and a new era of change is to come. Remember to wash your hands, wear a mask, and stay safe.

Letter from Birmingham Jail



SaNaya White Ann Richards

August 1963, from the Birmingham jail, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., wrote a letter to eight caucasian religious leaders of the South who expressed concern and caution toward his actions. After demonstrating nonviolent actions in a movement against segregation, Dr. King was detained. This letter is important to be recognized as it portrays additional heroic, brave, confident, and persistent acts of Dr. King working to make a difference in the world. Before diving into the letter, it is important to understand who he was. Most individuals know Dr. King from his well-known "I Have a Dream" speech. Dr. King fought for equality, liberty, freedom, and he is honored for his Civil Rights advancements through nonviolence and civil disobedience inspired by his Christian beliefs. He fought for the rights of African Americans, minorities, in hopes that freedom would come to them in the future. Dr. King never gave up.

Monday, January 20, is a day celebrated to recognize his activism and the footsteps he put forth for us to follow. Hope was given to the African American community as he had a plan to better the future and provide more opportunities for us as a whole. This is why I would like to shed light on the "Letter from Birmingham Jail". I was not aware of the existence of the letter until recently. Along with my peers, I was assigned to read and annotate the letter in my En-

glish class. At a glance, it may appear to be a story as the letter is six pages long, but as I read it myself, I came to learn so much information that I did not know before. In the letter, Dr. King mentioned that he rarely answered the negative criticism of his work, as he received so much, but that particular criticism from the eight religious leaders spoke out to him. Dr. King told the men that the reason he was in Birmingham was because there was injustice. He said that anyone within the United States could never be considered an outsider. This shows that Dr. King was willing to fight for equality for all, he did not discriminate or section off individuals who he would help and would not help.

Dr. King explained the four basic steps of a nonviolent campaign which included the collection of facts to determine whether injustice is alive, negotiation, self-purification, and direct action. He went into further detail of implementing these steps to reassure those who opposed, that everything he did was planned, and consisted of steps to success. Later in the letter, he mentioned that freedom is never given voluntarily by the oppressor, it must be demanded by the oppressed. So many amazing points were recognized as Dr. King emphasized that no one can understand what another is going through without experience. Additional information that was included was about deciding if a law is just or unjust. These are only a few points recognized within the letter and I recommend you all spend time reading it. It was extremely informative and inspiring to see how although he had opposition, he continued to fight for what he believed in. This would be the perfect time to read it as his day of recognition is almost upon us. I hope everyone has a blessed MLK Day.

Venus



Joshua Moore Manor H. S.

Venus is the second planet from the Sun, orbiting it every 224.7 Earth days. It has the longest rotation period (243 days) of any planet in the Solar System and

State of The Union



Tyler Allen
LBJ High School

What is the stat of the union today? The state needs to be examined. We are faced with many problems worth looking at. There are many challenges.

President Trump has left the world in a mess. The White House was under siege last week. Political figures urged in on it. Our president gave it his blessings. We are glad it was not a "Black lives matter" demonstration gone viral. According to

some of it was it would be a blood bath. Wo will be prosecuted? Just 56% of America want the president to be impeached.

Millions of Americans are out of work. The Covid 19 is raging our country. Inoculating the nation seems to be a problem. I wonder if anybody in control? Hundreds of Americans are making billions while millions are out of work, broke, and hungry. We live in the most wealthy country in the world, and I mean tens of trillions of dollars.

May experts predict that things will go back to normal for the coming years. Although what was considered was not that great for a large part of the country. We still have global warming. We still must deal with wildfires, prison reforms, and educating our youth and others. Who wants to be president?

An Extra Day Off



Rebekah McNeal
Round Rock H. S.

My first week back from break was short, but I got quite a bit of homework. Only 3 days in, and I already have work to get done! At least I know what classes I will and will not be taking next year.

It balanced out

over the weekend. I got three days off instead of two, because of how much it snowed on Sunday. They canceled classes in-person and virtual. I can't believe it snowed like that in Texas! It kept coming down. I think it reached at least three inches or more in my area. My mom and I pulled out our warmest cold-weather clothes and took the dog for a walk in the snow. I think he really enjoyed it! He had on his cute, puffed jacket to keep him warm from the cold.

