

Wilks Gets 1st Win As Leader



The Carolina Panthers won just their second game of the season Sunday while playing with a third-string quarterback and interim head coach.

P.J. Walker threw for 177 yards and two touchdowns for Carolina (2-5) in place of injured Baker Mayfield and Sam Darnold. The Panthers won for the first time under interim coach Steve Wilks, who replaced Matt Rhule when he was fired Oct. 10.

Tampa Bay's defense allowed the Panthers to rush for 173 yards.

D'Onta Foreman ran for 118 yards, Chuba Hubbard added 63 yards and a touchdown and the Panthers handed the Buccaneers their third loss in four games.

Carolina came in as a 13 1/2-point underdog and having lost 12 of 13 games. It's now one game behind the Bucs and Atlanta Falcons for first place in the NFC South.



Key Players In Trial Of Ex-Cops Charged

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Jury selection begins Monday in the trial of two former Minneapolis police officers charged in George Floyd's death. J. Alexander Kueng and Tou Thou are both charged with aiding and abetting second-degree unintentional murder and aiding and abetting second-degree manslaughter.

Floyd, who was Black, died on May 25, 2020, after another former officer, Derek Chauvin, who is white, pressed his knee on Floyd's neck for about nine minutes while Floyd was handcuffed and pleading that he couldn't breathe. Kueng knelt on Floyd's back during the arrest, and Thou held bystanders back. Another officer, Thomas Lane, has pleaded guilty to a state charge and is not facing trial.

Among key figures for the trial:

THE JUDGE

Hennepin County Judge Peter Cahill handled Chauvin's trial and is back on the bench for this one. Cahill started in the county public defender's office in 1984 and worked for 10 years as a prosecutor, serving as top advisor to U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar when she was the county's head prosecutor. Cahill, a judge since 2007, is known for

(See **KEY PLAYERS**, P. 2)

Cops: Rampage Started When 15-Yr.-Old Shot, Killed His 16-yr.-Old Brother

By Gary D. Robertson and Ben Finley

Associated Press

Police believe the shooting rampage that left five dead in North Carolina's capital city last week began when the 15-year-old suspect shot his older brother, according to a report released Thursday.

More details about the shootings emerged from the four-page preliminary report that Raleigh's police chief provided to the city manager. Such summaries are written within five business days of an officer-involved shooting.

Those who died in the Oct. 13 shooting included an off-duty city police officer who lived in the Hedingham neighborhood where the shootings began, according to police. Two others were wounded, one of them another community resident who remains in critical but stable condition, the report said.

Witnesses had described a shooter wearing camouflage

clothing, which the report confirmed, and firing a shotgun in the subdivision and along a nearby walking trail.

Police said the suspect—still not named in the report because he is a juvenile but identified by his parents last week as Austin Thompson—was captured in a barnlike structure more than four hours after the first emergency call.

The report said the teen had traveled nearly 2 miles from where his brother was found shot and stabbed. Police said they exchanged gunfire with the teen and one officer was injured. The officer was treated at a hospital and released that evening.

The report said officers gave repeated commands for the suspect to surrender and special officers worked to figure out his exact location. Police ultimately decided to advance toward the building where he was found.

When officers arrested the teen, he appeared to have a single gunshot wound and had

a handgun in his waistband. A shotgun and shells were lying nearby, according to the report. It didn't describe how he obtained the weapons or how he was wounded.

The report was released the same day the first memorial service for victims was held at a Raleigh church—where a basketball jersey and a pair of shorts were placed atop a closed coffin.

James Thompson, 16, the youngest of those killed and the brother of Austin Thompson, was "just getting to that age when the whole world was opening up for him," Jeff Roberts, senior pastor of Trinity Baptist Church, said during the service.

"And we remember his life—a life filled with joy and laughter and experiences that shaped him and were shaping his future," the pastor said.

When he was younger, James Thompson was a calm and smiling presence at Sunday school but a fierce player in the church's basketball program.

He was a child who picked up used golf balls at the golf course, cleaned them and resold them.

As he grew older, the teen developed an interest in cooking and would try out new ideas after watching YouTube videos of celebrity chef Gordon Ramsay. The teen loved deep-sea fishing. And he was starting to think about college, possibly at nearby North Carolina State University.

"We don't want this moment to define James's life," the pastor said. "Part of the events of the past week will be part of his story. But I want you to know it's not all of his story."

Roberts also spoke about the names of the other victims.

"We are a community who is grieving, grieving with this family and grieving with so many other families as well," Roberts said.

Meanwhile, Austin Thompson remains in critical condition,

(See **RAMPAGE**, P. 2)

Beasley Widens Money Gap Over Budd

By Gary D. Robertson

Associated Press

North Carolina Democratic U.S. Senate candidate Cheri Beasley saw her fundraising advantage over Republican rival Ted Budd widen during the past three months and entering the campaign's final weeks.

Budd's campaign reported over the weekend—on the Federal Election Commission's deadline date—that it raised \$4.77 million during the three months ending Sept. 30. That's barely

one-third the \$13.36 million that Beasley told the FEC that she raised — in keeping with what her campaign already had disclosed last week.

Beasley has been the top fundraiser among all of the candidates that sought to succeed retiring Republican Sen. Richard Burr since she entered the race 18 months ago. Her campaign also outspent Budd during the quarter by a 4-1 margin.

"Cheri has earned unmatched support in every quarter of this race because North Carolinians

know she is the only candidate who will stand up for the people of North Carolina and put them first—every day, every time," Beasley campaign manager Travis Brimm said in a news release.

For the entire election cycle, Beasley has raised \$29.4 million compared to \$11.1 million for Budd.

Budd's campaign downplayed Beasley's margin, pointing out that Democratic Senate nominees in North Carolina since 2014—all unsuccessful—out-

raised their Republican rivals in the third quarter.

"The numbers that matter to the working families of North Carolina are the skyrocketing cost of living due to inflation and the rising violent crime rates," Budd said. The three-term congressman blames those things on President Joe Biden's policies, which he says are supported by Beasley, a former chief justice of the state Supreme Court.

Budd's monetary deficit has

(See **BEASLEY**, P. 2)

Minneapolis Struggles To Recruit Cops

By Trisha Ahmed

Associated Press/Report for America

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. (AP)—Inside the Minneapolis Police Academy's sprawling campus on the city's north side, six people

sat soberly and listened to a handful of officers and city officials make their pitch about joining an understaffed department that is synonymous with the murder of George Floyd.

Officers would live in a bus-

ting, vibrant metro area with a high quality of life, they said, working in a large department where they could choose a wide variety of career paths with comprehensive benefits.

But those who take the oath

must understand it is a dangerous job and that they would be expected to protect the sanctity of human life—even if it means reining in a fellow officer. And everything they do must be aimed at rebuilding trust in a city left in tatters by the killing of Floyd and other Black men.

"There's still people who still value us," Sgt. Vanessa Anderson told the potential recruits. "The community still values us. I really do think that."

