

Responsive Records, as redacted
2022-FOIA-00432/Civil Action No.: 2021-1246
122 pages

From: (b)(6)
To: [Smith, Bradley](#); [Gacki, Andrea](#); (b)(6); (b)(6)
Cc: [Battle, John](#); [Gatianis, Gregory](#); [Palluconi, Lisa](#); [Scheinert, Lawrence](#); [Quinby, Ripley](#); (b)(6); (b)(6); [Liebschutz, Sarah](#); (b)(6); [Martin, Elyse](#); (b)(6); (b)(6); [Prince, Jason](#); [DL OFAC SPI-\(POL\) Policy](#) (Govt); [DL OFAC OGI-Coordiators & Above](#); [DL OFAC LIC Managers](#)
Subject: Clearances: Monday 1/25
Date: Monday, January 25, 2021 9:33:15 AM

CLEARANCES/REVIEW

Monday, January 25

(b) (5)

ACTIONS - TENTATIVE TIMING

(b) (5)

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

LEGISLATIVE ENGAGEMENTS

From: [Prince, Jason](#)
To: [Smith, Bradley](#)
Cc: [Trew, Heather](#)
Subject: FW: FP guidance
Date: Tuesday, February 2, 2021 7:10:14 PM

PRIVILEGED//PRE-DECISIONAL//DELIBERATIVE
ATTORNEY-CLIENT COMMUNICATION

Good evening, Brad:

(b) (5)

(b) (5)

We look forward to your feedback.

Thanks,
Jason

From: Trew, Heather (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, February 2, 2021 6:16 PM
To: Prince, Jason (b) (6)
Subject: FW: FP guidance

(b) (5)

From: Trew, Heather
Sent: Tuesday, February 2, 2021 6:16 PM
To: Gacki, Andrea (b) (6)
Subject: FP guidance
Privileged/Predecisional/Attorney-Client Communication

(b) (5)

Please let me know if you have questions or any follow up from this. Thank you!

Thanks,
Heather

From: (b)(6)
To: (b)(6)
Cc: (b)(6)
Subject: FW: FT - US ready to impose fresh sanctions on Democratic Republic of Congo
Date: Monday, August 6, 2018 11:15:08 AM

(b)(6) – (b)(5)

From: Mandelker, Sigal
Sent: Monday, August 06, 2018 11:05 AM
To: (b)(6)
Subject: Fwd: FT - US ready to impose fresh sanctions on Democratic Republic of Congo

From: (b)(6)
Date: August 6, 2018 at 11:00:50 AM EDT
To: _DL_TFI_Alerts <_DL_TFI_Alerts@do.treas.gov>
Subject: FT - US ready to impose fresh sanctions on Democratic Republic of Congo
[US ready to impose fresh sanctions on Democratic Republic of Congo](#)
[Washington squeezes Joseph Kabila amid concerns he may seek re-election](#)

Katrina Manson in Washington
August 5, 2018

The Trump administration is ready to impose further sanctions against the regime of Democratic Republic of Congo president Joseph Kabila to dissuade him from trying to hold on to power, according to several people briefed on the matter.

Mr Kabila is constitutionally obliged to step down in the vast mineral-rich African country after two terms in office, but he has not ruled out seeking re-election this year despite repeated appeals from the US, France and Britain. Speculation is rife that he will put his name on the ballot this week.

“The US is trying to convince Kabila to go between now and August 8,” said one of the people briefed, referring to the deadline for politicians to declare their candidacy for the presidency. “They’re trying to squeeze his family and his finances.”

A US government source said Washington was prepared to sanction other allies of Mr Kabila if he did not abide by his commitments. “Clearly that means having a process whereby Kabila is not a candidate,” said the person. “His name should not be on the ballot.”

Mr Kabila, 47, took over as president in 2001 after his father Laurent-Désiré Kabila was assassinated during a civil war. Despite its mineral riches, which include diamonds, copper and gold, the country ranks among Africa’s poorest.

In his confirmation hearings to the Senate this week, Michael Hammer, President Donald Trump’s pick for US ambassador to Congo, said many of its minerals, which also include uranium and the world’s largest reserves of cobalt, an essential input for mobile phones, “are critical to US industry”. The Trump administration has cumulatively increased the severity and range of its sanctions against Mr Kabila. In June 2017 the US Treasury imposed sanctions on one of Mr Kabila’s most senior military officials. In December, the same department imposed sanctions on Dan Gertler, an Israeli businessman and close friend of the president.

In June, at least one family member of Mr Kabila was targeted by a state department visa ban, three people briefed on the matter told the Financial Times.

The people said at least three more family members were under consideration for stronger Treasury designated sanctions that would include asset freezes under the Global Magnitsky Act, which targets corruption and human rights abuses.

The focus on Mr Kabila's family has infuriated the president, two of the people said, adding that the Congolese government officials regularly bring up US sanctions with Washington. But a senior administration official told the FT the Trump administration was prepared to apply sanctions to anyone "regardless of who they are".

"[We] stand ready to apply sanctions to individuals or entities, regardless of who they are, who undermine the democratic process, or threaten the peace and security of the country," said the senior administration official, adding the Trump administration was closely following Congo's electoral preparations.

Peter Pham, Africa director at the Atlantic Council, said US interests in Congo went far beyond electoral and humanitarian concerns, arguing that access to its mineral deposits were "critical to the technologies which will power this century". He said Washington would have wide support to take further action should it see "a worrisome trajectory" during the election candidacy process.

Most recently, Mr Kabila has refused to meet Nikki Haley, US ambassador to the UN, as well as UN secretary-general António Guterres and the head of the African Union. He has also refused international money and technical assistance for the polls.

Some analysts in Washington and Kinshasa suspect Mr Kabila may ask the country's constitutional court to rule that, despite 17 years as president, he has legally served only one term and so would be eligible for another.

Sasha Lezhnev at Washington-based advocacy group, The Enough Project, said that the US needed to go further still. "The administration has taken some important initial steps but a lot more is needed frankly to really impact Kabila's calculations," he said.

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From: [Gacki, Andrea](#)
To: [Smith, Bradley](#)
Subject: FW: STORY SLATED TO POST SUNDAY. Want to make sure you see this email.
Date: Friday, February 12, 2021 5:54:52 PM

(b) (5)

From: Gacki, Andrea

Sent: Friday, February 12, 2021 5:50 PM

To: Mitchell, Calvin (b) (6) Nisanci, Didem (b)(6)
Schaffer, Laurie (b)(6) Rosenberg, Elizabeth

(b)(6); (b)(6) (b)(6)

Subject: RE: STORY SLATED TO POST SUNDAY. Want to make sure you see this email.

Hi Calvin – (b) (5)

(b) (5)

(b) (5)

From: Mitchell, Calvin (b) (6)

Sent: Friday, February 12, 2021 5:18 PM

To: Nisanci, Didem (b)(6) > Schaffer, Laurie

(b)(6) > Rosenberg, Elizabeth (b)(6);

Gacki, Andrea <(b)(6)> (b)(6)

Subject: FW: STORY SLATED TO POST SUNDAY. Want to make sure you see this email.

Eric Lipton, NYT, is back with his story (b) (5)

(b) (5)

His summary is below (b) (5)

Thank you.

Calvin

From: Eric Lipton <lipton@nytimes.com>

Sent: Friday, February 12, 2021 5:06 PM

To: Mitchell, Calvin (b) (6) >

Subject: STORY SLATED TO POST SUNDAY. Want to make sure you see this email.

**** Caution:** External email. Pay attention to suspicious links and attachments. Send suspicious email to suspect@treasury.gov **

On Fri, Feb 12, 2021 at 10:51 AM Eric Lipton <lipton@nytimes.com> wrote:

Hello Calvin

The story I have been working on is going to be running in the next couple of days. I want to ask for any formal input from Treasury, either on the record or on background.

Here are a few specific questions.

1) We have been told that part of the reason that the license was issued was an argument that was presented to Treasury by officials in Israel and within the United States government that there was a national security interest involving Gertler. This argument was made directly to Mnuchin and to Pompeo, we have been told. The argument made was that granting this license was in the interest of the United States. But we also have assembled documentation showing that this argument was being pushed by Gertler and his legal and lobbying team. So it remains hard to determine if this was simply a very smart lobbying strategy or if there was really significant United States and Israeli interests in play.

Obviously, this is a very difficult question for you to address, I understand that. But welcome background guidance if you or someone can offer it.

2) One senior State Department official who served in the Trump administration noted that the most important United States interest in DRC was the continued transition toward democracy and transparency and that keeping Gertler subject to strict sanctions was the most important part, not some potential role he might play in providing the United States information. So this State official dismissed the "national interest" argument as being exaggerated. Again, welcome any insight

3) Gertler via Arnold and Porter asked for the sanctions to be lifted entirely. It was Andrea Gacki who then proposed the one-year license as an alternative as a way to address the request by Mnuchin that OFAC consider the request. Mnuchin did ask Gacki to take this up. But he did not force her to sign the license, we are told by a Trump official. The one-year license was Andrea's way to accommodate the request that had come from Mnuchin and from Gertler's team. Welcome any insight on this.

4) Obviously, Treasury Sec. Yellen has now received multiple letters from members of Congress, NGOs. I attached a few of them. I want and need to include some kind of a comment from Treasury that says something.

5) More specifically, we have been told that Treasury is reviewing this license and considering modifying, suspending or revoking it. Is this accurate? Can you please clarify and at a minimum offer any guidance on background.

Thanks in advance. **Need this input by Saturday.**

Eric

Look forward to talking.

Eric Lipton

The New York Times

Washington Bureau

202 370 7951 cellphone/whatsapp

917 523 4073 Signal

lipton@nytimes.com

Bates Nos.: 2021-1246_010065-010066

Duplicate of Bates Nos.: 2021-1246_006480-006481 in 23rd Interim

From: (b)(6)
To: (b)(6) [Smith, Bradley](#)
Subject: FW: Walden starts his own consultancy — Former Carper chief joins Venable — Big brands get on board with packaging tax
Date: Monday, February 22, 2021 3:59:24 PM

— Ambassador **Marshall Billingslea**, most recently former President Donald Trump's chief arms control negotiator, is joining the **Hudson Institute**, Morning Defense reports.

(b)(6) Senior Advisor, Office of Foreign Assets Control, U.S. Treasury Department,
(b)(6)

From: POLITICO Influence <politicoinfluence@email.politico.com>
Sent: Monday, February 22, 2021 3:41 PM
To: (b)(6)
Subject: Walden starts his own consultancy — Former Carper chief joins Venable — Big brands get on board with packaging tax

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Feb 22, 2021

[View in browser](#)

BY [CAITLIN OPRYSKO](#)

With Daniel Lippman

WALDEN HEADS TO K STREET: Former Rep. **Greg Walden** of Oregon is partnering up with the lobbying shop **Alpine Group** to form **Alpine Advisors**, a separate strategic advisory firm. Walden spent years as the top Republican on the powerful House Energy and Commerce Committee, and twice chaired the House GOP’s campaign arm before retiring at the beginning of this year. But retirement’s “not what it’s cracked up to be for me,” the 11-term lawmaker said in an interview.

— Walden isn’t sure whether he will register to lobby when his one-year ban lifts, or whether he’ll represent foreign clients, explaining that he believes “there’ll be enough opportunity” in the strategic advising space.

— There's a "huge, big need now that people have to get a better understanding of what's going on in the country, in the halls of Congress, from a sort of strategic and forward-looking brain," he said. "We live in this instant world, and the smallest misstep can be material to a company," Walden noted, and those stakes result in "a huge opportunity and a tremendous demand from those making strategic decisions in companies."

— Walden is the fourth former lawmaker out of last year's class of retired or defeated lawmakers to head to K Street by PI's count, joining former House Ag Chair **Mike Conaway** (R-Texas), who started his own lobbying shop, Rep. **Pete Olson** (R-Texas), who joined **Hance Scarborough**, and Rep. **Bradley Byrne** (R-Ala.), who rejoined his old firm **Adams and Reese** earlier this year.

VENABLE ADDS FORMER CARPER CHIEF: Venable has added **Jim Reilly**, a former chief of staff to Senate Environment and Public Works Chair [Tom Carper](#) (D-Del.) as a senior policy adviser. Reilly, who will focus on issues like energy, infrastructure and the environment, joins the firm from the **American Wind Energy Association** (now the **American Clean Power Association**), where he led the federal affairs team. Prior to that, he served as Carper's top aide dating back to now-President **Joe Biden's** days in the Senate, and he did a stint advising the British Embassy on climate issues.

— In an interview, Reilly touted the Delaware congressional delegation's ability to consistently "punch above its weight" while adding that his move to Venable was a "natural next step" given the Biden administration's intent to enact a major infrastructure package "that is paying attention to the energy that goes into it and the way infrastructure helps the economy, helps the environment," which he noted is "the space that I have worked in in Washington, both on the Hill and" at AWEA.

Good afternoon and welcome to PI. Send tips: coprysko@politico.com. And follow me on Twitter: [@caitlinoprysko](https://twitter.com/caitlinoprysko).

NOT SOMETHING YOU HEAR EVERY DAY: “Beset with rising consumer criticism and a dire need for recycled materials, [consumer giants are calling for a fee on packaging](#) — a plea for, in essence, a tax on their own products,” **POLITICO’s Catherine Boudreau** reports. **The Recycling Partnership**, an industry coalition that includes food giants **Nestlé, Mars** and **Unilever**, has unveiled a framework that would pool revenue from the fees with \$4 billion in annual taxpayer money that currently funds thousands of local recycling programs.

— “It’s a turnabout for the brands, which for years have fought efforts that would force them to take responsibility for the empty bottles, used wrappers and other refuse their products leave behind. The change of heart is driven by a quandary — companies aiming to attract sustainability-minded investors and meet the green demands of consumers have pledged to increase their use of recycled material. But without access to salvaged waste, they can’t make good on those promises.”

— The plan doesn’t have total buy-in across industry, however — the **Consumer Brands Association**, one of its largest lobbying groups, has yet to back a recycling fee and earlier this month [released its own recycling blueprint](#).

HOW AN ISRAELI BILLIONAIRE SECURED LAST-MINUTE SANCTION RELIEF FROM TRUMP: The New York Times’ **Eric Lipton** is out with a lengthy investigation into how Israeli mining magnate **Dan Gertler** [was able to convince the Trump administration in its final days](#) to roll back stiff sanctions it slapped him with in 2017 over accusations of corruption.

— Over former President Donald Trump’s tenure, Gertler hired “high-powered lobbyists and lawyers, including **Alan Dershowitz**, who had represented President Donald J. Trump in his first impeachment trial, and the former F.B.I. director **Louis Freeh**. But with time running out on the Trump administration and the incoming Biden administration unlikely to give his pleas much of a hearing, Mr. Gertler put one last offer on the table: He would agree to have outside monitors track his business and submit regular reports on his financial transactions if the

United States would lift the sanctions.”

TV, FILM INDUSTRY ASKS WHITE HOUSE FOR CRACKDOWN ON PIRACY: A group of industry group and union heads representing the entertainment industry are asking the Biden administration to crack down on online piracy that they say has surged throughout the pandemic and to strengthen copyright laws in order to boost the sector’s recovery.

— In a letter to Biden last week, **Jennifer Dorning**, president of **AFL-CIO’s** Department for Professional Employees, **Matthew Loeb**, the international president of the **International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees**, **Charles Rivkin**, the **Motion Picture Association’s** chair and chief executive, **Russell Hollander**, the national executive director of the **Directors Guild of America**, **Jean Prewitt**, president and CEO of the **Independent Film & Television Alliance**, and **David White**, **SAG-AFTRA’s** national executive director, wrote that the industry stands “ready to partner with you and the Congress on a comprehensive policy agenda to ensure the entertainment industry recovers and delivers more of the vibrant movie, television, and streaming content that audiences around the world love.”

— To do so, they argued that the Biden administration needs to appoint leaders at key agencies including USTR, Commerce, DOJ and within the White House will provide creators with copyright protection and rein in piracy while enacting a “globally-competitive environment” to incentivize American production “including with tax, trade, and insurance policy.”

FORMER AMNESTY LOBBYIST GRANTED FIRST BIDEN ETHICS WAIVER: **Charanya Krishnaswami**, the senior counselor to DHS Secretary **Alejandro Mayorkas** and a former lobbyist for **Amnesty International**, [has received an ethics waiver](#) to work on policies in areas she lobbied for, the first of the Biden administration, according to **Axios’ Lachlan Markay**.

— In a [memo made public Friday](#), acting OMB Director **Robert**

Fairweather argued that without a waiver, “the adjustments that would be necessary to maintain Ms. Krishnaswami’s recusal are anticipated to result in serious limitations and inefficiencies in the Department.” The memo indicated that Amnesty’s status as a nonprofit, as well as Krishnaswami’s assertion that she has only ever lobbied Congress and not DHS, weighed favorably on the waiver process. The waiver still bars Krishnaswami from participating in issues “directly affecting” Amnesty’s finances, the memo says.

NEW - “THE RECAST” NEWSLETTER: Power dynamics are changing. “Influence” is changing. More people are demanding a seat at the table, insisting that all politics is personal and not all policy is equitable. “The Recast” is our new twice-weekly newsletter that breaks down how race and identity are recasting politics, policy and power in America. And POLITICO is recasting how we report on this crucial intersection, bringing you fresh insights, scoops, dispatches from across the country and new voices that challenge “business as usual.” Don’t miss out on this important new newsletter, [SUBSCRIBE NOW](#). Thank you to our sponsor, Intel.

JOBS REPORT

— The **National Pork Producers Council** has added **Jack Frye** as manager of congressional relations and **Jack Detiveaux** as manager of competition, labor and tax. Frye most recently managed the **National Restaurant Association's** federal and state political advocacy programs, and Detiveaux most recently was senior manager of legislative affairs for the **National Association of Chemical Distributors**.

— **Steve Kidera** will be communications director for **TechNet**. He most recently served as senior director of communications and public affairs with the **Computing Technology Industry Association**.

— **Evan Gillissie** has joined TechNet as government relations and communications coordinator. He most recently worked at **Brownstein**

Hyatt Farber Schreck where he supported their energy and natural resources clients.

— The **Center for a New American Security** has launched the Indo-Pacific Security Program. **Lisa Curtis**, former NSC Senior Director for South and Central Asia, will direct the program, and **Rich Verma**, former U.S. ambassador to India; **David Feith**, former deputy assistant secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs; and **John Park**, director of the Korea Project at the **Harvard** Kennedy School's Belfer Center will join as senior fellows.

— Ambassador **Marshall Billingslea**, most recently former President Donald Trump's chief arms control negotiator, is joining the **Hudson Institute**, Morning Defense reports.

— **Anne Wall** is joining **Google's** government affairs and public policy team as head of strategy and external affairs, Playbook reports. She most recently was a partner at the **Duberstein Group**, and is an Obama Treasury and White House alum.

— **Robert Butora** is now a director of federal government affairs for **CVS Health**, Huddle reports. He previously was a health policy adviser for Sen. [Bill Cassidy](#) (R-La.).

NEW JOINT FUNDRAISERS

Team Josh 2022 (Citizens for **Josh Mandel**, Inc., Justice Opportunity Strength Honor PAC)

NEW PACS

Done with Dunn 2022 (PAC)
Grand Strand Pee Dee PAC (PAC)
Integrity Matters PAC (Super PAC)
Ohio Democrats For Democracy (PAC)
Pragmatic Voter PAC, Inc. (Super PAC)

NEW LOBBYING REGISTRATIONS

Atlantic Strategies Group: Envistacom, LLC
Atlantic Strategies Group: Logos Technologies, LLC
Bockorny Group, Inc.: Riskld
Bridge Street Group, LLC: Save Our Standards
Cornerstone Government Affairs, Inc.: Quantum Technology Sciences, Inc.
Cornerstone Government Affairs, Inc.: Runx1 Research Program
Covington & Burling LLP: Valneva USa, Inc.
Diamond Foundry: Diamond Foundry
Ervin Graves Strategy Group, LLC: Palantir Technologies Inc.
Greenberg Traurig, LLP: Alen Corp
Holland & Knight LLP: Wing Aviation LLC
Klein/Johnson Group: Aon Service Corporation
M-Sec Enterprises LLC: Symptomsense LLC
No Fluke Fishing LLC: The Ocean Conservancy
Pricewaterhousecoopers: The R&D Coalition
Putalastategies: Ip Renewable Energy Holdings LLC
Putalastategies: Pattern Energy Group Services Lp
Putalastategies: Slm Corporation
Shumaker Advisors, LLC: Toledo Museum Of Art
Strategies 360: Alaska Native Village Corporation Association
Strategies 360: National Alliance For Public Charter Schools
The Campbell Consulting Group: Charleston County Government

NEW LOBBYING TERMINATIONS

Innovative Federal Strategies, LLC: Zeno Power Systems
Kasowitz Benson Torres LLP: Iai North America
Law Office Of Alan J. Thiemann: Assn Of Test Publishers
Norm Dicks And Associates LLC: General Dynamics
Patriot One Detection Technologies, Inc.: Patriot One Technologies
Tch Group, LLC: Peabody Energy, Inc.
William Watson Group LLC: Magsari Biosciences, LLC

Designed specifically for regulatory affairs professionals -
AgencyIQ FDA Forecast 2021: In its inaugural year, AgencyIQ's FDA

Forecast predicts the FDA regulatory changes that will take place in 2021 and what they will mean for the life sciences industry. [Read more about the report and download the summary here.](#)

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From: [Gacki, Andrea](#)
To: (b)(6) [Neufeld, Michael](#); [Smith, Bradley](#); [Trew, Heather](#)
Cc: (b)(6)
Subject: FW: Week Lookahead Tomorrow
Date: Tuesday, February 2, 2021 3:53:43 PM

Hi everyone – (b) (5)

(b) (5)

Thank you!

Andrea

From: Rosenberg, Elizabeth (b) (6)
Sent: Tuesday, February 2, 2021 3:46 PM
To: Gacki, Andrea (b)(6)
Subject: FW: Week Lookahead Tomorrow

Hi!

(b) (5)
(b) (5)
(b) (5)

Thank you!

From: (b)(6) (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, February 2, 2021 11:39 AM
To: Nisanci, Didem (b)(6) > (b)(6)

(b)(6)

(b)(6) Rosenberg, Elizabeth
(b)(6); Schaffer, Laurie < (b) (6) >; Mitchell,
Calvin (b) (6)

Subject: Week Lookahead Tomorrow

Hi all,

(b) (5)

Thanks!

(b)(6)

[REDACTED]

(b)(6)

Special Assistant, Office of the Secretary
U.S. Department of the Treasury

(b)(6)

From: (b)(6)
To: (b)(6); [Smith, Bradley](#);
[Rosenberg, Elizabeth](#); (b)(6)
Cc: [DL OFAC SPI-\(POL\) Policy \(Govt & Contr\)](#); [Palluconi, Lisa](#)
Subject: NSC Leg Sync 3/9/21
Date: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 10:55:52 AM

Good morning,

This morning, NSC #LEG hosted its Tuesday Leg sync.

-Gertler: (b)(5)

-NS2: Sen. Cruz is holding the nomination of Bill Burns to be CIA Director over concerns on the implementation of NS2 sanctions.

-DOD's Colin Kahl will have his Committee vote today. Given the likelihood that his nomination may result in a tie, a discharge petition may be required to facilitate a floor vote. (b)(5)

(b)(5)

-Syria/ME – NSC continues member-level engagement on last month's strike.

-Interagency Election Security actions are rolling out beginning on March 15.

-(b)(6) (DNSA-Cyber) is beginning a series of SSCI-member meetings this week on Cyber, specifically on the Microsoft vulnerability.

-Today, WH Press will announce Biden's Quad meeting.

-SFRC/China mark-up is set for late March, however the Committee has not agreed upon a set of bills for mark up.

-State and NSC continue to discuss a Special envoy for Climate.

From: (b)(6)
To: [OFACLegAffairs](#)
Subject: OFAC Congressional Correspondence Tracker
Date: Friday, February 26, 2021 3:50:46 PM

Good Afternoon,

Here is the latest and greatest OFAC Congressional correspondence tracker. Please let me know if there are any errors in my tracking or if you need more updates than I have provided.

If you are looking for any of the letters OFAC sent out over the 116th Congress (2019-2020) you can find them [here](#).

LETTERS SENT/ CLOSED OUT

LETTERS CLEARED FOR/ IN REVIEW

LETTERS RECEIVED/ RESPONSES IN DRAFT

1. [20212-SE-835](#) (February 1, 2021) Booker Durbin Cardin on Gertler Letter (b)(5)
(b)(5)/POC (b)(6)
2. [20212-SE-871](#) (February 3, 2021) Meeks Bass et al. on OFAC Gertler (b)(5)
(b)(5)/POC (b)(6)
3. [20212-SE-1235](#) (February 22, 2021) Heinrich Bennet on Belarus Sanctions (POC (b)(6)
(b)(6)
4. [20212-SE-1267](#) (February 23, 2021) Young on US Investment in Chinese Companies
(POC (b)(6)
5. [20212-SE-1301](#) (February 24, 2021) Portman Carper on Burma Sanctions (POC (b)(6)

(b)(5)

Thank you,

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

Legislative Affairs Coordinator | Office of Foreign Assets Control | U.S. Department of the Treasury

E

(b)(6)

From: (b)(6)
To: [Palluconi, Lisa](#); [Thomas, Nikole](#)
Cc: (b)(6)
Subject: RE: FYI
Date: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 10:37:26 AM

Got it. (b) (5)

From: Palluconi, Lisa (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 10:36 AM
To: (b)(6) Thomas, Nikole
(b)(6)
Cc: (b)(6)
Subject: RE: FYI

Thanks much, (b)(6). (b) (5)

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 10:30 AM
To: Thomas, Nikole (b)(6); Palluconi, Lisa (b)(6)
Cc: (b)(6)
Subject: Fwd: FYI

Lisa and Nikole,

(b) (5)

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

From: [Gacki, Andrea](#)
To: [Smith, Bradley](#)
Subject: Re: Bradley Smith sent you a message in Skype for Business
Date: Thursday, February 18, 2021 4:35:21 PM

Sorry I missed your Skype! I'm walking into the office (b) (5) Will call later!

From: Gacki, Andrea (b)(6)
Date: February 18, 2021 at 4:13:41 PM EST
To: Smith, Bradley (b)(6) Gacki, Andrea
(b)(6)
Subject: Bradley Smith sent you a message in Skype for Business

Gacki, Andrea 10:57 AM:

Good morning, btw! (b)(6) (b)(6)

Smith, Bradley 10:58 AM:

(b) (5)

Gacki, Andrea 11:01 AM:

(b) (5) (b) (5)

Smith, Bradley 11:01 AM:

(b) (5)

Smith, Bradley 11:01 AM:

(b) (5)

Smith, Bradley 11:01 AM:

(b) (5)

Gacki, Andrea 11:01 AM:

(b) (5)

Gacki, Andrea 11:02 AM:

Fwiw -- (b) (5)

Gacki, Andrea 11:02 AM:

(b)(5)

Smith, Bradley 11:03 AM:

(b)(5)

Gacki, Andrea 11:04 AM:

(b)(5)

Gacki, Andrea 11:05 AM:

(b)(5)

Gacki, Andrea 11:59 AM:

I am on the line. ;)

Smith, Bradley 12:00 PM:

(b) (6), (b) (5) I am dialing in now.

Gacki, Andrea 12:00 PM:

(yes)

Gacki, Andrea 12:00 PM:

We have not started!

Gacki, Andrea 12:00 PM:

(b)(5)

Gacki, Andrea 12:00 PM:

(b) (5)

Gacki, Andrea 12:01 PM:
(b) (5)

Smith, Bradley 12:01 PM:
(b) (6), (b) (5)

Gacki, Andrea 12:01 PM:
(b)(5)

Gacki, Andrea 12:01 PM:
(b) (6), (b) (5)

Smith, Bradley 12:01 PM:
(b) (5)

Smith, Bradley 12:04 PM:
(b) (5)

Gacki, Andrea 12:05 PM:
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Gacki, Andrea 12:51 PM:

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Gacki, Andrea 12:52 PM:

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Gacki, Andrea 2:27 PM:

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Smith, Bradley 4:11 PM:

(b) (6), (b) (5)

From: (b) (6)
To: [Thomas, Nikole](#); (b)(6) [Rasmussen, Mary](#)
Cc: (b)(6); [Thannhauser, Sara](#); [Moriarty, Kellen](#); (b)(6)
Bcc: [Sens, Andrew](#)
Subject: RE: For Input Monday - (b) (5)
Date: Monday, May 17, 2021 2:06:00 PM

PRE-DECISIONAL and DELIBERATIVE

(b) (5)

(b) (6)

From: Thomas, Nikole (b)(6)
Sent: Monday, May 17, 2021 1:59 PM
To: (b)(6) (b) (6)
<(b)(6) [Rasmussen, Mary](#) (b)(6)>
Cc: (b) (6) (b)(6) [Thannhauser, Sara](#)
(b)(6) [Moriarty, Kellen](#) (b)(6)
(b)(6)
Subject: RE: For Input Monday - (b) (5)

PRE-DECISIONAL and DELIBERATIVE

Thanks for flagging, (b)(6) (b) (5)

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Monday, May 17, 2021 1:40 PM
To: Thomas, Nikole (b)(6) (b) (6) (b)(6)
[Rasmussen, Mary](#) (b)(6)
Cc: (b) (6) (b)(6) [Thannhauser, Sara](#)
(b)(6) [Moriarty, Kellen](#) <(b)(6)>
(b)(6)
Subject: FW: For Input Monday - (b) (5)

Hi Licensing Colleagues,
I hope you are well.

(b) (5)

Thank you very much,

(b)(6) (b)(6)

(b) (5)

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Monday, May 17, 2021 9:54 AM

To: (b)(6)

Subject: For Input by 1pm Monday: (b) (5)

Hi – (b)(5)

Thanks

(b)(6)

(b) (5)

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Friday, May 14, 2021 6:47 PM

To: (b)(5)

_DL_OIA_MEG <_DL_OIA_MEG@treasury.gov>; (b)(5)

Cc: (b)(5)

Subject: For WL Clearance COB Monday: (b) (5)

Hi all,

(b)(5)

Would you kindly get back to me (b) (5) by COB Monday (17 May)?

Thank you and have a restful weekend.

Best regards, (b)(6)

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Thursday, May 6, 2021 10:25 AM

To: (b)(6)

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

Subject: WA/AIPAC - 5/26

Good morning –

(b) (5), (b) (6)

Thanks,

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

Senior Advisor to the Deputy Secretary

U.S. Department of the Treasury

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

From: (b)(6)
To: [Smith, Bradley](#)
Cc: (b)(6)
Subject: RE: FY 2022 Annual Audit Planning - related to TFFC
Date: Monday, February 22, 2021 12:20:59 PM

Good afternoon Brad,

(b) (5)

Thanks,

(b)(6)

Audit Manager

Treasury Office of Inspector General

875 15th Street, NW

Washington, DC 20005

(b)(6)

From: (b) (6) (b)(6)

Sent: Thursday, January 28, 2021 5:05 PM

To: (b)(6)

Subject: RE: FY 2022 Annual Audit Planning - related to TFFC

This message was sent securely using ZixCorp.

(b) (5)

Thanks again,

Brad

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Thursday, January 28, 2021 3:50 PM

To: Smith, Bradley (b) (6)

Cc: (b)(6)

Subject: FY 2022 Annual Audit Planning - related to TFFC

Good afternoon Brad,

(b) (5)

(b) (5)

Please provide us with available dates/times between late-February and mid-March. The discussion should take about 1 hour. Feel free to contact me with any questions.

Thanks,

(b)(6)

Audit Manager

Treasury Office of Inspector General

875 15th Street, NW

Washington, DC 20005

(b)(6)

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Bates Nos. 2021-1246_010089-0010090
Pending Consultation Internal to Treasury

From: [Bulletin Intelligence](#)
To: [TreasuryBulletin](#)
Subject: Treasury News Briefing for Monday, February 22, 2021
Date: Monday, February 22, 2021 6:06:33 AM

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iPhone optimized version and searchable archives available at treasury.bulletinintelligence.com.

[Treasury News Briefing](#)



TO: THE SECRETARY AND SENIOR STAFF

DATE: MONDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2021 6:00 AM EST

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- Business Insider Highlights GSE Refinancing Products.
- Michigan AG Warns Of Scams Tied To Pandemic Assistance.
- Schumer Promises Passage Of Relief Bill By March 14.
- Yield On 30-Year Bond Reaches Highest Level In A Year.
- Black Knight: Forbearances Rise By 15K.
- TransUnion: Mortgage Delinquencies Falling, But A Rise Is On The Way.
- Urban Institute Says Alternative Assessments Of Credit And Collateral Could Help Boost Black Homeownership.
- NAR: Existing Home Sales Up 0.6% MoM, 23.7% YoY In January, Beating Economists' Expectations.
- First Street Foundation: Homeowners In Flood-Prone Regions Could See Huge Rate Hikes In October.
- Oregon Experts, Advocates Anticipate Flood Of Evictions In July.
- Redfin To Buy RentPath For \$608M In All-Cash Deal.
- Weiss Analytics Debuts AVM Which Utilizes Geospatial Imagery, AI.

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- Opinion: A Strong Offense Can Decrease Cyberattacks On Critical Infrastructure.
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- Barkin: Full Herd Immunity May Not Be Needed To Achieve Economic Rebound.

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Treasury in the News

Commentary: Yellen, Powell Crisis Playbooks “Not Valid Today.”

In an op-ed for The [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/21, Hanke, Subscription Publication, 8.41M), Invesco Chief Economist John Greenwood and Johns Hopkins University Applied Economics Professor Steve H. Hanke write that markets are currently characterized by “speculative manias,” demonstrated by trends in Bitcoin and GameStop to which fiscal and monetary policymakers Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen and Fed Chair Jerome Powell “are turning a blind eye.” The writers contend Yellen and Powell, with “the fervor of messiahs,...tell us the only way to save the labor market and reach full employment is to continue to pour fiscal and monetary fuel on the fire.” The authors say “their prescriptions and prophecies, modeled on the playbook of the 2008 financial crisis, are not valid today.”

COVID-19 News

Psaki Says Teacher Vaccinations Do Not “Need To Be A Prerequisite” To Reopening

Schools.

The [Washington Post](#) (2/21, Wang, Whoriskey, 10.52M) reports, "The White House on Sunday reiterated that teachers do not need to be vaccinated against the coronavirus before schools can reopen, a stance Biden administration officials say is in line with scientific guidelines but that puts them at odds with some teachers unions that have insisted members will not return to the classroom until they receive the vaccine." White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said on [ABC's This Week](#) (2/21, 3.03M), "We all believe that teachers should be prioritized. ... But it doesn't need to be a prerequisite. The CDC is saying in order to be safe, a number of steps can be taken – having smaller class sizes, more PPE, more testing, facilities upgrades – those are additional steps that can be taken, and our Secretary of Education will work with school districts to implement that."

NIAID Director Fauci said on [CNN's State Of The Union](#) (2/21, 988K), "The situation on the ground is where teachers make the decisions and schools make their decisions. The CDC gives guidelines. If you follow the guidelines, I think it will go a long way to be able to get the children back to school in the safest way as you possibly can. ... Teachers clearly should be prioritized among those essential personnel to get vaccinated. I don't believe that it should be if they're not vaccinated, they should not go back. I believe we should prioritize them and get as many vaccinated as we possibly can."

Scalise Says White House Bowing To Teachers' Union Pressure. House Minority Whip Scalise said on [ABC's This Week](#) (2/21, 3.03M), "The first thing that the President can do is give strong guidance and follow the science. ... You can look at CDC guidance, they lay out safely how to reopen. ... Right now you can see as the unions have stepped up and say they don't want in-classroom learning, you have seen the White House pressure the CDC on guidance."

However, American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten said on [NBC's Meet The Press](#) (2/21, 3.22M), "I want to debunk this myth that teacher unions, at least our union, doesn't want to reopen schools. Teachers know that in-person education is really important. ... There is a road map now. You can follow that in terms of defining the risk."

New York Democrats Taking Action Against Cuomo In Wake Of Nursing Home Scandal.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/21, Vielkind, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) says the relationship between New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo (D) and top New York Democratic legislative leaders "has hit a nadir" amid questions about Cuomo's handling of COVID in nursing homes. Democrats in the state Senate will this week pass a bill requiring approval of any future executive orders regarding the pandemic. The [New York Post](#) (2/21, Campanile, Hogan, 7.45M) reports Queens state Sen. Leroy Comrie (D) "is demanding the Legislature hold special hearings on the coronavirus nursing home scandal...separate from a federal probe that is underway," and the [New York Daily News](#) (2/21, Greene, 2.51M) reports that many Democrats have grown weary of Cuomo's "aggressive tactics" that predate the pandemic.

White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki, on [ABC's This Week](#) (2/21, 3.03M), said, "We work with Gov. Cuomo just like we work with governors across the country. He plays an important role in insuring that we're coordinating closely and getting assistance out to his state and states across the country. We'll continue to do that. Of course, there will be a process. Investigations, we'll leave that to others to determine how that path is going to move as we look forward."

First Case Of South Africa Variant In A New York Resident Confirmed. The [New York Times](#) (2/21, Zaveri, 20.6M) reports Cuomo said Sunday that a Nassau County resident "has been confirmed as the first New York resident to have been infected by" the South Africa COVID variant.

Sullivan Advocates For Transparent WHO Investigation Into COVID Origins.

National Security Adviser Sullivan, on [CBS' Face The Nation](#) (2/21, 3M), discussed a potential investigation into the origins of the coronavirus. Sullivan said, "I believe that we need to take a variety of steps to look at this: the previous administration's response to the pandemic and what lessons we need to learn to make sure that never happens again. I also believe that we need a credible, open, transparent international investigation led by the World Health Organization. And they're about to come out with a report about the origins of the pandemic in Wuhan, China, that we have questions about, because we do not believe that China has made available sufficient original data into how this pandemic began to spread both in China and then eventually around the world. And we believe that both the WHO and China should step up on this matter." The [CBS Weekend News](#) (2/21, story 4, 0:35, Duncan, 8.27M) shared highlights from the interview in a brief segment.

China Using Its COVID Vaccine Supply To Expand International Influence.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/21, A1, Parkinson, Deng, Lin, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports that China is increasingly looking to expand its global influence by providing developing countries, particularly in Africa and Latin America, with doses of COVID vaccines.