I think I can manage all my school work now, because of that extra day off. I had more time to adjust to going back after the break. I don't know if this will happen again any time soon, but it was nice! Let's hope so!

rotates in the opposite direction to most other planets (meaning the Sun would rise in the west and set in the east). It does not have any natural satellites. It is named after the Roman goddess of love and beauty.

Venus's surface is very dry. Infrared rays from the sun evaporate water quickly during its evolution, holding it in a long molten state. On its surface today, there is no liquid water because the

blazing sun produced by its ozone-filled atmosphere would cause anyone to boil away. Nearly 2 of the surface of Venus is covered by flat, smooth plains marred by thousands of volcanoes, some which are still active today, ranging from about 0.5 to 150 miles (0.8 to 240 kilometers) wide, with lava flows carving long, winding canals up to more than 3,000 miles (5,000 km) in length, longer than on any other planet.

My New Year's Day



Aiden Loyden
Teravista Elementary

It was great to be able to bring in 2021. It's a new year, a fresh start, new resolutions and another year of experiences. I'm thankful that I was able to see the

New Year when others couldn't. This New Year was special for me. I've never gone out on New Year's Eve. I've always stayed home, but this year was different. At 8pm, I went with my dad to his friend's house. We ate wings and I played with his son. We were there until 11. Once we made it home my family and I watched the people in New Orleans count down to the New Year. I toasted with my parents and went to bed. On New Year's Day, my grandmother came over. We ate, laughed, talked and played games. Cheers to 2021!

Snow Day



Ava Roberts
Pflugerville H. S.

January 10, 2021 was an extraordinary day! Why you may ask? Because it snowed and the amount of snow was a lot more than I expected. Snow was a big deal for us in central Texas considering it rarely snows and the temperature is relatively warm during winter. I watched the falling snow. The view was breathtaking and reminded me of a winter greeting card. While I got dressed for my outdoor adventure, I could hardly wait to build a snowman, make a snow angel, and just run through the snow.

When I finally got outside, I seized the op-

portunity to make my first snowman. I did it all by myself and let me tell you snowballs can be deceptively heavy. I was very proud of my armless snowman who stood almost 5 feet tall and was quite plump. I put a red hat on it and snapped plenty of photos.

Next, I tried to make a snow angel but that didn't turn out that well. By the end my hands and feet were ice cold. I reveled in my creation. Although it was a little wonky, it was mine to enjoy. I took pictures then rushed inside to take of the wet clothing and get warm.

I hope everyone enjoyed that marvelous day when we got a chance to experience something other than a cold, rainy day or one of blistering heat. For some, it was the first-time seeing snow in person. For others, it was no big deal cause they've already seen it. Regardless, I hope everyone enjoyed their snow day!

The Importance Of Exercising



Zoey King
Idea Montopolis

Exercising is very important for your body. It improves your health and lowers the risk of developing diseases. It is also proven that exercise can help you sleep at night and boost your mood. You can exercise in a lot of ways like running, riding a bike, swimming, dancing, volleyball, tennis, jumping and much more. Without exercising for a long time you would become un-

healthy and probably get sick. It's good to exercise thirty minutes or more a day. If you also eat healthy it can help you work out but if you eat unhealthy foods, your body won't respond properly to exercise.

Working out can help lengthen your life span. People all over the world work out to stay healthy mentally and physically. Working out keeps your muscles strong and keeps your body in great shape. And not only is exercise good for humans, exercising is also good for some pets that can accompany a person when they are working out. People often exercise with their dogs by taking walks, running, playing fetch or any other games. Exercising can make a huge great impact of someone's life overall everyone should exercise.

HACA and Austin Mayor Steve Adler Announce \$23 Million in New Resources for Homelessness

HACA will provide \$1 million to help homeless persons currently residing in City ProLodge shelters, plus an additional \$22 million to develop new long-term housing for the homeless.

AUSTIN, TEXAS – Mayor Steve Adler and the Housing Authority of the City of Austin (HACA) are pleased to announce two new resources to aid the homeless currently residing in temporary shelters and to build and finance new housing for the homeless.