Crime rose in Minneapolis during the pandemic, as in many American cities. Homicide offenses nearly doubled from 2019 to 2021, aggravated assaults jumped by one-third, and carjackings—which the city only began tracking in fall 2020—exploded. And the city's crime problem has been compounded by a mass exodus of officers who cited post-traumatic stress after Floyd was killed, gutting the department of roughly one-third of its personnel.

Some residents say the city

(See **MINNEAPOLIS**, P. 2)



HAVING TROUBLE FINDING ACCEPTABLE RECRUITS—Cyrus Collins was among the few who applied to be a Minneapolis police officer during an event held recently. He didn't make it.



NORTH CAROLINA UNEMPLOYMENT RATE CREEPS UP TO 3.6 PERCENT

(AP)—North Carolina's unemployment rate rose slightly for a second straight month in September, the state Commerce Department reported on Friday, flipping incrementally a downward trend over two years during the pandemic recovery.

Last month's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate stood at 3.6 percent compared to 3.5 percent in August—when the first monthly increase since April 2020 was recorded. Earlier this year the rate had reached 3.4 percent, then the lowest rate since 2000, according to department data.

The agency said overall employment in the state was essentially flat compared to August at around 4.94 million people, but the number of unemployed grew by 4,700 to about 184,200.

Using another counting format based on monthly worksite surveys, the agency reported seasonally adjusted total nonfarm employment actually grew by 17,400 to 4.82 million. The leisure and hospitality services industry and professional and business services sector saw the largest numeric increases in employment among work categories, while government saw the largest decline.

September's U.S. unemployment rate was 3.5 percent.

CELL BIOLOGIST FROM DUKE NAMED NEW PRESIDENT OF MIT

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. (AP)—While there were myriad reasons Sally Kornbluth felt pulled to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, it was the chance to help address some of the world's greatest challenges that played perhaps the biggest role, the school's new president said at an introductory news conference on Thursday.

"Maybe above all, I was drawn here because this is a moment when humanity faces huge global problems, problems that urgently demand the world's most skillful minds and hands," she said. "In short, I believe this is MIT's moment. I could not imagine a greater privilege than helping the people of MIT seize its full potential."

Kornbluth, a cell biologist who has spent the past eight years as provost at Duke University, was elected MIT's 18th president on Thursday by the MIT Corporation, the school's governing body.

She will officially take over on Jan. 1, 2023, succeeding L. Rafael Reif, who in February announced that he planned to step down after 10 years on the job. She is the second woman to lead MIT.

Kornbluth has been on the Duke faculty since 1994, and is currently a professor of biology. As provost at the North Carolina school since 2014, Kornbluth was responsible for carrying out Duke's teaching and research missions; developing its intellectual priorities; and partnering with others to improve faculty and students.

It was her accomplishments at Duke that made her the clear front-runner out of the four finalists for the MIT presidency, said Diane Greene, chair of the MIT Corporation.

"Dr. Kornbluth is an extraordinary find for MIT," Greene said, noting that the vote was unanimous. "She's an exceptional administrator, widely respected for her ability to create an environment that breaks barriers, and importantly, enables every student, faculty and staff member to contribute at their highest levels. She is known for her judgment, plain-spokenness, and integrity."

Kornbluth also pledged to keep MIT a welcoming and comfortable environment where everyone can reach their potential.

"I'm absolutely committed to building a more diverse and increasingly inclusive environment here at MIT," she said.

Kornbluth already has one strong tie to MIT. Her son, Alex, is a Ph.D. student in electrical engineering and computer science at the school. Her husband, Daniel Lew, is a professor of pharmacology and cancer biology at the Duke School of Medicine, and her daughter, Joey, is a medical student at the University of California at San Francisco.

She grew up in Fair Lawn, N.J., and has degrees from Williams College, Cambridge University and Rockefeller University.

EARLY IN-PERSON VOTING BEGINS IN NC; BEASLEY AND BUDD RALLY

(See **STATE BRIEFS**, P. 2)

STATE BRIEFS

Continued from page 1

(AP)—Candidates and other officials from North Carolina's major political parties are trying to build excitement among supporters as early in-person voting begins.

Voting sites were set to open in all 100 counties Thursday morning. Such voting continues until the afternoon of Nov. 5. Election Day is Nov. 8.

North Carolina Democrats planned the first stop of their "Vote For NC" bus tour on Thursday morning in Raleigh. U.S. Senate nominee Cheri Beasley and candidates for Congress, courts and the legislature were scheduled to attend with Gov. Roy Cooper, who isn't on this year's ballot.

Republican Senate candidate Ted Budd, Republican National Committee Chairwoman Ronna McDaniel and South Carolina Sen. Rick Scott were the top names scheduled for an afternoon get-out-the-vote rally in Greensboro.

People registered to vote or who want to register can cast ballots at early-voting sites in their home counties during the 17-day period.

Already more than 43,000 traditional absentee ballots have been cast—that's over three times the total at the same point during the 2018 midterm elections. It's a small fraction of the number of mail-in ballots cast at this point in 2020.

Overall, roughly 3.75 million people cast ballots in the 2018 general election—a turnout of 53 percent.

S. CAROLINA FOOD PROCESSOR TO BUILD NC FACILITY, CREATE JOBS

LAURINBURG (AP)—A South Carolina-based food processor known for supplying U.S. military combat rations will build a facility in North Carolina, creating 440 jobs in a county with one of the state's highest jobless rates.

SO-PAK-CO Inc. and Gov. Roy Cooper announced on Tuesday the company's \$85 million investment in a new processing and packing operation in Laurinburg.

The new positions, which include managers, operators and administrative personnel, will have an average salary of more than \$45,000, which is above the countywide average in Scotland County of \$40,894, according to a news release from Cooper's office.

Scotland County's 7.7 percent unemployment rate for August, as reported by the state Commerce Department, was the second highest among the 100 North Carolina counties.

SO-PAK-CO, based in Mullins, S.C., could receive \$4.6 million in payments from the state over 12 years if it meets investment and job-creation thresholds. A state economic incentives panel approved the Job Development Investment Grant on Tuesday.

SO-PAK-CO is a leading company in producing shelf-stable, ready-to-eat meals. It provides food-processing services to federal, state and local agencies as well as commercial retail customers, Cooper's news release said.

NC APPEALS COURT RULES WHO WILL HEAR EDUCATION VOUCHER SUIT

(AP)—A legal challenge to North Carolina's taxpayer-funded scholarship program for K-12 children to attend private schools—focused on claims of bias based on religion and sexuality—must be heard by three trial judges, the state Court of Appeals ruled on Tuesday.

The majority on an appeals court panel reversed last year's decision by Wake County Superior Court Judge Bryan Collins, who ruled the lawsuit filed by several North Carolina parents in 2020 should remain before a single judge.

Republican legislators defending the "Opportunity Scholarship Program" created in 2013 appealed Collins' decision, saying three Superior Court judges are required to hear the case because the litigation was seeking to throw out the program in its entirety on grounds it violates the state constitution.