EU Members Use Pandemic To Reintroduce Border Restrictions.

The [New York Times](#) (2/21, Stevis-Gridneff, 20.6M) reports that while the EU "sees free movement as a fundamental pillar of the continent's deepening integration," many member states "seem to find taking back control of borders irresistible" amid the spread of new COVID variants. The Times adds remarks by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen "and a suggestion by commission spokespeople that new restrictions should be reversed, triggered a pushback from Germany, which echoed the new normal among E.U. countries in the coronavirus context: our borders, our business."

UK Sets July 31 Deadline For All Adults To Receive First COVID Vaccine.

The [AP](#) (2/21, Lawless) reports that the British government “declared Sunday that every adult in the country should get a first coronavirus vaccine shot by July 31, at least a month earlier than its previous target, as it prepared to set out a ‘cautious’ plan to ease the U.K.’s lockdown.” In addition to moving the target forward from September, it “calls for everyone 50 and over and those with an underlying health condition to get their first of two vaccine shots by April 15, rather than the previous date of May 1.”

[Politico Europe](#) (2/21, Guillot, 15K) reports Health Secretary Matt Hancock “said he was confident the U.K. had the capacity to deliver.”

Meanwhile, [Reuters](#) (2/21, Holton) reports that British Prime Minister Boris Johnson “will plot a path out of COVID-19 lockdown on Monday in an effort to gradually reopen the battered \$3 trillion economy, aided by one of the fastest vaccine rollouts in the world.” According to Reuters, “A fast start to the vaccine rollout plus a near-two month tough national lockdown means Johnson can now set out a phased easing of the restrictions, prioritising a return to schools and social mixing outdoors.” [Bloomberg](#) (2/21, Ashton, 3.57M) also reports Johnson “will announce that all schools in England will reopen from March 8,” and he is “expected to allow more social contact from March 29, when outdoor gatherings of either six people or two households can take place, and outdoor sports such as tennis and football can resume.”

Italians Mark One Year Of Pandemic.

The [AP](#) (2/21, Bruno) reports Italians on Sunday “marked one year since their country experienced its first known COVID-19 death” by holding “wreath-laying ceremonies, tree plantings and church services.” The AP adds Italians “paid tribute” to the country’s 95,500 confirmed dead, “Europe’s second-highest pandemic toll after Britain,” though experts “say the virus also killed many others who were never tested.”

Israel Reopening For Vaccine Passport Holders.

On [NBC Nightly News](#) (2/21, story 6, 1:55, Snow, 5.41M), Sarah Harmon reported Israel “is reopening, but not for everyone. Certain places, including gyms, hotels, and swimming pools, are only accessible for fully vaccinated and COVID recovered.” She added, “It is a sort of vaccine passport, linked to Israel’s centralized healthcare system.”

Israel Agrees To Finance Syria’s Supply Of Sputnik V Vaccine In Prisoner Exchange. The [New York Times](#) (2/21, Kingsley, Bergman, Kramer, 20.6M) reported that in order to secure the release of an Israeli civilian being held in Syria, Israel has agreed to fund the supply of the Sputnik V COVID vaccine for Damascus, according to an official. The [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/21, Lieber, Malsin, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Saturday “said he had spoken twice with Russian President Vladimir Putin to hammer out the deal, but denied that Israel provided its own vaccines in the deal,” and [Bloomberg](#) (2/21, Odenheimer, 3.57M) reports Netanyahu “didn’t comment directly on whether Israel bought Russian-made vaccines for Syria.”

World Bank Warns Palestinians Need \$30M To Fund COVID Vaccine Plan. [Reuters](#) (2/21, Ayyub) reports the World Bank on Monday forecast “the Palestinians’ COVID-19 vaccination plan faces a \$30 million funding shortfall, even after factoring in support from a global vaccine scheme for poorer economies.” The World Bank also suggested Israel, “a world leader in terms of vaccination speed, could perhaps consider donating surplus doses to the Palestinians to help accelerate a vaccine roll-out in the occupied West Bank and Gaza.”

Indian Vaccine Producer Cautions Domestic Restrictions May Delay Exports.

The [New York Times](#) (2/21, Yasir, 20.6M) reports Adar Poonawalla, the CEO of the Serum Institute of India, which “dozens of countries are counting on to supply...Covid-19 vaccines,” on Sunday warned these deliveries “might be delayed because it had been ‘directed’ to fill domestic needs ahead of export orders.” However, the Times adds Poonawalla “did not say who had issued the directive, and the Serum Institute did not immediately return requests for comment.”

Canadians Confront Popularity Of “COVID-Shaming.”

The [New York Times](#) (2/21, Porter, 20.6M) reports Canadians “might be known internationally as nice, apologetic and fair-minded. But, a year after the pandemic arrived, some Canadians worry it has exposed a very different national persona: judgmental, suspicious and vengeful.” According to the Times, “Covid-shaming has become fervent in parts of the country, with locals calling for the heads of not just politicians and doctors breaking the rules but their own family members and neighbors.”

Leading National News

US Nears 500K COVID Deaths; White House Plans Memorial Ceremony.

The [AP](#) (2/21, Raby) reports, “The U.S. stood Sunday at the brink of a once-unthinkable tally: 500,000 people lost to the coronavirus. A year into the pandemic, the running total of lives lost was about 498,000 – roughly the population of Kansas City, Missouri, and just shy of the size of Atlanta.” The total “surpasses the number of people who died in 2019 of chronic lower respiratory diseases, stroke, Alzheimer’s, flu and pneumonia combined.” (An [unofficial count](#) topped 500,000 on Sunday, but the [Johns Hopkins number](#) was still slightly below half a million.)

[CNN](#) (2/21, Saenz, LeBlanc, 89.21M) reports on its website that President Biden “is planning to deliver remarks and hold a candle

lighting ceremony at the White House around sundown as soon as Monday, if the threshold is crossed, a White House official said." Vice President Harris, Dr. Biden, and Doug Emhoff "will also participate. Plans for the ceremony underscore the empathetic message Biden has sought to bring to the US coronavirus response since taking office last month – a departure from his predecessor."

[Politico](#) (2/21, Mueller, 6.73M) reports NIAID Director Fauci called nation's "approach of half a million deaths due to Covid-19 'terrible,' 'really horrible' and 'historic' Sunday." Fauci told CNN, "It's nothing like we've ever been through in the last 102 years since the 1918 influenza pandemic. People decades from now are going to be talking about this as a terribly historic milestone in the history of this country."

All three broadcast networks made note. On [ABC World News Tonight](#) (2/21, story 2, 1:20, 1.86M), Linsey Davis called it "another dreadful milestone," with the total "more than the Americans who died during World War I, World War II, and the Vietnam War combined." On the [CBS Weekend News](#) (2/21, story 2, 2:10, 8.27M), Jericka Duncan said the "COVID-weary nation" is "about to hit an unfathomable death toll." Kate Snow of [NBC Nightly News](#) (2/21, story 5, 2:55, 5.41M) called it "a number so large, it is almost impossible to comprehend."

[USA Today](#) (2/21, Ortiz, 12.7M) reports, "Nearly a year into a life-altering pandemic, many Americans are fed up with wearing masks, desperate for a return to normalcy and numb to the relentless stream of grim numbers, such as the 500,000 COVID-19 deaths the USA is about to surpass." In its piece marking the looming milestone, the [Washington Post](#) (2/21, A1, Fisher, Cha, Gowen, Hernandez, Rozsa, 10.52M) profiles several families who have lost children to COVID, writing, "Each death represents a shattered family and a trauma deepened, parents say, by the rampant belief that kids can't get covid, or that it doesn't much harm them when they do."

The [New York Times](#) (2/21, Bosman, 20.6M) reports, "The milestone comes at a hopeful moment: New virus cases are down sharply, deaths are slowing and vaccines are steadily being administered. But there is concern about emerging variants of the virus, and it may be months before the pandemic is contained." Fauci, on [Fox News Sunday](#) (2/21, 1.11M), said, "We really need to keep our guard up, because we have variances out there that are circulating that have a greater degree of capability of transmitting from person-to-person. ... The slope of downward trajectory is really very good and very impressive. It's very sharp if you look at it. The one thing we don't want to do is to get complacent that it's coming down so sharply that now we are out of the woods, because we are still at a baseline of daily infection that's quite troublesome."

Former FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb said on [CBS' Face The Nation](#) (2/21, 3M), "This has taken a tragic toll on the United States, but we should be optimistic, in my view. I think we're going to continue to see infection rates decline into the spring and the summer. Right now, they're falling quite dramatically. I think these trends are likely to continue. The new variants do create new risk." [Reuters](#) (2/21) and [The Hill](#) (2/21, Budryk, 5.69M) also report.

Administration Moves Beyond Initial Goal Of 100M Vaccinations In 100 Days. The [AP](#) (2/21, Miller) reports that the Administration's goal of 100 million vaccination shots in 100 days "sounded so ambitious at first blush. ... Now, one month into his presidency, Joe Biden is on a glide path to attain that goal and pitching well beyond it to the far more ambitious and daunting mission of vaccinating all eligible adults against the coronavirus by the end of the summer. ... About 145 million doses are set for delivery in the next 5 1/2 weeks, with an additional 200 million expected by the end of May and a further 200 million by the end of July."

The [New York Times](#) (2/21, 20.6M) reports that the rate of vaccinations, "which had been accelerating after a chaotic start, has quickly fallen" due to last week's winter storms. However, it remains about 1.52 million vaccine doses per day – "still above President Biden's target" but down from the peak of 1.7 million doses of February 16, "before a brutal winter storm hit states from coast to coast." Snow said on [NBC Nightly News](#) (2/21, story 3, 1:35, 5.41M) that the Administration "says it is moving to deliver more COVID vaccines after those storms delayed six million doses."

[Axios](#) (2/21, Lawler, 1.26M) says the nation's "much-maligned vaccine rollout is actually going relatively well, at least compared to other wealthy countries." The US "has carried out more vaccinations than any country in the world, and given a first dose to a higher percentage of its population (12%) than all but five countries: Israel, the Seychelles, the UAE, the U.K. and Bahrain."

The [Washington Post](#) (2/21, A1, Rozsa, 10.52M) runs a front-page feature on efforts to persuade those over 65 in Belle Glade, Florida, to get vaccinated.

Fauci Says Americans May Be Wearing Masks Into 2022. On [ABC World News Tonight](#) (2/21, story 3, 1:55, Davis, 1.86M), Zohreen Shah reported Fauci said Sunday that "Americans could be wearing masks into 2022." The [New York Times](#) (2/21, Goodnough, 20.6M) reports Fauci told CNN that Americans "may still be wearing masks outside their homes a year from now, even as he predicted the country would return to 'a significant degree of normality' by fall." The [Washington Post](#) (2/21, Thebault, 10.52M) reports Fauci said "the level of new infections must go 'way down'...before he could say people needn't wear face coverings." The [New York Post](#) (2/21, Salo, 7.45M) also covers Fauci's comments.

Collins: Political Resistance To Masks May Have Led To "Tens Of Thousands" Of Deaths. [Axios](#) (2/21, Johnston, 1.26M) reports NIH Director Collins told Axios On HBO that "the politicization of mask wearing during the pandemic may have led to the deaths of 'tens of thousands' of Americans." Collins said, "The evidence was pretty compelling by last March or April that uniform wearing of masks would reduce transmission of this disease. And yet, with a variety of messages through a variety of sources, mask wearing became a statement about your political party or an invasion of your personal freedom."

Administration Officials Say Biden Will Announce PPP Reforms To Prioritize Small, Minority-Owned Businesses.

[The Hill](#) (2/22, Chalfant, 5.69M) reports President Biden on Monday “will announce policy changes to the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) aimed at targeting assistance to businesses that employ 20 or fewer workers and those that are minority-owned.” The Hill adds Biden “plans to announce that his administration will institute a 14-day period beginning Feb. 24 and running through March 9 during which only businesses with 20 or fewer employees can apply for PPP loans, according to senior administration officials,” and he will “announce that his administration is changing its loan calculating formula for sole proprietors, independent contractors, and self-employed individuals to help them obtain more financial support through the program.”

House Democrats Expect To Pass COVID Relief This Week With No GOP Support.

[Politico](#) (2/21, Emma, 6.73M) reports as the House prepares to pass President Biden’s COVID relief bill by the end of the week, House Democrats “aren’t expecting to get a single GOP vote.” On Monday, the House Budget Committee will meet “to tee up the legislation for floor passage on Friday or Saturday, with Senate action as soon as the following week.” Politico says the measure that makes it to Biden’s desk “will likely change from the House-passed bill” because “Senate consideration will be laden with political minefields, and major provisions in the bill – such as its minimum wage hike or paid sick leave expansion – could be stripped out or rejiggered as Democrats in the upper chamber muddle through budget restrictions during floor debate.” There is, Politico adds, “plenty of uncertainty to come before the House and Senate must ultimately resolve any differences and agree on any amendments before the measure is sent to Biden’s desk.” [The Hill](#) (2/21, Marcos, 5.69M) describes this week’s vote on the measure as the “biggest unity test yet” for House Democrats. No Republican are expected to support the package, so Democrats “have little room for error to ensure it satisfies the centrist and progressive wings of the caucus that make up their razor-thin majorities while delivering on Biden’s top legislative priority.” [NBC Nightly News](#) (2/21, story 4, 0:55, Snow, 5.41M) and the [CBS Weekend News](#) (2/21, story 3, 0:40, Duncan, 8.27M) provided similar coverage.

The White House has cited polls showing that the package is popular, but a [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/21, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) editorial questions how much popular support it would have “if Americans understood that most of the blowout is a list of longtime Democratic spending priorities flying under the false flag of Covid-19 relief.” According to the Journal, “more than \$1 trillion” in the bill “is a combination of bailouts for Democratic constituencies, expansions of progressive programs, pork, and unrelated policy changes.” The Journal calls it “a progressive blowout for the ages that does little for the economy but will finance Democratic interest groups for years.”

Khanna Says \$15 Minimum Wage Is “Very Reasonable.” Rep. Ro Khanna (D-CA) said on [CNN’s Inside Politics](#) (2/21, 849K), “It’s absolutely the right time to give working Americans a raise. Let’s look at the facts. Amazon raised their wage to \$15 nationally, not regionally. They have more jobs today. It didn’t hurt job creation or business. Target followed, they also did it nationally, more jobs.” Asked how a minimum wage would impact small business struggling to stay open, Khanna said, “They shouldn’t be doing it by paying people low wages. We don’t want low-wage businesses. I think most successful small businesses can pay a fair wage. ... I love small businesses. I’m all for it, but I don’t want small businesses that are underpaying employees. It’s fair for people to be making what they’re producing and I think \$15 is very reasonable in this country.”

Economists See Indications Of Post-COVID Boom.

The [New York Times](#) (2/21, A1, Casselman, 20.6M) reports that “on Wall Street and in Washington, attention is shifting to an intriguing if indistinct prospect: a post-Covid boom.” While “forecasters have always expected the pandemic to be followed by a period of strong growth,” in “recent weeks, economists have begun to talk of something stronger: a supercharged rebound that brings down unemployment, drives up wages and may foster years of stronger growth.” The Times cites “hints that the economy has turned a corner: Retail sales jumped last month as the latest round of government aid began showing up in consumers’ bank accounts. New unemployment claims have declined from early January, though they remain high. Measures of business investment have picked up, a sign of confidence from corporate leaders.”

Blue-Collar Job Growth Surges.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/21, A1, Cambon, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports that blue-collar employment in many occupations has surged to above pre-pandemic levels. Many economists and companies expect continued growth for blue-collar job openings, and predict the key factors for growth – a shift to ecommerce and a booming housing market – will continue even as vaccine roll-out continues. As the pandemic recedes, economists say service-industry jobs will see particularly big gains.

Garland To Outline Priorities For DOJ During Confirmation Hearing.

The [New York Times](#) (2/21, Benner, 20.6M) reports that Attorney General-designate Garland “plans to tell senators on Monday that he will restore the Justice Department’s commitment to equal justice under the law, combat a resurgent domestic terrorist threat and work to root out widespread discrimination should he be confirmed as attorney general.” The Times says “Garland laid out his top three priorities in an opening statement that he intends to deliver before the Judiciary Committee...when he begins confirmation hearings.”

The [AP](#) (2/21, Balsamo) reports Garland “is widely expected to sail through his confirmation process” and says his selection by President Biden “reflects the president’s goal of restoring the department’s reputation as an independent body.” [The Hill](#) (2/21, Budryk, 5.69M) says Garland “is one of the last major cabinet appointments by Biden and is likely to secure confirmation with bipartisan support despite the former Republican blockade on his last nomination.”

However, [USA Today](#) (2/21, Jansen, 12.7M) reports that as senators “weigh confirmation, Garland is certain to be confronted with

pointed inquiries about whether the Justice Department should investigate, and potentially prosecute, Trump for inciting the riot Jan. 6 that left five dead, including a Capitol Police officer." USA Today adds that Senate Minority Leader McConnell "all but threw Trump's fate to the Justice Department last week when the Senate acquitted the former president at his impeachment trial." Meanwhile, the [Chicago Sun-Times](#) (2/21, Sweet, 970K) says Republicans "are expected to press Garland on pursuing probes of Biden's son Hunter; Trump; and New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo." On [ABC World News Tonight](#) (2/21, story 7, 1:35, Davis, 1.86M), Rachel Scott noted Biden announced Garland's nomination "just one day after the Capitol Hill riot."

Schumer Says He And Biden Seeking "Extra Votes" To Confirm Tanden.

[CNN](#) (2/21, Diaz, Robertson, Duster, 89.21M) reports on its website that Senate Majority Leader Schumer "said Sunday he is working with President Joe Biden to gather the support needed to confirm" OMB Director-designate Tanden after Sen. Joe Manchin (D-WV) "said last week he would not vote for Tanden." Schumer said, "I am working with President Biden to find the extra votes so she can be passed." However, CNN says Republicans "resist her nomination."

Biden Is Poised To Name Emanuel As Ambassador To Japan, Sources Say.

[The Hill](#) (2/21, Parnes, Samuels, 5.69M) reports former Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel (D) "appears poised to take on a high-profile ambassadorship for President Biden, a step likely to trigger contention with progressives who've balked at him taking a Cabinet role." Sources told The Hill that Emanuel "is the front-runner to be Biden's nominee as ambassador to Japan," and is "also being considered for the post in China, but sources said Japan is the more likely landing spot for former President Obama's chief of staff. Former State Department official Nicholas Burns is the likely front-runner to end up in Beijing." According to The Hill, "The diplomatic role in Asia would mark a high-profile return to the federal government for Emanuel, who built a reputation as a brash but effective political tactician in the Democratic Party."

Judge Says Gunman Who Killed Her Son Also Targeted Sotomayor.

Bill Whitaker reported on [CBS' 60 Minutes](#) (2/21, 7.34M) that since her son was killed by a gunman who was targeting her, US District Judge Esther Salas "has become a crusader for federal legislation to scrub judges' personal information from the Internet. Her mission became more urgent when the FBI discovered a second locker in New Jersey belonging to her son's killer." Salas: "They found another gun, a Glock, more ammunition. But the most troubling thing they found, was a manila folder with a workup on Justice Sonia Sotomayor. ... They had her favorite restaurants, where she worked out, her friends. ... Who knows what could have happened?"

Jayapal, Khanna Push For Student Loan Debt Forgiveness.

Rep. Pramila Jayapal (D-WA), on [CNN's State Of The Union](#) (2/21, 990K), discussed the Biden Administration's stance on canceling student debt. Jayapal said, "We want at least \$50,000 canceled. This is \$1.7 trillion of student debt. If you cancel that debt, you give a lifeline to millions of people across the country. Let's work on it together. If Congress can do it, that's great. But we believe that the President has the authority to do it, and we have been in conversation with the White House about it and we urge President Biden to use every tool in his tool box and get relief to people at this critical time."

Rep. Ro Khanna (D-CA) was asked on [CNN's Inside Politics](#) (2/21, 849K) about his call for the Administration to forgive up to \$50,000 in student loan debt. Khanna said, "First of all, I'd say let's at least do the \$10,000 right away. I encourage President Biden to at least sign the executive order to have that done. Second, the debt relief of \$50,000 is targeted. It wouldn't go to people like me or to President Biden's daughter. It goes to working- and middle-class Americans."

Educators Warn Learning Gap Widening As Millions Of Children Skip Kindergarten.

[USA Today](#) (2/21, Wong, 12.7M) reports that due to the pandemic, "potentially hundreds of thousands of parents who decided not to enroll their kindergarten-aged children in traditional schools this academic year." USA Today adds "the recent tendency toward kindergarten alternatives makes a lot of sense – Zoom school has been challenging for many students of all ages, and a growing body of research indicates that's especially true for young children" and federal data from 2018 "shows most states don't require kindergarten attendance," but the trend "could have implications that extend well beyond the current school year, educators argue," and could also "exacerbate the achievement gap."

Little Rock Nine Reflect On How Education Has Changed Since Desegregation.

For the [NBC Nightly News](#) (2/21, story 9, 2:50, Snow, 5.41M) "State Of The Struggle" series, Rehema Ellis interviewed "members of the Little Rock Nine to discuss progress since school desegregation, and what still needs to change." Ellis also reported, "Nearly 70 years after segregated schools were outlawed, the number of mostly minority schools have more than tripled in recent years. Housing segregation, income inequality, abandoned federal policies on desegregation, and some families having the option to choose the schools they want their children to attend all contribute to the state of education today."

Asylum-Seekers Feel Hope, Anxiety As Administration Announces Plan To Deal With Pending Petitions.

The [Los Angeles Times](#) (2/21, 3.37M) reports that "a sense of hope, combined with renewed anxiety, has emerged for" migrants

“who have been forced to wait in Mexico under a Trump administration doctrine as their political asylum cases proceed through U.S. immigration courts.” The Migrant Protection Protocols “was a signature effort in Trump’s campaign to clamp down on immigration by compelling most to wait in tenuous living conditions as their cases proceeded.” The Biden Administration has “stopped adding new enrollees to MPP, and unveiled a plan to work through a backlog of some 25,000 people with active petitions in U.S. immigration courts.”

Philadelphia Agency Prepares As Biden Moves To Rebuild National Resettlement Program. The [Philadelphia Inquirer](#) (2/21, Gammage) reports there is hope at the Nationalities Service Center (NSC) in Philadelphia and other agencies “around the Biden administration’s plan for a robust return to welcoming some of the world’s most vulnerable people to new homes in the region.” While former President Trump “squeezed the admission of refugees...down to a maximum of 15,000 a year,” Biden “intends to raise the cap to 125,000. This month he issued an executive order to rebuild and enhance the” national resettlement program, “saying it promotes stability in unsettled regions and encourages nation-to-nation cooperation amid the worst refugee crisis since World War II.”

WPost: Biden Must Reverse Trump’s Border Policies Without Triggering “Run On The Border.” A [Washington Post](#) (2/21, 10.52M) editorial describes “a high-wire act at the U.S.-Mexico border,” in which the Biden Administration is “trying to dismantle what it rightly regards as former president Donald Trump’s inhumane immigration policies and simultaneously to avoid signaling to desperate migrants that the doors to the United States have swung open amid a pandemic.” The Post says “officials are trying to buy time; they say it will be another few months before the administration produces a fully formed new policy. Critically, that approach must feature orderly procedures for asylum seekers that allow them to pursue their legal claims in the United States – which the Trump administration did not – and do not trigger a massive new run on the border by migrant caravans.”

Lawmakers To Hold Hearing On Capitol Riot This Week.

The [New York Times](#) (2/21, A1, Mazzetti, Broadwater, 20.6M) reports on “new details about what transpired” during the 115 minutes between the chief of the Capitol Police’s “desperate call for backup” after protesters burst through the barricades around the Capitol and when officials “approve[d] the deployment of the National Guard.” The Times says the details “tell a story of how chaotic decision-making among political and military leaders burned precious time as the rioting at the Capitol spiraled out of control.” That time period “is likely to be a focus of a congressional hearing on Tuesday, when lawmakers will publicly question Steven A. Sund, the Capitol Police chief at the time, and other current and former officials for the first time about the security failures that contributed to the violence on that day.”

Johnson Calls For “Full Accounting” Of What Occurred During Capitol Riot. On [Fox News’ Sunday Morning Futures](#) (2/21), Sen. Ron Johnson (R-WI) called for “a full accounting of what actually happened” during the Jan. 6 riot at the US Capitol. Johnson added that he and Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC) “called for a completely independent investigation shortly after the breach on the sixth, and something independent of Congress. It’s difficult to figure out how to do that when you have a President that is a Democrat and you have total control by Congress of Democrats, but we need a more independent and fair investigation of this and I don’t think we will get it with the general that Nancy Pelosi has appointed.”

Officials, Private Companies Mount Legal Effort To Hold Trump, Allies Accountable. The [Washington Post](#) (2/21, Helderman, 10.52M) reports while former President Donald Trump “was acquitted by the Senate on a charge that his rhetoric incited the deadly Capitol siege, public officials and private companies are pursuing a multi-front legal effort to hold him and his allies accountable in other ways. The actions target the former president and numerous others – including elected officials, media pundits and lawyers – who indulged and echoed his falsehoods that President Biden did not win the election.” According to “lawyers and others supportive of such efforts,” the goal “is to mete out some form of punishment for those who helped undermine confidence in the election results and fueled the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol. But even more, they said, they hope to discourage other public officials from rerunning Trump’s strategy of attempting to overturn an election result by sowing doubt about the legitimacy of the vote.”

Oath Keeper Leader Claims She Met With Secret Service Before Riot. [Reuters](#) (2/21, So) reports Jessica Watkins, “a leader of the far-right ‘Oath Keepers’ group” who is charged with conspiring to storm the Capitol, “said she was in Washington on Jan. 6 to provide security for legislators and meet with Secret Service agents, according to a court filing.” While prosecutors “said Watkins entered the Capitol building illegally,” a defense petition filed Saturday said “Ms. Watkins did not engage in any violence or force at the Capitol grounds or in the Capitol.” According to her attorney, “Ms. Watkins was present not as an insurrectionist, but to provide security to the speakers at the rally, to provide escort for the legislators and others to march to the Capitol as directed by the then president, and to safely escort protesters away from the Capitol to their vehicles and cars at the conclusion of the protest. She was given a VIP pass to the rally. She met with Secret Service agents.”

[Bloomberg](#) (2/21, 3.57M) says a spokesperson for the Secret Service “rejected Watkins’ claim in an emailed statement,” which said, “To carry out its protective functions on January 6, the U.S. Secret Service relied on the assistance of various government partners. Any assertion that the Secret Service employed private citizens to perform those functions is false.” [CNN](#) (2/21, Polantz, 89.21M) provides similar coverage on its website.

FBI: Pennsylvania Police Officer Was At “The Front Of The Pack Pushing Against Police.” The [Washington Post](#) (2/21, Knowles, 10.52M) reports Joseph W. Fischer, a patrolman with the North Cornwall Township, Pennsylvania Police, “is charged with obstructing law enforcement during ‘civil disorder,’ accused of aiding the insurrection that left one police officer dead and many others wounded.” Fischer is one of “more than a dozen off-duty members of law enforcement...suspected of participating in the Jan. 6 riots, raising uncomfortable questions for chiefs and departments around the country. But the allegations

against Fischer stand out for how directly they pit him against members of his own profession." According to the FBI, Fischer was at "the front of the pack pushing against the police."

Psaki Says "Eager" Biden Could Visit Texas As Soon As This Week.

The [Washington Post](#) (2/21, Firozi, Wang, Whoriskey, 10.52M) reports that with millions of Texans "grappling with water restrictions, spiking energy bills and other havoc left behind by last week's winter storm, White House officials said Sunday that President Biden is 'eager' to visit and could head there as soon as this week." On [ABC's This Week](#) (2/21, 3.03M), White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said the President "is eager to go down to Texas and show his support," but is "also very mindful of the fact that it's not a light footprint for a President to travel to a disaster area. He does not want to take away resources or attention." She added that the Administration has "been in very close touch with" Texas Gov. Greg Abbott (R), and the President "spoke with him just a few days ago." Psaki continued that the President "asked his team to expedite [the recovery]. FEMA determined where it should focus the immediate resources: the counties that are the hardest hit," which "means not just getting people through this emergency, but getting people through the recovery, people who don't have water or heating, need a place to stay for a while, that's what that major disaster declaration will address."

Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner (D), on [CBS' Face The Nation](#) (2/21, 3M), said that Biden "certainly can come now." According to Turner, the President's presence "would not be a distraction, neither a burden." Asked why the energy systems failed in Texas, Turner said, "The power outages and the water system are all interconnected, so it's not one versus the other. In addition, mostly when the power went out, we had to bring on even more generators in order to power our system. We have a very large system. At one point in time, the water pressure was below what we call 20 psi. But as of now, the system has been normalized. The water pressure is above 50 psi and we have already taken samples, forwarded them to the state. And hopefully we can get a positive response that our system is fine and ready to go."

Transportation Secretary Buttigieg asserted on [MSNBC's Politics Nation](#) (2/21, 907K) that the US has "some decisions to make" when it comes to infrastructure, given "the reality is we have systematically disinvested in infrastructure as a country for more than a generation now. We're still learning some of the specific details that went into this situation [in Texas], although I can tell you what it was not. It was not because of renewable energy." Buttigieg added, "This is about something much deeper to do with our grid and to do with our willingness to invest and modernize. Infrastructure isn't glamorous – roads, pipes, power grids – but when they aren't in excellent condition, nothing else works. And the good news is we have an opportunity right now, enormous will among the American people to make those investments, and this time to make them equitably."

Rep. Ro Khanna (D-CA), who chairs the House Oversight and Reform Subcommittee on the Environment, on [CNN's Inside Politics](#) (2/21, 849K) pledged to hold hearings with the ERCOT CEO about the problem. According to Khanna, "Ten years ago, they had the same issue. Why did they not weatherize their equipment? Why did they not take appropriate regulatory action? Texas has had an attitude, 'We don't need to invest in the weatherization, we're just going to allow deregulation.' Why were those decisions made? And then most problematic, why are people on television selling lies to the American people about blaming renewable energies? Where did these conspiracy theories come from? We will get to the bottom of it."

On [CBS' Face The Nation](#) (2/21, 2.25M), Fort Worth Mayor Betsy Price (R) said, "Citizens are depending on their local leaders to insist that we get answers, and we're going to demand those answers of the state because the state runs the power grid and we're the ones who dealt with the issues on the ground. They're going to have to come up with solid answers and solutions."

Rep. Michael McCaul (R-TX), on [CNN's State Of The Union](#) (2/21, 988K), said, "I think power sharing would have been helpful. We should have shared with other power grids. Texas does have its own grid called ERCOT. It was set up that way to be independent of federal oversight and regulations. That's very good with things like cyber security, not so good with an Arctic blast like this one. In 2011, the state legislature, after we had a bad freeze, came out with a bipartisan report with recommendations to the energy companies and ERCOT how to winterize our operations." However, McCaul conceded Texas is "not prepared for this. We're not used to this kind of weather, so when it happened, our entire energy system was not winterized for sub-zero degree temperature as it is in the Northeast. That's what we're going to be taking a look at moving forward – are these recommendations made in 2011 and how can we move forward to winterize these operations so this never happens again?"

On [CNN's State Of The Union](#) (2/21, 988K), McCaul also discussed the role climate change may have played in the disaster. McCaul said, "I think I surprised some of my colleagues across the aisle when I said I'm not saying [climate change is] not happening. I think it's real. I think the question is how to deal with it. I think innovation, technology, a Manhattan-type project to deal with the clean energy is the way to go. Micro-nuclear devices, which I had a lot of conversations with my state counter-parts about, we have one nuclear facility in Texas. Why aren't we bringing in micro-nuclear devices to produce a ton of energy with zero carbon emissions? Ideas like that we can put forward. Tying ourselves to an agreement with China...doesn't seem to be a really good idea unless we can change that paradigm with the Paris accords." [Politico](#) (2/21, Mueller, 6.73M) and the [CNN](#) (2/21, Cole, Huynh, 89.21M) website provide coverage of McCaul's remarks during the interview.

Sen. Ron Johnson (R-WI), on [Fox News' Sunday Morning Futures](#) (2/21, 1.3M), said, "I think what we saw in Texas certainly shows what following the Green New Deal would be, shows how unreliable wind and solar power generation really is, and how it needs a fossil fuel backup. We've also learned how vulnerable our grid is, how unreliable green energy is also to disturbances from the sun, solar winds and also potentially EMP attacks. We need to do a lot more about hardening our electrical grid. I've been on this case as the six years of chief of the Homeland Security Committee, but very few people seem concerned about it. But this is a warning in terms of what happened to Texas, how vulnerable we are."

In a [New York Times](#) (2/21, 20.6M) op-ed, Naomi Klein, a senior correspondent at The Intercept and the Gloria Steinem Endowed Chair at Rutgers University, writes that Texas' "most prominent Republicans have tried to pin the blame for the crisis" on the Green New Deal. Klein argues Abbott "knows that the Green New Deal, which promises to create millions of union jobs building out shock-resilient green energy infrastructure, transit and affordable housing, is extremely appealing." Klein says the Green New Deal "finds itself under fierce attack" because "for the first time in a long time, Republicans face the very thing that they claim to revere but never actually wanted: competition – in the battle of ideas."

Millions Remain Without Safe Drinking Water Following Storms. On [NBC Nightly News](#) (2/21, story 2, 2:30, 5.41M), Kate Snow reported the "desperation [is] growing in Texas following those deadly winter storms. Millions are still without drinking water tonight. Temperatures are finally rising, but so is outrage over absurdly high electric bills." Morgan Chesky added the state is now facing "a Texas-sized thaw, flooding the state with one problem after another. Crews rushing to fix burst waterlines, as many try to find emergency supplies." On the [CBS Weekend News](#) (2/21, lead story, 2:25, Duncan, 8.27M), Janet Shamlian reported, "The weather crisis is now a humanitarian one. The state has thawed, but the need is growing. They will run out of food here well before the cars in line stop coming. Water issues are life threatening."

The [Houston Chronicle](#) (2/21, Powell, Carballo, 982K) reports on the recovery efforts in Houston, where residents have come together to support each other during the crisis. On [ABC World News Tonight](#) (2/21, story 5, 2:45, Davis, 1.86M), Trevor Ault said that Houston on Sunday "finally lift[ed] their boil water orders, but problems still remain across Texas and beyond." Elwyn Lopez added in south Jackson, Mississippi, "70% of people are without running water. The city providing this 5,400-gallon tanker just to be able to provide people with water to flush their toilets."

In addition, [USA Today](#) (2/21, Bacon, 12.7M) reports that about 20,000 homes and businesses in Texas "remained without power Sunday afternoon, according to poweroutage.us, a utility tracking website." The [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/21, Eaton, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) provides similar coverage.

Abbott Announces Billing Moratorium On Texas Utilities. [Reuters](#) (2/21, So) reports Abbott on Sunday announced regulators "will temporarily ban power companies from billing customers or disconnecting them for non-payment, after the deadly winter storm that caused widespread blackouts." Reuters says the announcement came a day after Abbott "called an emergency meeting with state lawmakers...after reports of many customers receiving bills for thousands of dollars for just a few days' electricity service while Texas was gripped by frigid temperatures."

The [Dallas Morning News](#) (2/21, Blaskovich, 772K) reports Abbott "said addressing those high bills and the failure of the state's power grid are priorities for Texas lawmakers, adding that he will not allow the legislative session to end without guaranteeing protections for power during peak demand – in summer and winter." [Bloomberg](#) (2/21, Yang, Malik, 3.57M) reports McCaul "said Sunday that the current plan is to use federal assistance funding to help homeowners with both post-storm repairs, such as for water damage and pipe bursting, and surprise electricity bills," but Turner "said the state of Texas should pay for the 'exorbitant costs' of repairs and bills for consumers."

A more than 2,000-word [Washington Post](#) (2/21, Gowen, Craig, Hernandez, 10.52M) article says Abbott has faced "a series" of deadly disasters over his past six years as governors, but while Abbott in the past "carefully studied the situation – and its political ramifications – before taking action, usually demanding future legislative changes that may never happen," this time he is confronting "citizens across the state post[ing] angry memes on social media about the governor, crafting basketball-sized snowballs they wanted to aim at him and superimposing 'Where is Greg Abbott?' over a hellscape." Per the Post, "critics have charged that Abbott and his administration failed to take the storm's threat seriously or issue sufficient emergency warnings throughout – with meteorologists giving ample warning of a serious storm that could bring record cold, cause power demand to spike, and threaten electrical infrastructure more than a week in advance," and "Texas Republicans have been accused of neglecting winterization upgrades recommended to the electrical grid more than a decade ago." Analyses by the [AP](#) (2/21, Merchant) and the [New York Times](#) (2/21, A1, Krauss, Fernandez, Penn, Rojas, 20.6M) examine why the state was unprepared for the storm.

Meanwhile, [The Hill](#) (2/21, Choi, 5.69M) reports that the family of the 11-year-old boy who allegedly died on Tuesday of hypothermia "filed a lawsuit against the state's grid operator the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) and power company Entergy, alleging that gross negligence led to the child's death."

Cruz Mocked For Efforts To Repair Reputation. [Insider](#) (2/21, Porter) reports Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX) "is being mocked for posting pictures of himself loading water bottles into a vehicle as he seeks to repair the political damage from jetting off to Cancun for a family vacation during the winter storms that devastated Texas." According to Insider, after Cruz posted the pictures, "some said [they] appeared to be staged," while others "contrasted Cruz's response to the disaster" with Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY), "who has raised \$4 million in relief for Texas and volunteered at a food bank in Houston." The [Washington Post](#) (2/21, Kornfield, 10.52M) reports that as Cruz has taken steps "to rehab his image," his tweets since his trip "have further fanned the flames of criticism, putting the junior senator under fire for his response to the winter storms that devastated Texas."

On [CNN's State Of The Union](#) (2/21, 988K), McCaul addressed the leadership in Texas, including Cruz's trip to Cancun. McCaul said, "That's what America is about. It was great [Ocasio-Cortez] and Beto [O'Rourke] are crossing party lines. ... I think it's great that they're crossing party lines to help Americans first and not just Republicans or Democrats and I think that's the way it really should be and I know that some are taking heat. Look, when a crisis hits my state, I'm there. I'm not going to go on some vacation. I know Mr. Cruz called it a mistake and owned up to that, but I think that was a big mistake and as for me, I was on the ground trying to help my people out and my constituents and that's what we should be doing in a time of crisis just like we did during the hurricane season, as well."