HACA has received \$1,078,690 through the Mainstream voucher program, authorized by the federal CARES Coronavirus Relief Act, which will help 100 non-elderly disabled individuals transition from the Protective Lodging Facilities (ProLodge) system and find permanent supportive housing. HACA will be working with the City of Austin and community partners to identify and assist those most need help. Criminal background screening criteria have been significantly reduced to ensure that HACA can house more people in need.

This Mainstream voucher program is federally funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and these vouchers assist homeless, non-elderly persons with disabilities. An individual issued a voucher can locate a home in the private rental market. A housing subsidy is paid directly to the property owner/manager, and the household pays between 30-40% of their income for rent. Eligibility for the Mainstream program requires that the household's income not exceed 50% of the Austin metropolitan area median income.

To address the long-term need for permanent supportive housing for the homeless, HACA is also announcing the availability of 100 project-based vouchers to create new housing opportunities. These vouchers are being made available through a request for proposal (RFP) process to develop new permanent supportive housing or the rehabilitation of existing housing to serve the homeless.

HUD also provides the funding for these 100

project-based vouchers through the tenant-based Housing Choice Voucher program and attaches funding to specific units. Developments awarded project-based vouchers will be required to provide available units to the homeless for an expected term of twenty years. HACA plans to make an award of vouchers to selected developments in February and March. The rent paid to assist homeless families, and the vouchers' value over the twenty-year period is expected to exceed \$22 million. Any qualified organization seeking to serve the homeless and access project-based vouchers should refer to the HACA website at hacanet.org/business-opportunities/bid-rfp.

"These new resources are an important tool to realize new supportive housing for those experiencing homelessness in Austin and to help provide permanent housing for those living in the temporary COVID-19 Protective Lodges," said Mayor Steve Adler. "We all see that too many of our neighbors are hurting, and we must do more to get people off the streets and out of tents. I appreciate HACA's leadership, and I want the community to know that the Council and City, the business community, the service providers, and the many community stakeholders are working aggressively this year to tackle homelessness in our city."

"HACA is pleased to provide these new resources to address homelessness in Austin, and we are grateful for Mayor Adler's leadership," added HACA CEO Michael Gerber. "The Housing Authority's mission is to serve people with the lowest income to secure affordable housing. HACA is committed to helping address homelessness in our city, and these two voucher resources will help so many people now, and for years to come."

Mayor Muriel Bowser urges people to avoid DC as Secret Service begins inauguration prep early

By Devan Cole and Barbara Starr | CNN

(Washington, DC) -

Mayor Muriel Bowser on Monday urged Americans to avoid the city during President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration next week and the Secret Service has been instructed to begin its preparations for the inauguration ahead of schedule.

Meanwhile, the National Guard has plans to have up to 15,000 National Guard troops to meet current and future requests for the inauguration, Gen. Daniel Hokanson, the chief of the National Guard Bureau, said Monday. The dramatic increase in troops comes as law enforcement in the nation's capital and around the country brace for further extremist violence amid the transition of power.

Speaking at a news conference Monday, Bowser, a Democrat, stressed that she was concerned about more violent actors potentially coming to the city in the run-up to the inauguration, saying, "if I'm scared of anything, it's for our democracy, because we have very extreme factions in our country that are armed and dangerous."

"Trumpism won't die on January 20," said Bowser, who has asked Trump and acting Homeland Security Secretary Chad Wolf to declare a pre-disaster declaration for DC.

"Our goals right now are to encourage Americans to participate virtually and to protect the District of Columbia from a repeat of the violent insurrection experienced at the Capitol and its grounds on January 6," Bowser said.

The White House said in a statement Monday night that Trump approved the emergency declaration requested by Bowser.

"Today, President



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Donald J. Trump declared that an emergency exists in the District of Columbia and ordered Federal assistance to supplement the District's response efforts due to the emergency conditions resulting from the 59th Presidential Inauguration from January 11 to January 24, 2021," the statement read.

Bowser is also asking the Trump administration to cancel public gathering permits between January 10 and 24.

The emergency declaration request by Bowser would unlock additional funding for the city's security efforts for the inauguration. The mayor ultimately assessed in a letter to Trump over the weekend that despite the security assets the city has in place, "significant preparedness gaps remain that cannot be remedied without this emergency declaration and direct federal assistance."