The plaintiffs in the lawsuit have said the scholarships are lawful in some formats but unconstitutional as carried out in each of their individual circumstances, so only a single judge should preside. For example, some plaintiffs are in same-sex marriages who say they're being discriminated against because some private religious schools benefiting from student grants oppose LGBTQ rights or expel openly gay students.

The scholarships are considered one of the chief education policy accomplishments for Republicans at the General Assembly since they took control of the legislature over a decade ago. Nearly 23,000 students in low- and middle-income families received awards during the last school year, and over \$63 million in grants are being disbursed this school year, according to program data.

Program opponents include Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper and the North Carolina Association of Educators, which describes the awards as vouchers.

The General Assembly agreed in the 2000s to start using panels of three trial judges to hear redistricting challenges so as to prevent plaintiffs from "judge shopping" by filing cases in certain counties. Their use was expanded in 2014 to cover any lawsuit that sought to declare a state law "facially" unconstitutional, or in every situation. The chief justice, who is currently Republican Paul Newby, appoints the three judges in these matters, each of them from a different region.

Writing Tuesday's majority decision, Court of Appeals Judge April Wood said it's plain that the lawsuit seeks to strike down the program completely and prevent students from being awarded grants. No evidence has been presented that the plaintiffs applied for scholarships or were unconstitutionally denied enrollment to the program, she added.

The "plaintiffs have been unable to identify any conceivable remedy for their claims that would not require either rewriting the statute or imposing sweeping court supervision on scholarship approvals by regulators," Wood wrote. "These remedies are unmistakable markers of a facial challenge."

Court of Appeals Judge Richard Dietz sided with Wood. In a dissenting opinion, Judge Toby Hampson wrote that it was premature for the appeals court to decide the breadth of the challenge in the lawsuit, and thus who should hear the case at trial.

Key Players In Trial Of —CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

being decisive and direct. He allowed livestreaming of Chauvin's trial because of immense public interest and COVID-19 limitations, saying at a national judicial conference recently that he thought if he hadn't, the result was "never going to be accepted by the community."

But cameras are typically not allowed in Minnesota courtrooms, and with COVID-19 restrictions loosening, he's not permitting livestreaming this time.

PROSECUTION

Attorney General Keith Ellison led the Chauvin prosecution at the behest of Gov. Tim Walz, after civil rights advocates in the community said Hennepin County Attorney Mike Freeman didn't have the trust of the Black community.

Ellison, the state's first African American elected attorney general, previously served in Congress and worked as a defense attorney. He appeared in court at times during Chauvin's trial, but was not part of the trial team.

Matthew Frank and Steven Schleicher, both of whom helped convict Chauvin, are back to lead that team. Frank is an experienced attorney who also won a guilty plea in the case of Lois Riess, a Minnesota woman who became notorious for killing her husband in 2018, then killing a woman in Florida



and assuming her identity before she was captured.

Schleicher is a former federal prosecutor who led the prosecution of the man who admitted to the 1989 kidnapping and killing of Jacob Wetterling, whose initial disappearance helped inspire a 1994 federal law requiring states to establish sex offender registries.

DEFENSE

Kueng, who is Black, was the youngest of the four officers at the scene and a rookie, just days on the job. His personnel file, which says he speaks, reads and writes Russian, did not list any disciplinary actions. At his federal trial, he testified that he

deferred to Chauvin because Chauvin was his senior officer and that is what he had been trained to do.

His attorney, Tom Plunkett, represented another former Minneapolis police officer in a high-profile case. Mohamed Noor was convicted in the 2017 fatal shooting of Justine Ruszczyk Damond, who had called 911 to report a possible sexual assault.

Thao, who is Hmong American, was Chauvin's partner the day of Floyd's killing and an eight-year veteran. City records showed six complaints against Thao, and he was the subject of a 2017 federal lawsuit accusing him and another officer of excessive force.

During his federal trial, Thao testified that on the day of Floyd's arrest, he served as "a human traffic cone" to keep traffic away from the other officers. He said his role was crowd control, and he presumed Floyd was breathing.

His attorney, Bob Paule, was a public defender before he started his own practice. His website says he obtained a rare not-guilty verdict for a murder defendant via a mental illness defense. He also said he was part of a team that got 23 murder charges dismissed in another case, after challenging that prosecutors acted with misconduct during grand jury proceedings.

Rampage Began When Kid... —CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

the report said. His mother said Wednesday that he was moved to a pediatric ICU unit. The top local prosecutor has said she will seek to charge the youth as an adult.

The teen had a backpack that contained several types of rifle and shotgun ammunition, the report said, and the sheath for a large knife clipped to his belt. A hunting knife was found at the front of the outbuilding where he was captured, police said.

Based on the teen's estimated direction of travel, police believe James Thompson was shot first, the report said.

"The collective motive for

these attacks is still unknown," the report from Chief Estella Patterson said, adding there doesn't appear to be any connection between the victims shot by the suspect before he encountered police other than they all lived in close proximity.

According to the report, emergency communications received a 5:09 p.m. call for service based on multiple shots fired near the neighborhood's golf course.

A few minutes later, a 911 caller reported hearing shots and seeing two shooting victims in front of a house on the same street where the 16-year-old was discovered in a residence. Police

believe the teen shot Marcille Lynn Gardner, who was found wounded in the driveway, then fired at Nicole Connors, 52, who lived in the house. Connors was shot on her porch and later died. Gardner, 60, remains hospitalized.

Soon after, off-duty Raleigh police Officer Gabriel Torres was shot inside his car on another street in the neighborhood as he was about to leave for work, the report said. Torres, 29, later died at the hospital.

That's when the teen fled toward the Neuse River Greenway Trail, the report said, where

minutes later a 911 caller found two more victims along the trail who died at the scene. They were Mary Marshall, 34, who was walking her dog, and Susan Karnatz, 49, who was out on a run.

Officers who had swarmed the area located the teen a little over an hour later in an area with two barn-like structures. That's when police said they believe he fired shots at officers from one of the buildings and multiple officers returned fire. Raleigh police estimated their officers fired 23 rounds. Two city officers who discharged their firearms have been placed on administrative duty.

Beasley Widens Money Gap —CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

largely been closed by national Republican groups and other super PAC allies that are spending large sums on money opposing Beasley.

The Senate Leadership Fund—which backs Republican Senate candidates and is linked to Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky.—has now spent \$24.7 million on advertising against Beasley, according to FEC reports. Another \$6.5 million has spent by the National Republican Senato-

rial Committee opposing her.

On the Democratic side, the Senate Majority PAC—associated with Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said it has spent over \$10.5 million against Budd or for Beasley. The group said late last week it had reserved another \$4 million in TV advertising in the campaign's final two weeks.

PACs associated with the National Federation of Independent Business—backing Budd—and

the Human Rights Campaign—supporting Beasley—unveiled ad campaigns Monday to attempt to influence the election, which could decide which party takes a majority in the current 50-50 Senate.

Both candidates are appearing with current senators to help them rally supporters and encourage voting in the campaign's final weeks.