White House Aides Say Policy Agenda In Coming Months Will Have Bipartisan Voter Appeal.

[Reuters](#) (2/21) reports that while President Biden "is on the cusp of securing a bigger economic rescue package than during the 2009 financial crisis," and has "wiped out his predecessor Donald Trump's policies from climate change to travel bans, while the U.S. daily COVID-19 vaccine distribution rate grew 55%," the White House's "broad strategy – avoid unwinnable political fights, focus on policies with mass voter appeal, and mostly ignore Republican attacks – will be increasingly difficult in the months ahead, Democrats and Republicans say." According to White House aides, "the policy agenda they plan to push in the coming months has bipartisan voter appeal, and they believe Republicans in Congress could ultimately be forced to support it by their constituents." However, Reuters says, "Biden's early polling numbers suggest that will be a challenge. Some 56% of Americans approve of his performance as president, according to a Reuters/Ipsos poll conducted in mid-February, but just 20% of Republicans."

NYTimes: Under Biden, Democratic Party's "Big Tent" Facing A Stress Test. [New York Times](#) (2/21, Herndon, 20.6M) analysis says that while he was running for president, Biden "contorted his campaign to appease both wings of the Democratic Party, trying to excite progressives with an ambitious policy platform while assuring moderates he opposed structural changes to the political process. Now, faced with the realities of governing and dual crises of public health and economic stagnation, Mr. Biden is increasingly squeezed by members of his own party who see an inevitable collision course between his deference to Washington norms and his promises of far-reaching change." To the Times, "the big tent of the Democratic Party is set for a stress test under Mr. Biden unlike any it has faced while in power in recent decades. Democrats have long prided themselves on including liberals, moderates and even conservative Democrats in the tent," but "they are hardly united by the same governing goals."

Democrats Jockeying To Influence Biden's First Nominee For Supreme Court.

The [New York Times](#) (2/21, A1, Martin, 20.6M) reports that after an Oval Office meeting with President Biden, Vice President Harris, and senior House Democrats, House Majority Whip Clyburn went to Harris' West Wing office to discuss the Supreme Court. Clyburn "wanted to offer Ms. Harris the name of a potential future justice, according to a Democrat briefed on their conversation." The Times says Clyburn and other lawmakers "are already maneuvering to champion candidates and a new approach for a nomination that might come as soon as this summer, when some Democrats hope Justice Stephen Breyer, who is 82, will retire." The "early jockeying illustrates how eager Democratic officials are to leave their mark on Mr. Biden's effort to elevate historically underrepresented contenders for a landmark Supreme Court nomination. But it also casts a spotlight on discomfiting issues of class and credentialism in the Democratic Party that have been just below the surface since the days of the Obama administration."

Battle Between Unions And Industry Endangers Biden's Green Energy Agenda.

[Politico](#) (2/21, Wolff, Rainey, 6.73M) reports that "a fight between organized labor and industry over unionization, wages and other workplace issues" is threatening to consume President Biden's green energy agenda. The renewable energy industry is expanding, and unions and their congressional allies "are determined to unionize more of the jobs or, at the very least, require the payment of union-equivalent wages. But the industry says such moves would cripple some of their operations." While both Biden and the industry "are eager to push clean energy projects forward and make them a bigger part of the nation's electrical grid, their disagreements will test Biden's vow to be both the greenest and the most pro-union president in history".

FAA Orders United To Step Up Inspections Of Certain Boeing 777s.

The [AP](#) (2/21) reports the FAA is "ordering United Airlines to step up inspections of all Boeing 777s equipped with the type of engine that suffered a catastrophic failure over Denver Saturday. United says it is temporarily removing those aircraft from service." [ABC World News Tonight](#) (2/21, lead story, 3:10, Davis, 1.86M) and [NBC Nightly News](#) (2/21, lead story, 2:45, Snow, 5.41M) opened with the story, with both focusing on the details of the Saturday incident. The [CBS Weekend News](#) (2/21, story 6, 2:05, Duncan, 8.27M) aired a similar report later in its broadcast.

The [New York Times](#) (2/21, Chokshi, Dooley, 20.6M) reports FAA Administrator Dickson said on he was "requiring 'immediate or stepped-up inspections' of all Boeing 777 planes equipped with a particular Pratt & Whitney engine model." The announcement "came shortly after its counterpart in Japan ordered airlines there to stop flying the plane, affecting 32 jets operated by All Nippon Airways and Japan Airways."

The [Washington Post](#) (2/21, MacMillan, 10.52M) reports the National Transportation Safety Board "said it is investigating the causes" of the engine failure. The [Denver Post](#) (2/21, 660K) reports, "Three aviation experts" said blades that "spin rapidly inside the engine" were a "potential culprit for the uncontained engine failure that United Airlines Flight 328 experienced after the Hawaii-bound Boeing 777-200 took off from Denver." [Reuters](#) (2/21, Freed, Shepardson), [USA Today](#) (2/21, 12.7M), and the [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/21, A1, Sider, Tangel, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) also report.

USA Today Poll: 46% Of Trump Voters Would Join A New Party If He Creates One.

[USA Today](#) (2/21, Page, Elbeshbishi, 12.7M) reports, "If there's a civil war in the Republican Party, the voters who backed Donald Trump in November's election are ready to choose sides. Behind Trump." A USA Today/Suffolk University poll of 1,000 Trump voters (2/15-2/19) found that 46% "would abandon the GOP and join the Trump party if the former president decided to create one," while 27% would stay with GOP and the rest are undecided.

In her [Washington Post](#) (2/21, 10.52M) column, Jennifer Rubin takes issue with claims that “we need a functioning two-party system” and “we need a better Republican Party.” Rubin argues that “modern conservatism, in large part a response to the Cold War, is ideologically spent. ... Real, existing conservatism as it exists in America in 2020 is an accomplice to, an apologist for, and an enabler of Trump’s nativist, populist, unconservative, and illiberal authoritarianism.” There is, Rubin adds, “no particular reason to hope for a revived Republican Party insofar as we are looking for a vehicle for an exhausted ideology.”

Hutchinson Says He Would Not Back Trump 2024 Bid. The [AP](#) (2/21, Yen) reports Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson (R) said Sunday he will not back Trump “if the former president runs for the White House in 2024, saying ‘it’s time’ to move on to different voices in the Republican Party.” Hutchinson, on [CNN’s State Of The Union](#) (2/21, 990K), said, “I would not support him for reelection in 2024. He’s going to have a voice...but there are many voices in the party, and he should not define our future. We’ve got to define it for ourselves, and that has to be based upon the principles that gave us strength in America.” [Politico](#) (2/21, Mueller, 6.73M) also covers Hutchinson’s remarks.

Pence Reportedly Declined Invitation To Speak At CPAC.

[The Hill](#) (2/21, Pitofsky, 5.69M) reports, “Former Vice President Mike Pence declined an invitation to speak at the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) next week, according to multiple reports. Organizers of the annual conservative conference are seeking to change the former vice president’s mind about attending or giving remarks, an unidentified source” told CNN. Another source said Pence “is planning to stay out of the headlines for at least six months after leaving office in January.”

WPost Calls On Congress To Pass Equality Act.

In an editorial, the [Washington Post](#) (2/21, 10.52M) argues for passage of the Equality Act, which would “bar LGBTQ discrimination in employment, education, credit, jury service, federal funding, housing and public accommodations.” President Biden called for the measure’s fast passage on Friday and the House “may vote on it as soon as this week. But it faces an uncertain fate in the Senate, where it would need to attract the support of 10 Republicans to overcome a filibuster. A solution must be found; LGBTQ people have waited long enough for comprehensive anti-discrimination protections.”

Financial International News

World Bank Pushing To Standardize Vaccine Contracts, Increase Manufacture Transparency.

[Reuters](#) (2/19, Shalal) reported the World Bank “is working to standardize COVID-19 vaccine contracts that countries are signing with drug makers, and is pushing manufacturers to be more open about where doses are headed, as it races to get more vaccines to poor countries, the bank’s president said on Friday.” World Bank President David Malpass “told Reuters he expected the bank’s board to have approved \$1.6 billion in vaccine funding for 12 countries, including the Philippines, Bangladesh, Tunisia and Ethiopia, by the end of March, with 30 more to follow shortly thereafter.” The Bank “is working with local governments to identify and fill gaps in distribution capacity, after they purchase vaccines under a \$12 billion World Bank program, and also to standardize the contracts they are signing with manufacturers, he said.”

World Bank Warns Palestinians Need \$30M To Fund COVID Vaccine Plan.

[Reuters](#) (2/21, Ayyub) reports the World Bank on Monday forecast “the Palestinians’ COVID-19 vaccination plan faces a \$30 million funding shortfall, even after factoring in support from a global vaccine scheme for poorer economies.” The World Bank also suggested Israel, “a world leader in terms of vaccination speed, could perhaps consider donating surplus doses to the Palestinians to help accelerate a vaccine roll-out in the occupied West Bank and Gaza.”

ECB Set To Disappoint Campaigners On Climate Change.

The [Financial Times](#) (2/21, Arnold, Subscription Publication, 1.48M) reports, “The European Central Bank is likely to adopt a less aggressive approach to tackling climate change than many campaigners want. It will rely...”

BoE Faces Tension Over Stimulus Options If Recovery Disappoints.

The [Financial Times](#) (2/21, Giles, Subscription Publication, 1.48M) reports, “Bank of England policymakers are set for a rare internal battle over how best to boost the recovery from coronavirus later this year if...”

Leading International News

WSJournal: Under Paris Accord, US Energy Is Restricted While China Gets “Free Ride.”

A [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/21, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) editorial says China is pleased the US has rejoined the Paris climate agreement “because it knows the accord will restrict American energy while Beijing gets a decade-long free ride.” China “emitted nearly twice as much CO2 as the U.S. in 2018,” but under the agreement, “Beijing gets a pass to increase its emissions until 2030.”

WPost Analysis: Area Of India Avalanche Was “Vulnerable To The Accelerated Effects Of Climate Change.”

The [Washington Post](#) (2/21, A1, 10.52M) reports, "Experts around the globe are studying satellite imagery to understand what caused" an avalanche earlier this month in northern India. The Post says "the massive flooding illustrates the risks of development in an area vulnerable to the accelerated effects of climate change."

McCaul Calls For A Residual Force In Afghanistan.

Rep. Michael McCaul (R-TX) said on [CNN's State Of The Union](#) (2/21, 990K), "I was in the White House with President Trump arguing to him you don't want to repeat the same mistake as your predecessor on Iraq, where you pulled out 100% and then ISIS reared its ugly head. ... I think Afghanistan is going to be very important and I hope the Biden administration, I can work with them on this. I've talked to Secretary [of State] Blinken and the National Security Adviser about leaving a residual force there to protect the homeland and not allow the Taliban to take over that country. It is vitally important not only to their national security interests, but to ours."

Peace Talks Spark Concern Progress On Women's Rights Will Be Lost. The [New York Times](#) (2/21, Faizi, Nordland, 20.6M) reports that "as negotiations between the Afghan government and the Taliban slowly move forward in Qatar, many worry that a peace deal could mean that the progress Afghan women have made the last two decades will be lost."

Burma Junta Answers Call For General Strike With Threat Of Lethal Force.

The [AP](#) (2/21) reports Burma's ruling junta has issued "a thinly veiled threat to use lethal force," after demonstrators called for a Monday general strike to protest the military's seizure of power. On Sunday, the Civil Disobedience Movement "asked people to gather together for the Five Twos – referring to the digits in Monday's date – to make a 'Spring Revolution.'" Late Sunday, state television broadcaster MRTV "carried a public announcement from the junta," which said, "It is found that the protesters have raised their incitement towards riot and anarchy mob on the day of 22 February. Protesters are now inciting the people, especially emotional teenagers and youths, to a confrontation path where they will suffer the loss of life."

[Reuters](#) (2/21) says "huge crowds" marched on Sunday "in a show of defiance after the bloodiest episode of the campaign for democracy the previous day, when security forces fired on protesters, killing two. ... Tens of thousands of people massed peacefully in the second city of Mandalay, where Saturday's killings took place, witnesses said."

Trump Offered Kim A Ride Home On Air Force One Following 2019 Summit.

[The Hill](#) (2/21, 5.69M) reports then-President Donald Trump offered North Korean leader Kim Jong-un a ride home on Air Force One after they met for their second summit in Hanoi in 2019. Former Deputy National Security Adviser Matthew Pottinger "told the BBC that Trump made the offer after negotiations over North Korea's nuclear program ended at the February 2019 gathering with no significant progress." Pottinger said, "President Trump offered Kim a lift home on Air Force One. The President knew that Kim had arrived on a multi-day train ride through China into Hanoi and the President said: 'I can get you home in two hours if you want.' Kim declined."

WPost: Australian Legislation Will Not Level The Playing Field For News Organizations.

A [Washington Post](#) (2/21, 10.52M) editorial is critical of "legislation expected to pass the country's Parliament that would force platforms to pay news organizations for hosting links to their content. ... The News Media Bargaining Code would require digital services, specifically Google and Facebook, to cut a deal with publishers or enter into binding arbitration to determine the price they must pay to display their content." The Post argues that "publishers (including The Post) make more money from the traffic and subscriptions they gain through platforms than platforms do from monetizing the material publishers put there. What platforms gain is high-quality content and a healthier information ecosystem." To the Post, the measure under consideration "looks less likely to level the playing field than to tear it up."

Barcelona Protests Turn Violent For Sixth Straight Night.

The [AP](#) (2/21) reports that for a sixth consecutive night, protests in Barcelona in support of a jailed rapper turned violent Sunday "with clashes between police and groups of mostly angry youths in the center of the Spanish city." The day "began with a peaceful protest," but "as night fell, the tension increased as protesters mostly dressed in dark clothes marched through the city center to the National Police headquarters. After half an hour of being pelted by rocks, bottles, trash and firecrackers, Catalan police moved in supported by vans to clear the street in from the station." [Reuters](#) (2/21, Rubio, Castellija) reports, "More than 95 people have been arrested across Catalonia and in other Spanish cities" since Pablo Hasel was arrested and jailed.

Sullivan: Biden Is Determined To Prevent Iran From Getting A Nuclear Weapon.

National Security Adviser Sullivan, said on [CBS' Face The Nation](#) (2/21, 3M), "Let me offer just a couple of basic propositions: First, Joe Biden is intent, determined to prevent Iran from getting a nuclear weapon. Second, he believes that hardheaded, clear-eyed diplomacy is the best way to do that. And so he's prepared to go to the table to talk to the Iranians about how we get strict constraints back on their nuclear program. That offer still stands because we believe diplomacy is the best way to do it. Iran has not yet responded. But what's happened as a result is that the script has been flipped. It is Iran that is isolated now diplomatically, not the United States. And the ball is in their court."

David Ignatius writes in the [Washington Post](#) (2/21, 10.52M) that President Biden's "declaration Friday that he's ready to

'reengage' Iran is less of a diplomatic breakthrough than it may appear. ... The hard bargaining still lies ahead." Gen. Frank McKenzie, head of US Central Command, said, "I don't think [the President] is locked into or out of anything by agreement to talk. ... I think they're still taking a very deliberate look at the way we're going to move on this." Ignatius adds, "Military combat with Iran's proxies may continue even as the United States moves toward negotiations with Tehran. ... The wonder is that Iran and the United States were able to contain their conflict these past few years, even as they fired rockets at each other's military forces and waged covert assaults – with little effect other than to reinforce the impasse. Diplomacy may not work any better, but it's worth another try."

IAEA Says Iran Will Give UN Inspectors "Less Access" To Its Nuclear Program. The [AP](#) (2/21, Vahdat, Gambrell, Rising) reports IAEA chief Rafael Grossi said Sunday that Iran will offer UN inspectors "less access" to its nuclear program, but investigators will still be able to monitor its work. Grossi's comments "came after an emergency trip to Iran in which he said the International Atomic Energy Agency reached a 'technical understanding' with Tehran to continue to allow monitoring of its nuclear program for up to three months." [Reuters](#) (2/21, Murphy) reports Grossi's announcement "confirmed that Tehran would go ahead with its plan to slash cooperation with the agency on Tuesday."

The [New York Times](#) (2/21, Sanger, Fassihi, 20.6M) reports Iran's foreign minister, Mohammad Javad Zarif, "said that under a law passed by the country's Parliament, Tehran would no longer abide by an agreement with the nuclear agency that gives the inspectors the right to demand access to any site where they suspect nuclear activity may have taken place. He also said inspectors would be blocked from obtaining footage from security cameras that keep some of the sites under constant surveillance."

Sullivan Says US In Communication With Iran About American Hostages. The [CBS Weekend News](#) (2/21, story 5, 0:20, Duncan, 8.27M) reported Sullivan "said the US is in communication with Iran about the, we believe the number is about five or so Americans still being held there. That is a separate discussion from the efforts to restart the Iran nuclear talks. The US said last week it would be willing to sit down with Iran and talk about that topic, but the meeting so far does not have a time, date, or place."

The [New York Post](#) (2/21, O'Neill, 7.45M) reports Sullivan told [CBS' Face The Nation](#) (2/21, 3M), "We have begun to communicate with the Iranians on this issue." Sullivan "called the country's imprisonment of dozens of dual nationals in recent years, including several Americans," a "complete and utter outrage" and said it was a "significant priority" of the Biden Administration to get them "safely back home." Sullivan said, "We will not accept a long-term proposition where they continue to hold Americans in an unjust and unlawful manner."

Houthi Stepped Up Marib Offensive After Biden Ended Support For Saudi-Led Coalition.

The [Washington Post](#) (2/21, Al-Mujahed, Raghavan, 10.52M) reports that after the Biden Administration "ended U.S. support for a Saudi-led coalition fighting in Yemen and took steps to lift sanctions" the Houthi rebels, the Houthis, "seemingly emboldened by the American pivot...intensified their offensive in strategic Marib province." The escalation "threatens to displace hundreds of thousands of Yemenis, many of whom have already fled violence multiple times. That would significantly worsen a humanitarian crisis already described by the United Nations as the world's most severe, say U.S. and U.N. officials and aid workers." The Post says "the Marib offensive underscores the obstacles" the Administration "faces to tackling a key foreign policy objective."

UN Envoy Says Yemen Talks Over Prisoner Swap Have Made No Progress. The [AP](#) (2/21, Magdy) reports the UN said Sunday that Yemen's government and the Houthi rebels "did not achieve progress in their latest round of negotiations over a prisoner swap." UN Special Envoy for Yemen Martin Griffiths "said the two sides did not agree to release prisoners during this round of talks concluded Sunday in Amman." Griffiths said, "I am disappointed that this round of talks did not amount to what we saw in Switzerland last September which resulted in the historic release of 1056 detainees."

Prince Denies Any Role In Libya Mercenary Operation.

The [New York Times](#) (2/21, Walsh, 20.6M) reports that in response to "accusations by United Nations investigators that he violated an international arms embargo," Blackwater Worldwide founder Erik Prince, a "prominent supporter of Donald J. Trump, denied playing any role in an \$80 million mercenary operation in Libya in 2019. And he insisted that key findings of the U.N. investigation were entirely wrong." Prince told the Times, "Erik Prince didn't breach any arms embargo and had nothing to do with sending aircraft, drones, arms or people to Libya – period." A confidential report submitted to the UN Security Council "accused Mr. Prince of breaching the decade-old arms embargo on Libya by taking part in an ill-fated mercenary operation in 2019 that sought to support a powerful Libyan commander in his drive to overthrow Libya's internationally backed government."

"Culture Of Corruption And Political Influence" Hinders Investigation Of Beirut Explosion.

The [Washington Post](#) (2/21, 10.52M) reports Judge Fadi Sawan, the Lebanese judge leading the investigation into the August explosion in Beirut that killed more than 200 people and injured more than 7,500, "had set his sights on the caretaker prime minister and three former ministers, charging them with negligence for ignoring the highly combustible material stored for six years on the waterfront." But when two of the former ministers alleged in a complaint that Sawan "had demonstrated a lack of neutrality by charging prominent figures to appease the public, he was dropped last week from the case." The Post says the investigation into the explosion "is struggling to break through Lebanon's culture of corruption and political influence to hold anyone of

consequence accountable.”

Dubai’s Missing Princess Says Her Father Is Holding Her Prisoner.

The [CBS Weekend News](#) (2/21, story 8, 2:05, Duncan, 8.27M) reported that “the whereabouts of Princess Latifa, daughter of the ruler of Dubai, remains a mystery.” The Princess “claims her father is holding her prisoner, and recent secret phone video has prompted questions about her safety.” CBS’ Elizabeth Palmer added that after the UN asked Dubai “for proof that Latifa is alive,” instead of “offering proof of life, the Dubai royal family simply issued a statement from the embassy here in London saying that Latifa was being cared for by her family with medical support.”

Housing

Inside Mortgage Finance Discusses How Cash-Purchase Cap Could Affect Numerous Lenders.

Behind a paywall, [Inside Mortgage Finance](#) (2/19, Subscription Publication) discusses how the GSE cash-purchase cap could weigh on loan sales at numerous lenders.

JPMorgan Chase Analysts Say Mortgage Hedgers Aren’t Likely To Pose Problems For MBS Investors.

[National Mortgage News](#) (2/19) reports mortgage hedgers “are unlikely to exacerbate the Treasuries sell-off this time around, according to JPMorgan analysts.” MBS are “continuously callable, so when rates increase, a mortgage portfolio’s duration – a measure of its interest-rate sensitivity – can rise dramatically, which necessitates rebalancing. When mortgage investors react to that, the trades they make – such as selling Treasuries – can worsen the very event they are trying to escape, adding impetus to rate sell-offs.” According to NMN, “The potential for that kind of hedging could worry any mortgage-bond investor, as the duration of the agency MBS universe is extending after hitting post-2008 lows last year. ... But today the mortgage players who most actively hedged – Fannie and Freddie, real estate investment trusts and large bank servicers – have significantly reduced their need to do so, the analysts added.”

Business Insider Highlights GSE Refinancing Products.

[Business Insider](#) (2/19, 2.74M) says, “With a rate-and-term refinance, you exchange your current mortgage for a new one with different terms. You’ll get a new interest rate and term length, hence the name ‘rate-and-term.’” BI adds, “Maybe you have a conventional mortgage, but you don’t have enough equity to qualify for a regular rate-and-term refinance. That’s where the Freddie Mac Enhanced Relief Refinance (FMERR) and Fannie Mae High LTV Refinance Option (HIRO) programs come in.” Each program allows for refinancing in the event “you have less than 3% equity in your home. You can even qualify if you’re underwater on your mortgage, meaning you owe more than your home is worth.”

Michigan AG Warns Of Scams Tied To Pandemic Assistance.

The [Iron Mountain \(MI\) Daily News](#) (2/19, 22K) reports, “Michigan residents facing financial hardship during the pandemic may be eligible for continued rent and mortgage payment assistance, as well as deferred student loan payments, state Attorney General Dana Nessel advised.” Nessel also said, “With temporary halts on evictions for those eligible, mortgage payment forbearance and a continued pause on federal student loan payments, it’s important to remain on alert for scammers seeking to capitalize off of these opportunities.” The Daily News adds that the Federal Trade Commission “recently provided information on updates or extensions to” several federal assistance programs. For homeowners experiencing difficulty with making payments for federally supported mortgages due to “the pandemic, payment forbearance may still be available, and the pause on foreclosures runs through at least March 31. The Federal Housing Finance Agency can assist in finding out if a mortgage is federally backed.”

Schumer Promises Passage Of Relief Bill By March 14.

The [Washington Post](#) (2/19, Werner, 10.52M) reports that on the same day that President Biden “mounted a strong defense” of his \$1.9 trillion COVID relief bill, Senate Majority Leader Schumer on Friday “pledged that Congress would approve the legislation and send it to the president to sign ahead of the March 14 deadline of when enhanced unemployment insurance benefits expire.” According to the Post, “Schumer’s commitment came even as a dispute over Biden’s proposed \$15-per-hour minimum wage remains unresolved, with moderate Democratic senators balking on the issue as liberals push it aggressively.” [Reuters](#) (2/19, Lambert) reports Senate Budget Chairman Bernie Sanders “said on Friday he expects to find out next week whether lawmakers can include a hike in the minimum wage to \$15 an hour in the coronavirus relief bill they are racing to pass.” Meanwhile, [Reuters](#) (2/19, Cowan) reports the bill “took a step forward” when the House Budget Committee on Friday “unveiled the legislation Democrats hope to pass by late next week.” The [New York Times](#) (2/19, A1, Cochrane, Tankersley, 20.6M) reports that although Republican leaders on Friday “led a final attempt to tarnish the package, labeling it a ‘payoff to progressives,’” they are “struggling to persuade voters to oppose...Biden’s \$1.9 trillion economic rescue plan, which enjoys strong, bipartisan support nationwide even as it is moving through Congress with just Democratic backing.” A new SurveyMonkey poll conducted on behalf of the Times has found that “more than 7 in 10 Americans now back Mr. Biden’s aid package,” including “three-quarters of independent voters, 2 in 5 Republicans and nearly all Democrats.”

On [ABC's Good Morning America](#) (2/19, 3.29M), Mary Bruce said the President "often notes that the majority, according to latest poll, the majority of Americans do support these proposals, including more than a third of Republican voters." On [CBS This Morning](#) (2/19, 2.42M), Tony Dokoupil said more than 400 mayors have sent a new letter "imploing Congress to approve \$350 billion in aid as part of the president's COVID relief plan." Ed O'Keefe went on to interview the Democratic mayor of Baltimore and the Republican mayor of Oklahoma City, both of whom are urging Congress to approve additional funding for municipalities. In a column headlined "Biden Is Going Big, And Americans Are With Him," [New York Times](#) (2/19, 20.6M) contributing opinion writer Timothy Egan contends that if Biden's "\$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan and the jobs, infrastructure and climate initiatives to follow work out as well as they are now polling, his party could govern for many years to come." He adds, "Some 40 years after Ronald Reagan convinced Americans that government was the problem, Biden could successfully spin the counterargument by wielding something simple, but entirely missing while Donald Trump was in charge: competence."

Jobless Benefits May Lapse Despite Democrats' Hurry To Pass Biden's Rescue Plan. [Politico](#) (2/19, Scholtes, Cassella, Emma, Lorenzo, 6.73M) reports that "Democratic leaders are racing to get...Biden's \$1.9 trillion pandemic aid plan through Congress," but "even if they hit their ambitious targets, major parts of the bill may already be too slow for many Americans walloped by the virus," since "some of the largest pieces of the aid will not hit U.S. households for at least another month – and in some cases longer." Politico says "the lag is expected to be most painful for the millions of jobless Americans facing a drop-off in their \$300 a week boost in unemployment payments, even if Congress can stay on track and get its Covid aid measure to Biden's desk by mid-March."

Yield On 30-Year Bond Reaches Highest Level In A Year.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/19, Banerji, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports that investors "dumped government bonds and piled into shares of economically sensitive companies on Friday, betting that the U.S. economy will rev up in coming months," although "the broader stock market's moves were more muted." However, the [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/19, Pellejero, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) in another article reports the yield "on the benchmark 10-year Treasury note finished Friday's session at 1.344%, according to Tradeweb," which is "up from 1.286% at Thursday's close and marks the largest one-week gain since Jan. 8," and "the 30-year bond yield rose to 2.140% Friday – the highest level in a year – from 2.076% Thursday."

Black Knight: Forbearances Rise By 15K.

[National Mortgage News](#) (2/19) reports, "One of the lowest exit rates since the pandemic began helped drive a weekly increase in forbearances, according to Black Knight." National Mortgage News adds, "Outstanding mortgages in forbearance plans rose by 15,000 to 2.686 million as of Feb. 16 from 2.671 million one week prior." The rise can be partly "attributed to the recent forbearance moratorium extensions. First, the Federal Housing Finance Agency announced borrowers could request three additional months of coverage for Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac mortgages. Then, President Biden followed suit for FHA, VA and USDA loan protections." Loans supported "by Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac decreased week-over-week, dipping by 2,000 to a total of 905,000." [Mortgage News Daily](#) (2/19) provides additional coverage.

TransUnion: Mortgage Delinquencies Falling, But A Rise Is On The Way.

[HousingWire](#) (2/19, 7K) reports consumer credit activity rose in 4Q20, with "low interest rates" and "high housing demand" continuing to "fuel mortgage demand, according to TransUnion's latest industry insights report." Serious delinquency rates in mortgages "declined year-over-year to 0.7% in the fourth quarter of 2020. Delinquency rates were at 1% in the fourth quarter of 2019." According to TransUnion VP of Research and Consulting Matt Komos, "On the surface, the consumer credit market is performing quite well. Additional stimulus and flattening unemployment rates point to a continuation of this trend. However, the performance of those accounts still in accommodation will help shape the true consumer credit picture."

Urban Institute Says Alternative Assessments Of Credit And Collateral Could Help Boost Black Homeownership.

[National Mortgage News](#) (2/19) reports, "Establishing alternative methods of assessing credit and collateral could improve the rate of Black homeownership particularly at lower income levels, where racial disparities are currently quite pronounced, according to Urban Institute data." Urban found a "10 percentage point gap in homeownership of those with annual incomes of \$150,000 or more: 80% for Blacks and 90% for whites." Meanwhile, "for those who make \$25,000 or less per year, the gap between Blacks and whites is 25 percentage points, with Blacks having a homeownership rate of 25% and whites at 50%." According to NMN, "The best way for a low-income homeowner to pay for repairs or maintenance may be to refinance and tap more home equity, but often the reluctance to make small-dollar loans precludes that as well."

NAR: Existing Home Sales Up 0.6% MoM, 23.7% YoY In January, Beating Economists' Expectations.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/19, Friedman, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports existing home sales rose 0.6% in January from December, hitting a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 6.69 million, the National Association of Realtors reported on Friday. According to the Journal, January's sales represented a 23.7% increase from the same month a year prior. Economists surveyed by the Journal had expected a 2.4% monthly decline in sales. The [AP](#) (2/19, Veiga) reports January had the "strongest sales pace since October and the second highest since 2006." Home prices "also rose," with the US median home price up to "\$303,900 in

January, an increase of 14.1% from a year earlier. Prices increased in every region of the country." NAR Chief Economist Lawrence Yun said, "Sales easily could have been even 20% higher if there had been more inventory and more choices." [MarketWatch](#) (2/19, Robb, 2.64M) reports, "Sales have been moving sideways since setting a cycle high in October. Economists think that low mortgage rates will continue to boost housing demand in coming months. Buyers are also looking for more room and more remote locations in the wake of the pandemic."

First Street Foundation: Homeowners In Flood-Prone Regions Could See Huge Rate Hikes In October.

[USA Today](#) (2/21, 12.7M) reports, "With a major overhaul of the nation's flood insurance program just months away, new data released Monday by the First Street Foundation suggests hundreds of thousands of homeowners in the riskiest locations across America could face massive rate hikes starting in October." According to USA Today, the research group "estimates the average rate needs to more than quadruple on the nation's most flood-prone homes under the ongoing effort to make the federal flood insurance program solvent and ensure homeowners most at risk are paying their fair share."

Oregon Experts, Advocates Anticipate Flood Of Evictions In July.

The [Eugene \(OR\) Register-Guard](#) (2/21, Parafiniuk-Talesnick, 214K) reports Oregon housing experts and advocates fear there will be "a mass eviction event" in July, when renters are required to have paid back rent that went unpaid during the pandemic. Researchers at Portland State University estimated that these mass evictions "will cost the state between \$1 billion and \$3.3 billion."

Redfin To Buy RentPath For \$608M In All-Cash Deal.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/19, Randles, Sebastian, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports Redfin Corp. has agreed to buy RentPath Holdings Inc., an apartment search website operator, out of bankruptcy for \$608 million. The Journal says the deal "would combine operators of leading U.S. property listing websites for purchasing and renting a home." According to [Fox Business](#) (2/19, 3.06M), "The all-cash deal announced Friday comes months after an earlier acquisition agreement between RentPath and real-estate data provider CoStar Group Inc. was blocked by federal antitrust regulators. Redfin's proposed acquisition of RentPath is subject to antitrust approval by the Federal Trade Commission and a bankruptcy judge."

[HousingWire](#) (2/19, 7K) reports, "It's only the second acquisition Redfin has made since its founding in 2004. Despite RentPath's baggage, namely a \$650 million bankruptcy restructuring, Redfin sees big traffic and lead-generation potential with the pending acquisition." Redfin said in a statement on Friday, "Over time, RentPath can bolster Redfin's traffic, by drawing a younger audience of renters to Redfin.com, but also by increasing our stature among homebuyers and renters as one of North America's premier real estate sites. Redfin's brand will get bigger. We'll show up higher for Internet searches on Phoenix housing or St. Louis real estate. ... We estimate that 10 million of Redfin's 40+ million monthly online visitors may also be interested in renting a home." Mostly behind a paywall, [Inman News](#) (2/19, 16K) reports Redfin CEO Glenn Kelman said, "When approved, this acquisition will bring together a leading site for buying a home with a leading site for renting a home, giving anyone trying to move a complete view of her options. ... Redfin's 2020 rapid traffic growth has already transformed our prospects, giving us a powerful channel for meeting customers and marketing listings directly to buyers. Together with RentPath, which grew traffic by more than 25% in 2020, Redfin will aim to compete with the largest portals on every front, for every visitor. It'll be a wild battle."

Also covering the acquisition are [National Mortgage News](#) (2/19), the [Atlanta \(GA\) Journal-Constitution](#) (2/19, 1.46M), and the [Puget Sound \(WA\) Business Journal](#) (2/19, Subscription Publication, 877K), potentially behind a paywall.

Weiss Analytics Debuts AVM Which Utilizes Geospatial Imagery, AI.

Under the headline "Weiss Analytics Launches AVM Powered By Geospatial AI," [HousingWire](#) (2/19, 7K) reports, "With ValPro+, Cape Analytics and Weiss Analytics have created what they say is the first automated home valuation engine that uses geospatial imagery and artificial intelligence to integrate current home conditions – like a damaged roof or a pool – into valuations." According to HousingWire, "The rise of AVMs over the years has waxed and waned based on the perceived risk of the product, but it's caught fire over the last year with the COVID-19 pandemic and new initiatives by the Federal Housing Finance Agency."

Markets

10-Year Yield Rises.

[MarketWatch](#) (2/22, 2.64M) reports the 10-year Treasury yield rose to 1.364 percent.

Dollar Holds.

[Reuters](#) (2/22, White) reports that the US dollar "held steady" against the yen at 105.45. The euro is trading at \$1.4030. The dollar is "likely to fall...as more investors focus on economic recovery once the worst of the coronavirus pandemic passes."

Gold Rises.

[Reuters](#) (2/22, Layek) reports that gold prices "gained on Monday after hitting a more than seven-month low in the previous session, as support from a weaker dollar eclipsed pressure from firmer Treasury yields." US gold futures were up 0.6% to

\$1,787.70.

Oil Rises.

[Reuters](#) (2/22, Sheldrick) reports, "Oil prices rose on Monday as the slow return of U.S. crude output cut by frigid conditions served as a reminder that the supply situation was tight, just as demand recovers from the depths of the COVID-19 pandemic." Brent crude rose 55 cents, or 0.9%, to \$63.46 per barrel. West Texas Intermediate was up 47 cents, or 0.8%, to \$59.71 per barrel.

Cybersecurity

FBI Investigating Racist Zoom-Bombing.

The [Wyoming Tribune Eagle](#) (2/20, Taylor, 40K) reports, "The University of Wyoming Police Department and FBI are currently investigating the racist Zoom bombing that took place Monday during a UW Black History Month forum hosted by the Black Studies Center and African American and Diaspora Studies," during which "racist pornographic images were displayed that disrupted the panel discussion on cinematic racist propaganda." Other universities, including Penn State, Rutgers University, Rider University, the New Jersey Institute of Technology, University of South Florida and Seattle University, are also conducting investigations on Zoom-bombings, "either with local law enforcement or FBI."

Events At Three New Jersey Colleges Subjected To "Zoom Bombing" Incidents.

[NJ News](#) (2/21, Atmonavage, 1.47M) reports, "The Black History Month event the Delta Iota Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity was hosting with Rutgers University's Paul Robeson Cultural Center was supposed to be a celebration of Black leaders. Until it turned ugly." NJ News adds, "In a detailed post on the fraternity's Instagram account, the group said white supremacists Zoom bombed the event, writing racial slurs in the chat, changing their usernames to invoke racism, playing a KKK song that says 'Kill all Black people,' and then running a video clip of Black people being brutalized and murdered. The disturbing, hostile practice is called 'Zoom bombing' and is a form of targeted harassment by outsiders who hijack events or meetings being held virtually. Most instances revolve around anti-Black, misogynistic, homophobic rhetoric or pornography." The FBI "says Zoom bombing as an emerging violent crime and has previously said it investigates it as a criminal act."

White House Will Respond To SolarWinds Attack In Coming Weeks.

[Reuters](#) (2/21) reports White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan "told CBS News' 'Face the Nation' that the US will respond to the SolarWinds hack that hit several government agencies last year in 'weeks, not months,' as the US investigates the suspected Russian cyberattack." He "said the response will include a mix of tools seen and unseen, and it will not simply consist of sanctions." He said, "We will ensure that Russia understands where the United States draws the line on this kind of activity." [CBS News](#) (2/21, 5.39M) reports Sullivan during his interview on 'Face The Nation' "says Biden vows 'seen and unseen' response to SolarWinds hack." [Business Insider](#) (2/21, Shalvey, 2.74M) reports Sullivan "told CNN's Christiane Amanpour that President Biden's Administration may respond 'weeks from now.'" Sullivan "said it would consider new sanctions, as one of a 'broad range of responses.'" He added, "We are in the process of working through, with the intelligence community, and his national security team, a series of steps to respond to SolarWinds, including steps that will hold who we believe is responsible for this accountable, and you will be hearing about this in short order." Also reporting on the story is [CNN](#) (2/19, Gaouette, 89.21M).