Bowser told CBS's "Face the Nation" on Sunday that she will also ask the Department of Homeland Security to begin a "national special security event" timeline sooner than planned, as well as include the US Capitol in their coverage area for the inauguration.

Wolf said on Monday that he had instructed the US Secret Service to begin the National Special Security Event operations for Biden's Inauguration on Wednesday, instead of

January 19, the day before Biden is set to be inaugurated.

"In light of events of the past week and the evolving security landscape leading up to the inauguration and at the recommendation of Secret Service Director James Murray, I have instructed the U.S. Secret Service to begin the National Special Security Event operations for the 2021 Inauguration effective Wednesday, January 13th instead of January 19th," Wolf said in a statement. "Our federal, state, and local partners will continue to coordinate their plans and position resources for this important event."

The preparations come as the FBI is warning that there will be protests around the country this weekend.

The bureau has received information indicating "armed protests" are being planned at all 50 state capitols and the US Capitol in Washington in the days leading up to Biden's Inauguration, according to an internal bulletin obtained by CNN.

"Armed protests are being planned at all 50 state capitols from 16 January through at least 20 January, and at the US Capitol from 17 January through 20 January," the bulletin states.

Last month, Biden's camp urged people not to travel to DC for the inauguration, citing the worsening coronavirus



Mayor Muriel Bowser
(Alex Wong/Getty Images)

pandemic. The scaled-back festivities will instead feature a virtual program to allow Americans to participate from home.

The National Park Service also announced Monday that it will close the Washington Monument to visitors for more than two weeks, a time period that includes the inauguration.

The park service said it also "may institute temporary closures of public access to roadways, parking areas and restrooms within the National Mall and Memorial Parks if conditions warrant, to protect public safety and park resources."

A senior defense official told CNN on Monday that National Guard troops who are already earmarked for the inauguration are beginning to arrive, and the plan is to have 10,000 in the city by Saturday.

There is a full rehearsal with troops this week in DC. The Justice Department command center will be extra robust with virtually every Cabinet department and law enforcement agency plugging in, the official said.

Currently there 6,200 National Guard members who already been mobilized in the wake of last week's attack on the Capitol by pro-Trump supporters.



Zambian Community Bid Farewell to Ms. Vallon

by Tsoke (Chuch) Adjavon
VILLAGER Columnist



Samuel, Zambian community member.

(VILLAGER NEWS) - Over the weekend, the Zambian community of Austin came together to say goodbye to Mrs. Vallon, returning to Zambia. The crowd enjoyed entertainment by Alsemeny, a well-known Zambian American musician in Central Texas.

As the Zambian American Community grows, so does their desire to showcase their rich music and vast history to the rest of Austin, Texas. The Zambian American Community has a lot of great artists like Abolla and Alsemeny. Apart from their independence, the Guinean American community also organizes special events.

Over the years, Central Texas has seen a drastic increase in the African Diaspora and Guinea community. This growth is fueled by the Central Texas economy, where African immigrants can find manufacturing jobs that pay a decent wage.

Austin the Least Available for Minimum Wage Workers

by Tsoke (Chuch) Adjavon
VILLAGER Columnist

(VILLAGER NEWS) - Over the years, Austin

has transformed itself from a sleepy government and college town into an international technology capital. Recently, Austin hit one million inhabitants, which highlights the fast growth. However, Austin's accelerated growth has left thousands behind, creating an overwhelming homeless population due to low wages.

Although Austin has a Democratic Party-led Mayor and City Council, there is hardly any safety net for those making minimum wage.



Tech giant digs the local vibe. Photos courtesy of Facebook

According to political experts, the city leaders have been busy cutting deals with big companies but not worried about the average worker's wages.

Finally, this type of policy has consequences

like average families are moving to the suburbs, such as Pflugerville, Manor, Round Rock, and Cedar Park. Also, the Austin Independence School district has seen a drop in student enrollment."

Austin Sees A Massive Covid 19 Surge

by Tsoke (Chuch) Adjavon
VILLAGER Columnist

(VILLAGER NEWS) - Due to the poor management of the re-opening process, Texas has seen a surge of the COVID 19 cases, with over 150,000 deaths.