Over the weekend, Sens. Cory Booker, D-N.J., and Jon Ossoff,

D-Ga., appeared with Beasley at separate get-out-the-vote rallies—Booker in Charlotte and Ossoff in Chapel Hill.

And Budd was scheduled to appear Monday with Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., for a national security panel in Charlotte with other speakers, including former Director of National Intelligence John Ratcliffe. U.S. Sen. John Kennedy, R-La., campaigned for Budd in Concord last week.

Minneapolis Struggles —CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

can feel lawless at times. On July 4, police appeared unable to cope when troublemakers shot fireworks at other people, buildings and cars. That night sparked more than 1,300 911 calls. One witness described a firework being shot at one of the few police cars that responded.

"Our city needs more police officers," Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey said in August, while presenting a proposal to boost police funding in a push to increase officer numbers to more than 800 by 2025. Adding to the pressure: a court ruled in favor of residents who sued the city for not having the minimum number of officers required under the city's charter.

One of the six who attended the late summer presentation at the Minneapolis Police Academy was 36-year-old Cyrus Collins of suburban Lino Lakes, who identifies as mixed race.

Collins sports a facial tattoo of an obscenity against police. He told The Associated Press that it is directed at the "evil ones," such as those who killed Floyd and Breonna Taylor, who was shot to death by officers serving a search warrant in Louisville, Ky. The department said it has no policy governing tattoos.

"I don't want people of color to be against cops," said Collins, who works as a pizza cook and a FedEx package distributor. "What other career would be doper to send that message than to be a Minneapolis police officer?"

Also at the meeting was William Howard, a 29-year-old Black man who said he installs office furniture, writes stories for video games, and has only lived in Minneapolis for a few months. Howard said he has studied meditation and that he thinks it would be a useful skill when de-escalation is required.

"I feel like I can bring more heart into the police force. Heart

isn't about power and control, it's about courage and protecting people and serving people," Howard said.

But he was on the fence about applying. He has a 1-year-old son and worried about work-life balance and the dangers of the job.

Frey's proposed funding would cover an officer recruitment marketing campaign, an internship program for high school students, and four classes of police recruits each year, among other measures.

Police spokesman Garrett Parten said the city is aware of the recruitment challenges it faces. Each class can accommodate up to 40 recruits, but only six were in the class that graduated in September. Only 57 people applied in 2022, down from 292 applicants in 2019.

"You can scream as loud as you want, 'Hire more people!' but if fewer people are applying, then it's not going to change the outcome much," Parten said. "Across the country, recruitment has become an issue. There's just fewer people that are applying for the job."

Statistics bear that out. Among 184 police agencies surveyed in the U.S. and Canada, the non-profit Police Executive Research Forum found that resignations jumped by 43 percent from 2019 through 2021, and retirements jumped 24 percent. In the face of those departures, overall hiring fell by 4 percent.

At an informational session for aspiring cadets in March, Matthew Hobbs, a training officer, thanked the attendees for simply being there.

"In Minneapolis, with what we've been through for the last couple years, for you to be here and have an interest in law enforcement... I'm impressed with every one of you that's here," he said.

Hobbs talked of how he felt the day after Floyd's killing, when he and other officers were ordered to leave the precinct that protesters quickly took over and burned.

"It was the worst day of my career. But even after that, I still love my job," Hobbs said, urging attendees to apply. "It's an incredible career."

Howard—the potential recruit with reservations—said later that he applied but did not make

it past the oral exam. And Collins, who had talked about being a bridge between people of color and the police, said a last-minute trip forced him to miss a necessary oral exam. He plans to apply again later, he said.

"I want to do something that I take pride in and give all my compassion to it," Collins said. "I can't figure out any other career—right now, in 2022, with all this stuff going on—than to be a cop."

EPA Probes Mississippi

By Emily Wagster Pettus, Matthew Daly and Aaron Morrison

Associated Press

JACKSON, Miss. (AP)—The federal government is investigating whether Mississippi state agencies discriminated against the state's majority-Black capital city by refusing to fund improvements for its failing water system, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency said Thursday.

The announcement came days after leaders of two congressional committees said they were starting a joint investigation into a crisis that left most homes and businesses in Jackson without running water for several days in late August and early September.

The EPA gave The Associated Press the first confirmation that it is conducting a civil, not criminal, investigation of the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality and the Mississippi State Department of Health. The federal agency could withhold money from the state if it finds wrongdoing—potentially millions of dollars. If the state agencies don't cooperate with the investigation, the EPA could refer the case to the Department of Justice.

Heavy rainfall in late August

exacerbated problems at Jackson's main water treatment facility. Republican Gov. Tate Reeves declared an emergency Aug. 29, and the state health department and the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency have been overseeing operations and repairs at the facility since then.

About 80 percent of Jackson's 150,000 residents are Black, and about a quarter of the population lives in poverty. By the time Reeves issued the emergency order, Jackson residents had already been told for a month to boil their water to kill possible contaminants. Volunteers and the National Guard had distributed millions of bottles of drinking water. Although the boil-water notice was lifted in mid-September, many residents remain skeptical about water safety.

NAACP President Derrick Johnson, who lives in Jackson with his family, called the EPA investigation a step in the right direction after years of the state withholding federal funds needed to improve the city's water system.

"We believe we gave compelling evidence that the state of Mississippi intentionally starved the city of Jackson of the resources to maintain its water infrastructure," Johnson told The AP on Thursday.

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Business & Finance

Plastics Crisis, Is A Solution Sought Or Just A Distraction?

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (AP) — The plastics industry says there is a way to help solve the crisis of plastic waste plaguing the planet's oceans, beaches and lands—recycle it, chemically.

Chemical recycling typically uses heat or chemical solvents to break down plastics into liquid and gas to produce an oil-like mixture or basic chemicals. Industry leaders say that mixture can be made back into plastic pellets to make new products.

“What we are trying to do is really create a circular economy for plastics because we think it is the most viable option for keeping plastic out of the environment,” said Joshua Baca, vice president of the plastics division at the American Chemistry Council, the industry trade association for American chemical companies.

ExxonMobil, New Hope Energy, Nexus Circular, Eastman, Encina and other companies are planning to build large plastics recycling plants. Seven smaller facilities across the United States already recycle plastic into new plastic, according to the ACC. A handful of others convert hard-to-recycle used plastics into alternative transportation fuels for aviation, marine and auto uses.

But environmental groups say advanced recycling is a distraction from real solutions like producing and using less plastic. They suspect the idea of recyclable plastics will enable the steep ramp up in plastic production to continue. And while the amount produced globally grows, recycling rates for plastic waste are abysmally low, especially in the United States.

Plastic packaging, multi-layered films, bags, polystyrene foam and other hard-to-recycle plastic products are piling up in landfills and in the environment, or going to incinerators.

Judith Enck, the founder and president of Beyond Plastics, says plastics recycling doesn't work and never will. Chemical additives and colorants used to

give plastic different properties mean that there are thousands of types, she said. That's why they can't be mixed together and recycled in the conventional, mechanical way. Nor is there much of a market for recycled plastic, because virgin plastic is cheap, she said.