Officials Say SolarWinds Hack Will Require Adoption Of Zero Trust Security Concepts. [MeriTalk](#) (2/19) reported officials from the Defense Department (DOD) and the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) "said today that creating more effective defenses against sophisticated cyberattacks of the type used in the SolarWinds Orion hack may require further adoption of zero trust security concepts." That was the "news from Bob Kolasky, who heads CISA's National Risk Management Center (NRMC), and Stacy Bostjanick, director of the Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification (CMMC) Policy Office for DOD's under secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment." Both officials also "discussed the growing likelihood that the CMMC security model will migrate in some form from its present use in ensuring minimum cybersecurity standards in the defense industrial base (DIB) to further areas of Federal government contracting."

Accellion Hack Triggers Global Ripple Effects.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/19, Uberti, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reported the hack of software provider Accellion USA LLC has spurred fears among security experts of attacks on suppliers and demonstrated the challenges of fighting them in real time.

French Firm Beneteau Suspends Production Following Cyberattack.

[Bloomberg](#) (2/21, 3.57M) reports French boat manufacturer Beneteau SA "said it will slow down or stop some of its production after a cyberattack." The company "detected a malware intrusion during the night of February 18 to February 19 and disconnected its information systems to prevent a further spread." While the deployment of backup systems "will allow Beneteau's activities to start again, production at some of its units, particularly in France, will have to slow down or stop for a few days." The company said, "Alongside this, investigations will continue moving forward with a view to fully restoring all of the group's systems."

Safety Certification Giant UL Targeted With Ransomware Attack.

[Forbes](#) (2/19, Mathews, 10.33M) reported UL detected "suspicious activity on its network last weekend." At-risk systems "were

shut down as soon as possible to prevent the ransomware from spreading further.” That resulted in “interruption to certain services offered by UL including the myUL client portal.” A statement provided by UL “notes that the breach was detected on February 13.” A ‘leading cybersecurity firm’ “has been brought in to assist UL with its investigation of the incident and law enforcement officials have been notified.” At this point it “appears that UL wants nothing to do with its ransomers.” Staff have been “told not to respond to the hackers’ attempts to make contact.”

South Carolina County Rebuilds Computer Network Following Ransomware Attempt.

The [AP](#) (2/20) reported a South Carolina county continues to “rebuild its computer network after what it called a sophisticated hacking attempt.” Hackers “sent an email January 22 that allowed them to take over Georgetown County’s computers.” They “demanded a ransom to return the system to the county’s control.” The county “did not pay the ransom and has been working for the past month to restore email and the network and clean infected computers.” The cyber security experts hired by the county “said there is no indication that tax, employment or other private information was obtained by the hackers.”

Report Warns Cyber Criminals Widen Pool Of Potential Targets.

The [Daily Mail \(UK\)](#) (2/21, 4.11M) reports a new study indicates cyber criminals are “stealing smaller sums of money but from more people in an effort to avoid detection.” The change in tactics “means online thieves are taking as little as £10, which may go unnoticed, from hundreds of thousands of accounts at a time.” The Royal United Services Institute (Rusi) think-tank “said the method, dubbed ‘silent stealing,’ involves fewer risks than grabbing large sums and amounted to cyber crime going ‘downmarket.’” One expert quoted in the report said, “Yes, trying to steal £10 million from a bank is an option, but stealing £10 a hundred thousand times is going to give you a good return and probably go below the radar. Are you going to call Action Fraud or your bank in the case where you lose £10?”

Opinion: A Strong Offense Can Decrease Cyberattacks On Critical Infrastructure.

In a commentary in [The Hill](#) (2/19, 5.69M), former NSA director Michael Hayden, former Homeland Secretary Tom Ridge, retired US Coast Guard Vice Admiral John Shkor, and retired US Navy Rear Admiral Mark Montgomery wrote, “After years of malicious cyber activity targeting US critical infrastructure, hackers linked to Russia recently infiltrated numerous American companies and federal government agencies. This attack compromised national security and is costing business and the government untold millions or billions of dollars in damages.” They contend, “This litany of increasingly sophisticated cyber intrusions by Russia, China and others makes it clear that we are in a cyber conflict and our cyber defenses alone are insufficient to protect our critical infrastructure. It is time to reassess our national approach to cyber protection and ensure that our efforts include a strong defense and, importantly, a commitment to using offense capabilities, both cyber and non-cyber, to impose consequences on those who would do us harm.”

Administration Expected To “Unleash Wave Of Spending” On Cybersecurity Measures.

The [AP](#) (2/19, Fox, Suderman) says US officials, “jolted by a sweeping hack that may have revealed government and corporate secrets to Russia,” are “scrambling to reinforce the nation’s cyber defenses and recognizing that an agency created two years ago to protect America’s networks and infrastructure lacks the money, tools and authority to counter such sophisticated threats.” According to the AP, “The breach, which hijacked widely used software from Texas-based SolarWinds Inc., has exposed the profound vulnerability of civilian government networks and the limitations of efforts to detect threats. It’s also likely to unleash a wave of spending on technology modernization and cybersecurity.” The AP reports that Anne Neuberger, the deputy national security adviser for cyber and emergency technology, said earlier this week that the hack “really highlighted the investments we need to make in cybersecurity to have the visibility to block these attacks in the future.”

LATimes Report: Harris A Top Target For Online Harassment.

According to the [Los Angeles Times](#) (2/19, Bierman, 3.37M), “Research shows that Kamala Harris may be the most targeted American politician on the internet, one who checks every box for the haters of the fever swamps: She’s a woman, she’s a person of color and she holds power.” The Times adds, “It’s not just the amount but the type of harassment that makes the Harris slurs stand out. ... Those directed at Harris...tend to reference sex, violence or misogynistic accusations that she does not deserve her position.” The Times goes on to report that “online attacks against Harris, now that she is vice president, are monitored by the Secret Service. Her aides declined to comment other than to say threats to her and her family are taken seriously.”

TFI/Sanctions

In Its Final Days, Trump Administration Lifted Sanctions On Israeli Billionaire.

The [New York Times](#) (2/21, A1, Lipton, 20.6M) reports that in 2017, the Trump Administration imposed sanctions on Israeli billionaire Dan Gertler, “a mining magnate who had been accused for years of corruption in deals he struck with leaders of the Democratic Republic of Congo.” Gertler tried unsuccessfully to get the sanctions removed. Then, with “time running out on the Trump administration,” Gertler offered “to have outside monitors track his business and submit regular reports on his financial transactions if the United States would lift the sanctions.” In mid-January, then-Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin “granted Mr.

Gertler much of what he wanted. ... The decision stunned and angered American diplomats in Washington and Africa and government officials and human rights activists in the Democratic Republic of Congo,” and “it has left the Biden administration scrambling to determine how Mr. Gertler managed to pull it off – and whether it can be reversed.”

Federal Reserve

Williams: High Prices On Stock, Assets Justified Amid Low Interest-Rate Landscape,

[CNBC](#) (2/19, Cox, 7.34M) reported NY Fed President John Williams “said Friday that high prices for stocks and other assets are justified in light of a growing economy and low interest rate landscape.” Williams said during an interview, “Market participants and investors around the world are looking ahead through this year and looking into an economy that hopefully have a pretty robust recovery and a strong expansion over the next several years, which would support stronger valuations.” Although Williams “did not commit to a specific future course for the central bank, he indicated that the environment likely will remain accommodative.” The [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/19, Derby, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) and [Reuters](#) (2/19, Saphir) also reported.

Rosengren: Reopening Effort Must Include Programs To Improve Job Quality, Provide Childcare.

[Reuters](#) (2/19, Marte) reported Boston Federal Reserve Bank President Eric Rosengren “said on Friday...[w]omen, minorities and low-wage workers have been disproportionately affected by pandemic-related job losses and efforts to reopen the economy should include programs that improve job quality and make child care more affordable.” Rosengren, in remarks for the Yale Economic Development Symposium, said, “Absent such an effort, many individuals will continue to be held back from participating in the labor market, with negative repercussions for the economy as a whole.” Rosengren added, “Policymakers have reacted aggressively to the current pandemic-driven economic situation and appear prepared to continue with additional fiscal and monetary policy actions as needed.”

Barkin: Full Herd Immunity May Not Be Needed To Achieve Economic Rebound.

[Reuters](#) (2/19, Schneider) reported Richmond Fed President Tom Barkin “said on Friday....[t]he US may struggle to reach full herd immunity from the coronavirus but the economy can probably grow quickly this year even without it.” Barkin, in remarks to the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Chamber of Commerce in Virginia, said, “Individual hesitance is going to be a real barrier for herd immunity. ... The good news is I am not sure the economy requires it. ... There still may be some caution, but I expect those who have been vaccinated to have large pent up demand – meals, entertainment, travel. ... As cases come down then with vaccines, warmer weather I expect businesses to start returning to normal operations.”

Financial Regulatory Agencies

Civil Liberties Groups Sue SEC Over “No Admit, No Deny” Settlement Policy.

[MarketWatch](#) (2/19, Matthews, 2.64M) reported civil liberties groups are suing the SEC over its policy of “no admit, no deny” settlement policy, saying that by “barring a person or company from publicly denying a charge that was settled out of court is a violation of their First Amendment rights.” If the policy is ruled unconstitutional in the courts, “it could have wide-ranging implications for a financial regulatory apparatus that relies heavily on these agreements to police the financial services industry, given the SEC’s limited budget of roughly \$1.9 billion.” For comparison, JPMorgan Chase had a revenue of more than \$29 billion in Q4 alone. Kurt Schacht, Managing Director of Advocacy at CFA Institute, said, “The SEC is vastly outgunned by the companies it oversees,” adding that these figures “demonstrate that the SEC is gravely outmatched and that private industry is increasing its spending at a rate more than twice that of its regulator.”

CFPB On Hiring Spree In Preparation Of Tougher Oversight.

[American Banker](#) (2/22, Subscription Publication, 27K) reports the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) “is assembling a new enforcement team and hiring more personnel as it prepares to toughen oversight of banks, mortgage servicers and other financial firms.” Acting Director Dave Uejio “has already named a new head of enforcement and launched an effort to recruit attorneys.” The hirings are seen “as a sign that the bureau aims to bulk up under new leadership, even before” Biden’s pick for Director Rohit Chopra is confirmed.

WSJournal Criticizes Biden’s Nomination Of Chopra To Lead CFPB.

In an editorial, the [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/19, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) called President Biden’s decision to nominate Rohit Chopra to head the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau worrying, adding Chopra wants the agency to extend its arm into political speech, crossing over constitutional limits.

Internal Revenue Service

US Government Defends Tax Credit Rules In Court Filing Over Challenge Brought By FedEx.

[Bloomberg Tax](#) (2/20, Bagchi) reported the Treasury Department and IRS filed a brief Friday in the US District Court for the Western District of Tennessee defending “rules restricting foreign tax credit claims that cost FedEx Corp. \$89 million.” According to the story, “FedEx has argued that the rules reflect the IRS and the Treasury Department supplanting the language of the law with the government’s ‘preferred policy choice.’” The dispute “is one of several testing international tax provisions in the 2017 tax law.”

Office of the Comptroller of the Currency

Next Comptroller Will Need To Bring CDFIs, MDIs Together.

[American Banker](#) (2/19, Subscription Publication, 27K) reported that the person who is selected as the next Comptroller will “have a profound impact on the entire banking industry” during their term. The two groups of financial institutions that will be impacted the most by the appointment are community development financial institutions and minority depository institutions. The next leader of the OCC will “play a critical roll” in strengthening the cooperation between financial institutions and fintechs, through initiatives such as Project REACH, which “aims at building partnerships to help minority-owned banks thrive and support the communities they serve.” By helping these organizations work together, underserved Americans can be brought into the financial system. Therefore, “with the right creative financial partnerships and a new leader at the helm of the OCC, there is hope that technology can ultimately help unit the country, rather than creating a divide between the haves and have-nots.”

Delay In White House Nominating Barr For Comptroller Leads To Speculation About Other Candidates.

In a news roundup, the [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/19, Rubin, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reported that while the White House was expected to nominate Michael Barr as head of the OCC, the announcement remains stalled, with no announcement imminent, sources said. The delay has led to speculation that the White House is considering alternatives, such as Mehrsa Baradaran.

Santander Bank Earns “Outstanding” Rating From OCC.

[American Banker](#) (2/19, Alix, Subscription Publication, 27K) reported, “Four years after receiving a ‘needs to improve’ grade on its Community Reinvestment Act examination, Santander Bank in [Boston] has earned an ‘outstanding’ rating from the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency.” The agency “gave...Santander particularly high marks for its mortgage and small-business lending, as well as its community development activities, the bank said in a press release.” The bank has worked to improve a number of regulatory issues recently, as the OCC downgraded the bank to “needs to improve” between 2011 and 2013 for legal issues surrounding its lending practices. The bank received a “satisfactory” rating for the 2014 to 2016 period. Santander US CEO Tim Wennes said, “Of the many operational improvements that Santander has made in recent years, receiving an outstanding assessment of our Community Reinvestment Act efforts is particularly meaningful.”

Citigroup Weighs Divestiture Of Asia-Pacific Retail Banking Units.

[American Banker](#) (2/19, Subscription Publication, 27K) reported that Citigroup is considering the divestiture of some retail banking units in the Asia-Pacific region, according to people familiar with the matter. The units under review include those in South Korea, Thailand, the Philippines, and Australia, the people added. Additionally, consumer operations in Mexico is also being reviewed, one of the sources said, but noted that it is less likely to be sold. According to American Banker, “offloading the international consumer franchise would simplify Citigroup’s business at a time when the firm is under strict orders from regulators to clean up internal infrastructure and controls.” Both the OCC and the Federal Reserve “criticized the bank last year for shortcomings in its technology.”

Also reporting are [Reuters](#) (2/19, Staff), [Bloomberg Law](#) (2/20, Subscription Publication, 4K), [Business Insider](#) (2/19, 2.74M), and the [Straits Times \(SGP\)](#) (2/21, 35K).

Wells Fargo Resumes Branch Closures.

The [Winston-Salem \(NC\) Journal](#) (2/19, Craver, 226K) reported that according to its latest filing with the OCC, Wells Fargo has resumed closing branches across the US. The bank had taken a two month pause in closing branches. The current submission includes 21 planned closures. The bank’s “nationwide branch closing count since mid-July has reached at least 433, with at least 25 in North Carolina, including two locations in Greensboro and one in Dobson.”

Editorial Wrap-Up

Washington Post.

“Biden Is Moving To End Trump’s Inhumane Border Policies. Can He Avoid Triggering A New Migrant Surge?” The [Washington Post](#) (2/21, 10.52M) describes “a high-wire act at the U.S.-Mexico border,” in which the Biden Administration is “trying to dismantle what it rightly regards as former president Donald Trump’s inhumane immigration policies and simultaneously to avoid signaling to desperate migrants that the doors to the United States have swung open amid a pandemic.” The Post says “officials are trying to buy time; they say it will be another few months before the administration produces a fully formed new policy. Critically, that approach must feature orderly procedures for asylum seekers that allow them to pursue their legal claims in the United States – which the Trump administration did not – and do not trigger a massive new run on the border by migrant

caravans.”

“Australia’s Ham-Handed Attempt To Save Journalism Will Only Aid The Powerful.” The [Washington Post](#) (2/21, 10.52M) is critical of “legislation expected to pass the country’s Parliament that would force platforms to pay news organizations for hosting links to their content. ... The News Media Bargaining Code would require digital services, specifically Google and Facebook, to cut a deal with publishers or enter into binding arbitration to determine the price they must pay to display their content.” The Post argues that “publishers (including The Post) make more money from the traffic and subscriptions they gain through platforms than platforms do from monetizing the material publishers put there. What platforms gain is high-quality content and a healthier information ecosystem.” To the Post, the measure under consideration “looks less likely to level the playing field than to tear it up.”

“Last Year Was Good For LGBTQ Rights. Congress Can Make This One Even Better.” The [Washington Post](#) (2/21, 10.52M) argues for passage of the Equality Act, which would “bar LGBTQ discrimination in employment, education, credit, jury service, federal funding, housing and public accommodations.” President Biden called for the measure’s fast passage on Friday and the House “may vote on it as soon as this week. But it faces an uncertain fate in the Senate, where it would need to attract the support of 10 Republicans to overcome a filibuster. A solution must be found; LGBTQ people have waited long enough for comprehensive anti-discrimination protections.”

Wall Street Journal.

“The Non-Covid Spending Blowout.” The White House has cited polls showing that President Biden’s COVID relief package is popular, but the [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/21, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) questions how much popular support it would have “if Americans understood that most of the blowout is a list of longtime Democratic spending priorities flying under the false flag of Covid-19 relief.” According to the Journal, “more than \$1 trillion” in the bill “is a combination of bailouts for Democratic constituencies, expansions of progressive programs, pork, and unrelated policy changes.” The Journal calls it “a progressive blowout for the ages that does little for the economy but will finance Democratic interest groups for years.”

“Why Beijing Loves Biden And Paris.” The [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/21, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) says China is pleased the US has rejoined the Paris climate agreement “because it knows the accord will restrict American energy while Beijing gets a decade-long free ride.” China “emitted nearly twice as much CO2 as the U.S. in 2018,” but under the agreement, “Beijing gets a pass to increase its emissions until 2030.”

The Big Picture

Headlines From Today’s Front Pages.

Wall Street Journal:

[Blue-Collar Jobs Boom As Covid-19 Boosts Housing, E-Commerce Demand](#)
[FAA Orders Immediate Inspections After United Engine Failure](#)
[Travel’s Covid-19 Blues Are Likely Here to Stay – “People Will Go Out Of Business”](#)
[China Deploys Covid-19 Vaccine To Build Influence, With US On Sidelines](#)
[The Least-Relaxing Pandemic De-Stresser: Tiny DIY Doll Houses](#)
[Bond Selloff Prompts Stock Investors To Confront Rising Rates](#)

New York Times:

[The Lost Hours: How Confusion And Inaction At The Capitol Delayed A Troop Deployment](#)
[How Texas’ Drive For Energy Independence Set It Up For Disaster](#)
[On The Post-Pandemic Horizon, Could That Be ... A Boom?](#)
[Tough Sanctions, Then A Mysterious Last-Minute Turnabout](#)
[Can Andrew Cuomo’s ‘Bullying’ Style Still Work In Politics](#)
[How Democrats Are Already Maneuvering To Shape Biden’s First Supreme Court Pick](#)

Washington Post:

[Anger In Texas Poses Political Test For Abbott](#)
[Youngest Victims Few, But Pain Runs Deep](#)
[Trump, Allies Face Lengthy Reckoning](#)
[Fatal Floods In India Point To A Himalayan Climate Threat](#)
[Door By Door, Pleading With Skeptics To Take Vaccine](#)

Financial Times:

[HSBC Intensifies Pivot To Asia With Job Moves And US Exit](#)
[Salvini’s Hardcore Supporters Lose Faith In Their “Capitano”](#)
[China’s State Broadcaster Applies To France For Right To Air In Europe](#)

Story Lineup From Last Night’s Network News:

ABC: United Airlines-Engine Failure; COVID Deaths Remembrance; Vaccines; COVID-Children; Texas-Winter Storm; Weather Report; Garland-AG Nominee; New Orleans-Shooting at Gun Store; Florida-Woman With Autism Disappearance; SS Katherine Johnson Rocket; First Class of Female Eagle Scouts.

CBS: Texas-Winter Storm; Vaccines; Biden-COVID Relief; WHO-China; US/Iran Relations; United Airlines-Engine Failure; Asian-American Discrimination; Dubai-Princess Latifa; Severe Weather; Italy-Mt. Etna; San Francisco-Victorian House Moved; SS Katherine Johnson Rocket; Americans Meet In The Middle.

NBC: United Airlines-Engine Failure; Texas-Winter Storm; Vaccine Delays; Biden-COVID Relief; COVID Deaths Remembrance; Vaccine Passport; Cleveland-Ice Rescue; Gas Prices; Racial Inequality-Education; Dad Receives News Daughter Is Cancer Free.

Network TV At A Glance:

United Airlines-Engine Failure – 8 minutes, 0 seconds

Texas-Winter Storm – 7 minutes, 40 seconds

Last Laughs

Late Night Political Humor.

John Oliver: “Texas saw a full-blown humanitarian crisis this week, with many losing electricity and access to clean water, hospitals having to evacuate patients, and dozens of deaths. And if you watched Fox News, there was one culprit for all of this: Green energy. ... Just because you loudly insist something ‘is science’ doesn’t make it science. That’s science!”

John Oliver: “Texas is the only state in the lower 48 not on the federal power grid. And sometimes, when you’re the only one doing something, you’re a pioneer. But sometimes, you might be an idiot. If you’re the only person trying to set the world record for being covered in the most bees, maybe ask yourself, ‘What am I trying to prove here exactly? Why am I like this?’ Because that independence meant that Texas was limited in its ability to import energy from neighboring states.”

John Oliver: “Ten years ago, Texas was hit with a storm that paralyzed the state. After which, federal regulators warned that their power plants needed to winterize to prevent this from happening again. And state officials knew full well what might happen if they didn’t act. ... So Texas had a decade to prepare, and it didn’t. And you can get a lot done in ten years! Look at Beyonce. In the last decade...she got a lot done. She probably could’ve winterized Texas’ power plants if anyone had just thought to ask her.”

John Oliver: “So much of the problems this week stemmed from Texas’s state philosophy of ‘every man for himself.’ And that attitude has defined the response from their officials, too. ... There was the saga of Ted [jerk face] Cruz. He fled the state on Wednesday and took his family to Cancun. And when photos of him on the plane emerged, he came back the next day, initially implying that his plan had always been just to drop his family off and come back. ... He eventually admitted he’d planned to stay the whole time, and blamed his preteen daughters for the trip, saying they had asked him to go, and ‘I was trying to be a dad.’ Because the first rule of fatherhood is throw your daughters under the bus at the first opportunity.”

John Oliver: [On Rick Perry suggesting Texans prefer blackouts to federal regulations] “But maybe the ultimate example of self-defeating Texan swagger this week actually came from former Governor and US Secretary of Energy Rick Perry. ... Far be it for me to question the wisdom of a man who failed running for President twice, and who came in 12th on ‘Dancing with the Stars’ – meaning he lost to Mitt Romney, Donald Trump, and Vanilla Ice.”

Washington’s Schedule

Today’s Events In Washington.

White House:

- President Biden — No public schedule released.
- Vice President Harris — No public schedule released.

US Senate:

- Senate Judiciary Committee begins considering Merrick Garland to be AG – Nominations hearing considers Merrick Garland to be Attorney General, day one * Hearing will conclude tomorrow, with a vote on the nomination next week * Then-President-elect Joe Biden nominated the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit judge last month * Then-President Barack Obama nominated Garland to be a U.S. Supreme Court Associate Justice in 2016, to succeed the late Antonin Scalia, only for the Republican-controlled Senate to refuse to consider the nomination in the final year of his presidency, arguing that the winner of the 2016 presidential election deserved to choose who should fill the vacancy. After Donald Trump won, he nominated the conservative Neil Gorsuch. The Senate then went on to approve Trump’s nomination of Amy Coney Barrett in the final year of his presidency, despite their previous claims over Garland

Location: Rm 216, Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, DC; 9:30 AM

- Senate returns after Presidents Day recess – Senate returns after Presidents Day State Work Period, with Republican Sen.

Rob Portman delivering Washington's Farewell Address; 3:00 PM

- [Senate Rules and Administration Committee organizational meeting](#) – Business Meeting, with agenda including 'Committee Rules and Budget Authorization' and 'Omnibus Committee Funding Resolution'

Location: S-219, U.S. Capitol, Washington, DC; 5:30 PM

US House:

- [House of Representatives meets in pro forma session](#)

Location: U.S. Capitol, Washington, DC; 11:30 AM

- [House Budget Committee markup hearing \(virtual\)](#) – Virtual markup hearing on 'A bill to provide for reconciliation pursuant to title II of the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2021, S. Con. Res. 5', held via WebEx; 1:00 PM

Cabinet Officers:

- [Secretary of State Blinken participates in EU Foreign Affairs Council meeting](#) – Council of the European Union Foreign Affairs Council meeting, chaired by EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell, with discussion topics including Burma (aka Myanmar), EU-Russia relations, the Strategic Compass, a common European security and defense culture, increasing threats and challenges, and Hong Kong * Secretary of State Anthony Blinken also participates, at the invitation of Borrell

Location: Brussels, Belgium; 8:30 AM

Visitors:

- [No visitors scheduled](#)

General Events:

- [U.S. Supreme Court hearing](#) – U.S. Supreme Court hearing, via teleconference: 'Florida v. Georgia' (Whether Florida is entitled to equitable apportionment of the waters of the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint River Basin and appropriate injunctive relief against Georgia to sustain an adequate flow of fresh water into the Apalachicola Region?) * Court was previously scheduled to hear 'Donald Trump / Joe Biden v. Sierra Club', on whether govt officials were permitted to reallocate money to fund U.S.-Mexico border wall construction, before the Biden administration requested that the court remove the case from schedule; 10:00 AM
- [National Forum on COVID-19 Vaccine \(virtual\)](#) – National Forum on COVID-19 Vaccine, hosted virtually to promote the most effective strategies to build trust and confidence in coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccines, use data to optimize vaccine implementation, and provide participants with practical information for increasing vaccine access in communities nationwide, especially for persons at increased risk of COVID-19 and those who may face barriers to vaccination. Day one speakers include CDC Director Rochelle Walensky, Health Resources and Services Administration Acting Administrator Diana Espinosa, FEMA Acting Administrator Bob Fenton, CMS Acting Administrator Elizabeth Richter, White House COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force Senior Policy Advisor Cameron Webb, NIH Coronavirus Vaccines and Immunopathogenesis Lead Kizzmekia Corbett, Massachusetts Department of Health Commissioner Monica Bharel, American Nurses Association President Ernest Grant, and Washington State Secretary of Health Umair Shah; 10:00 AM
- [NCAI Executive Council Winter Session continues \(virtual\)](#) – National Congress of American Indians Executive Council Winter Session (aka Tribal Nations Legislative Summit) continues, with agenda today including the State of Indian Nations address delivered by NCAI President Fawn Sharp; 11:00 AM
- [Middle East Policy Council and National U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors Forum \(virtual\)](#) – Middle East Policy Council and National U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors Forum host virtual ambassadors forum, with U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Amb. Matthew Tuller, former U.S. Ambassador to Oman Richard Schmierer, and Middle East Policy Council Executive Director Bassia Alghussein; 11:00 AM
- [ORR discussion on the nomination of Deb Haaland to be secretary of the interior](#) – Outdoor Recreation Roundtable hold virtual discussion with women leaders of ORR member organizations to discuss the nomination of Democratic Rep. Deb Haaland to be secretary of the interior, and what it means for the outdoor industry. Speakers include National Marine Manufacturers Association Senior Vice President for Government and Legal Affairs Nicole Vasilaros, Outdoor Industry Association Executive Director Lise Aangeenbrug, People for Bikes President and CEO Jenn Dice, The Corps Network President and CEO Mary Ellen Sprenkel, and ORR Acting Executive Director Lindsey Davis; 11:00 AM
- [National Association of State Treasurers Legislative Conference \(virtual\)](#) – National Association of State Treasurers Legislative Conference opens. Day one speakers include Brookings Institution President John Allen, Connecticut Treasurer Shawn Wooden and U.S. Chamber of Commerce Executive Vice President and Chief Policy Officer Neil Bradley* Taking place virtually due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic; 12:00 PM
- [Brookings Institution discussion on Black political power in the South \(virtual\)](#) – 'A conversation on the past, present, and future of Black political power in the South' Brookings Institution online discussion, with Georgia Stand-Up Executive Director Deborah Scott, Louisiana state Sen. Karen Carter Peterson, National Coalition on Black Civic Participation President and CEO Melanie Campbell, and HIT Strategies Democratic Pollster Terrance Woodbury; 2:00 PM
- [Brookings Institution 'The Middle East and the New U.S. Administration' conference \(virtual\)](#) – 'The Middle East and the New U.S. Administration' Brookings Institution conference, with speakers include Iraqi President Barham Salih, Moroccan Foreign Minister Nasser Bourita, Algerian Foreign Minister Sabri Boukadoum, former UAE Foreign Minister Anwar Gargash,

Democratic Rep. Gregory Meeks, Israeli Leader of the Opposition Yair Lapid, UK Ambassador to the U.S. Amb. Karen Pierce, German Ambassador to the U.S. Amb. Emily Haber, Jordanian Ambassador to the U.S. Dina Kavar, former Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Salam Fayyad, former Secretary of Defense Mike Esper, former Rep. Will Hurd, and New Hope Party Chair Gideon Sa'ar

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TO: THE SECRETARY AND SENIOR STAFF

DATE: MONDAY, JANUARY 25, 2021 6:00 AM EST

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- NMHC's Schwartz Expects 180 On GSE Reform, More Rental Assistance From Biden Administration.
- Haus.com Chief Economist: January Is The Best Month To Score A Low Mortgage Rate.
- Despite OIG Recommendation, FHFA Still Alerting Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac Management About Supervisory Concerns.
- Forbearances Rise Following Consecutive Weeks Of Declines.
- NAR: Existing-Home Sales Hit A 14-Year High In December As Supply Fell To An All-Time Low.
- IHS Markit: US Economy Seeing Increased Activity This Month.
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Treasury in the News

Civil Rights Leaders Pledge To Maintain Pressure On Administration.

The [Washington Post](#) (1/24, Wootson, 10.52M) reports that days after Vice President Harris "became the first Black and south Asian woman to win a national election, racial justice activists are trying to balance their elation over having representation at the highest levels of government with a determination to press the administration on racial issues that have festered for decades and spilled protesters into American streets last year." The Post adds civil rights leaders insist President Biden's commitment to a diverse Administration "will not deflect their demand for action on everything from fair policing to economic inequity to environmental justice." Rashad Robinson, "president of Color of Change, a civil rights advocacy organization founded in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, said he has been working with the Biden administration," including Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen.

Treasury To Propose Rules On Extending Anti-Money Laundering Requirements To Antiquities Market.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (1/22, Sun, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reported that as part of the National Defense Authorization Act extending the Bank Secrecy Act to antiquities market dealers, the Treasury Department will propose new rules to extend those anti-money-laundering requirements.

Senior Democrats Exploring Treasury-Run Online Portal For Tax Credit Disbursal.

The [Washington Post](#) (1/22, Stein, 10.52M) reported senior Democrats in Congress "are moving to fulfill President Biden's desire to expand the child tax credit by drafting legislation that would direct the IRS to send recurring monthly payments to tens of millions of American families, according to officials who spoke on the condition of anonymity to share knowledge of the internal discussion." Lawmakers "are also exploring whether the Treasury Department can set up an online portal for parents to manage the disbursal of the new credit," according to sources, though aides cautioned it could take time for Treasury officials "to successfully set up a site that could handle millions of such requests."

JetBlue Received \$252M From Treasury In Exchange For Stock Warrants.

[MarketWatch](#) (1/22, Kilgore, 2.64M) reported JetBlue Airways "disclosed Friday that it received \$252 million from the U.S. Treasury as part of a Payroll Support Program Extension Agreement, including a grant of \$206 million and a lot of \$46 million." Under the terms of the agreement, JetBlue "said it issued to the U.S. Treasury warrants to buy 316,583 shares of JetBlue common stock, at an exercise price of \$14.43."

Some Economic Impact Payment Recipients Worry Visa Card Disbursement Is A Scam.

[USA Today](#) (1/22, Tompor, 12.7M) reported that the disbursement of Economic Impact Payments via prepaid Visa cards has raised suspicions among some recipients that the cards could be tied to a scam. A similar scare "took place in the spring, when...some consumers were throwing away the first round of Visa debit cards that contained stimulus money. One woman even went so far as to shred the card." Starting the first week of the year, Treasury and the IRS "started sending out about 8 million prepaid debit cards for people to access their Economic Impact Payments," with Treasury noting, "In order to quickly disburse EIPs, some people who received EIPs by paper check for the first round of EIPs might receive an EIP Card this time, and some people who received an EIP Card for the first round may receive a paper check," adding to the confusion.

COVID-19 News

Fauci Reflects On "Difficulties, And The Toll," Of Working With Trump.

In an interview with the [New York Times](#) (1/24, McNeil, 20.6M), NIAID Director Fauci "described some of the difficulties, and the toll, of working with President Donald J. Trump." Asked about his plans for the Biden Administration, Fauci said, "We are living through a historic pandemic, the likes of which we haven't seen in 102 years. I think what I bring to the table is something that's very much value-added. I want to keep doing it until I see us crushing this outbreak, so that people can get back to normality. And even after then, I've left some unfinished business. There's still H.I.V., to which I've devoted the overwhelming proportion of my professional life. I want to continue the work that we're doing on influenza, on H.I.V., on malaria and tuberculosis. As I said, this is what I do."

Birx Says Trump Was Being Provided With "Parallel Set Of Data And Graphics."

The [AP](#) (1/24) reports former White House coronavirus adviser Deborah Birx said Sunday that during her tenure on President Donald Trump's task force, she "had to grapple with COVID-19 deniers in the White House and that someone gave the president 'parallel' streams of data that conflicted with hers." Birx told [CBS' Face The Nation](#) "that she was at times censored by the

Trump administration but denied ever withholding information. Birx said she would see Trump 'presenting graphs that I never made' and that 'someone out there or someone inside was creating a parallel set of data and graphics that were shown to the president.'"

[The Hill](#) (1/24, Budryk, 5.69M) reports Birx "said she was unsure" who provided Trump with the differing data, "but that she suspected at least some of the data had been provided by former White House adviser Scott Atlas, who is not an expert on infectious diseases and repeatedly battled with Birx and other experts about the best way to contain the pandemic." [CBS News](#) (1/24, Quinn, 5.39M) reports on its website, "Birx stressed that for the new administration, having a team at the White House to respond to the ongoing pandemic 'is going to be really, really important.'"

Hundreds Of ICUs Straining For Resources Due To High Number Of Patients With COVID.

The [AP](#) (1/24, Johnson, Forster) reports that as they confront a high number of patients with COVID, hundreds of ICUs in the US, mainly in the South and the West, "are running out of space and supplies and competing to hire temporary traveling nurses at soaring rates." According to an AP analysis of federal hospital data, "more than 40% of Americans now live in areas running out of ICU space, with only 15% of beds still available."

Meanwhile, the [Boston Globe](#) (1/24, Dayal McCluskey, 1.04M) reports on the growing use of field hospitals, which "are stark reminders of the severity of a pandemic that has sickened and killed thousands of people...and is far from over." However, the Globe says field hospitals have some advantages for patients, who "can do something forbidden in traditional hospitals during the pandemic: walk around and socialize." The Globe adds that while patients in traditional hospitals "are confined to their rooms because of the risk of spreading infection," those at field hospitals "already have COVID, and all the health care workers wear full personal protective equipment at all times," so it is "safe for patients to leave their beds and interact."

Advocates Say Those With Disabilities Should Be Given Vaccination Priority.

The [Washington Post](#) (1/24, A1, Contrera, 10.52M) reports the CDC "has said health-care personnel and residents of long-term-care facilities should be first in line" for COVID vaccination, and "disability advocates say guidance should be interpreted to include all people with disabilities who receive long-term care." But as federal guidance "has been translated into vaccine distribution plans made by states, those with disabilities have been downgraded to lower priority status." Many states "are leaving people with disabilities who live in large institutions and group homes out of their Phase 1a plans, instead moving them to 1b or 1c," in Indiana and Rhode Island, "group homes have been pushed to Phase 2, with the likelihood that vaccinations are months away."

Study: Essential Workers In California At Highest Risk Of Death From COVID.

[Fox News](#) (1/24, Ruiz, 23.99M) reports on its website that a new study "looking at which jobs carry the most risk of death for California workers" from COVID "found that cooks have the deck stacked against them," as do "people who operate packaging machines, followed by agricultural workers, bakers, construction laborers, factory hands and shipping clerks, according to Dr. Kirsten Bibbins-Domingo, the vice dean of Population Health and Health Equity at University of California San Francisco, who worked on the study," which is still awaiting peer review. Fox News adds that the researchers have "called for those same laborers to be prioritized for vaccines."

California Officials Examine Death Of Person Hours After Vaccination.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (1/24, Toy, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports the Placer County Sheriff's Office and Placer County Public Health Department are investigating after a person who died several hours after received a COVID vaccine. However, a spokeswoman for the Placer County Sheriff's Office and Coroner's Office did not link the death to the vaccine.

Jackson Lee Urges Abbott To Permit Local Jurisdictions To Respond To COVID.

The [Houston Chronicle](#) (1/24, 982K) reports Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX) on Friday sent a letter asking Texas Gov. Greg Abbott (R) to "rescind the executive order he issued in response to COVID-19, saying that the recent closure of the Heights Hospital shows that local officials need more decision-making power to adequately respond to the pandemic." The Chronicle adds Jackson Lee "said that Abbott's March executive order 'poses an imminent threat of disaster for all the counties in the state' because it limits the ability of local officials to implement rules and closures." According to the Chronicle, Jackson Lee also "sent a similar letter to Jeffrey Zients, who is leading President Joe Biden's COVID-19 response team, and asked that he intervene and 'prevail upon' Abbott."

West Virginia Playing Leading Role In Vaccine Rollout.

In a more than 2,300-word article, the [New York Times](#) (1/24, A1, Mervosh, 20.6M) reports that since the US "began distributing vaccines more than a month ago, it has moved far more slowly than officials hoped and has been stymied by widespread logistical problems," but West Virginia "has stood out for its success in getting people vaccinated." The Times says that 9% of West Virginians "have received a first dose of the coronavirus vaccine, a larger segment than in every state but Alaska and double the rate of some," and "no state has given a larger share of its residents second doses, a crucial step to securing the best chance at immunity." The Times highlights that West Virginia has also "given out 83 percent of its doses, by far among the highest," although "even the most efficient state vaccine operations do not have enough shots for all who want them."

New Orleans Turning To “Carnival Dance Culture” To Promote Vaccinations.

The [New York Times](#) (1/24, Hoffman, 20.6M) reports that while Mardi Gras this year has been canceled due to COVID, the “new, upbeat ‘Sleeves Up, NOLA’ campaign deftly uses local personalities and the Carnival dance culture to encourage citizens to get a Covid shot.” The Times adds there are a number of campaigns nationwide “to persuade people of the importance of getting a Covid shot,” but the “homegrown approach, using neighborhood personas and invoking local culture with ‘laissez les bons temps rouler’ dance moves and costumes, may make it particularly effective, say experts in vaccine hesitance and behavioral change.”

Chicago Teachers Refuse To Return To In-Person Learning.