According to the Texas Department of Emergency Management, the growth rate of the COVID 19 has increased by almost 415 percent since June 4, 2020, in the 78660 zip code (Pflugerville). As a result, they have opened a free testing area located at the Pfield.



According to the TPEM, "with cases on

the rise, it is important for people to follow the COVID 19 guidelines established by the CDC, which includes social distancing." Despite those issued guidelines, Austin has seen a massive surge in cases. As a result, Mayor Adler is seeking to set up restrictions on local bars.

Disabled Texans Worry Loss of Affordable Care Act Could Cost them Programs that Help them live Independently

by Trinady Joslin
Texas Tribune

Laura Halvorson relies on two 24-hour breathing machines to keep her alive. The machines cost \$2,000 per month.

They're paid for through her insurance from the Affordable Care Act. Halvorson, who is 36 and lives in San Antonio, has muscular dystrophy, a disease that causes progressive loss of muscle mass.

For years, Halvorson was a teacher in North Texas and received health insurance through her employer. But eventually her disability progressed to the point that she could no longer work.

Now she's worried that the U.S. Supreme Court will strike down the health care law that has helped her live independently. Without it, Halvorson fears she'll end up in the state's care at a nursing home.

Texas is leading a group of conservative states, with the backing



Laura Halvorson worries that the U.S. Supreme Court will strike down the health care law that has helped her live independently. Credit: Chris Stokes for The Texas Tribune

of outgoing President Donald Trump, in a legal battle to have the sprawling health care law struck down. Texas argued last month before the U.S. Supreme Court that when Congress in 2017 eliminated the individual mandate, a tax for people who do not obtain health insurance, the rest of the law became unconstitutional.

A ruling is expected to come next year, and

for Halvorson and 3 million other disabled Texans, the stakes feel impossibly high.

Without the Affordable Care Act, disabled Texans stand to lose programs that have allowed more people to stay in their homes, rather than state-run institutions. And like many Americans, they fear they could again face insurance companies that would deny them coverage because they have

preexisting conditions.

"The ACA was a huge deal in terms of fairness for insurance for all Americans, but certainly for people with disabilities," said Brian Shannon, a law professor at Texas Tech University who has served on the Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities.

Texas is one of eight states that opted into the Community First Choice Option program, made possible by the ACA. The Medicaid program gives states funding to help keep disabled people in their homes who might otherwise end up in nursing facilities or other institutionalized care.

Sheena Walter, 35, lives in Austin and has used the Community First Choice program for four years. Walter is autistic and needs personal care attendants that help with tasks like cooking and laundry five days a week.

For years, she's had personal care attendants paid for by Medicaid, but they didn't always show up. Sometimes, Walter waited over a week for someone to arrive and sus-

tained herself on cold sandwiches.

Now her CFC service coordinator helps her advocate for the care she needs and acts as a mediator when attendants aren't doing their jobs.

Before CFC, the state primarily relied on home- and community-based services, a Medicaid waiver, to provide at-home care for people with disabilities.

But there are more than 100,000 Texans on a waiting list to receive those services, and some people will wait more than 15 years before their number is called.

Advocates stress that CFC is a vital service, but it does not replace the state's home- and community-based services, which provide more specialized care and therapy.

Around 25,000 Texans were using the CFC program in 2019, according to Texas Health and Human Services. But Walter and disability advocacy groups are worried the program may disappear.

Sean Jackson, a Disability Rights Texas attorney, said if the court rules to eliminate the ACA, the program would likely be cut whenever

federal funding ran out.

A spokesperson for Texas Health and Human Services said the agency wouldn't be able to speculate on the continuation of the program.

What comes next?

Before the ACA, people with preexisting conditions weren't guaranteed insurance policies. Companies could simply turn them away or give them a policy that didn't cover preexisting conditions while charging them higher rates, Shannon said.

Now companies are required to offer a plan to anyone who applies, regardless of their health status, and they have to charge people in the same age group similar rates.

If the ACA were to go away, insurance companies likely wouldn't renew contracts with people with preexisting conditions because on paper, they cost more to insure, Jackson said.

The act also eliminated lifetime and annual caps, which put a limit on how much money a company would spend on a person's benefits before they would be required to pay it themselves, and allowed children to stay on their parents' insurance until they were 26 instead of 19.