So what is more likely to happen than actual recycling, said Enck, a former regional administrator at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, is the industry will shift to burning plastics as waste or as fuel.

Lee Bell, a policy advisor for the International Pollutants Elimination Network, thinks chemical recycling is a public relations exercise by the petrochemical industry. The purpose is to dissuade regulators from capping plastics production. Making plastic could become even more important to the fossil fuel industry as climate change puts pressure on their transportation fuels, Bell said.

The industry has made roughly 11 billion metric tons of plastic since 1950, with half of that produced since 2006, according to industrial ecologist Roland Geyer. Global plastic production is expected to more than quadruple by 2050, according to the United Nations Environment Programme and GRID-Arendal in Norway.

The international Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development says the share of plastic waste that is successfully recycled is projected to rise to 17% in 2060 from 9% in 2019 if no additional policies are enacted to restrain plastic demand and enhance recycling, but that wouldn't begin to keep up with the projected growth in plastic waste. With more ambitious policies, the amount of plastic waste that is recycled could rise to 40% to 60%, according to OECD.

Two groups working to reduce plastic pollution, the Last Beach Clean Up and Beyond Plastics, estimated that the U.S. rate for recycling plastic waste in 2021 was even lower — 5% to 6%,

after China stopped accepting other countries' waste in 2018.

The U.S. national recycling strategy says no option, including chemical recycling, should be ruled out. The way to think of these new plants, the industry says, is as manufacturing plants. They should be legally defined that way, and not as waste management. About 20 states have adopted laws in the past five years consistent with that wish. Opponents say it's a way to skirt the more stringent environmental regulations that apply to waste management facilities.

EXISTING PLANTS

The U.S. facilities currently recycling plastic into new plastic are small — the largest is a 60-ton-per-day plant in Akron, Ohio, Alterra Energy, according to the ACC.

Alterra Energy says it takes in the hard-to-recycle plastics, like flexible pouches, multi-layered films and rigid plastics from automobiles — everything except plastic water bottles since those are recycled mechanically, or plastics marked with a “3” since they contain polyvinyl chloride, or PVC.

“Our mission is to solve plastic pollution,” said Jeremy DeBenedictis, company president. “That is not just a tag line. We all truly want to solve plastic pollution.”

The Ohio facility typically takes in 40 tons to 50 tons per day, heating and liquifying the plastic to turn it back into an oil or hydrocarbon liquid, about 10,000 gallons to 12,000 gallons daily. About 75% of what comes into the facility can be liquified like that. Another 15% is turned into a synthetic natural gas to heat the process, while the remainder — paper, metals, dyes, inks and colorants — exit the reactor as a byproduct, or carbon char, DeBenedictis said. The char is disposed of as nonhazardous waste, though in the future some hope to sell it to the asphalt industry.

The process doesn't involve oxygen so there's no combustion



Ground up plastics that Alterra Energy receives from recycling facilities, move along a conveyor at the start of their process that transforms the material into a liquid that is then used in the manufacture of plastic, from the facility in Akron, Ohio on Thursday, Sept. 8, 2022. The U.S. facilities currently recycling plastic into new plastic are small — the largest is the 60-ton-per-day plant Alterra Energy, according to the ACC. (AP Photo/Keith Srakocic)

or incineration of plastics, DeBenedictis said, and their product is trucked as a synthetic oil to petrochemical companies, essentially the “building blocks on a molecular level for new plastic production.”

The materials they take in, that haven't been able to be recycled until now, should not be sent to landfills, dumped in the ocean or

incinerated, DeBenedictis said.

“That next level has to be a new technology, what you call chemical recycling or advanced recycling. That's the next frontier,” he said.

“Let's not kid ourselves here. This is the right time to do it,” added company CEO Fred Schmuck. “There is absolutely no way we can meet our climate

goals without addressing plastic waste.”

DeBenedictis said he's licensing the technology to try to grow the industry because that's the “best way to make the quickest impact to the world.” A Finnish oil and gas company, Neste, is currently working to commercialize Alterra's technology in Europe.

French Probe Internet Cable Cuts

By John Leicester

Associated Press

LE PECQ, France (AP)—French police said Friday they're investigating multiple cuts to fiber-optic cables in France's second-largest city. Operators said the cables link Marseille to other cities in France and Europe and that internet and phone services were severely disrupted.

The disruptions in Marseille were a taste of what analysts warn could be far larger problems in other cases if cables are systematically attacked. The vulnerability of fiber-optic cables, especially those underwater, and other key infrastructure was highlighted by the sabotage last month in the Baltic Sea of natural gas pipelines from Russia.

The damage in the city in southern France also appeared to resemble suspected acts of sabotage to other cables in the country earlier this year.

French cable operator and internet service provider Free said its repair teams were mobilized before dawn Wednesday

to deal with “an act of vandalism on our fiber infrastructure.”

It said the attacks were simultaneous and on multiple spots of its fiber network near Marseille. Photos that Free published on Twitter showed multiple cables completely severed in their concrete housings buried in the ground. It said the cuts led to major disruptions to its network and phone services in the Marseille area.

A spokeswoman for Marseille police said Friday that the judicial police were investigating multiple breakages to cables on the city's outskirts.

Cybersecurity company Zscaler said the severed cables link Marseille to Milan, Barcelona and the French city of Lyon. It said the cuts “impacted major cables with connectivity to Asia, Europe, (the) U.S. and potentially other parts of the world.”

The damage also slowed some network traffic from Europe to India, company CEO Jay Chaudhry said.

“Since Zscaler controls the network, we were able to reroute the traffic and mitigate the

issue for our global users,” he posted.

In the case earlier this year, France's domestic intelligence agency was recruited to help with the investigation into suspected sabotage of French fiber-optic cables.

Photos posted then by Free showed damage that looked much like the latest cuts in Marseille, with multiple cables severed in their apparently pried-open concrete housings.

Internet service was disrupted in several regions around France in that case, requiring the call-out of repair teams in the middle of the night. The Paris prosecutor's office opened a preliminary investigation and said the French internal intelligence service, known as the DGSI, was also enlisted, along with the judicial police.

The prosecutor's office opened a preliminary investigation in that case on charges of “damaging goods of a nature of harming the fundamental interests of the nation,” as well as “obstruction of an automatic data processing system” and criminal association.

BofA Profits Decrease Over Year

By Ken Sweet

AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP)—Bank of America's profits fell by 8 percent in the third quarter as the bank set aside cash to cover potential loan losses. It's the latest bank to start socking away money for a potential recession, as Wall Street's biggest banks have become increasingly gloomy on the U.S. economy going into the winter.

The nation's second-largest bank said it earned \$7.08 billion last quarter, or 81 cents a share, compared to a profit of \$7.69 billion, or 86 cents a share, in the same period a year earlier. The results were better than Wall Street forecasts, who were looking for BofA to earn 78 cents a

share, according to FactSet.

BofA put \$378 million into its loan-loss reserves this quarter—a similar level to Citigroup and Wells Fargo. These reserves are designed to cushion banks against potential bad loans when economies turn downward. During the pandemic, banks set aside tens of billions of dollars into these reserves, only to release them a year later when economic activity picked up again.