The [Chicago Sun-Times](#) (1/24, Issa, 970K) reports members of the Chicago Teachers Union on Sunday “voted to defy Chicago Public Schools’ reopening plans and continue working from home Monday because of health and safety concerns.” The Sun-Times adds Chicago officials “said in recent days they would view the collective refusal of in-person work as a strike, but in response to Sunday’s vote results said they will delay the scheduled return of thousands of teachers and staff until Wednesday ‘to ensure we have the time needed to resolve our discussions without risking disruption to student learning,’” and the [Chicago Tribune](#) (1/24, Rosenberg-Douglas, Ruthhart, 2.03M) reports Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot (D) “struck an optimistic tone.” She said, “What I know is that we’re still at the table, we’re still bargaining, we’ve narrowed the range of issues and it’s certainly my hope that we will get a deal done.”

The [Washington Post](#) (1/24, Reiss, 10.52M) reports the CTU “said it does not have any agreement with the district on any terms but will continue to negotiate.” The [AP](#) (1/24, Tareen) reports Chicago Public Schools, the third-largest district in the country, had “wanted roughly 10,000 kindergarten through eighth grade teachers and other staffers to return to school Monday to get ready to welcome back roughly 70,000 students for part-time in-school classes starting Feb. 1,” but the CTU “opposes the plan over concern for the health of its members and called on them to continue teaching from home in defiance of the district’s plan.”

On [NBC Nightly News](#) (1/24, story 10, 3:25, 3.76M), Kate Snow reported, “What’s playing out in Chicago is happening all across the country.” Rehema Ellis added, “It’s a tale of two school systems playing out across the country. Private schools are mostly in person. Nearby public schools are hybrid or remote.” According to Ellis, 76% of US private schools “have managed to stay open for in-person learning. While only 38% of public schools have.” Meanwhile, [Bloomberg](#) (1/24, Campbell, Singh, 3.57M) reports President Biden “has vowed to reopen most schools in his first 100 days and has directed the departments of Education and Health and Human Services to provide guidance on reopening.”

Georgia School Board Members Refused To Wear Mask To Honor Teacher Who Died Of COVID.

The [Washington Post](#) (1/24, Kornfield, 10.52M) reports that while an employee of the Cobb County, Georgia school district recently “pleaded” with members of the Board of Education to wear masks “in honor of Hendricks Elementary School kindergarten art teacher Patrick Key, 53, who died Christmas Day after he was hospitalized for about six weeks” with COVID, at least two members, “including Superintendent Chris Ragsdale, who were not wearing face coverings remained maskless” during the memorial. The Post says that for Key’s family, “the inaction came across as indifference to the community’s loss, prompting them to speak out against the board’s mute reaction.” After Key died, “Dana Johnson, a teacher at Kemp Elementary School, and Cynthia Lindsey, a paraprofessional at Sedalia Park Elementary School, also lost their lives to the disease caused by the virus.”

Archambault Urges Biden To Reform IHS Amid “Extraordinarily High” Native American COVID Death Rate.

In a [New York Times](#) (1/24, Archambault, 20.6M) op-ed, Jodi Archambault, a Hunkpapa and Oglala Lakota woman and former special assistant to the president for Native American affairs under President Barack Obama, writes that Native Americans “are dying from Covid-19 at extraordinarily high rates across the country. North and South Dakota, home to the Lakota reservations, lead the United States for coronavirus rates per capita.” Archambault adds that “we are losing the language spoken by our elders,” which is “why it is critical that we have a coordinated federal Covid-19 response.” President Biden “now has an opportunity to help. That means providing the highest quality health care and preventive measures on reservations, and a top-down reform of the Indian Health Service, a long-neglected treaty right. Finally, the next federal budget must fully fund tribal language restoration programs.”

Cotton Pans US Decision To Rejoin WHO.

Sen. Tom Cotton (R-AR), on [Fox News’ Sunday Morning Futures](#) (1/24, 1.33M), discussed the Biden Administration’s decision to rejoin the World Health Organization. Cotton said, “I think it was a misguided decision to go back into the World Health Organization. They have largely been carrying water for China for the last year. Reporting since the early days of this pandemic has made that clear.”

Dutch Police Clash With Protesters Demonstrating Against COVID Lockdowns.

The [AP](#) (1/24, Dejong) reports Dutch police “clashed with protesters demonstrating against the country’s lockdown in the capital, Amsterdam and the southern city of Eindhoven on Sunday, a day after rioting youths protesting the country’s curfew torched a coronavirus testing facility in a Dutch fishing village.” [Reuters](#) (1/24, Sterling) reports, “National broadcaster NOS said riot police

had been deployed in at least 10 cities and towns after a curfew went into effect at 9 p.m." [NBC Nightly News](#) (1/24, story 8, 0:20, Snow, 3.76M) provided similar coverage in a brief report.

UK Vaccinates Most Of Over-80 Population Amid Concerns About New Variant.

The [AP](#) (1/24) reports, "Britain is expanding a coronavirus vaccination program that has seen almost 6 million people get the first of two doses – even as the country's death toll in the pandemic approaches 100,000." UK Health Secretary Matt Hancock "said Sunday that three-quarters of the U.K.'s over-80s have received a vaccine shot." He also "said three-quarters of nursing home residents have also had their first jab."

Meanwhile, the [New York Times](#) (1/24, Landler, Mueller, 20.6M) reports the government's disclosure on Friday "that a new variant of the virus could be deadlier than the original raised a stir about why such alarming information was put out when the evidence was so inconclusive," but it also "silenced those who called for life to go back to normal any time soon." The Times adds the government "is expected to announce in coming days that it will prolong and tighten the nationwide lockdown imposed by Prime Minister Boris Johnson this month. Schools may stay closed until Easter, while travelers arriving from overseas could be required to quarantine in hotels for 10 days." The [Wall Street Journal](#) (1/24, Fidler, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) says the appearance of the new variants poses a challenge to efforts to combat COVID.

Mexican President Tests Positive For COVID.

The [Washington Post](#) (1/24, Sheridan, Sieff, 10.52M) reports Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador on Sunday announced he "tested positive for the coronavirus and was experiencing 'light' symptoms." The Post says López Obrador "has frequently minimized the severity of the pandemic and has rarely worn a mask, even as covid-19 has killed nearly 150,000 people in Mexico – the fourth-highest total in the world, and the 19th-highest as a percentage of the population, according to figures compiled by Johns Hopkins University." The [New York Times](#) (1/24, Kitroeff, 20.6M) reports López Obrador on Friday "posted a photo of himself indoors, again without a mask, conducting a call with President Biden," along with Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard "and Alfonso Romo, a former top aide – and neither was wearing masks. And on Saturday, the president met with local business leaders in Monterrey."

Meanwhile, the [AP](#) (1/24, Sherman) says the announcement "came shortly after news emerged that he would speak with Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday about obtaining doses of the Sputnik V COVID-19 vaccine." The AP adds, "Other Latin American leaders who have tested positive for the coronavirus are Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro, Guatemala's Alejandro Giammattei, Honduras' Juan Orlando Hernández and Bolivia's then-interim President Jeanine Áñez. All have recovered."

Mexico's Vaccination Program Stalls Due To Delays from Pfizer. The [Los Angeles Times](#) (1/24, Linthicum, 3.37M) reports that hospitals in many states in Mexico "are near capacity, ventilators and oxygen tanks are in scarce supply and more people are dying than ever before." While "large-scale vaccination is widely seen as the clearest way out...this last week the government announced that its inoculation program – one of the most ambitious in Latin America – had essentially come to a standstill." Mexico, a "country of 128 million people, has received just 766,350 doses of vaccine, all produced by Pfizer-BioNTech." The number "was supposed to hit 1.5 million by the end of the month, but Pfizer now says it can't meet that goal because it is remodeling one of its factories in Europe to eventually boost production."

Fewer Indians Getting Vaccinated Than Expected.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (1/24, Bellman, Agarwal, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) says India is struggling to roll out its vaccines due to a lower-than-expected turnout due to problems with its notification app and due to concerns about vaccine safety.

Israel Adds Additional COVID Restrictions.

The [AP](#) (1/24, Federman) reports Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday announced the closure of the country's international airport "to nearly all flights, while Israeli police clashed with ultra-Orthodox protesters in several major cities and the government raced to bring a raging coronavirus outbreak under control." The AP says that new virus variants, "coupled with poor enforcement of safety rules in ultra-Orthodox communities, has contributed to one of the world's highest rates of infections," which "threatened to undercut Israel's highly successful campaign to vaccinate its population against the virus." According to the [Washington Post](#) (1/24, Hendrix, 10.52M), "Even Jewish immigrants scheduled to arrive under the country's Law of Return will be barred during the shutdown, an interruption in the flow of newcomers that reportedly was opposed by Israel's immigration minister."

Egypt Launches COVID Vaccination Program With Sinopharm's Shot.

The [AP](#) (1/24, Magdy) reports, "Egypt on Sunday launched a vaccination campaign against the coronavirus, with the first shots of Chinese state-owned pharmaceutical giant Sinopharm's vaccine given to healthcare workers in the Suez Canal city of Ismailia."

Turkey Passes 25,000 Deaths From COVID.

The [AP](#) (1/24) reports Turkey on Sunday "passed 25,000 COVID-19-related deaths since the start of the outbreak in March, the health ministry said." According to the AP, "Turkey has recorded more than 2.4 million infections since the first case was recorded on March 11."

WPost Criticizes Wealthy Countries For Abandoning Vaccine Equity.

A [Washington Post](#) (1/24, 10.52M) editorial criticizes wealthy countries for “scooping up the supply of vaccines to fight the pandemic, while poor nations are still waiting for their first shots.” According to the Post, “The ideal of vaccine equity for all is being lost.”

Global Health Expert: China’s “Comparative Success” Against COVID Has Left Citizens At Risk.

In an op-ed for the [New York Times](#) (1/24, Huang, 20.6M), Yanzhong Huang, a global health expert specializing in China, writes that the Chinese government claims it has done well against coronavirus, “with daily infection figures nationwide rarely exceeding 100 between March 7, 2020, and Jan. 8, 2021.” While “some will doubt the reliability of China’s official statistics,” Huang writes that “even if these figures are somewhat exaggerated or somehow skewed, and even considering the worrisome spate of new outbreaks in China recently, there is ample reason to believe that China really has done much better at containing the spread of the virus than other major economies.” But China’s “comparative success now risks hurting the country. Having been largely spared by the pandemic, most Chinese people remain susceptible to infection, and yet some seem disinclined to get vaccinated because of a false sense of safety.”

Leading National News

Biden To Reinstate And Broaden Travel Restrictions To Confront COVID Spread.

Tom Llamas opened [ABC World News Tonight](#) (1/24, lead story, 3:35, 4.79M) by reporting that the COVID pandemic has hit “disturbing new milestones in the US – the country with more than 25 million cases of COVID-19, the highly contagious UK variant now in at least 23 states. Amid growing concerns about mutations, the Biden Administration [is] ready to reinstate and expand the COVID travel restrictions.” The Administration is also “ramping up vaccinations, calling it a top priority. The CDC says more than 20 million shots have now been administered, [NIAID Director] Fauci calling the goal of 100 million vaccinations in 100 days ‘a floor, not a ceiling.’” ABC’s Andrew Dymburt: “President Biden [is] planning to block most noncitizens traveling from South Africa after a new variation of the coronavirus from that country has begun to spread around the globe. The Administration [is] also reinstating a ban on almost all non-US citizens traveling from Brazil, UK, Ireland, and more than 26 countries former President Trump sought to cancel. ... President Biden is determined to deliver on his promise of 100 million shots in his first 100 days in office.” Chief of Staff Klain: “One hundred million shots is a bold and ambitious goal, but we need to keep going after that.”

Kate Snow said in the lead story on [NBC Nightly News](#) (1/24, lead story, 2:30, 3.76M), “President Biden is preparing to sign tough new restrictions on international travelers coming into this country.” NBC’s Shaquille Brewster: “In a dramatic effort to contain the spread of new COVID-19 variants, [Biden] is set to impose a travel ban on most non-US citizens entering the country who have recently been in South Africa, where a new, more contagious strain of COVID is spreading widely. Biden will also reinstate an entry ban on nearly all non-US travelers who have been in Brazil, the UK, Ireland, and 26 other European countries. That ban, in effect since March, was rescinded by President Trump just days before his term ended.” Surgeon General-designate Murthy: “We’re in a race against the variants. The virus is going to change, and it’s up to us to adapt and make sure we’re staying ahead.”

The [AP](#) (1/24, Madhani) reports Biden “will formally reinstate COVID-19 travel restrictions on non-U.S. travelers from Brazil, Ireland, the United Kingdom and 26 other European countries that allow travel across open borders, according to two White House officials.” [Reuters](#) (1/24, Shepardson) reports CDC Principal Deputy Director Anne Schuchat said Sunday, “We are adding South Africa to the restricted list because of the concerning variant present that has already spread beyond South Africa.” [CNN](#) (1/24, Saenz, LeBlanc, 89.21M) says on its website that “the decision to reinstate the travel restrictions – and expand restrictions in the case of South Africa – marks the latest effort by the Biden administration to break from Trump’s discursive approach to the pandemic as cases continue to climb nationwide.” [USA Today](#) (1/24, Rivera, 12.7M) and [Politico](#) (1/24, Beasley, 6.73M) also report.

US Passes 25M Confirmed Cases; Epidemiologist Pegs Total At More Than 105M. The [AP](#) (1/24) says “the new milestone” of 25 million US cases, “reported Sunday by Johns Hopkins University, is a grim reminder of the coronavirus’ wide reach in the U.S., which has seen far more confirmed cases and deaths than any other country in the world.” [NPR](#) (1/24, Schwartz, 3.69M) reports on its website that according to Johns Hopkins tracker, the US passed “the tragic marker as of Sunday morning. The true number of cases, however, is likely far higher: Many people become infected but never get tested, so they aren’t reflected in the count.” The [New York Times](#) (1/24, Conlen, Lu, Glanz, 20.6M) reports Columbia University epidemiologist Jeffrey Shaman “estimates that more than 105 million people have already been infected across the U.S., well above the number of cases that have been reported. And his projections show millions more infections are yet to come as the vaccine rolls out.” [Axios](#) (1/24, Rummier, 1.26M) reports that the President “has said he expects the country’s death toll to exceed 500,000 people by next month, as the rate of deaths due to the virus continues to escalate.”

However, Snow said on [NBC Nightly News](#) (1/24, story 3, 2:20, 3.76M), “There is a glimmer of hope in the battle against this raging pandemic. The holiday COVID surge that so many warned us about may finally be waning.” NBC’s Meagan Fitzgerald: “For the first time in months, COVID numbers are trending downward, signaling the holiday surge may be over. ... Hospitalizations are down or plateauing in every state except New York. Over the last week, the number of new infections dropped 20%, even while testing stayed steady. In California, the positivity rate is down nearly 4%. And in Illinois, daily new cases decreased by a third in

the last two weeks. Health experts say this new trend is happening because the public is listening.”

Administration Defends Vaccination Plan, Lays Out Challenges Ahead. Llamas reported on [ABC World News Tonight](#)

(1/24, story 2, 3:00, 4.79M), “America’s vaccine supply is struggling to keep up with all the demand. Hospitals from New York to Hawaii [are] cancelling thousands of appointments. The major questions now: How much of a vaccine supply does the country have, how much is on the way, and when can shipments be expected?” Kelly O’Donnell said on [NBC Nightly News](#) (1/24, story 2, 2:15, Snow, 3.76M) that the US is confronting “vaccine anxiety, [with] confusion and concern voiced by several governors and top health officials.” CDC Director Walensky: “The current supply crunch is the one that is what I’m most worried about.” O’Donnell: “The scale of that supply crunch is a big unknown for the new director of the CDC.” Walensky: “I can’t tell you how much vaccine we have, and if I can’t tell it to you, then I can’t tell it to the governors, and I can’t tell it to the state health officials.”

Walensky, on [Fox News Sunday](#) (1/24, 952K), said, “We have to go faster. We are limited by numerous constraints here. The first is the supplier and we are working closely with the manufacturer so that it does not become a constraint. We also need to sort of make sure that the supply gets to pharmacies, that we have enough vaccinations, that we have enough places and outreach to do the vaccination, so yes, I think that the supply is probably going to be the most limiting constraint early on.”

The [Washington Post](#) (1/24, Goldstein, Wang, Firozi, Knowles, 10.52M) covers Walensky’s remarks and reports that “as officials push to ramp up inoculation efforts to help crush the pandemic, increasing understanding of coronavirus variants is also presenting a challenge.” Fauci said Sunday that “that based on British findings, he now believes the coronavirus strain first detected in the United Kingdom is more deadly and spreads faster.”

Klain said on [NBC’s Meet The Press](#) (1/24, 3.03M), “Like all complex processes, this is a very complex process that needs help on all fronts. We need more vaccine. We need more vaccinators, more vaccination sites. In the Biden Administration, we’re tackling all three. ... We’re going to take responsibility at the federal government, we’re going to own this problem and work closely with the states. They’re key partners in getting this done. We’ll set up federal vaccination centers to make sure that in states that don’t have enough vaccination sites we fill those gaps. We’re going to work closely with the manufacturers to ramp up production.”

Fauci, on [CBS’ Face The Nation](#) (1/24, 2.87M), said, “I believe that in the [Trump] Administration, I think maybe two out of those days had reached one million [shots per day]. And the average along that period of time was about 450,000 per day. This is hard. Now what we’ve got to realize that although more recently there have been a couple of days where you’ve had a million, that has been predominantly in areas that are relatively easy from the standpoint of getting it done in a nursing home or in a situation in a hospital setting. ... It is going to be a challenge. I think it was a reasonable goal that was set. We always want to do better than the goal you’ve set.”

Murthy, on [ABC’s This Week](#) (1/24, 2.83M), said, “Success has to be gauged, not just by the number of vaccines we deliver, but also by how fairly we deliver those vaccines, how equitably we deliver them. We know from the COVID crisis over the year, rural areas are having a harder time getting access to the vaccines and seniors have struggled. And what we’ve got to do is not only increase supply, which we can do using the Defense Production Act, we’ve also got to set up the kind of distribution channels like mobile units, strategically placed vaccination centers that can reach people.”

The [New York Post](#) (1/24, Moore, 7.45M) says Administration representatives on Sunday “admitted they are behind in getting the coronavirus vaccine into the arms of Americans – but blamed the delay on the Trump White House.” Klain “said the process to distribute the vaccine – particularly outside of nursing homes and hospitals out into the community as a whole – ‘did not really exist’ when the new team entered the White House.” In an editorial, the [Wall Street Journal](#) (1/24, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) says that in order to achieve the goal of 100 million vaccinations, the Administration should heed the example of states with the most successful vaccine rollouts, and avoid federal micromanagement.

Becerra: “The Plane Is In A Nosedive.” HHS Secretary-designate Becerra, on [CNN’s State Of The Union](#) (1/24, 948K), said, “I believe President Biden has made it very clear. The plane is in a nosedive, and we got to pull it up, and you aren’t going to do that overnight, but we’ll pull it up. We have to pull it up. Failure is not an option here. The President has put forward a rescue plan that should be followed by a recovery plan. ... We have to be coordinating and talking to people. We can’t just tell the states, ‘Here’s PPE, some masks, here’s some vaccine. Go do it.’ No, no. When we hand them over we stay with them and provide resources to make it happen. We do that, if we get people following the President’s guidance of wearing a mask for these first 100 days, we’re going to get control of this thing.”

The [Los Angeles Times](#) (1/24, King, 3.37M) reports Becerra “likened the U.S. spread of COVID-19 to a ‘plane in a nose dive’ as the new administration vowed to rapidly ramp up vaccinations.” The [New York Daily News](#) (1/24, Shahrigan, 2.51M) reports Becerra “touted the president’s plans to ‘rescue the people, rescue the economy,’ apparently alluding to Biden’s goal to get 100 million Americans vaccinated during his first 100 days, as well as a nearly \$2 trillion economic relief package that’s in the works.”

[Fox News](#) (1/24, Blitzer, 23.99M) says on its website that Becerra “tried to straighten out the Biden administration’s message on the coronavirus pandemic after President Biden presented a fatalist outlook on the immediate future. At a Friday news conference, Biden said ‘there’s nothing we can do to change the trajectory of the pandemic in the next several months.’ ... On Sunday, Becerra indicated that the administration indeed has a plan, but that it will not have immediate results.”

Biden Calls For New Pandemic Testing Board. [USA Today](#) (1/24, Alltucker, 12.7M) reports the President “seeks to reset the nation’s inconsistent coronavirus testing efforts with a \$50 billion plan and more federal oversight. Biden’s plan calls for a newly created Pandemic Testing Board to coordinate a ‘clear, unified approach’ to testing for COVID-19, a marked difference from the Trump administration’s policy of states establishing their own plans with federal support.”

Senators Express Concern About Biden Relief Plan’s Stimulus Payments.

In what [Politico](#) (1/24, Barron-Lopez, Everett, 6.73M) describes as “an opening setback in the new administration’s complex pandemic negotiations with Congress,” in a call with White House officials on Sunday, “a bipartisan group of senators” said that “the stimulus spending in President Joe Biden’s coronavirus relief plan provides too much money to high-income Americans.” Nonetheless, “multiple senators on the call” said the exchange “was civil and there was a ‘consensus’ on the need to act urgently on vaccine distribution.” Politico adds that the call between “a bipartisan group of 16 senators” and NEC Director Deese, coronavirus coordinator Jeff Zients, and Louisa Terrell, head of White House legislative affairs, was “a sign that the Biden White House will be more hands on than former President Donald Trump, who nearly refused to sign the last relief bill after making a flurry of last-minute requests after the bill already passed Congress.”

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (1/24, Peterson, Duehren, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) says there was discussion among some lawmakers of passing a smaller package focused on vaccine funding before the impeachment trial of former President Donald Trump begins the week of February 8. [Reuters](#) (1/24, Cornwell, Shalal) reports an aide to a Democrat who was on the call “said the discussion had been ‘robust’ and that the two sides would continue to work together.” According to the aide, “everyone agreed” on the call that quick production and efficient distribution of the vaccine was the number one need. [Bloomberg](#) (1/24, Wasson, Wingrove, Dennis, 3.57M), which describes the call as “the latest sign Biden faces challenges in enacting Covid economic stimulus, his top legislative priority,” says participants “characterized it as an initial outreach by the White House as President Joe Biden seeks what would be the second-largest emergency spending bill ever,” while the [Washington Post](#) (1/24, Werner, Kim, 10.52M) says the call was “an early test for whether Biden’s relief plan has a chance of getting the kind of support it would need to pass Congress with bipartisan backing.”

The [AP](#) (1/24, Madhani, Mascaró) reports Sen. Angus King (I-ME) said the talks were a “serious effort.” King said, “There was not a hint of cynicism or lack of commitment to at least trying to work something out. ... If they were just trying to jam this through, I don’t think it would have interrupted the Packers game.” The AP adds, “There was also no discussion of pushing it through on a procedural move that could be done without Republicans, King said.”

Sen. Sanders Says Democrats Will Use Reconciliation To Pass Biden’s Relief Package. However, the [New York Post](#) (1/24, Lapin, 7.45M) reports incoming Senate Budget Chairman Bernie Sanders “warned” on [CNN’s State Of The Union](#) Sunday that Democrats are prepared to use reconciliation to push through Biden’s relief package. Sanders said if Republicans do not support the bill, Democrats will use the process “as soon as we possibly can.” Sanders said, “What we cannot do is wait weeks and weeks and months to go forward. We have to act now. ... I criticized Republicans for using reconciliation to give tax breaks to billionaires. ... And if they want to criticize me for helping to feed children who are hungry – or senior citizens in this country who are isolated and alone and don’t have enough food, they can criticize me. ... I think it’s the appropriate step forward.”

On its website, [Fox News](#) (1/24, Wallace, 23.99M) says Sanders “said the Senate must break through the ‘old approach’ that it could take years to get anything done.” Sanders argued that “we don’t have time to sit around weeks on impeachment and not get vaccines into the arms of people. ... We can chew bubble gum and walk at the same time. The American people are hurting and they want us to act. That’s what our candidates ran for in this election. ... That’s what the guys in Georgia won on and we have got to reaffirm the faith in the American people in government that we can respond to their pain.”

Americans On SNAP Face Challenges Purchasing Groceries Online Despite Benefits Increase.

[USA Today](#) (1/24, Ruiz-Goiriena, 12.7M) reports that while the federal government is encouraging Americans to stay home and turn to online grocery shopping, “a majority of Americans who depend on food stamps have no choice but to shop in person because the federal government only allows online shopping with SNAP benefits in limited circumstances in 47 states.” The cost for those able to shop online “can be shocking for families who barely have enough to eat in part because SNAP benefits cannot be used to pay for delivery fees or tips.” While President Biden on Friday “signed an executive order calling on the USDA to expand and extend federal nutrition assistance programs,” it made “no mention of online food shopping access.”

Options Activity Increases As Investors Bet Stocks Will Continue Record Increases.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (1/24, Banerji, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports there has been an increase in options activity in recent months as investors are betting that stocks will continue their record increases.

Amazon Asks NLRB To Require In-Person Unionization Vote.

[USA Today](#) (1/24, Rivera, 12.7M) reports Amazon is asking the NLRB “to direct warehouse workers to cast unionizing votes in-person, rather than by mail.” While the election “was set to begin on Feb. 8 by mail,” a motion filed by Amazon “intends to have the NLRB reconsider its decision on the method of voting and instead go for a one-day in-person event.” Amazon spokeswoman Heather Know said in a statement, “We believe that the best approach to a valid, fair and successful election is one that is conducted manually, in-person, making it easy for associates to verify and cast their vote in close proximity to their workplace.”

Manufacturing Recovery Causing Delays In Supply Chain.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (1/24, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports that with things like vacations and dinners out curtailed, consumers have been spending on appliances, home improvements, and cars. As a result of the faster-than-anticipated recovery in manufacturing, the demand for commodities used in such products has increased and is resulting in disruptions in manufacturers’ supply chains.

Shift In Spending During Pandemic Disrupted Global Supply Chain.

The [Washington Post](#) (1/24, Lynch, 10.52M) reports that a year after “the coronavirus pandemic first disrupted global supply chains by closing Chinese factories, fresh shipping headaches are delaying U.S. farm exports, crimping domestic manufacturing and threatening higher prices for American consumers.” According to the Freightos Baltic Index, “the cost of shipping a container of goods has risen by 80 percent since early November and has nearly tripled over the past year.” The increase “reflects dramatic shifts in consumption during the pandemic, as consumers redirect money they once spent at restaurants or movie theaters to the purchase of record amounts of imported clothing, computers, furniture and other goods.” The “unprecedented spending shift has upended long-standing trade patterns, causing bottlenecks from the gates of Chinese factories to the doorsteps of U.S. homes.”

Biden Officials Vow A Different Approach To Trade.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (1/24, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports Biden Administration officials are vowing a different approach to international trade. American officials will no longer look to open markets for companies whose foreign investments do not increase exports or jobs in the US. The Journal says Biden’s tax proposals are aimed at urging US companies to keep jobs in the US. For example, a tax credit would be earned for expanding facilities in the US but moving production outside the US would result in higher taxes.

Other Countries Watching As Biden Prepares To Outline “Buy American” Plan.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (1/24, Hayashi, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports President Biden is expected to provide details of his “Buy American” plan on Monday and other countries with an interest in his pledge to repair relations with US trading partners will be watching closely. The Journal says other countries are concerned that Biden’s plan could result in their countries being denied US procurement funds as Washington spends to combat the pandemic.

China Surpasses US As Leading Destination For Direct Foreign Investment.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (1/24, Jeong, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports China surpassed the US as the world’s leading destination for direct foreign investment last year. According to UN figures released Sunday, in 2020, new investments by overseas businesses in the US fell 49% as US economic output in 2020, according to U.N. figures released Sunday, as the country struggled to curb the spread of the new coronavirus and economic output dropped amid efforts to slow the spread of coronavirus. Meanwhile, direct investment by foreign companies in China rose 4%, according to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

Klain Praises Republican Cooperation On Cabinet Nominees, Urges Mayorkas Confirmation.

Chief of Staff Klain, on [NBC’s Meet The Press](#) (1/24, 3.03M), discussed the Administration’s relations with Senate Republicans. Klain said, “I think by and large, we’ve seen a lot of progress on this front. Obviously we got some Senate hearings held, held by Republican-led committees for our nominees before the switchover this past week. We’ve seen two Cabinet nominees confirmed already, and we hope to get votes on a number of others this week. I wish we could get a little less Republican blocking on [DHS Secretary-designate] Mayorkas. Our homeland is under threat. I wish we could move faster. Hopefully we’ll see progress this week. We’re grateful to the Senate Republicans who worked with us on these national security nominees.”

USAGM Announces New Leadership For RFE/RL, RFA, MBN.

The [AP](#) (1/24) reports Acting US Agency for Global Media CEO Kelu Chao on Sunday announced the “new heads of three federally funded international broadcasters after abruptly firing Donald Trump-appointed” leading Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Radio Free Asia, and the Middle East Broadcasting Networks on Friday, “just a month after they had been named to the posts.” [The Hill](#) (1/24, Bowden, 5.69M) reports USAGM in a statement “said Daisy Sindelar would take over as acting head of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, while Bay Fang would take over Radio Free Asia and Kelley Sullivan would assume control of the Middle East Broadcasting Networks (MBN).” The Hill adds that the “shakeup” comes after President Biden “moved within hours of taking office to force out” former USAGM CEO Michael Pack, “who was installed by President Trump last year and accused of working to ferret out journalists with negative opinions of the president from the various news organizations under the agency’s purview.”

Meanwhile, [Fox News](#) (1/24, Stimson, 23.99M) reports on its website that Voice of America Director Robert Reilly and Deputy Director Elizabeth Robbins on Thursday “were removed from the government-funded broadcaster over longstanding Democratic fears it was turning into a pro-Trump propaganda outlet,” with Reilly “replaced by VOA veteran journalist Yolanda Lopez.” Fox News adds that Jeffrey Shapiro, Director of the Office of Cuba Broadcasting, “another U.S. funded outlet that reports news to Cubans, also resigned, USAGM confirmed.”

WPost Analysis: Biden Likely Will Struggle To Remove Some Trump Loyalists.

A [Washington Post](#) (1/24, Rein, Gearan, 10.52M) analysis says President Biden “is trying to shake a Trump hangover in the federal government by acting to remove some holdovers and install his own appointees, but a quiet push to salt federal agencies with Trump loyalists is complicating the new president’s effort to turn the page.” The Post says that while the Biden Administration

“moved quickly last week to dump several high-profile, Senate-confirmed Trump appointees whose terms extended beyond Inauguration Day – in some cases by several years,” other “lower-profile Trump loyalists, some of whom helped carry out his administration’s most controversial policies, are scattered throughout Biden’s government in permanent, senior positions. And identifying them, let alone dislodging them, could be difficult for the new leadership.”

WSJournal: Power Should Answer Questions About Flynn’s Unmasking During Confirmation Hearing.

In an editorial, the [Wall Street Journal](#) (1/24, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) says that during her upcoming confirmation hearing, USAID Director-designate Power “owes the American people a full explanation” about her role in the unmasking of former national security adviser Michael Flynn.

Five People Killed In Mass Shooting In Indianapolis.


[CNN](#) (1/24, Joseph, Ellassar, 89.21M) reports, “Five people and an unborn child were killed Sunday after an early-morning shooting in Indianapolis’ northeast side, police said – an incident the mayor called ‘a mass murder.’” CNN adds a juvenile “was also in critical condition after being shot in the incident, which marks Indianapolis’ “largest mass casualty shooting in more than a decade,” according to Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Chief Randal Taylor.” The [Indianapolis Star](#) (1/24, Mack, Huang, 662K) reports law enforcement officials “are looking into whether the shooters illegally obtained the guns and will also investigate who is responsible for supplying the guns, said Mayor Joe Hogsett during a public address from IMPD’s North District headquarters in the wake of the tragedy.”


Puerto Rico Governor Declares State Of Emergency Over Violence Against Women.


The [Miami Herald](#) (1/24, Ortiz-Blanes, 647K) reports Puerto Rico Gov. Pedro Pierluisi “declared a state of emergency Sunday over a tide of violence against women, a measure local activists have demanded for years to address a scourge that continues to go largely unpunished.” According to the Herald, “The order is the latest measure to bring attention to violence against women in Latin America and the Caribbean, considered one of the most dangerous regions in the world to be female.”

More Republicans Criticize Biden’s Immigration Plan.

An [AP](#) (1/24, Weissert) analysis contends that President Biden “is confronting the political risk that comes with grand ambition,” as his “sweeping immigration overhaul” announced last week is both “precisely the type of measure that many Latino activists have longed for, particularly after the tough approach of the Trump era,” and one that will be potentially “impossible” to steer through Congress. The AP adds the proposal “must compete with Biden’s other marquee legislative goals, including a \$1.9 trillion plan to combat the coronavirus, an infrastructure package that promotes green energy initiatives and a ‘public option’ to expand health insurance.” However, the [Philadelphia Inquirer](#) (1/24, Gammage) says that for 11 million undocumented immigrants, Biden’s plan “offers a chance to step from the shadows.”

Meanwhile, House Minority Leader McCarthy said on [Full Court Press](#)  (1/24, 794K), “Immigration is not an easy bill to pass forward and I think it’s pretty difficult from the position the democrats take, especially when we have thousands of people coming up along our borders now just because the democrats won power. they think you automatically are able to break the law and become a citizen. I think that is dangerous for going to the future, I want to know what President Biden is going to do about stopping these caravans coming into our country because I know President Trump was able to have Mexico do something they haven’t done before, to not allow them through and not allow them into America.”

Sen. Tom Cotton (R-AR), on [Fox News’ Sunday Morning Futures](#)  (1/24, 1.33M), said, “Joe Biden basically announced to the entire world that it’s all free at the border. We’ll resume allowing people showing up at the border, making bogus claims of asylum, to enter the country, to come back for a hearing months or years later. We had a strong agreement with Mexico which was keeping these migrants in Mexico while their asylum claims could be adjudicated. For no reason, Joe Biden tore up the agreement. We’ll see another surge at the border. We already see some caravans coming through Central America. I suspect they’ll get much larger very soon.”

Sen. Marco Rubio (R-FL), on [Fox News Sunday](#)  (1/24, 952K), said, “He’s basically talking simply, and almost entirely, about what to do with people that are here in an unlawful status, of which I think the majority of Americans believe we need to do something, but you can only do something after you’ve gotten in place immigration reforms that allow you to secure the border and stop illegal immigration. Otherwise doing something is going to encourage more people to come. We saw a very brief example of that, just the fact that he was elected incentivized some of these trafficking networks to try to push people to the United States in one of these caravans. That’s a reality.”

Menendez Seeks To Protect Venezuelans From Deportation.

[Politico](#) (1/24, Rodríguez, 6.73M) reports Sen. Bob Menendez (D-NJ) on Monday will start “another effort to offer Venezuelan exiles protection from deportation through Temporary Protected Status – a move that the Biden administration supports and former President Donald Trump fell short of doing.” Politico says Menendez “will introduce a bill that would allow Venezuelans fleeing the humanitarian crisis brought on by Nicolás Maduro’s government to live and work legally in the U.S. through TPS.”

McCarthy Blames FBI For Not Stopping Attack On Capitol.

House Minority Leader McCarthy said on [Full Court Press](#) (1/24, 393K) regarding the January 6 Capitol attack, "The FBI knew that this was planned. The FBI knew so many days in advance, told the Capitol Police, and I am the Republican leader, no one told us. What did the Sergeant at Arms know? Why didn't he allow the National Guard in there? These are the people that have a great deal of responsibility for protecting that Capitol and letting that Capitol get broken into. If they knew ahead of time, the FBI, did they tell the Speaker and a Sergeant at Arms and didn't tell the Republicans? Did they deny the National Guard to come forward because they didn't like the look of that?" He added, "I think this is what we have to get to the bottom of and when you start talking about who has responsibilities."

However, House Majority Whip Clyburn was asked on [Full Court Press](#) (1/24, 804) about claims that members of Congress "may have aided and abetted rioters." Clyburn said, "When I first heard that, I kind of cringed thinking that kind of accusation should not be made. But since that time, I have seen and heard enough to tell me that there was some coordination taking place between people inside those buildings and people who were outside of them."

In his [Washington Post](#) (1/24, Hiatt, 10.52M) column, Fred Hiatt writes that when President Donald Trump "pressured local officials to overturn the results of a fair and free election, it fell to a few heroic local officials in Michigan, Arizona and Georgia to resist the president's potentially criminal entreaties and stand up to the mob he loosed on them for their integrity. Very few of the eminences who gathered on Inauguration Day came to the defense of those local officials when it counted." Hiatt argues that while "democracy prevailed," we "need to be asking ourselves...how we came so close to losing it."

Police Departments Nationwide Seek To Discipline Officers Involved In Capitol Riot.

The [Washington Post](#) (1/24, Kindy, Berman, Bellware, 10.52M) says that the "revelation that the Capitol mob – covered in emblems of extremist groups – included off-duty law enforcement officers possibly assisted by working police is escalating pressure on sheriffs and police chiefs nationwide to root out staff with ties to white supremacist and far-right armed groups." A Post analysis found "more than a dozen off-duty law enforcement officers were allegedly part of the Jan. 6 mob and are under investigation," while "at least a dozen Capitol Police officers are also under investigation for possibly playing a role in the rioting by assisting or encouraging the mob."

An [AP](#) (1/24, Bellisle, Bleiberg) survey of US law enforcement agencies has "found that at least 31 officers in 12 states are being scrutinized by their supervisors for their behavior in the District of Columbia or face criminal charges for participating in the riot."

Biden Gets High Marks In ABC/Ipsos Poll.

[ABC News](#) (1/24, 2.44M) reports on its website that President Biden "is held in high regard by most Americans, according to a new [ABC News/Ipsos poll](#) released Sunday." In the survey of 504 adults nationwide (1/22-1/23), Biden "yielded high approval ratings for his response to the coronavirus (69%) and confidence in his ability to unify the country (57%). ... In a recent ABC News/Washington Post poll, Biden's score for handling the transition landed at 67%."

Biden Attends Mass With Son And Granddaughters, Stops Off For Bagels.