February 3-5, 2021 Central Texas African American Family Support Conference



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Texas House Elects Dade Phelan Speaker as 2021 Legislative Session gets Underway

by Cassandra Pollock
Texas Tribune

(TXT) - The Texas House on Tuesday elected state Rep. Dade Phelan as the next House speaker, ushering into office a new leader who will oversee a chamber facing its toughest set of legislative challenges in years against the backdrop of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.



State Rep. Dade Phelan, R-Beaumont. Credit: Miguel Gutierrez Jr.

The House voted 143-2 for Phelan, with four members not voting. The two members

who voted against Phelan were GOP freshmen Bryan Slaton and Jeff Cason.

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Capitol police officer Eugene Goodman hailed as 'a hero'

by Tom Hals
REUTERS



Capitol Police officer Eugene Goodman led an angry mob of Trump supporters away from the sitting Senate during last week's riot. Source: Twitter / New York Times

(Reuters) - A police officer is being hailed for his role steering an angry mob away from the Senate chambers in Wednesday's deadly storming of the U.S. Capitol by supporters of President Donald Trump.

Capitol Police officer Eugene Goodman, identified by CNN reporter Kristin Wilson, can be seen getting rioters to move away from the Senate as police raced to secure the chamber.

In the confrontation, Goodman puts himself between a man wearing a black T-shirt for the QAnon conspiracy movement and a hallway leading to the Senate chambers, then shoves the person to induce him and the crowd to chase Goodman toward officers in the opposite direction.

Capitol Police did not respond to a request regarding the identify of the officer.

"As trump's fascist mob ransacked the US Capitol, this brave USCP officer kept murderous rioters away from the Senate chamber and saved the lives of those inside. God bless him for

his courage," U.S. Representative Bill Pascrell wrote in a Twitter message on Sunday.

Trump, who has sought unsuccessfully to overturn his Nov. 3 election loss to Democrat Joe Biden, falsely claiming widespread fraud, had called on supporters gathered in Washington to protest the congressional counting of electoral votes certifying Biden's victory.

Five people including a Capitol Police officer died as a result of Wednesday's rioting and dozens of people have been charged.

Among the mob who stormed the Capitol were individuals who waved Confederate flags and wore clothing carry-

ing insignia and slogans espousing white supremacist beliefs.

The efforts by Goodman, who is Black, gave police the time needed to race to lock the doors to the Senate chamber, according to the Washington Post.

Several members of Congress with military experience, including Ruben Gallego and Jason Crow, have also been praised for calming frightened colleagues and helping with the evacuation during the chaos.

The chief of the Capitol Police resigned following the attack and a federal prosecutor said he would charge any Capitol Police member found to be complicit.



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YouTube Suspends Donald Trump's Account, Removes Content, Disables Comments

By Stephanie Mlot | PCMAG

(PCMAG) - YouTube is the latest platform to remove content and suspend Donald Trump. The video streaming site today announced a temporary ban on new content for at least seven days alongside the removal of some new content.

The account, which boasts 2.78 million subscribers and more than 825 million views since March 2015, still features uploads made as recently as Jan. 12—ahead of YouTube's brief embargo.

YouTube stated, "Given the ongoing concerns about violence, we will also be indefinitely disabling comments on President Trump's channel, as we've done to other channels where there are safety concerns found in the comments section."

This marks Trump's first strike on YouTube. While full privileges are usually restored after one week, the point remains on the channel for 90 days. Second and third strikes within those three months will result in permanent removal from the site. Each strike expires 90 days from the time it's issued; deleting offending content will not remove a strike. It seems the earliest President Trump could regain control of his account is on Jan. 20—inauguration day.

Trump's YouTube suspension comes after a number of major social networks—including Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitch—banned or disabled the president after he incited the Jan. 6 coup at the nation's Capital that left five people dead.

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Photo: Chestnut-sided Warbler

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Insurrection, (noun): The act or an instance of open revolt against civil authority or a constituted government.



desecration.



Trump supporters clash with police and security forces as they push barricades to storm the US Capitol in Washington, DC on January 6, 2021 [Roberto Schmidt/AFP]



An image of a man carrying a Confederate flag through the U.S. Capitol. (Saul Loeb / AFP/Getty Images)