JPMorgan, the nation's largest bank, set aside roughly a \$1 billion in its loan loss reserves last week, while Citigroup and Wells both roughly put \$400 million into their reserves this quarter.

The bank saw loans grow by a very healthy 12 percent from a year earlier, which the bank

ascribed to businesses taking out loans as well as consumers carrying a credit card balance. Wells Fargo, Citigroup and JPMorgan all reported double-digit increases in consumer credit card spending compared to a year earlier, which has led to worries that consumers are needing to borrow to keep up with inflation.

The bank also is benefiting from higher interest rates. The bank's net interest income grew by 24 percent to \$13.8 billion in the quarter. BofA's balance sheet tends to skew more toward short-term interest rates, which means the Fed's recent sharp rate hikes have a more immediate impact on the bank's bottom line compared to its competitors.

Republicans Sue Google Over eMail Discrimination Against Conservatives

By Jill Colvin and Michael Liedtke

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO, Calif. (AP)—The Republican National Committee has filed a lawsuit against tech giant Google, alleging the company has been sup-

pressing its email solicitations ahead of November's midterm elections—an allegation Google denies.

The lawsuit, filed in the District Court for the Eastern District of California Friday evening, accuses Gmail of “discriminating” against the RNC

by unfairly sending the group's emails to users' spam folders, impacting both fundraising and get-out-the-vote efforts in pivotal swing states.

“Enough is enough—we are suing Google for their blatant bias against Republicans,” said RNC Chairwoman Ronna Mc-

Daniel in a statement to The Associated Press. “For 10 months in a row, Google has sent crucial end-of-month Republican GOTV and fundraising emails to spam with zero explanation. We are committed to putting an end to this clear pattern of bias.”

Google, in a statement, denied the charges. “As we have repeatedly said, we simply don't filter emails based on political affiliation. Gmail's spam filters reflect users' actions,” said spokesperson José Castañeda, adding that the company provides training and guidelines to campaigns and works to “maximize email deliverability while minimizing unwanted spam.”

The lawsuit focuses on how Google's Gmail, the world's largest email service with about 1.5 billion users, screens solicitations and other material to help prevent users from being inundated by junk mail. To try to filter material that account holders may not want in their inboxes, Google and other major email providers create programs that flag communications likely to be perceived as unwelcome and move them to spam folders that typically are rarely, if ever, perused by recipients.

The suit says Google has “relegated millions of RNC emails en masse to potential donors' and supporters' spam folders during pivotal points in election fundraising and com-

munity building”—particularly at the end of each month, when political groups tend to send more messages. “It doesn't matter whether the email is about donating, voting, or community outreach. And it doesn't matter whether the emails are sent to people who requested them,” it reads.

Google contends its algorithms are designated to be neutral, but a study released in March by North Carolina State University found that Gmail was far more likely to block messages from conservative causes. The study, based on emails sent during the U.S. presidential campaign in 2020, estimated Gmail placed roughly 10 percent of email from “left-wing” candidates into spam folders, while marking 77 percent from “right-wing” candidates as spam.

Gmail rivals Yahoo and Microsoft's Outlook were more likely to favor pitches from conservative causes than Gmail, the study found.

The RNC seized upon that study in April to call upon the Federal Election Commission to investigate Google's “censorship” of its fundraising efforts, which it alleged amounted to an in-kind contribution to Democratic candidates and served as “a financially devastating example of Silicon Valley tech companies unfairly shaping the

political playing field to benefit their preferred far-left candidates.”

Since then, the commission has approved a pilot program that creates a way for political committees to get around spam filters so their fundraising emails find their way into recipients' primary inboxes. Gmail is participating in the “Verified Sender Program,” which allows senders to bypass traditional spam filters, but also gives users the option of unsubscribing from a sender. If the unsubscribe button is hit, a sender is supposed to remove that Gmail address from their distribution lists.

As of Friday evening, the RNC had not signed up to participate in the pilot program.

Republicans who have tried to cast doubt on the outcome of the 2020 election without parroting the most extreme and baseless claims about corrupted voting machines and stolen votes have often tried to blame big technology companies like Twitter and Facebook that they allege were biased against former President Donald Trump. A long list of state and local election officials, courts and members of Trump's own administration have said there is no evidence of the mass fraud Trump alleges.

Colvin reported from Akron, Ohio.



REPUBLICAN NATIONAL COMMITTEE CHAIRWOMAN RONNA MCDANIEL

Opinion



Georgia Is Ground Zero for Democracy

By Ben Jealous

President of People For the American Way

Like so many of us right now, I've got Georgia on my mind.

As I write this, I've just gotten back from meeting with Black ministers who are working nonstop to get out the vote across the state. And with good reason, because there's just no other way to say it—Georgia is ground zero for the future of our democracy in this midterm election.

Control of the Senate could hinge on whether Rev. Raphael Warnock can keep his Senate seat or is defeated by Herschel Walker, a familiar former athlete who has become a far-right extremist. Depending on who gains a Senate majority, the rest of the Biden-Harris administration agenda is either on track or dead on arrival in Congress.

The governor's race features an incumbent MAGA diehard, Brian Kemp, versus Stacey Abrams. I have written about Stacey and our decades-long friendship before. No one is more committed to civil rights and greater opportunity for Georgians than Stacey. Reelecting Kemp would be a disaster: not just for Georgians, but for a country in which MAGA schemers are looking to capture as many states as possible to advance their reactionary agenda.

Kemp's record is appalling. In a state with a large share of uninsured Black Americans, including high numbers of Black children, Kemp has refused to expand Medicaid so that more Georgians could have health care. He signed a law making it easier for just about anybody, including dangerous White supremacists, to carry concealed weapons. His administration has cut state contracts with Black businesses, and is responsible for denying unemployment claims for twice as many Black workers as White workers. Kemp recently signed an anti-choice law so extreme that women who have miscarriages could be arrested. Women who terminate pregnancies could be charged with murder.

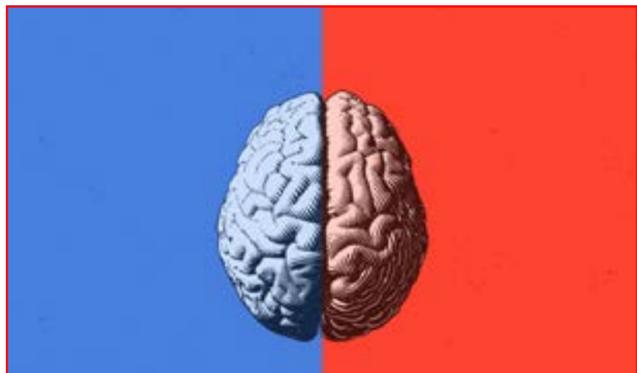
The MAGA folks in Georgia know the coalition of Black voters and young voters who made history in 2020 won't vote for this agenda. Those voters changed the course of the nation when they went for Joe Biden and Senate candidates Rev. Raphael Warnock and Jon Ossoff. The MAGA Far Right went crazy, and they made Georgia the home of some of the worst voter-suppression laws in the country since the original Jim Crow. One of those even made it illegal to give snacks and water to voters waiting in long lines. All of that was for one reason: to stop people, mostly Black people, from voting in the next big election. And that election is now.