The [AP](#) (1/24, Madhani) reports the President "attended Mass for the first time since taking office" on Sunday, worshipping at Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Georgetown, "the church he frequented when he was vice president. ... Biden entered through the front entrance, where a Black Lives Matter banner was hanging on one side and a banner with a quote from Pope Francis was on the other: 'We cannot tolerate or turn a blind eye to racism and exclusion in any form and yet claim to defend the sacredness of every human life.'" The President "was accompanied to church by his son, Hunter, and two of his grandchildren, Finnegan and Maisy."

The [New York Post](#) (1/24, Moore, 7.45M) reports, "On the return trip to the White House, the presidential motorcade pulled over and Hunter Biden jumped out to make a quick run to Call Your Mother, a popular deli near the church known for their bagels."

[Reuters](#) (1/24, Shalal) reports the President "waved at a crowd of cheering supporters near the shop, while his son Hunter waited at the takeout window before returning with a bag of bagels and some beverages."

[WTOP-FM](#) Washington (1/24, 164K) reports on its website, "Biden didn't get out of the car during the stop, but a sizable crowd of several dozen people gathered at a nearby intersection to see the president." The [Jewish Telegraphic Agency](#) (1/24, 3K) says "the self-described 'Jew-ish' eatery serves bagels, sandwiches, bagel sandwiches and smoked fish sides. The deli is co-owned by Jeff Zients, a Jewish businessman who ran the National Economic Council under President Obama from 2014 to January 2017 and is now Biden's COVID-19 czar, coordinating the administration's plans to tackle the virus."

[WJLA-TV](#) Washington (1/24, Mitchell, 144K) reports on its website that "co-owners Andrew Dana and Daniela Moreira said they are 'thrilled and proud that he chose their deli as one of his first public outings as president' and for his 'showing support to D.C.'s local businesses."

Biden To Repeal Trump's Transgender Military Ban, Sources Say.

[Reuters](#) (1/24, Hunnicutt) reports President Biden "is poised to repeal his predecessor Donald Trump's ban on transgender people enlisting in the U.S. military, a person familiar with the matter said." Reuters adds the source "said Biden could lift the ban as soon as Monday," although the White House "did not immediately respond to a request for comment." A source also told the [Wall Street Journal](#) (1/24, Youssef, Lubold, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) that Biden wanted Defense Secretary Austin to be sworn in before he proceeded with lifting the ban.

Rural Montana Counties Hope Biden Will Restore Passenger Train Service.

The [New York Times](#) (1/24, Robbins, 20.6M) reports that with “a new president known as ‘Amtrak Joe’ and Democratic control of both houses of Congress, a dozen counties across” Montana “are hoping that a return to passenger train service through the cities of Billings, Bozeman, Helena and Missoula, and whistle stops like Deer Lodge in between, is closer than it has been in four decades.” Because “defending the current funding for Amtrak’s routes is a constant battle,” the idea “of adding new ones is seen as a long shot,” but “some say” it is now “less so...because of the new president and Democratic control of both chambers.” The Times adds that President Biden’s infrastructure plan “promises to ‘spark the second great railroad revolution.’” In a statement to the Times, Transportation Secretary-designate Buttigieg said, “I believe that the department should promote, help to develop, and fund passenger rail in order to bring America’s railroads into the 21st century.”

Pentagon Considers Repurposing B-52 For Future Conflicts.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (1/24, A1, Gordon, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports that as the Department of Defense prepares for future conflicts, the Pentagon plans to continue to operate B-52’s through at least 2050 alongside newer aircraft, although the bombers will be modernized with the latest technology.

Schumer Pushes Back On McConnell’s Effort To Preserve Filibuster.

The [New York Times](#) (1/24, Lerer, 20.6M) reports since President Biden left the vice presidency four years ago, the Senate “has become a far less collegial and productive place.” Days after his inaugural address, in which he called for unity, “the Senate is already locked in a stalemate, with leaders of the two parties unable to agree on basic rules of operation.” The Times says Biden “enters with a deeper understanding of the legislative process and politicians than any president since Lyndon Johnson, a former Senate majority leader,” but the question is whether his “legislative prowess is, well, a little bit sepia toned. When Mr. Biden talks about bipartisanship now, a fair number of Democrats in Washington quietly roll their eyes.” Former Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid “is urging Mr. Biden not to waste much time trying to win over his former Republican colleagues. Like many Democrats, he’d like Mr. Biden to eliminate the legislative filibuster.”

Meanwhile, the [Washington Post](#) (1/24, DeBonis, Kim, 10.52M) reports Senate Minority Leader McConnell has told Republican senators “he would deliver [Senate Majority Leader] Schumer a sharp ultimatum: agree to preserve the legislative filibuster, the centerpiece of minority power in the Senate or forget about any semblance of cooperation.”

On its website, [Fox News](#) (1/24, Fordham, 23.99M) reports that during a news conference Sunday, Schumer said, “Mitch McConnell will not dictate to the Senate what we should do and how we should proceed. ... McConnell is no longer the majority leader, and in every Senate in the past, they have come to an agreement on an organizing resolution, Democrats and Republicans, to move forward. McConnell is standing in the way. ... We will move forward and decide on the organizing resolution where Democrats make the decisions, not Mitch McConnell.”

Durbin: McConnell’s Demand For Filibuster Protection A “Non-Starter.” [Politico](#) (1/24, Hooper, 6.73M) reports Senate Majority Whip Durbin on Sunday said McConnell’s “demand for absolute protection of the filibuster in the deal to run a 50-50 Senate is a ‘non-starter.’” Durbin told [NBC’s Meet The Press](#) (1/24, 3.03M), “If we gave him that, then the filibuster would be on everything, every day.” Durbin “said although Schumer offered McConnell ‘word for word’ the same agreement as the last time there was a 50-50 Senate, McConnell came back still wanting absolute protection for the filibuster.” He added, “Well, that’s a non-starter.” [The Hill](#) (1/24, 5.69M) quotes Durbin as saying, “The American people want us to take action, action on this pandemic, action on this economy and on a host of other issues, and if this filibuster has become so common in the Senate that we can’t act, that we just sit there helpless, shame on us. Of course we should consider a change in the rule under those circumstances. ... But let’s see. Let’s see if we can initiate a real bipartisan dialogue and get something done. That’s the bottom line.”

Progressive Group Posts Billboard Urging Schumer To End Filibuster. [Axios](#) (1/24, Goba, 1.26M) reports Just Democracy, “a coalition of more than 40 progressive groups led by Black and brown organizers seeking to reform government,” is “pressuring...Schumer on his home turf by running a digital billboard in Times Square urging the new majority leader to end the Senate filibuster.” The ad includes quotes from Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY), former President Barack Obama, and Reid, “all condemning the filibuster. None of them is working in conjunction with the organizers on the billboard.”

GOP Senators Divided On Trump Trial As House Prepares To Deliver Article Of Impeachment.

The looming second impeachment trial of former President Donald Trump received wide coverage Sunday, with both of the broadcast network newscasts that aired covering the story. On [ABC World News Tonight](#) (1/24, story 3, 2:55, Llamas, 4.79M), Rachel Scott reported, “In just 24 hours, the House will deliver the article of impeachment to the Senate. ... Democrats say they have even more evidence to add to their case” against Trump, with “the New York Times and the Wall Street Journal describing the President’s final days in office and his desperate attempts to cling to the White House.” The Times reported that Trump “schemed to remove his acting attorney general and replace him with a Department of Justice lawyer who would help in his fight to overturn the election,” while the Journal reported Trump “also allegedly tried to push the Justice Department to go directly to the Supreme Court to challenge Joe Biden’s victory.”

Monica Alba said on [NBC Nightly News](#) (1/24, story 4, 1:00, Snow, 3.76M) that House Speaker Pelosi “is expected to send over that single article of impeachment for inciting the insurrection at the Capitol over to the Senate on Monday evening. That sets the stage for the trial to begin February 9. Democrats would need 17 Republican senators to join them in order to convict former President Trump, but some GOP lawmakers are already indicating that’s unlikely.” The [AP](#) (1/24, Jalonick, Mascaro) reports, “A

growing number of Republican senators say they oppose holding an impeachment trial, a sign of the dimming chances" that Trump will be "convicted on the charge that he incited a siege of the U.S. Capitol."

Sen. Mike Rounds (R-SD), on [NBC's Meet The Press](#) (1/24, 3.03M), said, "I think it's a moot point because right now Donald Trump is no longer the president. He is a former president. The Constitution – and I know there are other people that may disagree with me – specifically points out that you can impeach the president, and it does not indicate that you can impeach someone who is not in office."

Sen. Marco Rubio (R-FL), on [Fox News Sunday](#) (1/24, 952K), said, "I think the trial is stupid. I think it's counterproductive. We already have a flaming fire in this country, and it's taking a bunch of gasoline and pouring it on top of the fire. ... The House didn't have much of a record of witnesses and so forth because they frankly rammed it through very quickly...but I just want to repeat, I think this is going to be really bad for the country."

However, [Reuters](#) (1/24, Cornwell) reports that "at least one Republican," Sen. Mitt Romney (R-UT), "said he believed the trial, which could lead to a vote banning Trump from future office, was a necessary response to the former president's inflammatory call to his supporters to 'fight' his election defeat before the Jan. 6 attack." Romney said on [CNN's State Of The Union](#) (1/24, 948K), "I believe that what is being alleged and what we saw which is incitement to insurrection is an impeachable offense. If not, what is? ... These allegations are very serious. They haven't been defended yet by the President. He deserves a chance to have that heard, but I think it's important for us to go through the normal justice process and for there to be resolution."

On [Fox News Sunday](#) (1/24, 952K), Romney discussed whether a trial is constitutional, saying, "If you look at the preponderance of the opinion – legal opinion not by people who are partisan, but by scholars over the years about whether and impeachment trial can and should be held after someone has left office – the preponderance of opinion is that, in fact, yes, an impeachment trial is appropriate after someone leaves office." The [Boston Globe](#) (1/24, 1.04M) reports Romney "criticized Trump for his actions and words before and after the November election during his interview on Fox. 'I think it's pretty clear that over the last year or so there has been an effort to corrupt the election in the United States,' Romney said. 'It was not by President Biden, it was by President Trump.'"

The [New York Times](#) (1/24, Edmondson, 20.6M) reports lawmakers "burrowed into dueling positions over the impending impeachment trial" on Sunday, and the [Washington Post](#) (1/24, Wang, Dawsey, Goldstein, 10.52M) says "the fractures within the Republican Party were evident Sunday as GOP senators appeared split over whether it was constitutional to hold an impeachment trial for a president who had already left office. ... Members of the Republican National Committee also were in a heated debate over the weekend on how to respond to impeachment – and how fiercely to defend Trump, who maintains support among a majority of the 168 committee members, party officials and members said." The [Los Angeles Times](#) (1/24, 3.37M) says that "even for Republicans who no longer need fear angry tweets – Trump has been banned from Twitter – the prospect of an open vote on whether to convict him is clearly unsettling."

[USA Today](#) (1/24, Hayes, King, 12.7M) says the trial "is unprecedented in nearly every way possible. No president had been impeached twice, and no president has been tried by the Senate after he left office – a question that divides constitutional scholars over what is legally permissible." The [New York Daily News](#) (1/24, Shahrigian, 2.51M) similarly says the trial "is sure to be extraordinary on several levels."

Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), on [ABC's This Week](#) (1/24, 2.83M), said, "I think we're going to get more and more evidence over the next few weeks – as if it's not enough that he's sent an angry mob down the mall to invade the Capitol, didn't try to stop it, and a police officer was killed. I don't really know what else you need to know." Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) said on [CNN's Inside Politics](#) (1/24, 689K), "We're talking about a President who stood in front of a mob and told them to go to the Capitol and invade, told them to go to the Capitol and stop the lawful business of government, so that he could try to stay in the White House. That is so fundamentally wrong."

Rep. Madeleine Dean (D-PA), one of the House impeachment managers, said on [CNN's State Of The Union](#) (1/24, 1.02M), "I was up in the gallery at the time of the attack. I was there when they said sit down, prepare to kneel or lie on the floor, take out your gas masks. ... I was there as the pounding on the doors began and the piercing of the doors on the floor of the House took place. This was a terrifying moment. ... They chanted, 'Hang Vice President Pence.' They sought to assassinate the Speaker. This cannot go unanswered. The world has witnessed what has happened. We will put forward a very strong case for impeachment for disqualification for conviction."

James Downie writes in the [Washington Post](#) (1/24, 10.52M) that after the "Donald Trump-incited riots at the Capitol," his supporters "deployed the usual two-step playbook when Trump makes an indefensible blunder. First, they hid. ... This week, they emerged for the second step: Deflect, and protect Trump from having to suffer any consequences." Downie adds that with Trump "making noises about going after his GOP critics or even starting a third party," Rounds, Rubio, and others "once again put loyalty to Trump over helping the country move forward."

Law Enforcement Investigating Threats Against Lawmakers. The [AP](#) (1/24, Balsamo) reports, "Federal law enforcement officials are examining a number of threats aimed at members of Congress" as the trial nears, according to "a U.S. official. ... The threats, and concerns that armed protesters could return to sack the Capitol anew, have prompted the U.S. Capitol Police and other federal law enforcement to insist thousands of National Guard troops remain in Washington as the Senate moves forward with plans for Trump's trial, the official said."

[Politico](#) (1/24, Desiderio, Seligman, Bertrand, 6.73M) reports that the upcoming trial "poses a security concern that federal law enforcement officials told lawmakers last week requires as many as 5,000 National Guard troops to remain in Washington through mid-March, according to four people familiar with the matter." However, Sen. Tom Cotton (R-AR), on [Fox News' Sunday Morning](#)

[Futures](#) (1/24), said he does not think that keeping National Guard troops in the Capitol is “necessary. I’m on the Senate Intelligence Committee, I consulted with Senate leadership. I’m not aware of threat reporting that suggests we need the troops with razor wire around the Capitol.”

Klain Says Biden Is “Busy Doing His Job.” Chief of Staff Klain, on [NBC’s Meet The Press](#) (1/24, 3.03M), discussed the President’s position on impeachment. Klain said, “I don’t know. I think he’s busy doing his job, which is being President, fixing these crises we’ve been talking about. He’s not a senator. He’s not going to vote on impeachment. I think his focus is on being President, not doing the job he used to have, which is being a US senator.”

NYTimes Examines Democratic Preparations For Trump Push, Response To Riot. The [New York Times](#) (1/24, Burns, 20.6M), under the headline “How Democrats Planned For Doomsday,” looks at how Democratic leaders and activists reacted and strategized in the hours after the Capitol attack, and on how they had prepared throughout 2020 for a possible effort by Trump to undermine the vote count or exploit loopholes in the Electoral College system.

Perry Facing Calls To Resign.

[USA Today](#) (1/24, 12.7M) reports, “Calls are mounting” for Rep. Scott Perry (R-PA) to resign “after a report late Saturday exposed his ‘significant role’ in trying to overturn the 2020 presidential election.” The New York Times reported that Perry “connected President Donald Trump with a Justice Department official to try to remove the acting U.S. attorney general from his post and pressure Georgia lawmakers to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential contest.”

The [Philadelphia Inquirer](#) (1/24, Distefano) reports Pennsylvania Democratic Party leaders on Sunday called on Perry to quit. State Attorney General Josh Shapiro (D) wrote on social media that Perry “should familiarize himself with” a section of the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which bars people from Congress who ‘engaged in insurrection or rebellion’ or aided rebels against the government.”

McCarthy Says He Supports Cheney But Has “Concerns.”

House Minority Leader McCarthy was asked on [Full Court Press](#) (1/24, 393K) if he supports House Republican Conference Chairwoman Rep. Liz Cheney (R-WY). McCarthy said, “I support her, but I also have concerns. She took a position as the number three member in the conference, she never told me ahead of time [about her vote to impeach President Donald Trump], and one thing about leadership is if we are going to work together, we know that this is going to become a difficulty.”

NYTimes Profiles NYC Radio Station That Hosts Giuliani’s “False Claims Of Election Fraud.”

The [New York Times](#) (1/24, Paybarah, 20.6M) profiles New York’s WABC-AM under the headline “Where Giuliani Still Routinely Offers False Claims Of Election Fraud,” writing that “in the heart of New York City, long a Democratic stronghold, WABC has become an established beacon for right-wing views,” with hosts including Rudy Giuliani, Brian Kilmeade, Bill O’Reilly, and Jeanine Pirro.

Sen. Sanders Says Democrats Must Make Progress Or Risk Losing Congress In 2022.

Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT), on [CNN’s State Of The Union](#) (1/24, 1.02M), discussed the possibility that Democrats will lose control of both the House and Senate in 2022. Sanders said, “People are watching this program and do not have food in their cupboards to feed their kids. They are sick. They cannot afford to go to the doctor. ... And the American people say, ‘We elected you guys. Do something.’ ... And if Democrats, who have slim majorities in the House and the Senate, got President Biden in the White House, if we do not respond now, yes, I believe two years from now, the Republicans will say, ‘Hey. You elected these guys. They did nothing. Vote for us.’ They will win.”

Rubio Deflects Question About Possible Florida Senate Challenge From Ivanka Trump.

Sen. Marco Rubio (R-FL), on [Fox News Sunday](#) (1/24, 952K), discussed the possibility of facing Ivanka Trump in the 2022 Florida GOP Senate primary. Rubio said, “When you decide to run for reelection in a state like Florida, you have to be prepared for a competitive race. You run it like a competitive race, so that’s what I’m preparing to run. ... I don’t own the Senate seat, it doesn’t belong to me. If I want to be back in the Senate I have to earn that every six years.” The [New York Daily News](#) (1/24, Shahrighian, 2.51M) says Rubio “was coy” about the possible challenge.

Sarah Sanders To Run For Arkansas Governor.

The [AP](#) (1/24, DeMillo) reports former White House spokeswoman Sarah Sanders, who served under President Donald Trump from 2017-2019, will run for governor of Arkansas. She plans “to announce her bid on Monday, a senior campaign official told the AP on condition of anonymity. ... The daughter of former Gov. Mike Huckabee, Sanders had been widely expected to run for the office after leaving the White House – and Trump publicly encouraged her to make a go.”

The [New York Times](#) (1/24, Haberman, 20.6M) says Sanders “is seen as the preferred candidate” of the former president and “will also be, to some extent, a test of Mr. Trump’s remaining strength in the Republican Party. ... She is expected to face a primary, but her name recognition alone is expected to give her a boost at the outset.” [KAIT-TV](#) Jonesboro, AR (1/24, 122K) reports on its website that Sanders has spoken with Republican state senators “across the state, laying the groundwork needed to campaign for

office. Two other statewide Republican leaders, Lt. Gov. Tim Griffin and Attorney General Leslie Rutledge, are also in the running. No Democrats have announced a bid to run for the seat."

WPost: Biden Administration Should Make Legal Aid Available To Marginalized People.

In an editorial, the [Washington Post](#) (1/24, 10.52M) says the Trump Administration sought "to impede" the ability of unaccompanied migrant children to secure "legal representation, with the federal government's assistance." The Post says the effort "reflected the Trump administration's pattern of disregard, or outright hostility, for safeguarding the rights of low-income and marginalized people in other civil legal processes," and argues that the Biden Administration "could advance the cause of justice through a concerted, high-profile push to make legal advice and aid more widely available to those who cannot secure it on their own. That would be a critical step toward repairing the widening chasm between haves and have-nots in America."

WSJournal Blasts Arizona GOP Decision To Censure McCain, Flake, Ducey.

A [Wall Street Journal](#) (1/24, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) editorial says the Arizona Republican Party's decision to censure Cindy McCain, ex-Sen. Jeff Flake (R-AZ), and Gov. Doug Ducey (R) is symbolic of the divisions that could relegate the GOP to minority status across the nation for years. If Republicans want to continue losing elections, the Journal argues, they will continue to fight over the last election and former President Donald Trump instead of focusing on the future.

WPost: Trump Social Media Ban Was Deserved But Platforms Must Clarify Their Rules.

A [Washington Post](#) (1/24, 10.52M) editorial says while former President Donald Trump "deserved to be booted" from Facebook and Twitter, as "activists around the globe are clamoring for similarly stringent remedies to be applied to other leaders who urge the destruction of their enemies or spread disinformation about vaccines," the platforms must respond "by applying the lessons they learned from the debacle of the past four years with explicit terms of service and transparent appeals processes."

Blow Says Progressives Must Press New Administration For Action.

Charles M. Blow writes in the [New York Times](#) (1/24, 20.6M) that during former President Barack Obama's Administration, "the opposition rallied. At times the vitriol coming at not only Obama, but at his family, was so beyond the pale that the natural impulse among many liberals was to circle the wagons around him." Progressives chose "to temper their demands and be restrained in their complaints, lest their fair critique become conflated with the unfair attacks of those opposed to any progressive achievements." Blow argues that "for progressives to refrain from applying pressure is to abdicate responsibility." As the Biden Administration begins, Blow writes, "I sincerely hope that liberals have learned this lesson." Blow adds that "progress must be made on the issues that progressives care about."

Sweet: First Lady "Knows What She Wants To Do And Is Already Doing It."

In her [Chicago Sun-Times](#) (1/24, 970K) column, Lynn Sweet says the First lady "knows what she wants to do and is already doing it. Look for one of her signature issues to be working with military families. Dr. Biden, with eight years as second lady – and no young kids to deal with – comes to the East Wing with a running start – far more so than Michelle Obama. This is new for a first lady: Dr. Biden will continue to teach at a community college in Northern Virginia."

Toledo Educators Find Hope In First Lady's Presence.

The [Toledo \(OH\) Blade](#) (1/24, 49K) reports, "For Toledo-area school officials, the inauguration of President Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris represents hope for the reinvigoration of public education. Many educators have fixed their eyes on First Lady Jill Biden because of her long career as a college educator." Dr. Biden "is expected to continue teaching as an English professor at Northern Virginia Community College while she resides in the White House." Toledo Board of Education President Chris Varwig said, "It's a breath of fresh air to have a First Lady in the White House that will focus on education and has an education background. Anytime we can put public education in the forefront is a positive for all of our communities."

Financial International News

ECB To Examine How To Measure Borrowing Costs.

[Reuters](#) (1/22, Canepa, Koranyi, Siebelt) reported ECB policymakers "are set to delve deeper at their [next] meeting into how they measure borrowing costs in the virus-hit euro zone economy after failing to reach an agreement [last] week, four sources told Reuters." While the ECB "has pledged to maintain 'favourable financing conditions'" to help the eurozone's economic recovery, "but it has never spelled out how those are measured." According to Reuters, "The issue is crucial as it determines how many bonds the ECB will buy under its pandemic-fighting scheme, which is the object of some market speculation after the bank said on Thursday it did not need to exhaust its 1 trillion euros of remaining firepower."

ECB Considers Terminating Private Calls To Big Investors, Banks After Policy Meetings.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (1/22, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reported the ECB is considering terminating private calls to banks and investors shortly after policy meetings. The calls were made to big investors such as BlackRock and banks such as Goldman Sachs and JPMorgan Chase, breaking the central banks usual practice of delivering information to all market participants at the same time. Initially, ECB chief economist Philip Lane said he planned to continue them. However, in a letter to a Dutch member of the European Parliament, ECB President Christine Lagarde said the bank was reconsidering the calls.

The [Financial Times](#) (1/22, Arnold, Subscription Publication, 1.48M) also reported.

Lawmakers Pressure Bank Of England To Stop Buying High Carbon Bonds.

[Reuters](#) (1/24, Milliken) reports a group of British parliament members are pressuring the Bank of England to stop buying bonds from companies whose activities accelerate global warming. The House of Commons' Environmental Audit Committee said buying said bonds went against government goals of reducing global warming, and though the committee itself has no power over the BoE, Finance Minister Rishi Sunak could change the BoE's remit to require a greater emphasis on environmental issues.

Additional coverage is provided by the [Financial Times](#) (1/24, Hodgson, Subscription Publication, 1.48M), [The Times \(UK\)](#) (1/25, Martin, Subscription Publication, 141K), and [Bloomberg](#) (1/25, Shankleman, 3.57M).

Leading International News

Argentina's Abortion Law Goes Into Effect.

The [AP](#) (1/24, Calatrava) reports Argentina's "groundbreaking abortion law" took effect Sunday "under the watchful eyes of women's groups and government officials, who hope to ensure its full implementation despite opposition from some conservative and church groups." Argentina's Senate passed a law December 30 "guaranteeing the procedure up to the 14th week of pregnancy and beyond that in cases of rape or when a woman's health is at risk," making it "the largest nation in Latin America to legalize elective abortion."

Chinese Fighter Jets Fly Near Taiwan.

[Reuters](#) (1/24) reports on rising "tensions" near Taiwan "just days into U.S. President Joe Biden's new administration." According to Taiwan, "Chinese air force planes including 12 fighter jets entered Taiwan's air defence identification zone for a second day on Sunday." Reuters says China's actions "mark a ratcheting up with fighters and bombers being dispatched rather than reconnaissance aircraft as had generally been the case in recent weeks."

The [New York Times](#) (1/24, Ramzy, 20.6M) describes the move as "a show of force to the Biden administration that signals Beijing's plans to maintain pressure on Taiwan even as it calls for a reset with the United States." State Department spokesman Ned Price said in a statement that the US "notes with concern the pattern of ongoing P.R.C. attempts to intimidate its neighbors, including Taiwan. ... We urge Beijing to cease its military, diplomatic, and economic pressure against Taiwan and instead engage in meaningful dialogue with Taiwan's democratically elected representatives." The [Wall Street Journal](#) (1/24, Wong, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) provides similar coverage.

NYTimes Analysis: Biden Must Contend With Threat China Poses To US Military In Space. A [New York Times](#) (1/24, Broad, 20.6M) analysis says the question of "how to contend with the threat that China poses to the American military in space and, by extension, terrestrial forces that rely on the overhead platforms" is "among the most important national security issues now facing" Biden. The Biden Administration has not indicated "what it plans to do with President Donald J. Trump's legacy in this area: the Space Force." Trump "presented the initiative as his own, and it now suffers from an association with him and remains the brunt of jokes on television. But its creation was also the culmination of strategic choices by his predecessors, Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama, to counter an emboldened China that raised bipartisan alarm."

In a separate story, the [New York Times](#) (1/24, Broad, 20.6M) says China "is intent on dominating the democratized space age. It is building ground-based lasers that can zap spacecraft and rehearsing cyberattacks meant to sever the Pentagon from its orbital fleets." Defense Secretary Austin "told the Senate that he would keep a 'laserlike focus' on maintaining and sharpening the U.S. 'competitive edge' against China's increasingly powerful military." He "called for new American investment in 'space-based platforms' and repeatedly referred to space as a war-fighting domain."

Bolton: Biden Must Think And Act Strategically On China. In an op-ed for the [Washington Post](#) (1/24, 10.52M), former national security adviser John Bolton writes that Biden "has an evanescent opportunity to think strategically about China-U.S. relations across the full range of politico-military and economic issues." While the media "usually focus on discrete decisions," the "primal question is whether his successor will think, and then act, strategically." Former President Donald Trump "did neither. He didn't read the fine strategy papers set before him, or else didn't absorb them. His chaotic 'decision-making' led from a bromance (in his mind at least) with Chinese President Xi Jinping to a trade war." Bolton adds that it "matters enormously whether the administration pursues the correct strategy," and "because I both reject Trump's strategic incoherence and fear that Biden represents merely a warmed-over version of President Barack Obama's limp China policy, there must be real debate, both in public and in Congress, on the substance of Biden's China strategy."

NYTimes: Biden Administration Should Stand With People Of Hong Kong. In an editorial, the [New York Times](#) (1/24, 20.6M) says while the Biden Administration's China policy "has yet to be defined," on Hong Kong, "there appears to be continuity" with the Trump Administration. The Times says Hong Kong "has no real defenses against the Goliath on the mainland other than the opinion and pressures of the world's democracies – the United States first among them." The Biden Administration, the Times

argues, "should continue to stand with the people of Hong Kong."

Biden Speaks With Macron.

[Reuters](#) (1/24) reports President Biden spoke Sunday with French President Emmanuel Macron on Sunday and expressed "his desire to strengthen bilateral ties, the White House said, as Biden made the traditional ally one of the first countries contacted during his initial days in office." According to the White House statement, Biden "emphasized his commitment to bolstering transatlantic relations, through NATO and the U.S. partnership with the European Union." Biden and Macron "also agreed on the need for close coordination, including through multilateral organizations, in tackling common challenges such as climate change, COVID-19 and the global economic recovery, the statement said."

Kremlin Spokesman Says US Interfering In Russian Affairs.

[Reuters](#) (1/24) reports a Kremlin spokesman said in a television appearance Sunday that Russian President Vladimir Putin would be willing to talk if the US showed a willingness to do so. But, the spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, also "accus[ed] Washington of meddling in mass protests in support of detained opposition leader Alexei Navalny." Ahead of demonstrations on Saturday "which saw police detain more than 3,000 people and use force to break up rallies across Russia," the US Embassy in Moscow "issued a 'Demonstration Alert,' warning U.S. citizens to avoid the protests and naming the venues in Russian cities where protesters planned to gather." Peskov said, "Of course, those publications are inappropriate. ... And of course, indirectly, they are absolute interference in our internal affairs. So, this is a direct support of the breach in the Russian Federation's law." The [AP](#) (1/24) says while the protests "attracted thousands of people in Russia's major cities, including an estimated 15,000 in Moscow, and demonstrations occurred in scores of other cities," Peskov "dismissed the turnout as insignificant." He said, "Now many will say that many people came out for the illegal actions. No, few people came out; many people vote for Putin."

The [New York Times](#) (1/24, Troianovski, 20.6M) says the Kremlin "tried to ignore" Navalny for years, but by Sunday, Russian officials had drastically reversed course. Peskov's television appearance was part of what the Times calls a "tightly scripted, all-hands attack on Mr. Navalny," that "underlined how the opposition leader's dramatic return to Russia a week earlier and his arrest have changed the landscape of Russian politics." While Putin "remains in firm control of the levers of power," Russians "unhappy with their president – long a weak, diverse and atomized group – suddenly have a clear leader around whom to rally, and the government appears unsure about how to fight back."

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (1/24, Kantchev, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) says the demonstrations have presented the Kremlin with a choice. It can cave to the pressure from protesters and undercut its authority by releasing Navalny, or it can leave Navalny in jail, which could foment more protests and unify the opposition.

Scottish Leader Promises Referendum On Independence From UK.

The [AP](#) (1/24) reports First Minister Nicola Sturgeon "said Sunday that she intends to hold a 'legal referendum' on independence from the U.K. if she wins Scottish elections scheduled for May." The move would put Sturgeon "on a constitutional collision course with Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who opposes another secession vote." Although Scotland "voted to remain in the U.K. by a margin of 55%-45% in a 2014 referendum that was billed as a once-in-a-generation event," Sturgeon "argues that Brexit has transformed the situation by dragging Scotland out of the European Union against its will."

Estonia To Have Its First Female Prime Minister.

The [AP](#) (1/24, Tanner) reports Estonia's "center-right Reform Party and the ruling, left-leaning Center Party" reached "a deal on Sunday to form a new government to be led by a female prime minister for the first time in the Baltic country's history." The party councils "voted in favor of joining a Cabinet headed by Reform's prime minister-designate and chairwoman Kaja Kallas." Each party will have "seven ministerial portfolios in addition to Kallas' prime minister post in the 15-member government, which would muster a majority at the 101-seat Riigikogu Parliament."

Portuguese President Easily Reelected.

The [AP](#) (1/24, Hatton) reports Portugal's President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa "was returned to office for a second term Sunday, in an election held amid a devastating COVID-19 surge that has made the European country the worst in the world for cases and deaths." Rebelo de Sousa won "61.5% of the vote, with 98.5% of districts reporting. He had been widely expected to win." The [New York Times](#) (1/24, Minder, 20.6M) says while the center-right Rebelo de Sousa "secured a new, five-year term," the vote "also confirmed the rise of a far-right politician who formed his party less than two years ago." [Reuters](#) (1/24, Waldersee, Pereira) provides similar coverage.

NYTimes Analysis: Far Right In Europe Emboldened By US Capitol Riot.

A [New York Times](#) (1/24, Bennhold, Schwartz, 20.6M) analysis says that when "insurrectionists stormed the Capitol in Washington this month, far-right extremists across the Atlantic cheered," yet "the events of Jan. 6 at the U.S. Capitol have laid bare their violent potential." The Times says that while "no concrete plans for attacks have been detected in Germany" so far, according to officials, "some worry that the fallout from the events of Jan. 6 have the potential to further radicalize far-right extremists in Europe." The Times adds that despite uncertainty about "exactly how deep and durable the links are between the American far right and its European counterparts," officials "are increasingly concerned about a web of diffuse international links and worry that the

networks, already emboldened in the Trump era, have become more determined since Jan. 6.”

Israel Opens Embassy In UAE.

The [AP](#) (1/24) reports Israel said Sunday “it has opened its embassy in the United Arab Emirates, following through on last year’s U.S.-brokered agreement to establish full diplomatic ties with the Gulf country.” According to Israel’s Foreign Ministry, “the embassy would be in a temporary office while a permanent location is prepared. Eitan Na’eh, a veteran Israeli diplomat, will serve as the head of mission.”

Michaeli Chosen To Lead Israel’s Labor Party.

The [AP](#) (1/24) reports Israel’s Labor Party has chosen Merav Michaeli, “a veteran lawmaker and former journalist, as its new leader ahead of March elections.” Michaeli “faces a difficult task as she tries to revive the fortunes of the iconic party,” which has “struggled to remain relevant over the past two decades as peacemaking with the Palestinians ground to a halt and the electorate appears to have embraced Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s hard-line ideology.”

Despite Pressure From Lebanon, Syrians Say It Is Unsafe To Leave.

The [Washington Post](#) (1/24, 10.52M) reports the millions of Syrians who have “sought safety in Lebanon and across the region since the Syrian uprising began nearly a decade ago” are now “stuck between untenable options: ongoing instability and violence back in Syria as President Bashar al-Assad consolidates control, and deteriorating conditions in cash-strapped Lebanon, where politicians are pressing refugees to leave.” Studies have found “a majority” of Syrians “say they want to return – but don’t think conditions will be safe enough for several more years.” But, “Lebanon says it’s time to leave. And Assad, in need of money and resources for reconstruction, has been urging Syrians to come back.”

Filipinas Say They Were Trafficked To Syria.

The [Washington Post](#) (1/24, McQue, 10.52M) cites interviews with 17 Filipinas who say they were “recruited to work in the United Arab Emirates” and were “trafficked to Syria to work as maids, at times subjected to physical and sexual attacks by their employers and denied the salaries they were promised.” The women “are often imprisoned in their employers’ homes, and those who have escaped have fled to the Philippine Embassy in Damascus, where some of them say that about 35 women are now seeking shelter, unable to return home.”

Ignatius: Biden Reset In Relations With Saudis Should Address Human Rights Abuses.

David Ignatius writes in the [Washington Post](#) (1/24, 10.52M) that the Biden Administration’s hopes for “a better pathway in the U.S.-Saudi relationship,” could be impeded by the case of Omar and Sarah Aljabri, “one obstacle is the case of two young Saudis imprisoned by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to pressure their father,” Saad Aljabri a former top Saudi intelligence official, “to return to the kingdom from Toronto, where he has been living in exile.” Ignatius writes that while the Biden Administration “wants to maintain a strategic partnership with Saudi Arabia, just as the Trump administration did,” any “reset should address the broad bipartisan concern in Washington about Saudi human rights abuses. The bogus case against Aljabri’s children would be a good place to start.”

Housing

2020 Gave GSE CRT Market A Major Stress Test.

[Bloomberg Business](#) (1/22, 3.57M) released a guide to how the pandemic affected the GSEs’ Credit Risk Transfer programs in 2020, and how it may affect them going forward in 2021. According to Bloomberg, “Fannie hasn’t issued the bonds since the pandemic began, and Freddie has resumed issuing the bonds this summer after a pause near the start of the pandemic. Some investors are still worried about the impact of loan modifications on CRT securities.” In a December 10 webinar, Freddie Mac Single-Family VP of Credit Risk Transfer Mike Reynolds said, “Our Q1 was one of our busiest Q1 at Freddie for single-family CRT. We basically printed two-quarters worth of production in the first quarter because we were trying to shorten what we call our pipeline, which is the time between when we put our guarantee into the MBS, and we execute the CRT.” Bloomberg said Reynolds “pointed out that CRT securities are a relatively new market, and the pandemic was the first real stress test. He pointed out that when Freddie came back to the market in June, the company doubled the size of its CRT offering and had more than 50 investors.” Freddie Mac SVP and Single-Family Portfolio Manager Kevin Palmer said, “2020 definitely is a year that personally I would not like to repeat. At the same time, they say that you learn the most during a stress period, and we’ve definitely learned a lot during this stress event. It provides a good perspective that showed the resilience of the CRT market and the ability for Freddie Mac to continue to partner with the investors, to be able to transfer credit risk during a very serious economic downturn.”

BofA Analysts Recommend “Overweight” On Freddie K “C” Classes, Agency CRT Deals.

[BNN Bloomberg \(CAN\)](#) (1/22) reported Bank of America Corp. analysts “remain neutral on last-cash-flow AAA conduit CMBS spreads, and think the best potential near-term conduit market relative value exists further down the capital stack among new-

issue transactions, according to a recent report." The analysts "recommend an overweight on single-A and BBB- rated conduit paper, as well as on SASB hotel and retail deals, Freddie K 'C' classes, and agency credit risk transfer deals."

NMHC's Schwartz Expects 180 On GSE Reform, More Rental Assistance From Biden Administration.

[Real Deal \(NY\)](#) (1/22, 159K) interviewed National Multifamily Housing Council Chair David Schwartz, who discussed "his organization's latest efforts to counter the rent control movement," as well as its "strategy around securing federal assistance for landlords at a time when renters may be as much as \$70 billion behind on payments." When asked what he is "optimistic" and "less thrilled about" when it comes to the transition to the Biden Administration, Schwartz responded, "The Trump administration [had] really been trying to get Fannie and Freddie out of conservatorship and make them stand on their own. We think the Biden administration will likely reverse that course. They will behave more like the agencies did under the Obama administration. The affordability will be a bigger part of that mission. And so that's probably good for our industry, and it'll keep the financing affordable." According to Schwartz, "The Biden housing plan is kind of mixed, but rental housing is a big priority for them and so that's good. There are proposals such as renter tax credits that we're not asking for. It's all baked into their tax reform proposal, which is obviously negative."

Haus.com Chief Economist: January Is The Best Month To Score A Low Mortgage Rate.

[Bankrate](#) (1/25, Ostrowski, 343K) reports, "By taking a loan in January, you'll pay a rate of 0.2 percentage point, or 20 basis points, less than if you take the same loan during the two priciest months, June and October. That's according to Haus.com chief economist Ralph McLaughlin, who analyzed 8.5 million home loans bought by mortgage giant Freddie Mac from 2012 through 2019." According to McLaughlin, "Just as there's seasonality in home sales, there is pretty clear seasonality in mortgage rates. If you're thinking of refinancing, it turns out that December, January and February are the best times to do it."

Despite OIG Recommendation, FHFA Still Alerting Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac Management About Supervisory Concerns.

In a paywalled article, [Inside Mortgage Finance](#) (1/22, Subscription Publication) reported that years after being advised by the OIG to alert GSE directors about supervisory worries, FHFA is still alerting Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac management.

Forbearances Rise Following Consecutive Weeks Of Declines.

[National Mortgage News](#) (1/22, Centopani) reports, "Mortgages in forbearance rose after two weeks of declines, following the trend of midmonth increases in active plans and the country's surging coronavirus cases, according to Black Knight." National Mortgage News adds, "Forbearances jumped by 17,000 from one week earlier, growing to a total of 2.744 million plans as of Jan. 19." GSE-backed mortgages "were the only loan type to decrease week-over-week, dipping by 3,000 to a total of 929,000."

NAR: Existing-Home Sales Hit A 14-Year High In December As Supply Fell To An All-Time Low.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (1/22, Friedman, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) said that in 2020, existing-home sales rose to their highest level in 14 years, the National Association of Realtors reported on Friday. [HousingWire](#) (1/22, 7K) reported, "A total of 5.64 million homes were sold in 2020, up 5.6% from 2019 and the most since before the Great Recession, according to Lawrence Yun, NAR's chief economist. Sales also rose 0.7% from November and 22.2% year over year." The median existing-home price for all housing types in December "was \$309,800 – up 12.9% from December of 2019 – as prices increased in every region."

December's national price increase marked 106 straight months of YoY gains. Total housing inventory in December "totaled 1.07 million units, down 16.4% from November and down 23% from one year ago." Freddie Mac data indicates the average rate for 30-year FRMs fell from 2.77% in November to 2.68% in December.

[Realtor Magazine](#) (1/22) reported NAR Chief Economist Lawrence Yun said, "Although mortgage rates are projected to increase, they will continue to hover near record lows at around 3%. Moreover, expect economic conditions to improve with additional stimulus forthcoming and vaccine distribution already underway." [Fox Business](#) (1/22, O'Halloran, 3.06M) reported Yun said, "Home sales rose in December, and for 2020 as a whole, we saw sales perform at their highest levels since 2006, despite the pandemic. What's even better is that this momentum is likely to carry into the new year, with more buyers expected to enter the market."

Supply Hit All-Time Low Of 1.9 Months. [Mortgage News Daily](#) (1/22) reported, "The December supply was at an all-time low of 1.9 months at the current sales pace. The November supply was 2.3-months, and the December 2019 inventory represented a supply for 3.0 months." Properties stayed on the market for an average of 21 days in December, "seasonally identical with November and down from 41 days in December 2019." According to MND, "Seventy percent of the homes sold in December 2020 were on the market for less than a month."

IHS Markit: US Economy Seeing Increased Activity This Month.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (1/22, Hannon, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports IHS Markit on Friday revealed its index of US manufacturing activity for January "increased to 59.1, the highest level in more than a decade, while a measure of service-sector

activity reached 57.5," which suggests the economy is growing.

Pandemic Has "White-Collar Urbanites" Seeking "A Little More Elbow Room."

[US News & World Report](#) (1/22, , 1.91M) says, "Since the coronavirus pandemic shuttered offices across the U.S., white-collar urbanites have been looking for a little more elbow room." Los Angeles, New York City, and San Francisco are each seeing residents leave "in unheard of numbers. The perceived flood of city dwellers has driven real fears in amenity-rich gateway communities such as Gunnison County, Colorado, which temporarily banned second-home owners from returning." However, it's far from apparent as to "whether the pandemic-driven rise in telecommuting will significantly change the makeup of America's high-priced cities and attractive small towns." US News & World Report adds that housing prices are surging. Idaho, "which leads the nation in residential real estate price increases, saw home prices jump 14% in a year, according to the Federal Housing Finance Agency's most recent accounting."

Stevens Warns Against Releasing GSEs From Conservatorship.

In a [HousingWire](#) (1/22, 7K) op-ed, David Stevens, CMB, talks about "the danger in releasing the GSEs from conservatorship." He writes, "The failure to remember history can be the formula to repeat it. Viewing the GSEs as what they are and should be is the mandate; utilities created by Congress to support the housing finance system and not some for-profit play where shareholders win when times are good and taxpayers pick up the bag when it fails." Stevens adds, "The failure to remember history can be the formula to repeat it. Viewing the GSEs as what they are and should be is the mandate; utilities created by Congress to support the housing finance system and not some for-profit play where shareholders win when times are good and taxpayers pick up the bag when it fails."

Column: Eviction Moratorium Is Well-Intentioned, But Not A Solution.

Steve Chapman wrote in a [Chicago Tribune](#) (1/22, Chapman, 2.03M) column that President Biden's extension of the federal moratorium on evictions had a "commendable" purpose, but the moratorium "sends the bill for that benefit to a small group of people: property owners." According to Chapman, "Because we all gain from protecting renters, we all should swallow our share of the cost through that old-fashioned mechanism known as taxes." Many landlords "depend on rents for their own livelihood," and "[f]orcing them to provide free housing is an onerous burden" – especially during the pandemic. And, according to Chapman, "They're not the only ones who suffer from the moratorium. Brookings Institution economist Jenny Schuetz points out that 'many of the expenses incurred by landlords are actually the wages of other workers.' If property owners can't pay their property taxes, local governments will have even greater trouble funding public health services and other functions."

Analysis: Investors Should Be Ready For Some Changes As GSEs' Move Toward Capitalization.

According to a [Motley Fool](#) (1/22, Brumer, 1.96M) analysis by real estate investor Liz Brumer, the "new ruling" established by the Treasury Department and FHFA allows each GSE to "issue up to \$70 billion of common stock in efforts for capitalization." As the GSEs raise capital, investors "may notice higher costs for guaranteed loans." In addition, "the new ruling caps each entity's portfolio holdings at \$225 billion by the end of 2022, which means if the entities get close to their cap, loan originations and lenders may issue fewer loans." However, "considering Fannie Mae's portfolio as of November 2020 was \$163 billion and Freddie Mac's was \$193 billion," lenders are unlikely to see "any loan restrictions for quite some time."

Markets

10-Year Yield Falls.

[MarketWatch](#) (1/21, 2.64M) reports the 10-year Treasury yield fell to 1.080 percent.

Dollar Holds Firm.

[Reuters](#) (1/24, Sano) reports, "The dollar held ground against riskier currencies on Monday as weak economic data from Europe and fresh worries about the coronavirus supported investor demand for safe-havens, stretching greenback selling positions." The dollar index "stood at 90.247, flat on the day but off last week's low of 90.043 set on Thursday." The euro "was also little changed at \$1.2163, taking a pause after a 0.8% gain last week."

Gold Inches Lower.

[Reuters](#) (1/25, Layek) reports, "Gold prices inched lower on Monday due to concerns that a massive economic stimulus in the United States may not be passed smoothly, although a weaker dollar limited bullion's losses." Spot gold "fell 0.1% to \$1,850.91 per ounce by 0822 GMT, having dropped 0.9% in the previous session. U.S. gold futures fell 0.2% to \$1,851.80."

Oil Rises.

[Reuters](#) (1/25, Tan) reports, "Oil prices edged up on Monday as a weaker dollar offset fresh concerns about the hit to global fuel demand from renewed lockdowns to curb the spike in COVID-19 infections." Brent crude futures for March "rose 32 cents, or 0.6%, to \$55.73 a barrel by 0729 GMT, while U.S. West Texas Intermediate crude for March was at \$52.62 a barrel, up 35 cents, or

0.7%.”

Cybersecurity

Online Forums Backing Trump, QAnon Fragmented Since Capitol Attack.

According to the [Washington Post](#) (1/22, Timberg, Harwell, 10.52M), “A huge chunk of Twitter’s QAnon community has vaporized, seemingly overnight. A pro-Trump message board has rebranded itself, jettisoning the former president’s name from its URL in its move toward a broader message. And other right-wing forums are grappling with internal rebellion and legal war.” The Post says the changes “since the Jan. 6 Capitol attack raise questions about the long-term viability of pro-Trump communities now that their inspirational leader has been impeached, lost his own Twitter account and left the White House.” The Post adds that experts “say the communities are likely to recover...but it’s less clear whether online activists central to President Donald Trump’s rise and political power will remain a large, coherent force in the years ahead.”

However, a [Washington Post](#) (1/22, Tharoor, 10.52M) analysis says “a half-decade of Trumpism has accelerated a conversation about the threat of far-right extremism across Western democracies.” The Post adds that despite Trump “and the right’s demonization of antifa – a loosely knit group of far-left activists – domestic data shows that far-right or white-supremacist plots in the United States vastly outnumbered those hatched by leftist or anarchist radicals in 2020. And the threat is all too real.” The Post also warns that President Biden faces a challenge in responding, as the US “cannot censor or criminalize certain forms of hate speech the way Europe can, though the Biden administration is expected to lean more aggressively on tech companies to deal with disinformation and the spread of extremism on their social media networks.”

Democrat Senators Seek Answers On Impact Of SolarWinds Data Breach.

[The Hill](#) (1/22, Miller, 5.69M) reports incoming Senate Judiciary Chairman Dick Durbin and eight other Senate Democrats are seeking “answers on the impact of the recently discovered breach of IT group SolarWinds on the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the U.S. Courts (AO), both of which were compromised.” They wrote in a letter, “We are alarmed at the potential large-scale breach of sensitive and confident records and communications held by the DOJ and the AO, and write to request information about the impact and the steps being taken to mitigate the threat of this intrusion.”

[Law360](#) (1/22, Subscription Publication, 9K) reports that Sens. Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), and Patrick Leahy (D-VT) also signed the letter. They are urging “national court officials to reveal whether sealed legal filings were exposed during a hacking campaign attributed to Russian spies who exploited a flaw in software offered by information technology provider SolarWinds Corp.” They requested “details on which specific courts were targeted, in what court officials earlier this month called an ‘apparent compromise’ of the judiciary’s Case Management/Electronic Case Files system.”

Supply Chain Weaknesses Exposed In SolarWinds Hack. The [AP](#) (1/25, Tucker) reports that the SolarWinds hackers “got inside by sneaking malicious code into a software update pushed out to thousands of government agencies and private companies.” Former NCSC Director William Evanina said, “We’re going to have to wrap our arms around the supply-chain threat and find the solution, not only for us here in America as the leading economy in the world, but for the planet.” Evanina added, “We’re going to have to find a way to make sure that we in the future can have a zero-risk posture, and trust our suppliers.”

German CyberBunker Investigation Said To Lead To Shuttering Of Darkweb Marketplace.

Ed Caesar, in a column in the [New Yorker](#) (1/23, Caesar, 5.31M), described how data seized as part of a German police investigation into an organization called CyberBunker led investors to the administrators of DarkMarket, “a kind of eBay for the dark Web” that was shuttered last week. DarkMarket “had a few interesting quirks,” such as barring the sale of weapons, fentanyl, and images of child abuse, as well as falsely advertising that it was administered exclusively by women.

For Years Former ADT Employee Used Home Video Feeds To Watch Customers Have Sex.

[Mashable](#) (1/22, Morse, 524K) reported that former ADT technician Telesforo Aviles pleaded guilty “to accessing customers’ home video feeds thousands of times over the course of four and a half years” by adding himself to approximately 200 people’s accounts. Authorities said in a press release, “Plea papers indicate he watched numerous videos of naked women and couples engaging in sexual activity inside their homes.” ADT wrote in a statement, “We are grateful to the Dallas FBI and the U.S. Attorney’s Office for holding Telesforo Aviles responsible for a federal crime.”

Overall Bitcoin-Related Crime Down In 2020, But Ransomware Up.

[CNBC](#) (1/24, Rooney, 7.34M) reports blockchain data firm Chainalysis said that in 2020 “illicit activity made up 0.34% of all cryptocurrency transaction volume,” down from 2% the year before. However, Chainalysis head of research Kim Grauer said, “Ransomware was by far the biggest category in terms of activity growth and we’re seeing an all time high for dark-net market activity.” Ransomware “increased by 311% year over year.”

TFI/Sanctions

Biden Administration To Determine If Economic Sanctions Are Hindering Global Response To Pandemic.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (1/22, Sun, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reported that the Biden Administration intends to review current economic sanctions to determine if they are a hindrance to global efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. The heads of the Treasury, State, and Commerce Departments, along with HHS and USAID, "will review existing U.S. and multilateral sanctions to evaluate whether they are hindering responses to the pandemic," according to an Administration directive.

[Newsweek](#) (1/22, Brennan, 2.67M) also reported.

Treasury Quietly Eased Sanctions On Israeli Billionaire In Trump Administration's Final Days.

The [New York Times](#) (1/24, Lipton, 20.6M) reports the Trump administration "quietly moved in its final days to ease sanctions imposed in late 2017 on an Israeli billionaire who had been punished by the Treasury Department for corrupt and abusive mining practices in the Democratic Republic of Congo." Treasury's reversal "came after an appeal by lobbyists with close ties to former President Donald J. Trump who were hired by Dan Gertler, the Israeli billionaire, including the lawyer Alan M. Dershowitz, who helped represent Mr. Trump during his first impeachment, and Louis J. Freeh, a former F.B.I. director." The reversal by Treasury "drew immediate condemnation by human rights advocates, who said they hoped that the Biden administration would move to reverse the action."

Federal Reserve

What Effect Will Biden Stimulus Plans Have On Fed Policy?

The [Financial Times](#) (1/24, Subscription Publication, 1.48M) reports, "Federal Reserve officials convene this week for their first gathering of 2021 against a backdrop of surging coronavirus cases and further..."

Internal Revenue Service

Democrats To Press IRS On Nonprofit Groups Involved In Capitol Violence.

[CNBC](#) (1/22, Schwartz, 7.34M) reported Senate Democrats "plan to focus on the Internal Revenue Service as part of a larger probe into tax-exempt groups that helped organize the pro-Trump rally that preceded the deadly Jan. 6 riot at the U.S. Capitol." Democrats, including Senate Finance Committee members, "have begun asking the IRS to review the tax-exempt status of the dark money groups that were involved with the rally's planning."

IRS Among Agencies Acknowledged Buying Phone Location Data.

The [New York Times](#) (1/22, Savage, 20.6M) reported that the Defense Intelligence Agency, "a military arm of the intelligence community, buys commercially available databases containing location data from smartphone apps and searches it for Americans' past movements without a warrant." According to the Times, DIA analysts "have searched for the movements of Americans within a commercial database in five investigations over the past two and a half years, agency officials disclosed in a memo they wrote for Senator Ron Wyden, Democrat of Oregon." The Times says Wyden "has made clear that he intends to propose legislation to add safeguards for Americans' privacy in connection with commercially available location data."

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (1/22, Tau, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reported the IRS also bought access to the data "as part of its law enforcement mission" in 2017-18. The Treasury Department's internal watchdog is currently investigating the matter.

[The Hill](#) (1/22, Rodrigo, 5.69M) also reported.

Office of the Comptroller of the Currency

Biden "Leaning Toward" Nominating Barr To Lead OCC.

The [New York Times](#) (1/23, Flitter, 20.6M) reported, "President Biden is leaning toward nominating Michael S. Barr, a law professor and a former Obama administration official, to the position of Comptroller of the Currency, according to two people familiar with the process." This "prospect has dismayed many progressive groups that would prefer Mehrsa Baradaran, a law professor who has written about how banks treat Black people and the poor." The clash "reflects the high stakes around regulation of the banking industry," and represents "the latest example of the challenges facing President Biden, who will have to manage the divisions between progressives and moderates within his own party even as he tries to gain bipartisan support for his agenda."

The [Australian Financial Review](#) (1/25, 271K) and [Alaska Native News](#) (1/23) report similarly.

Summers Praises Barr's Expected Appointment To OCC. On [Bloomberg TV](#) (1/24, 3.57M), Larry Summers, former Treasury Secretary under Clinton and NEC Director under Obama, discussed the regulation of social media and its potential impact on markets. Summers said, "I suspect our market system will survive social media, but...this points out the need for, as we used to say in the treasury in the 1990's, a regulatory system as moderate as the markets. And there's always a need to regulate bucket shops and to regulate various ways in which retail investors are taken advantage of. And we're in a situation where it's an old theme in an old story, but there are new ways of doing it. So...I was glad about the appointment of people like Michael Barr at

the Comptroller of the Currency [and] Gary Gensler at the SEC, [who] will be committed to regulating where regulation is necessary.”

Barr, Gensler, Brummer May Be “Crypto-savvy Trifecta” Of Regulators. [CoinDesk](#) (1/24, 49K) reports that with Michael Barr likely to become the next Comptroller of the Currency, Gary Gensler leading the SEC, and Chris Brummer possibly heading the CFTC, it appears the US will have “a crypto-savvy trifecta of financial regulators.” CoinDesk says this “doesn’t guarantee crypto-friendly legislation, but at least it means the discourse will be relatively well informed.”

Opinion: OCC’s “Fair Access” Rule Is “Gross Distortion Of Fair Access” Laws.

In a BankThink piece for [American Banker](#) (1/22, Subscription Publication, 27K), Kat Taylor, co-Founder and board chair of Beneficial State Bank, and Erin Kilmer-Neel, Executive Director and Chief Impact Officer of Beneficial State Foundation, wrote that the OCC’s “so-called fair-access rule is under the guise of increasing credit access to disfavored sectors like gun businesses. However, it actually prevents banks from assessing and mitigating the various types of risks inherent to making loans to contentious industries including private prisons and fossil fuel companies.” The rule is “a gross distortion of fair access and fair treatment laws.”

Recent Reg Moves May Hasten Bitcoin ETF Approval.

[ETF Trends](#) (1/22) reported that recent “positive regulatory developments may serve to hasten” the approval process for a Bitcoin ETF, “or at least make an approval more likely.” Tom Jessop of Fidelity said, “I know we saw some really good interesting regulatory developments last year. You look at the OCC and see some of the guidance they’ve been given banks around access to the asset class or even participating in some of these networks... So we start to see more constructive engagement with the regulators and we think [it] will persist into [2021] just given what we’re seeing in terms of institutional as well as retail demand.”

[Medium](#) (1/22, Hileman, 893K) also mentioned the OCC’s moves.

However, [Bitcoin](#) (1/22) reported former acting Comptroller Brian Brooks “had warned that some of the positive crypto regulations he approved may be rolled back during the Biden Administration,” such as “allowing banks to provide crypto custody services and use public blockchains and stablecoins.” Brooks previously said he is concerned about a proposal by Rep. Maxine Waters (D-CA), who chairs the House Financial Services Committee. Brooks said Waters “proposes reversing innovation that occurred in the last four years,” adding that “She wants to retract the ability for banks to hold cryptocurrency assets and to rescind guidance that banks can support digital coins.”

Editorial Wrap-Up

New York Times.

“Hong Kong Crackdown Is An Early Test For Biden.” The [New York Times](#) (1/24, 20.6M) says while the Biden Administration’s China policy “has yet to be defined,” on Hong Kong, “there appears to be continuity” with the Trump Administration. The Times says Hong Kong “has no real defenses against the Goliath on the mainland other than the opinion and pressures of the world’s democracies – the United States first among them.” The Biden Administration, the Times argues, “should continue to stand with the people of Hong Kong.”

Washington Post.

“How President Biden Can Advance Rights For Marginalized Groups.” The [Washington Post](#) (1/24, 10.52M) says the Trump Administration sought “to impede” the ability of unaccompanied migrant children to secure “legal representation, with the federal government’s assistance.” The Post says the effort “reflected the Trump administration’s pattern of disregard, or outright hostility, for safeguarding the rights of low-income and marginalized people in other civil legal processes,” and argues that the Biden Administration “could advance the cause of justice through a concerted, high-profile push to make legal advice and aid more widely available to those who cannot secure it on their own. That would be a critical step toward repairing the widening chasm between haves and have-nots in America.”

“Rich Countries’ ‘Me First’ Vaccine Hoarding Is Leaving Behind Low-Income Nations.” The [Washington Post](#) (1/24, 10.52M) criticizes wealthy countries for “scooping up the supply of vaccines to fight the pandemic, while poor nations are still waiting for their first shots.” According to the Post, “the ideal of vaccine equity for all is being lost.”

“Trump’s Removal From Social Media Was Warranted – But Arbitrary. It’s Time For Clearer Rules.” The [Washington Post](#) (1/24, 10.52M) says while former President Donald Trump “deserved to be booted” from Facebook and Twitter, as “activists around the globe are clamoring for similarly stringent remedies to be applied to other leaders who urge the destruction of their enemies or spread disinformation about vaccines,” the platforms must respond “by applying the lessons they learned from the debacle of the past four years with explicit terms of service and transparent appeals processes.”

Wall Street Journal.

“State Lessons In Vaccine Rollouts.” The [Wall Street Journal](#) (1/24, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) says that in order to achieve the goal of 100 million vaccinations, the Biden Administration should heed the example of states with the most successful vaccine rollouts, and avoid federal micromanagement.

“Unmasking Samantha Power.” The [Wall Street Journal](#) (1/24, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) says that during her

upcoming confirmation hearing, USAID Director-designate Power “owes the American people a full explanation” about her role in the unmasking of former national security adviser Michael Flynn.

“Arizona Republican Meltdown.” The [Wall Street Journal](#) (1/24, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) says the Arizona Republican Party’s decision to censure Cindy McCain, ex-Sen. Jeff Flake (R-AZ), and Gov. Doug Ducey (R) is symbolic of the divisions that could relegate the GOP to minority status across the nation for years. If Republicans want to continue losing elections, the Journal argues, they will continue to fight over the last election and former President Donald Trump instead of focusing on the future.

The Big Picture

Headlines From Today’s Front Pages.

Wall Street Journal:

[China Overtakes US As World’s Leading Destination For Foreign Direct Investment](#)

[Covid-19 Bill Negotiations Offer First Test Of Biden’s Bipartisanship Effort](#)

[Covid-19’s Financial Toll Mounts As Homeowners Keep Postponing Mortgage Payments](#)

[For Wars Of The Future, Pentagon Looks To Distant Past: The B-52](#)

[Dropping WhatsApp? Nostalgia Drives Users To ICQ](#)

New York Times:

[Capitol Riot Puts Spotlight On ‘Apocalyptically Minded’ Global Far Right](#)

[How West Virginia Became A US Leader In Vaccine Rollout](#)

[Jeffrey Clark Was Considered Unassuming. Then He Plotted With Trump.](#)

[How Space Became The Next ‘Great Power’ Contest Between The US And China](#)

[How Democrats Planned For Doomsday](#)

[How Alvin The Beagle Helped Usher In A December Senate](#)

Washington Post:

[Feud Grinds Senate To A Halt](#)

[Shipping Woes Spell Trouble For Consumers](#)

[A Pitfall On The Path To Unity](#)

[Filipina Maids Trafficked To Syria Tell Of Abuse, Rape](#)

[Disabled And Caregivers Struggle To Get Vaccine](#)

[Chiefs Vow To Root Out Officers With Extremist Ties](#)

Financial Times:

[Vaccine Delays In Poorer Nations Threaten Advanced Economies](#)

[Polish President Calls On EU To Step Up Sanctions On Russia](#)

[Chuck Schumer: The Man Who Must Steer The Biden Agenda](#)

[Deutsche Probes Alleged Mis-Selling Of Investment Banking Products](#)

Washington Times:

[Democrats Question Election Results: ‘We Just Trust The Machines And We Shouldn’t’](#)

[Biden Administration Faces Early Tests From China, Russia](#)

[Parler’s Freedom From Censorship Comes At Cost Of Users’ Privacy](#)

[‘Victory Smoke In The Capitol, Boys’: Affidavits Reveal Capitol Rioters Trail Of Videos, Media Posts](#)

[‘We’re Fighters Here’: PragerU Fights Big Tech’s ‘Cancel Culture And The Mob’](#)

[‘Many Options’: Democrats Eye 14th Amendment As Impeachment Alternative](#)

Story Lineup From Last Night’s Network News:

ABC: Biden-COVID Plan; Vaccine Distribution; Impeachment; Tacoma-Officer Drives Through Crowd; Winter Storm; Houston-Carjacking; Cincinnati-Train Derailment; Phoenix-Inmates Escape; Los Angeles-Driver Rescued From Fiery Crash; Netherlands-Drug Kingpin Arrested; Nonprofit For Military Pet Owners.

NBC: Biden-Travel Ban; Biden-Vaccines; COVID; Impeachment; Tacoma-Officer Drives Through Crowd; Winter Storm; NFL-Tom Brady; Netherlands-COVID Curfew; China-Mine Collapse; COVID-Schools; College Students Delivers Free Pizzas To Those In Need.

Network TV At A Glance:

Impeachment – 3 minutes, 55 seconds

Tacoma-Officer Drives Through Crowd – 3 minutes, 5 seconds

Last Laughs

Late Night Political Humor.

No late-night talk shows aired last night.

Washington's Schedule

Today's Events In Washington.

White House:

- President Biden — Signs executive actions over the course of the week, including 'strengthening Buy American provisions, advancing equity and support for communities of color and other underserved communities, reforming the criminal justice system, addressing the climate crisis, expanding access to healthcare, restoring dignity to the immigration system and border policies, and reuniting families separated at the border'
- Vice President Harris — No public schedule released.

US Senate:

- [Senate Committee on Foreign Relations Business Meeting](#)

Location: Rm 106, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, DC; 6:00 PM

- [House delivers article of impeachment against former President Donald Trump to Senate](#) – House of Representatives transmits article of impeachment against former President Donald Trump, for 'incitement of insurrection', to the Senate * House impeached Trump earlier this month, following the 6 Jan attack on the U.S. Capitol which followed the then-president's remarks at a nearby 'Stop the Steal' rally, making him the first U.S. president to be impeached twice. 10 Republicans voted in favor, unlike in December 2019, when only Democrats supported his impeachment for 'abuse of power' and 'obstruction of Congress', which followed allegations that he pressured Ukraine to interfere with the 2020 election by withholding security assistance and then attempted to cover it up * Senate is required to begin an impeachment trial the day after the article is transmitted, with a two-thirds majority required in the final vote to convict. Trump's 2020 Senate impeachment trial saw him acquitted on both articles, although Republican Sen. Mitt Romney voted in favor of one

Location: U.S. Capitol, Washington, DC

- [Senate Finance Committee final vote on treasury secretary nominee](#) – Executive Session, to hold the final vote on the nomination of Janet Yellen to be Secretary of the Treasury. On Friday the Senate unanimously approved Yellen's nomination as the first woman Treasury secretary, indicating that she would easily win full Senate approval * President-elect Joe Biden nominated the former Federal Reserve chair in November. She was the first female Federal Reserve chair and would be the first female treasury sec

Location: Rm 106, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, DC

US House:

- [House of Representatives meets in pro forma session](#)

Location: U.S. Capitol, Washington, DC; 1:30 PM

- [House delivers article of impeachment against former President Donald Trump to Senate](#) – House of Representatives transmits article of impeachment against former President Donald Trump, for 'incitement of insurrection', to the Senate * House impeached Trump earlier this month, following the 6 Jan attack on the U.S. Capitol which followed the then-president's remarks at a nearby 'Stop the Steal' rally, making him the first U.S. president to be impeached twice. 10 Republicans voted in favor, unlike in December 2019, when only Democrats supported his impeachment for 'abuse of power' and 'obstruction of Congress', which followed allegations that he pressured Ukraine to interfere with the 2020 election by withholding security assistance and then attempted to cover it up * Senate is required to begin an impeachment trial the day after the article is transmitted, with a two-thirds majority required in the final vote to convict. Trump's 2020 Senate impeachment trial saw him acquitted on both articles, although Republican Sen. Mitt Romney voted in favor of one

Location: U.S. Capitol, Washington, DC

Cabinet Officers:

- [No public schedules released.](#)

Visitors:

- [No visitors scheduled.](#)

General Events:

- [U.S. Supreme Court releases an order list; 9:30 AM](#)
- [U.S. Supreme Court convenes for public non-argument session; 10:00 AM](#)
- [Court hearing for woman accused of helping steal Dem Rep. Nancy Pelosi's laptop \(virtual\)](#) – Virtual court hearing held for Riley June Williams, accused of theft, obstruction and trespassing, as well as violent entry and disorderly conduct on U.S. Capitol grounds * Williams is accused of helping steal House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's laptop during the 6 Jan attack on the U.S. Capitol * Before Judge Robin Meriweather * Case no. 1:21-mj-00099 * The FBI has said that an unidentified former

romantic partner of Williams tipped them off and claimed that she had hoped to sell the computer to Russian intelligence

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TO: THE SECRETARY AND SENIOR STAFF

DATE: WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2021 6:00 AM EST

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- Yellen Pressing Urgency Of Climate Change With Finance Ministers Worldwide.
- Yellen Lauds Partnership, Pledges Further Engagement In Call With Mexican Finance Minister.

- Rights Groups Press Yellen, Blinken To Reverse Last-Minute Sanctions Relief For Israeli Mining Tycoon.
- GameStop Trading Prompts Yellen To Call Meeting With SEC, Fed.
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COVID-19 News

- White House Announces Push To Distribute COVID Vaccines To Pharmacies.
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- Health Officials Say Wealthy Citizens Taking Up Vaccine In Poor Neighborhoods.
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- Cuomo Set To Open Restaurants Despite Worsening Case Counts.
- WPost Criticizes Michigan Restaurants For Ignoring Restrictions.
- Russian Vaccine Found To Be 91.6% Effective.
- France Declines To Administer AstraZeneca Vaccine To People Over 65.
- UK Officials Identify Presence Of South African Variant.
- Portuguese Hospitals Struggling Amid Spike In COVID Patients, Deaths.
- African Countries Confront Increasing Deaths Amid Struggle To Obtain Vaccines.

Leading National News

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- Study: Nearly \$18B In Jobless Benefits Were Not Distributed Due To State, Federal Delays.
- More Women Lost Jobs Than Men During COVID Recession.
- Warren To Join Senate Finance Committee.
- Bezos Stepping Down As Amazon's Chief Executive.
- Exxon, BP Report 2020 Losses.
- Leonhardt: Economy Performs Better Under Democrats.
- Professor: GM's Clean Energy Pledge Will Have Broad Economic Impact.
- Biden Reinstates Tariffs On UAE Aluminum.
- Senators Call On White House To Address Auto Chip Shortage.
- Senate Confirms Mayorkas As DHS Secretary On 56-43 Vote.
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- Environmentalists Reportedly Concerned About Regan's Willingness To Work With Republicans.
- Senate To Hold Tanden Confirmation Hearing Next Week.
- Biden Considers Rahm Emanuel For Ambassador Role, Sources Say.
- Austin Dismisses DOD Advisory Boards, Including Controversial Trump Appointees.
- FBI Investigating After Two Agents Killed, Three Others Shot While Serving Warrant In Florida.
- Manhattan DA Considers Prosecuting Bannon For Border Wall Fundraising Scheme.
- New Port Richey, Florida, Police Charged Only BLM Activists After Clash With Proud Boys.
- Six Arrestees Recount "Abuse By Officer Who Knelt On George Floyd."
- Football Team Faces Protests After Addition Of Officer In Tamir Rice Shooting.
- Education Department Orders Navient To Repay \$22.3M To Government.
- Media Analyses: Biden's Immigration Orders Disappoint Migrant Advocates.
- Bidens Pay Tribute To Sicknick At Capitol.
- House Approves Fines For Lawmakers Who Refuse To Use Metal Detectors.
- Capitol Riot Investigation Boosts Focus On Rioters Who Assaulted Police.
- Judge Delays Guantánamo Arraignments Amid Pandemic.
- Video Shows Greene Saying "Idiot" Parkland Survivor Is "Trained" Like "A Dog."
- Ocasio-Cortez Says Capitol Riot Compounded Previous Trauma From Sexual Assault.
- House Managers And Trump Defense Team File Briefs For Impeachment Trial.
- Study: US Cities Undercounting Greenhouse Gas Emissions.
- MSNBC Leads Cable News Networks In Prime-Time, With Fox Third.
- Politico CEO To Leave Company.
- Nevada Democrats Push For First-In-The-Nation Primary.
- Progressive PAC Takes Aim At Manchin And Sinema, Up For Reelection In 2024.
- North Carolina Democrats Prepare For Crowded Senate Primary.
- Republican Bartos Planning Pennsylvania Senate Run.
- Poll Shows Decline In Newsom's Popularity, But Skepticism About Recall Election.
- Schiff Reportedly Seeking Appointment As California AG.
- WPost Analysis: Dr. Biden Made Clear She Plans "To Make A Mark."

Financial International News

- Central Banks Take Rare Step Of Flagging Currency Sales In Advance.

- IMF May Not Recoup \$350M Emergency Aid Package Sent To Myanmar Days Before Coup.
- World Bank Suspends \$100M Education Aid Payment To DRC Over Fraud, Corruption.

Leading International News

- Administration Says Burma Military Takeover Was A Coup, Will Review US Aid.
- Biden Not Rushing To Engage With China.
- Chinese Activist Disappeared While Trying To Fly To US.
- Prominent Cleric Killed In Kabul Bombing.
- AEI's Schieber: North Korea Stepping Up Efforts To Block Flow Of Outside Information.
- Navalny Sentenced To More Than 2 1/2 Years In Prison.
- Italy's President Expected To Ask Draghi To Form Unity Government.
- Iran Agrees To Free Crew From Seized South Korean Vessel.

Housing

- AEI: Use Of Appraisal Waivers Skyrockets Amid Pandemic.
- Biden Administration Planning To Release Puerto Rico Aid.
- Urban Institute: Renting May Now Be A Better Financial Option Than Buying.
- Servicer Valon Raises \$50M In Series A Funding.
- Analysis: Biden Administration Faces An Uphill Battle To Close Racial Homeownership Gaps.

Markets

- 10-Year Yield Ticks Up Again.
- Dollar Stays Flat.
- Gold Edges Higher.
- Oil Rises.

Cybersecurity

- Chinese Hackers Reportedly Tapped SolarWinds To Spy On US Payroll Agency.
- Hackers Increase Healthcare-Related Attacks.
- Sources Report On Efforts To Steal Information On Vaccine Programs.
- Defense Deputy Secretary Nominee Seeks Cyber Strategy Clarification.
- Opinion: The Government Needs To Improve Oversight Of Internet-Of-Things.
- Legislators Seek Information On NSA Actions To Prevent Supply Chain Attacks.

TFI/Sanctions

- Biden's Options Limited In Responding To Myanmar Takeover.
- Commentary: US Must Ramp Up Sanctions Of Kremlin Elite's "Entire Upper Ranks."

Federal Reserve

- Fed Makes Headway With FedNow Payments Service; Aims For 2023 Release.
- NYTimes Analysis: Fed Has Poor Record Of Building A Diverse Workforce.
- Kashkari Says COVID-19 Vaccination Key To Reviving MN Economy.
- Kaplan Says No Systemic Concerns Amid GameStop Frenzy.

Office of the Comptroller of the Currency

- President Still Expected To Nominate Barr To OCC.
- Banks Rush Into Crypto-Custody Space After OCC Guidance.
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Treasury in the News

Biden, Yellen Urge Senate Dems To "Go Big" On COVID-19 Relief.

[USA Today](#) (2/2, Wu, 12.7M) reports President Biden "told a group of 10 Republican senators their roughly \$600 billion

counteroffer on a COVID-19 stimulus package was 'way too small,' top Senate Democratic leaders said Tuesday following a virtual meeting with Biden and Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen." Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said following a meeting of Senate Democrats that Biden "said that he told Senate Republicans that the \$600 billion that they proposed is way too small." Biden and Yellen "found their proposal insufficient to address the COVID-19 pandemic, Schumer said, though he noted Biden told Democrats he was open to 'some modifications' on the relief bill." Schumer said Yellen "specifically noted" the GOP plan excluded expansions of the Child and Earned Income Tax Credits, and thus "didn't do enough to help."

The [New York Times](#) (2/2, Broadwater, Tankersley, 20.6M) reports Biden and Yellen "met virtually with Senate Democrats at their lunch on Tuesday afternoon," during which they "spoke about the need for Congress to respond boldly and quickly," according to Schumer. Schumer said Biden "was very strong in emphasizing the need for a big bold package," and that although Biden "said he told Republicans he was willing to make some modifications to his proposal, he and Ms. Yellen told the group that if the Senate embraced the Republican plan, 'we'd be mired in the Covid crisis for years,' according to Mr. Schumer."

The [AP](#) (2/2, Mascaro, Boak) reports, "both Biden and Yellen recalled the lessons of the government response to the 2009 financial crisis, which some have since said was inadequate as conditions worsened." The [Washington Post](#) (2/2, Werner, Stein, Kim, 10.52M) reports Yellen, during the call, "emphasized the need for a robust relief package at an unsettled moment for the economy, which has begun shedding more jobs – and for the pandemic, as new coronavirus variants emerge." Schumer said of the GOP plan, "I think it is [Biden's] belief, it is Secretary Yellen's belief, it is our belief, that if we did a package that small, we'd be mired in the covid crisis for years."

[Politico](#) (2/2, Levine, Everett, 6.73M) reports Yellen "answered questions from senators and encouraged the caucus to pursue a large stimulus." Senate Democrats "said afterward that the call with Biden and Yellen was positive and vowed that the Senate would move swiftly on coronavirus relief, with or without Republican buy-in." Senate Finance Chair Ron Wyden said, "We've really gotta get this bill out early on." President Biden "and Janet Yellen are interested in a bipartisan package and talk about it. But they make clear the American people want something that really helps them." [Axios](#) (2/2, Treene, 1.26M) reports Yellen "emphasized Biden's insistence on ensuring they didn't underestimate the money needed to keep the economy in check, and then took several questions, which resulted in the meeting descending into chaos," according to a source on the call.