We can't stand by and let that happen. Black voters have the power to decide the election in Georgia, which will probably decide the future of our country in some ways we can predict and others we can't. This is especially true for Black men, who still don't vote in the high percentages Black women do. Black men in Georgia have to come out to the polls this year.

It doesn't surprise me that once again, Georgia is so central to Black American history. It has been that way for as long as we've had a history. Every time I visit, I'm moved by it. That sense of a momentous past is everywhere, mixed with the New South energy that makes the state such a unique place. Meeting with Georgians this time, I could feel the deep commitment to moving the state forward instead of back. That fills me with hope.

The eyes of the country—and even the world—are on Georgia this fall, and I believe Georgia will make us proud.

Ben Jealous serves as president of People For the American Way and Professor of the Practice at the University of Pennsylvania. A New York Times best-selling author, his next book Never Forget Our People Were Always Free will be published by Harper Collins in January 2023.



Your Brain On Elections

By Melinda Burrell

National Association for Community Remediation

"I'm afraid what Thanksgiving will be like, no matter how the election turns out," a friend commented. She's not wrong to be worried. Elections bring up all sorts of emotions and behaviors that create division. Understanding our "brains on elections" can help.

Psychologists note that we all have many identities. Some of mine include writer, trainer, wife, and daughter. When my father had a health crisis, being a daughter became far more important to me than being a writer. Yet later, when I saw poor communication at a board meeting, my identity as a conflict trainer came to the fore.

Now, as we are deluged with election-season news, our political identities not only are triggered but also affect our behaviors even beyond politics. As Stanford political scientist Shanto Iyengar found, we're less likely to hire someone from the other party, definitely don't want our children marrying across the political divide, and all of this is worsening because we don't have norms to control negative political speech. In democratic terms, we're losing opportunities for conversations to understand others' ideas about the problems we share.

Strong political identities have other consequences for democracy. We police our own "in-group" to maintain the purity of our side. Think of the left's cancel culture and the right's repudiation of Liz Cheney despite her near perfect Trumpian voting record. We lose diversity of thought in our society, and we also lose our own choice at the ballot box as we become reluctant to vote for someone we agree with but is from the other party. We lose moderate leaders, even though democracies need these "boundary leaders" who can form constructive connections with others to find lasting solutions to our problems.

A whole lot of neurobiology is at play here. We normally think of "fight or flight" in response to physical threats, but we've learned that social situations trigger threat responses. Encountering an inflammatory campaign assertion from "the other side," we suffer from "amygdala hijack." Anger or fear floods our brain so that we can't think straight. We also suffer from confirmation bias, an inbuilt tendency to remember information that confirms our theories of the world and ignore anything contradictory.

The approach of elections makes this worse. During the 2012 election, neuroscientist Emily Falk asked Democrats and Republicans to ponder how either Obama or McCain thought about issues. She tracked which parts of the brain lit up and found that, the closer it got to the election, the less able participants were to think about the thinking of the other candidate. Another more recent study examined cellphone data and found that people who spent Thanksgiving with members of another party cut those outings short—even shorter if they had been in areas saturated by very negative campaign ads.

So how can we tame our election-amped neurobiology? Self-knowledge is key. We can learn to spot moments when we're taking the easy way out of examining candidates and policy options. Are we too quickly putting on our partisan identities or can we be more open-minded?

We can also consciously reach out to someone who might be voting differently and ask genuinely curious questions about their thinking. This can be tough, but it's a great way to ensure our thinking is as complex as the problems we face.

Finally, we can uphold norms of peaceful democratic behavior by censuring rather than supporting anyone who suggests election-related violence. We'll all still be in the same country when the election is over. Our democracy needs calm citizens working together—and talking at Thanksgiving.

Melinda Burrell, PhD, @MelindaCBurrell, is a former humanitarian aid worker and now trains on the neuroscience of communication and conflict. She is on the board of the National Association for Community Mediation, which offers resources for community approaches to difficult issues.



Business, Bank Groups Sue to Stop CFPB's Fight Against Financial Discrimination

By Charlene Crowell

Center for Responsible Lending

On Sept. 28, two of the nation's largest and most influential business groups filed a lawsuit against the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) and its Director Rohit Chopra. The action aims to prevent the CFPB from using its existing authority to protect consumers from racial discrimination when seeking mortgages, auto loans, credit cards, bank accounts, or other financial services.

Leading the lawsuit are the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, a lobby group for more than three million businesses across the country, and the American Bankers Association's over 4,000 banks and trust companies. Additional co-plaintiffs include: the Consumer Bankers Association, Texas Association of Business, and the Independent Bankers Association of Texas.

The lawsuit argues that when the CFPB conducts its regular exams of non-bank financial institutions, it does not have the authority to look for discrimination—based on race, religion, and other personal characteristics—that is illegal under the prohibition on unfair, deceptive, and abusive practices.

"The CFPB is pursuing an ideological agenda that goes well beyond what is authorized by law and the Chamber will not hesitate to hold them accountable," U.S. Chamber Executive Vice President and Chief Policy Officer Neil Bradley said in a statement.

But federal laws—not ideology—are the framework for the CFPB's anti-discrimination work.

Discrimination in housing and lending more broadly were outlawed by 1968's Fair Housing Act and 1974's Equal Credit Opportunity Act (ECOA). Enforcing these laws is essential for financial fairness.

At the same time, illegal financial discrimination is pervasive, and some exists beyond the parameters of these fair lending laws that have traditionally been the focus of regulators. For example, the Student Borrower Protection Center has pointed to debt collection, predatory for-profit colleges, reporting credit information, and financial advice scams as markets where discriminatory acts or practices may not be covered by laws focused on the extension of credit, but that constitute unlawful financial discrimination nonetheless.

"When a person is denied access to a bank account because of their religion or race, this is unambiguously unfair," CFPB Director Chopra said in a statement announcing the Bureau would start looking for unlawful non-credit financial discrimination.

In a blog post, CFPB officials in charge of supervision and enforcement wrote, "[w]hen people of color suffer racist conduct in the financial marketplace, it can cause substantial monetary and non-monetary harms."

Consumer groups had strong reactions to the business groups' lawsuit, saying it ignored the impetus for creating a federal financial watchdog: to ensure that financial services firms no longer prey upon unsuspecting consumers—particularly Black and Latino consumers who often were targeted for financial exploitation.

"It is outrageous these trade associations could suggest that discrimination in any financial service is not unfair or abusive or that the CFPB should not be monitoring the financial industry for discrimination wherever it occurs," said Rich Dubois, executive director of the National Consumer Law Center. He added that "People of color are more likely to be unbanked, to suffer unexplained disparities in credit scores and reports used for purposes beyond credit, and to experience discrimination in multiple areas throughout their financial lives."

Similarly, Elyse Hicks, consumer policy counsel at Americans for Financial Reform, a broad-based advocacy coalition that includes civil rights and racial justice advocates, also spoke out.

"With this lawsuit, the bank lobby has joined the disgraceful campaign of many groups and politicians that exploit racial grievance to stop the United States from facing up to the very real effects of persistent discrimination," said Hicks in a statement. "The goal of big banks is simply to avoid having to face up to their own role in the historic wrong of structural racism, and the costs of that to their own bottom lines."

"The CFPB has clear authority, as the top consumer watchdog, to watch out for discrimination of all kinds in consumer finance, penal-

ize offenders, and correct bank practices," Hicks concluded.

A multi-agency initiative begun nearly a year ago that included CFPB and the Department of Justice took a similar approach in response to discrimination in financial services.

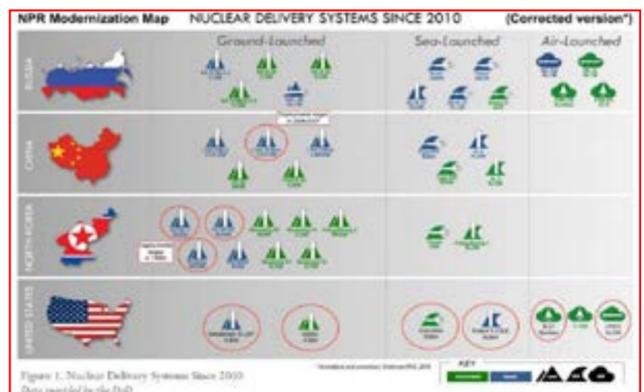
That effort resulted in a nearly \$9 million settlement with Trustmark National Bank, headquartered in Jackson, Miss., for redlining in majority-Black and Latino neighborhoods in the Memphis-Mississippi-Arkansas Metropolitan Statistical Area. The settlement found that Trustmark violated ECOA, the Consumer Financial Protection Act, and the Fair Housing Act.

The settlement included: a \$5.5 million civil penalty payable to CFPB and the OCC; the creation of a \$3.85 million loan fund targeted to Black and Latino communities; and an additional \$600,000 earmarked to underwrite community partnership activities and advertising in underserved communities.

"Trustmark purposely excluded and discriminated against Black and Hispanic communities," CFPB Director Chopra said in a statement. "The federal government will be working to rid the market of racist business practices, including those by discriminatory algorithms."

After 50 years, it is as unfortunate as it is unjust that leading business groups, with this lawsuit, are standing in opposition to fair lending and civil rights.

Charlene Crowell is a senior fellow with the Center for Responsible Lending. She can be reached at Charlene.crowell@responsiblending.org.



Bye-Bye World: While Nuclear Weapons And Wars Exist, Annihilation Beckons

By Lawrence S. Wittner

SUNY/Albany

It's been a long time since the atomic bombings of August 1945, when people around the planet first realized that world civilization stood on the brink of doom. This apocalyptic ending to the Second World War revealed to all that, with the advent of nuclear weapons, violent conflict among nations had finally reached the stage where it could terminate life on Earth. Addressing a CBS radio audience in early 1946, Robert Hutchins, chancellor of the University of Chicago, summed up the new situation with a blunt warning: "War means atomic bombs. And atomic bombs mean suicide."

With millions of people jolted awake by the atomic bombings and anxious to stave off worldwide catastrophe, calls for banning nuclear weapons and for building a federation of nations strong enough to keep the peace were widespread. Organizations among antinuclear scientists, world government advocates, and peace proponents emerged and flourished in the United States, as well as in much of the world. Often working together in the same peace and disarmament campaigns, activists in these organizations frequently adopted a common rallying cry: "One World or None!"

For a time, these activists had public opinion on their side. In August 1946, a Gallup poll found 54 percent of American respondents favored (and only 24 percent opposed) turning the United Nations into "a world government with power to control the armed forces of all nations." Similar polls in other nations during the late 1940s reported comparable results.

In practice, the efforts of activists went toward transforming the new United Nations into an institution that had the power to rid the world of nuclear weapons and to end the ancient practice of war. Thus, in the United States, where, by 1949, United World Federalists had some 47,000 members, it managed to get 111 members of the House of Representatives and 21 Senators to co-sponsor a resolution to turn the United Nations into "a world federation" with enough power "to preserve peace and prevent aggression."

Even so, while giving lip service to nuclear disarmament and peace, the world's governments and particularly those of the "great powers" weren't ready for this dramatic a departure from their traditional practices. After all, for thousands of years, competing territories, and later, nations, had been accustomed to waging wars and using the most powerful weapons available to them in these conflicts.

Yes, at times, the governments of the great powers were forced by popular pressure to curb their nuclear ambitions. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, public protest campaigns against nuclear weapons testing led to the world's first nuclear arms control agreement (the Partial Test Ban Treaty of 1963), to the nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty of 1970, and to the beginning of Soviet-American détente. Similarly, public protest campaigns in the early 1980s against the revived nuclear arms race led to major nuclear disarmament agreements (the INF Treaty and the START I and II treaties) and to the end of the Cold War.

But, despite these concessions, the governments of the major powers weren't ready to dispense with nuclear weapons or, for that matter, with war. Consequently, as popular protest ebbed, they gradually returned to their customary behavior. Starting about a decade ago, they ceased signing nuclear arms control and disarmament agreements. Instead, they began scrapping them, including the INF Treaty, the Open Skies Treaty, and the Iran nuclear agreement. Meanwhile, they commenced a race to "modernize" their nuclear arsenals with the production of new nuclear weapons possessing greater speed, maneuverability, and accuracy. Also, to intimidate other nations, their leaders—most notably Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin, who commanded the world's two largest nuclear arsenals openly threatened to attack these nations with nuclear weapons.

Even before the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the editors of the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* set the hands of their famed "Doomsday Clock" at 100 seconds to midnight, the most dangerous setting since the clock's appearance in 1947.

Of course, the world could yet be saved by what Albert Einstein termed "a new type of thinking" and, decades later, by what Mikhail Gorbachev called "the new thinking." Based on the threat nuclear weapons pose to human survival, this approach entails abolishing nuclear weapons and enhancing global governance to end their motor force, war. The UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, snubbed by the nine nuclear powers but now signed by 91 nations and ratified by 68 of them, would, if enforced, finally lift the nightmare of nuclear destruction from the people of the world. And a strengthening of the United Nations as the guarantor of international security would help to end the long-term practice of powerful nations waging war whenever their governments felt like it.

As things now stand, however, we're once more enmeshed in the dire situation so starkly revealed in August 1945: While nuclear weapons exist, any war can turn into a nuclear holocaust. Unless the people of all nations, recognizing the peril of universal death, demand the establishment of an international organization capable of enforcing policies of disarmament and peace, then, sooner or later, the time will come to say "bye-bye world."

Dr. Lawrence Wittner is Professor of History emeritus at SUNY/Albany and the author of Confronting the Bomb (Stanford University Press).