[Reuters](#) (2/2, Lawder) reports Yellen said in a statement following the call Tuesday that new CBO growth forecasts showed the US "desperately" needs Congress to pass Biden's relief package. Yellen said, "Last year, the economy shrunk more than any other since the end of World War II. With the growth that the CBO projects, it will be years before the country reaches full employment again."

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/2, Duehren, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) and [The Hill](#) (2/2, Carney, 5.69M) also report.

Yellen Holds "Warm & Productive" Call With IMF Head.

[Reuters](#) (2/2, Shalal) reports Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen and IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva "agreed on Tuesday on the need for multilateral solutions to address debt vulnerabilities and other issues facing the global economy, the Treasury Department said." Yellen's call with Georgieva "was the latest in a series of initial calls with top global finance officials after taking office last week." Treasury's statement said, "Secretary Yellen conveyed her intention to work closely with the IMF on the priorities of continuing to respond effectively to the COVID-19 pandemic, re-invigorating economic growth to support a strong global recovery, fighting inequality, and forcefully addressing the threat of climate change." Georgieva described the call in a tweet as "warm & productive."

Yellen Emphasizes Climate Change Threat In Call With World Bank Head.

[Reuters](#) (2/2, Shalal) reports Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen and World Bank President David Malpass, in a call on Tuesday, "stressed the need to coordinate in responding to the global pandemic, improving vaccine access for the poorest countries, and combating climate change, Treasury said." During the call, Yellen "emphasized that climate change is an existential threat to our environment and global economy and urged robust support to low-income countries," according to a Treasury Department statement, which added that Yellen "highlighted the need to work closely to help countries reduce debt vulnerabilities and improve debt sustainability and transparency."

Yellen Pressing Urgency Of Climate Change With Finance Ministers Worldwide.

[CBS News](#) (2/2, Ewall-Wice, 5.39M) reports Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen "is giving climate change a prominent role in her talks with her counterparts around the world, signaling a significant shift by the Biden administration to prioritize addressing climate change not just from the White House but also at the agency." Yellen "has spoken to the finance ministers of Italy, Japan, Canada, France, Germany and the United Kingdom since being sworn in less than a week ago, according to statements provided by the Treasury Department regarding those talks." In each one of those calls, "'forcefully addressing the threat of climate change' has been discussed as one of Yellen's top priorities and tackling climate change has been a topic of conversation, according to those statements."

Yellen Lauds Partnership, Pledges Further Engagement In Call With Mexican Finance Minister.

[Reuters](#) (2/2, Shalal) reports Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen "spoke on Tuesday with Mexican Finance Minister Arturo Herrera and underscored her desire to maintain close U.S.-Mexico coordination on economic and security issues, the Treasury

Department said in a statement.” Yellen “told Herrera that Mexico could be a strong partner in working on key priorities, including responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, supporting a robust economic recovery, fighting inequality, and addressing the threat of climate change.” Yellen also “told Herrera she looked forward to further engagement on shared interests, including combating illicit finance and facilitating economic development in Central America, Treasury said.”

[Reuters](#) (2/2, Daniel) also reports Yellen and Herrera discussed “the need for an international agreement on taxing the digital economy, Mexico’s finance ministry said.”

Rights Groups Press Yellen, Blinken To Reverse Last-Minute Sanctions Relief For Israeli Mining Tycoon.

[Reuters](#) (2/2, Shalal) reports, “Nearly 30 Congolese and international human rights groups and several U.S. lawmakers have called on the Biden administration to reverse a last-minute move by the Trump administration to ease sanctions against Israeli mining magnate Dan Gertler.” The Treasury Department “imposed the sanctions in December 2017 and June 2018, accusing Gertler of using his friendship with Democratic Republic of Congo’s former President Joseph Kabila to win sweetheart mining deals worth more than a billion dollars,” but the Trump administration “eased the sanctions in a secret action in its last week in office, a license granted by the Treasury Department showed.” In a joint letter to Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen and Secretary of State Antony Blinken, human rights groups “urged” them to “reverse course, arguing that the Trump administration’s move undermined U.S. anti-corruption efforts and set a dangerous precedent undercutting the Global Magnitsky sanctions program.”

GameStop Trading Prompts Yellen To Call Meeting With SEC, Fed.

[Politico](#) (2/2, Guida, 6.73M) reports that Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen “will meet with key financial regulatory agencies to scrutinize recent price surges in GameStop stock and other companies, the latest move by policymakers to respond to market maneuvers tied to a group of investors on Reddit.” The meeting, “which will take place as soon as Thursday, will focus on findings from the Securities and Exchange Commission, according to a Treasury official. It will also include the Federal Reserve, the New York Fed and the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, which oversees derivatives.” Politico adds, “The frenzy in a range of stocks has increasingly drawn in policymakers, particularly after brokerage Robinhood Financial suddenly limited trading in GameStop, AMC Entertainment and other stocks, citing demands from a clearinghouse for \$3 billion to back up trades as it continued to rack up purchase orders from its customers.”

[Reuters](#) (2/2, Lawder, Hunnicutt), The [Washington Post](#) (2/2, Stein, Siegel, 10.52M), and The [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/2, Davidson, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) also report.

Treasury Bringing In Officials To Focus On International Affairs.

[Reuters](#) (2/2, Shalal, Lawder) reports economist and former IMF and Treasury official David Lipton “will return to government service as a senior adviser to Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, six sources familiar with the matter said.” Lipton “will focus on the U.S. role within the Group of Seven advanced economies and the larger Group of 20 economies in a temporary role, several sources said on condition of anonymity.” Bringing Lipton to Treasury “to guide international matters will free Yellen to focus on the U.S. economy and work to ensure passage of President Joe Biden’s \$1.9 trillion rescue plan, which has run into resistance from Republicans in Congress, the sources said.”

[Bloomberg](#) (2/2, Mohsin, 3.57M) reports Yellen “is eyeing former Treasury official Marisa Lago, who now works for New York Mayor Bill de Blasio, and Heidi Crebo-Rediker, a former chief economist at the State Department, for undersecretary of international affairs at the Treasury, according to people familiar with the matter. The role requires Senate approval.”

Eisinger: Biden Needs More Than “Aggressive Appointments” To Undo Corporate-Friendly Policies.

In an op-ed for The [New York Times](#) (2/2, 20.6M), Jesse Eisinger of ProPublica writes that some of President Biden’s appointees and nominees “are among the most aggressive financial and corporate regulators of recent years,” including Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, who has “has generated tempered optimism” as “a late convert to the cause of aggressive financial regulation.” However, “it’s only a start. Persuading Mr. Biden, an avowed lifelong moderate, to reverse decades of corporate-friendly stances, even among Democratic administrations, will require more than a few aggressive appointments.”

Treasury Grant News

Pittsburgh, Allegheny County To Establish Treasury-Funded Covid-19 Emergency Rent Assistance Program.

The [Pittsburgh \(PA\) Business Times](#) (2/2, Schooley, 850K) reports the City of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County, Pennsylvania “issued a joint announcement today introducing a new Covid-19 emergency rental assistance program, working in conjunction with affordable housing nonprofit ACTION Housing and Dollar Energy.” A press release “from the administration of Mayor Bill Peduto” said a “proposal for the city to establish the new rental assistance program was slated to be introduced to City Council today as a measure to help meet the ongoing needs of those facing financial crisis from the Covid-19 pandemic.” The program “is expected to use federal funding available through the Consolidated Appropriations Act signed into law on Dec. 27.” Allegheny County “received \$27 million and the city \$8.9 million in U.S. Treasury grants from the new legislation, according to an announcement, with the funding expected to be used to assist households having trouble paying rent and utilities due to the pandemic.”

White House Announces Push To Distribute COVID Vaccines To Pharmacies.

[ABC World News Tonight](#) (2/2, story 3, 2:45, Muir, 8.01M) reported on the "new push to send vaccines to pharmacies across the nation. The White House [is] now directing one million doses to be sent to 6,500 pharmacies." ABC's Eva Pilgrim said the White House announcing shipments of vaccines "will begin going straight to select pharmacies starting next week." White House COVID coordinator Jeffrey Zients: "This pharmacy program will expand access in neighborhoods across the country, so you can make an appointment and get your shot conveniently and quickly."

Gabe Gutierrez said on [NBC Nightly News](#) (2/2, story 4, 1:45, Holt, 6.35M), "Across the country, from Georgia to California, frustration over the rollout is reaching the White House, which today announced details of its pharmacy vaccination program. By next week, February 11, the government says it will deliver one million doses to 6,500 retail pharmacies nationwide, eventually expanding to 40,000." Walgreens Chief Medical Officer Kevin Ban: "We have all of the infrastructure, all of the connection in community to be able to help those people who have been hard hit by the pandemic." Gutierrez: "Andy Slavitt is a senior COVID-19 adviser to the White House who says he's concerned providers are holding back second doses." Slavitt: "I think that's a function of what happens in a shortage. People hoard. If they are holding back second doses that were intended as first doses, they don't need to do that."

The [AP](#) (2/2, Alonso-Zaldivar) reports Zients "announced the moves on a call with the nation's governors Tuesday morning and then detailed them to the public in an afternoon news conference." The [Washington Post](#) (2/2, Schemm, Cunningham, 10.52M) reports Zients "cautioned that supply constraints will limit the early availability of shots in drugstores. He said the administration wanted to target supplies to pharmacies serving 'socially vulnerable communities.'" [Politico](#) (2/2, Lim, 6.73M) reports that the new pharmacy initiative "is separate from an ongoing federal program to have Walgreens and CVS vaccinate residents of long-term care facilities."

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/2, Parti, Armour, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports the Administration also announced plans to boost supplies of Moderna and Pfizer vaccines sent to states for the next three weeks and purchase enough additional doses to vaccinate most of the US population by the end of summer. The [AP](#) (2/2, Alonso-Zaldivar) reports the Administration "is allowing state and local governments to receive additional federal dollars to cover previously incurred expenses relating to the pandemic." The [New York Times](#) (2/2, LaFraniere, Weiland, Robbins, 20.6M) says the announcements "were clearly intended to show that Mr. Biden was making rapid strides on the vaccine front amid huge frustration in the country over tight supplies and a chaotic, cobbled-together system for administering the available shots."

Asked on [MSNBC](#) (2/2, Hayes, 2.69M) about issues with the vaccine rollout, NIAID Director Fauci said, "Overwhelmingly, if you look at the entire country, the supply does not at this point meet the demand. So if you get on the phone with mayors and governors, the biggest complaint is we need more vaccine." Fauci continued, "We will be doing better as we get into February and March and April. ... We will be getting more, but right now, we need to get more vaccine in the hands of the administrators who are going to be administering the vaccine."

Pfizer Expects To Supply US With 200M Vaccine Doses Months Early. [CNBC](#) (2/2, Lovelace, 7.34M) reports on its website that Pfizer intends to "deliver 200 million doses of its coronavirus vaccine to the U.S. by May, earlier than its initial forecast of July, according to slides published Tuesday by the company ahead of its fourth-quarter earnings call." Pfizer "also said it can potentially deliver 2 billion doses globally by the end of this year now that health-care providers can extract an additional sixth dose of the vaccine from the vials."

Moderna Asks FDA To Allow It To Overcome Vial Shortage. The [New York Times](#) (2/2, Zimmer, 20.6M) reports that the FDA "could decide within a few weeks how much more vaccine Moderna, the developer of one of the two federally authorized Covid-19 vaccines, can put into its vials. Moderna says it can raise the number of doses per vial from 10 to as much as 15." Moderna "has already been ramping up production of its vaccine, only to find a bottleneck in the bottling, capping and labeling process. With F.D.A. approval, more doses could start going into each bottle quickly."

CDC Seeks To Accelerate Efforts To Detect COVID Variants.

On [NBC Nightly News](#) (2/2, story 5, 1:15, Holt, 6.35M), Miguel Almaguer reported the CDC "is hoping to analyze 6,000 COVID samples a week, a race to track down dangerous and potentially deadlier variants of the virus." Almaguer added, "With the UK strain already detected in a majority of states, researchers fear if the South African and Brazilian variants are more resilient to vaccines, the death toll could climb to 600,000 in three months."

In an op-ed for the [Washington Post](#) (2/2, 10.52M), Ashish K. Jha, Dean of the Brown University School of Public Health, writes that the new strains of the coronavirus are "a powerful reminder that we must remain vigilant in fighting the virus, even as vaccines promise an end to the pandemic. And they are a warning that if the world doesn't bring the virus under control everywhere, this nightmarish pandemic could continue for years longer than it needs to."

Northeast Vaccine Sites Resume Rollout After Snowstorm.

The [AP](#) (2/2) reports, "Coronavirus vaccination sites across the Northeast ramped back up Tuesday after a two-day snowstorm that also shut down public transport, closed schools and stranded travelers with canceled flights." Officials "said that since vaccine supplies were thin to begin with, they didn't anticipate having big problems getting caught up on distribution after a day or two of

cancelled appointments." As of Tuesday, some vaccination sites in New York City "remained closed, but others, including those run by the public hospital system, were open," and in Massachusetts, "a Boston site that was supposed to open Monday for residents ages 75 and older did not." In Connecticut, "efforts are under way to provide vaccinations by the end of the week to" 10,000 people whose appointments were canceled Monday, and New Jersey's "six megasites for COVID-19 vaccines were still closed" on Tuesday.

Health Officials Say Wealthy Citizens Taking Up Vaccine In Poor Neighborhoods.

The [New York Times](#) (2/2, A1, Goodnough, Hoffman, 20.6M) reports, "Although low-income communities of color have been hit hardest by Covid-19, health officials in many cities say that people from wealthier, largely white neighborhoods have been flooding vaccination appointment systems and taking an outsized share of the limited supply." Residents of "underserved neighborhoods have been tripped up by a confluence of obstacles," including hard-to-navigate websites and phone lines, lack of transportation and time off, and vaccine hesitance. Several "cities are trying to rectify inequities" in distribution, but have faced obstacles, including "fear that singling out neighborhoods for priority access could invite lawsuits alleging race preference." Additionally, the ability "to address inequities depends on how much control they have over their own vaccine allocations and whether their political leadership aligns with that of supervising county or state authorities."

Nationwide Push For Schools To Reopen Intensifies.

The [AP](#) (2/2, Kunzelman, Ramer) reports, "Pressure is building on school systems around the U.S. to reopen classrooms to students who have been learning online for nearly a year, pitting politicians against teachers who have yet to be vaccinated against COVID-19." Even as "some communities maintain that online classes remain the safest option for everyone," parents, politicians, and administrators "have complained that...children's education is suffering from sitting at home in front of their computers and that the isolation is damaging them emotionally." They have also "argued...that reopening schools would enable parents to go back to work." The CDC has found that there is little evidence of transmission when schools observe public health measures. However, "many teachers have balked at returning without getting vaccinated first against the scourge that has killed over 440,000 Americans."

WPost Analysis: Cardona Won Education Nomination Through Push To Reopen Schools. The [Washington Post](#) (2/2, Meckler, Anderson, 10.52M) reports that Education Secretary-designate Cardona last summer pushed districts in Connecticut "hard to return to five days a week," and "saw all but one school district in his state adopt some flavor of in-person education in the fall" despite "noisy protests" from teachers and nationwide online learning. The Post says, "That record helped pluck the 45-year-old schools commissioner out of seemingly nowhere to become President Biden's nominee," as the President has named opening schools as one of his top priorities. Cardona, who "faces a Senate confirmation hearing Wednesday," has the support of both large teachers unions in his state, with leaders "saying he maintained productive and cordial relationships" during discussions about reopening despite disagreements.

WSJournal: Biden Is Absent On Reopening Schools. The [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/2, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) editorializes that the Biden Administration's pledge to follow the science is being undermined in regard to schools reopening, arguing that the President is absent in supporting local government officials battling teachers unions that have resisted calls to return to in-person learning despite data that suggests it is safe to do so.

States Look To Reallocate Unused Doses From Nursing Homes.

The [New York Times](#) (2/2, Fausset, 20.6M) reports that a number of states, including Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, and Oklahoma, are shifting supplies from the Pharmacy Partnership for Long-Term Care Program after discovering "a big logistical problem." The federal program allocated "thousands of precious doses...for nursing home patients that [were] not using them all," leaving "tens of thousands of doses...sitting untouched in freezers." The Times says the shift is "a telling example of how chaotic the inoculation effort in the U.S. has been so far," in part due to "a formula that turned out to significantly overestimate how many shots would be needed for long-term care facilities." Distribution also saw trouble with "a considerable number of residents" and staff "turning down" vaccinations.

Anti-Vaccine, Anti-Mask Activists Find Converging Ideologies.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/2, A1, Pulliam, McKay, Maher, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports that anti-vaccine and anti-mask activists are combining efforts to protest for what they call "health freedom," signaling mistrust in government and pharmaceutical companies. Officials are increasingly concerned that the groups, including state lawmakers, are spreading misinformation and impeding efforts to get the COVID pandemic under control.

LAPD Warns Of Arrests After Anti-Vaccine Protest At Dodger Stadium. The [Los Angeles Times](#) (2/2, Rector, 3.37M) reports that "days after anti-vaccination and far-right protesters disrupted operations at one of the nation's largest COVID-19 vaccination sites at Dodger Stadium, Los Angeles Police Chief Michel Moore on Tuesday said any such protests in the future would be met with quick arrests." Moore said that demonstrations will be restricted to an area near the entrance in order to respect the protesters' First Amendment rights while continuing operations at the site without interruption. The pledge follows "outrage from local officials who demanded that no incident like the one over the weekend be allowed to happen again."

Cuomo Set To Open Restaurants Despite Worsening Case Counts.

The [New York Times](#) (2/2, Keefe, 20.6M) reports that on Friday, New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo (D) indicated that New York City “could reopen indoor dining on Feb. 14, typically a busy day for the restaurant industry.” According to the Times, “As the governor spoke, average per-capita case counts in New York City were 64 percent higher than when he announced an indefinite ban on indoor dining in December.” The Times says “the decision to reopen indoor dining came amid growing criticism of the governor for scorning the expertise of public health officials over the advice of the business lobby.”

WPost Criticizes Michigan Restaurants For Ignoring Restrictions.

An editorial in the [Washington Post](#) (2/2, 10.52M) says more than 60 restaurants in Michigan are openly ignoring pandemic restrictions. The restaurants “formed Stand Up Michigan, a group that held rallies against pandemic restrictions.” The Post says Stand Up Michigan “has taken the defense of rights too far. Personal freedom does not mean the right to endanger others. ... It is absolute madness to encourage the kind of behavior – indoor dining at restaurants – that will spread the disease and lead to sickness and death.”

Russian Vaccine Found To Be 91.6% Effective.

The [New York Times](#) (2/2, Kramer, 20.6M) reports Russia “cleared a hurdle in its vaccine rollout on Monday with the publication in the respected British medical journal The Lancet of late-stage trial results showing that the country’s Sputnik V vaccine is safe and highly effective.” The Times says that while Russia “drew criticism from Western experts when it approved the vaccine for emergency use in August – before late-stage trials had even begun – and started vaccinations that month,” the peer-reviewed article “cleared those doubts. It showed the vaccine had an impressive efficacy rate of 91.6 percent against the virus and was completely protective against severe forms of Covid-19.” According to [Reuters](#) (2/2, Ivanova), “Experts said the Phase III trial results meant the world had another effective weapon to fight the deadly pandemic and justified to some extent Moscow’s decision to roll out the vaccine before final data had been released.” Reuters says the results from the Gamaleya Institute in Moscow “were in line with efficacy data reported at earlier stages of the trial, which has been running in Moscow since September.”

[CNN](#) (2/2, Rahim, 89.21M) reports on its website that the findings “are based on data gathered from 19,866 participants, of which around three-quarters (14,964) received two doses of the vaccine and a quarter (4,902) were given a placebo. Sixteen cases of symptomatic Covid-19 were confirmed in the vaccine group 21 days after participants received the first vaccine dose. Sixty two cases were found in the placebo group – equating to an efficacy of 91.6%.” [Politico Europe](#) (2/2, Martuscelli, 15K) reports the Sputnik V vaccine “is based on an adenoviral vector, which involves using a modified version of the common cold to induce cells to produce the spike protein found on the coronavirus.” Politico adds the Russian vaccine “is distinguished from Oxford/AstraZeneca’s shot – which is based on similar technology – because it uses two different viruses in each shot.”

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/2, Kantchev, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) says the “peer-reviewed study” is “handing Moscow a geopolitical coup and a potential slice of the multibillion-dollar vaccine market as it seeks to promote the Covid-19 shot abroad and curb the pandemic at home.” The Journal also says the “the endorsement of Sputnik V presents a significant victory for Russian President Vladimir Putin in the global vaccination race, providing a vote of confidence in the capability of Russian science and medicine and helping to deflect some of the criticism Moscow encountered for its fast-tracked development of the vaccine and lack of published trial data.”

However, NIAID Director Fauci said on [MSNBC](#) (2/2, Hayes, 2.69M), “It’s really very good news about the success of the Russian trial, which showed more than a 90% efficacy. That’s exactly what you want. You want to get the virus suppressed throughout the world, because when you’re dealing with a pandemic, if there’s a good degree of infection and spread in any part of the world, it’s always a threat to where you are.”

Mexico Poised To Approve Russian Vaccine. The [AP](#) (2/2, Delgado) reports Mexico is “on the verge of approving the Russian COVID-19 vaccine Sputnik V following the publication of early results of an advanced study, Mexican officials said Tuesday.”

France Declines To Administer AstraZeneca Vaccine To People Over 65.

The [AP](#) (2/2) reports France “will only administer the AstraZeneca coronavirus vaccine to people under age 65, President Emmanuel Macron said Tuesday after the government’s health advisory body cited a lack of sufficient data about its effectiveness in older people.” According to the AP, the decision “could shake up the French vaccination strategy, because the country has prioritized nursing home residents and people over 75,” and because France “had counted on the AstraZeneca vaccine for a large part of its upcoming inoculations, until the company announced delays affecting countries around Europe and the world.”

UK Officials Identify Presence Of South African Variant.

The [New York Times](#) (2/2, Kwai, 20.6M) reports that “painfully aware of the dangers posed by mutations of the coronavirus after a variant fueled a surge in deaths this winter,” the UK “has sounded a full-scale alarm over the detection of another variant, this one first registered in South Africa.” The Times adds that in “one of the largest concerted testing efforts in the country since the outbreak of the pandemic, the British authorities dispatched mobile units and began testing for 80,000 residents living in areas where the variant had been detected,” and “as of Monday, health officials had identified 105 cases of the variant in Britain, including in London, with 11 of them not linked to international travel.” According to the [Washington Post](#) (2/2, Achenbach, Booth, 10.52M), “The worrisome mutation, at a site on the virus RNA called E484K, has drawn close scrutiny from infectious-disease experts, who have given it the nickname ‘Eeek.’” The [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/2, Steinhilber, Sugden, Subscription Publication,

8.41M) reports vaccines appear to be less effective than this variant and as a result could make it more difficult to overcome the pandemic.

Portuguese Hospitals Struggling Amid Spike In COVID Patients, Deaths.

The [New York Times](#) (2/2, Minder, 20.6M) reports hospitals in Portugal are “overwhelmed,” as the country “is in the grips of its worst crisis of the pandemic.” According to the Times, Portugal “has recorded 12,757 total coronavirus-related deaths, 5,576 of those in the last month alone,” and the country has “the highest death rate in Europe.” The Times adds hospitals are “being forced to turn away critically ill patients,” and “those who do show up at hospitals in Lisbon are finding a system on the brink, with scores of people lining up outside and waiting for treatment in ambulances.”

African Countries Confront Increasing Deaths Amid Struggle To Obtain Vaccines.

An [AP](#) (2/2, Meldrum, Mutsaka) article headlined “African Countries Scramble To Bury Virus Dead, Get Vaccines” highlights that South Africa has begun turning shipping containers into “overflow mortuaries,” even as “some other African nations are now looking to China for the next wave of vaccine doses.”

Leading National News

Senate Opens Debate On Budget Resolution 50-49 As Biden Seeks “Big, Bold Package.”

The [CBS Evening News](#) (2/2, story 5, 0:55, O'Donnell, 4.87M) reported President Biden “is signaling he does not intend to negotiate the terms of his COVID relief bill. He came out of Monday’s nearly-two-hour meeting with Senate Republicans determined to go big.” CBS’ Ed O’Keefe said the President is “pushing ahead with his nearly \$2 trillion COVID relief plan, telling Senate Democrats in a lunchtime call that the Republican counteroffer, \$600 billion, isn’t enough for this crisis. ... Democrats are trying to fast-track the President’s proposal, with or without Republican support.” Senate Minority Leader McConnell, “who once used the same tools to push through a \$1.5 trillion tax cut, criticized the Democrats.” McConnell: “They’ve chosen a totally partisan path. I think that’s unfortunate.”

White House Communications Director Kate Bedingfield said on [CNN](#) (2/2, 3.06M), “President Biden’s hope is that we are still going to get Republican support for this package. What he is unwilling to do, though, is to slow the process down, or to put forward a package that he doesn’t believe meets the needs of the moment or the needs of this crisis.” Asked about the possibility of targeting stimulus checks, Bedingfield said the President “has signaled that he is open to looking at tailoring the checks, but he strongly believes that these \$1,400 checks...need to get out the door to the people who need them.”

[Reuters](#) (2/2) reports the Senate “voted on Tuesday to open debate on a budget resolution, starting a process that would allow Democrats to pass [Biden’s] proposed \$1.9 trillion coronavirus aid bill without Republican support.” [Bloomberg](#) (2/2, Wasson, 3.57M) reports, “With a [50-49 vote](#) Tuesday, the Senate opened debate on a budget resolution for the 2021 fiscal year, a maneuver that would clear the way for the president’s relief plan to pass in the chamber with a simple majority rather than the 60-vote threshold for most legislation.” The vote was along party lines, with Sen. Pat Toomey (R-PA) absent due to the snowstorm.

The [Washington Post](#) (2/2, Stein, Werner, 10.52M) reports that the White House is “open to narrowing eligibility for the next round of stimulus payments but not lowering those payments below \$1,400 per person.” However, White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki indicated that Biden is “wary of limiting the income thresholds on the payments too dramatically.”

[CNN](#) (2/2, Hoffman, Foran, Nobles, 89.21M) reports on its website that Schumer said Biden told Senate Democrats “that he wants a ‘big, bold package’ on Covid-19 relief and that he told Senate Republicans that their \$600 billion proposal is ‘way too small.’” It was a point [Psaki] reiterated during her briefing – there are certain ‘bottom lines’ that Biden wants to be in the next round of Covid-19 relief, including direct payments reaching more Americans than what the Republican proposal would include.” Psaki said, “His view is that at this point in our country, when one in seven American families don’t have enough food to eat, we need to make sure people get the relief they need and are not left behind.”

[CNBC](#) (2/2, Pramuk, 7.34M) reports on its website, “Democrats have contended they need to inject more money into the health and economic response as soon as possible.” [Fox News](#) (2/2, Dorman, 23.99M) reports on its website that from the left, Rep. Rashida Tlaib (D-MI) “is taking aim at President Biden’s White House, suggesting officials are needlessly stalling coronavirus relief for Americans.” She [tweeted](#), “Quit messing around and send people the survivor checks we promised them.”

Sen. Jon Tester (D-MT) said on [CNN](#) (2/2, 1.99M), “I think it would be great to have a bipartisan bill to get through. I think that would be the best of all worlds. It would show that Congress can work. On the other side of the coin, I think it is also very important that we get a bill that moves the economy forward. If it can only be done with Democrats, so be it. But the bottom line is, it has to be done.”

In his [New York Times](#) (2/2, 20.6M) column, Jamelle Bouie says the Republican proposal “is just the Biden plan except worse – less comprehensive, less ambitious, less generous. And there’s no rhyme or reason to these cuts; it’s just stinginess for stinginess’s sake.” Paul Waldman writes in the [Washington Post](#) (2/2, 10.52M) that Biden should “call the Republicans on their bluff. If they care so much about fairness that they don’t want to see families with incomes over \$100,000 get a stimulus check, he should agree to that demand, but only if they’ll boost the minimum wage to \$11.”

Manchin Votes To Move Forward Via Reconciliation. The [New York Times](#) (2/2, Fandos, Haberman, 20.6M) reports that on Tuesday, Sen. Joe Manchin (D-WV) “said he would vote to move forward with the budget process.” [Fox News](#) (2/2, 23.99M)

says on its website that Manchin “bowed to immense pressure Tuesday and announced he would vote in favor” of the budget resolution, “but would continue to fight for bipartisanship in the process of negotiations.” Manchin told reporters, “The resolution I’m going to support – this process. I only support this if it’s an open process. But it is urgent. This is the only way we can get a bipartisan package.”

[Roll Call](#) (2/2, Krawzak, 130K) reports Manchin “has expressed concern about the size of the additional \$1,400 rebate checks in Biden’s plan, for instance, and on Tuesday he said he would support a higher minimum wage, perhaps \$11 per hour, but not the \$15 hourly wage Democrats have promised.” Marc Thiessen writes in the [Washington Post](#) (2/2, 10.52M) that Biden “needs every Democrat plus Vice President Harris to ram through his bill without any GOP support,” which means Manchin “has veto power. Now is the moment to exercise that power and prod Biden to live up to his rhetoric about unity and cooperation.”

Romney Says GOP Must Be “Consistent” In Arguments About Spending. In an interview with the [Salt Lake \(UT\) Tribune](#) (2/2, 284K), Sen. Mitt Romney (R-UT) said, “When we had a Republican president and House and Senate, we kept on spending massively and adding almost a trillion dollars a year to the national debt. Now we say this is outrageous adding so much to the debt? They say we did the same thing when we were in charge. It does show that you have to be consistent in your arguments.”

White House Officials Hope Biden’s Executive Actions Will Build Momentum For COVID Relief Package. [Politico](#) (2/2, Korecki, Caputo, 6.73M) reports Biden has “instituted a record 45 executive actions that fulfill campaign promises on everything from climate change to racial equity to immigration, undo a number of Donald Trump’s policies, and have shaped the news cycle along the way.” Politico says White House aides are so firm in their belief that the actions have “helped build momentum for the president as he tries to sell a historic \$1.9 trillion ‘rescue’ package” that “officials and allies are now practically daring Republicans to fight them, convinced that the public is firmly on the side of quick action.” However, there is “a broad sense among Republicans that Biden and Democrats will fall out of favor with voters.”

Vanden Heuvel: Biden Has Declared “The Era Of Small Government” Over. Katrina Vanden Heuvel writes in the [Washington Post](#) (2/2, 10.52M) that in Biden’s first 10 days, he “has demonstrated that he intends to be a transformative, not a transitional president – launching initiatives that go beyond those of the Obama era. At long last, a Democratic president is declaring that the era of small government is over.” Biden, she adds, “is essentially announcing that the Washington consensus – one that favors deregulation, austerity and pro-corporate trade policies – is bankrupt.”

Study: Nearly \$18B In Jobless Benefits Were Not Distributed Due To State, Federal Delays.

[The Hill](#) (2/2, Elis, 5.69M) reports according to [a new study](#) from the “left-leaning group” the Century Foundation, “almost \$18 billion in unemployment aid was not distributed last month due to delays at the state and federal level, including former President Trump’s decision to wait a week to sign a massive coronavirus relief measure.” The analysis “determined that a combination of factors at various levels of government has prevented crucial aid from being delivered to jobless Americans. Part of that was due to inaction by Trump, the study said.” Although the Labor Department “moved furiously to ensure that states could continue the benefits despite the lapse, the Century Foundation’s analysis found extensive state-level delays in resuming benefits, as well as implementing new ones.”

More Women Lost Jobs Than Men During COVID Recession.

The [CBS Evening News](#) (2/2, story 7, 2:05, O’Donnell, 4.87M) reported the recession caused by COVID “is the first in which more women have lost jobs than men.” According to experts, “the true unemployment rate for women in America at the end of 2020 was 30%.” CBS’ Adriana Diaz added, “Women held a majority of service jobs lost in the pandemic, and due to the demands of schooling, this fall, four times as many women left the workforce as men.” In December, “156,000 jobs were lost, all of them from women.”

Warren To Join Senate Finance Committee.

[The Hill](#) (2/2, Lane, 5.69M) reports Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) will become a member of the Senate Finance Committee, “which has jurisdiction over taxes, trade policy, health insurance, Social Security and safety net programs.” The Hill says the position will give Warren “a prominent platform to push forward progressive proposals on tax policy and health care.” [Roll Call](#) (2/2, Lesniewski, 130K) says Warren, who is “known for her aggressive oversight of Wall Street and financial institutions, will remain a member of the Banking Committee.” Warren said in a statement, “I look forward to being a progressive voice at the table to secure meaningful relief and lasting economic security for struggling families, including as an aggressive advocate for accomplishing much of our agenda through the budget reconciliation process.” Warren also said she would advocate for “a wealth tax on fortunes over \$50 million to fund needed investments for working families.”

Bezos Stepping Down As Amazon’s Chief Executive.

The [AP](#) (2/2, Pisani) reports Amazon founder Jeff Bezos is stepping down as the company’s CEO. In a blog post to employees, Bezos “said he plans to focus on new products and early initiatives being developed at Amazon.” Bezos also “said he’ll have more time for side projects: his space exploration company Blue Origin; the newspaper he owns, The Washington Post; and his charities.” [Bloomberg](#) (2/2, Soper, Day, 3.57M) says Bezos “will step down from his post in the third quarter of 2021,” and [Reuters](#) (2/2, Dastin, Rana) that he will be replaced by current cloud computing head Andy Jassy. The [Seattle Times](#) (2/2, Khashimova

Long, 1.19M) reports Bezos “will transition to the role of executive chair of Amazon’s board of directors.” The [Washington Post](#) (2/2, Greene, Romm, 10.52M) calls the transition “the most radical shake-up in Amazon’s corporate ranks in its nearly 30-year history.”

[USA Today](#) (2/2, Guynn, Tyko, 12.7M) reports Bezos’ “surprise announcement came as Amazon reported record fourth-quarter sales that topped \$100 billion for the first time.” The [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/2, Herrera, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) says the company reported \$125.5 billion in fourth-quarter sales and net income of \$7.2 billion. [NBC Nightly News](#) (2/2, lead story, 2:20, Holt, 6.35M) led with the story, and the [CBS Evening News](#) (2/2, story 8, 0:15, O’Donnell, 4.87M) and [ABC World News Tonight](#) (2/2, story 6, 1:35, Muir, 8.01M) provided similar coverage, along with the [New York Times](#) (2/2, Weise, 20.6M), [Axios](#) (2/2, Chen, 1.26M), and a website story from [CNN](#) (2/2, Duffy, 89.21M).

Exxon, BP Report 2020 Losses.

The [AP](#) (2/2) reports Exxon Mobil and BP “reported staggering losses for 2020 on Tuesday as the pandemic crushed energy demand and undercut oil prices.” Exxon reported “the largest losses in its history – nearly \$20.1 billion for the fourth quarter, including more than \$19 billion to write down the value of company assets. For the full year, it lost \$22.4 billion.” While BP reports a fourth quarter profit of \$825 million, it “still lost \$18.1 billion in 2020.” The results follow Chevron’s report last week “that it lost \$5.5 billion last year.” The [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/2, Matthews, McFarlane, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) provides similar coverage.

The [New York Times](#) (2/2, Krauss, 20.6M) says “such painful years could become more commonplace as growing concerns about climate change, tighter regulations, and the rise of electric cars and trucks force a reckoning for an industry that has dominated the global economy over much of the last century.”

Leonhardt: Economy Performs Better Under Democrats.

In a piece for the [New York Times](#) (2/2, 20.6M), David Leonhardt writes that there has been “a stark pattern in the United States for nearly a century. The economy has grown significantly faster under Democratic presidents than Republican ones.” In part, this “surely involves coincidence,” but “the pattern is so strong and long-lasting that coincidence alone is unlikely to be the only explanation.” Leonhardt adds, “The pattern holds regardless of which party is running Congress. ... Over the last four decades, in fact, Republican presidents have run up larger deficits than Democrats.” Leonhardt argues there is “one broad possibility with a good amount of supporting evidence: Democrats have been more willing to heed economic and historical lessons about what policies actually strengthen the economy, while Republicans have often clung to theories that they want to believe. ... Democrats, in short, have been more pragmatic.”

Professor: GM’s Clean Energy Pledge Will Have Broad Economic Impact.

In an op-ed for the [New York Times](#) (2/2, 20.6M), Jody Freeman, an environmental law professor at Harvard Law School, writes that the repercussions of GM’s announcement “that it will stop making gas-powered cars, trucks and sport utility vehicles by 2035 and become carbon neutral by 2040” will “ripple broadly across the economy, accelerating the transition to a broader electric future powered by renewable energy.” Freeman calls the move “a sea change” that “puts pressure on other auto companies, like Ford and Toyota, to make equally ambitious public commitments.” In addition, it “may push the Biden administration to be equally daring when setting greenhouse gas and fuel efficiency standards for cars and truck, which Mr. Biden has promised to strengthen. It may also encourage the European Commission, now revising its 2030 standards, to aim higher.”

Biden Reinstates Tariffs On UAE Aluminum.

The [New York Times](#) (2/2, Swanson, 20.6M) reports President Biden on Monday “reinstated tariffs on aluminum exported from the United Arab Emirates...reversing President Donald J. Trump’s decision to lift them on his last day in office.” It was “one of Mr. Biden’s first significant moves on trade and suggests that his administration may be inclined to maintain the type of hefty tariffs Mr. Trump imposed on foreign metals to protect domestic industry.” The Times says “that position found favor with unions and progressive Democrats, but disappointed industries and businesses that have argued the tariffs raise costs.”

Senators Call On White House To Address Auto Chip Shortage.

[Reuters](#) (2/2, Shepardson) reports Senate Majority Leader Schumer, Sen. John Cornyn (R-TX), and 13 other senators on Tuesday “urged the White House to work with Congress to address the global semiconductor shortage that is hampering auto manufacturing.” Reuters says automakers have been “shutting assembly lines due to problems in the delivery of semiconductors, which have been exacerbated in some cases by the former Trump administration’s actions against key Chinese chip factories.”

Senate Confirms Mayorkas As DHS Secretary On 56-43 Vote.

The [Washington Post](#) (2/2, Miroff, 10.52M) reports the Senate on Tuesday in a [56-43 vote](#) confirmed Alejandro Mayorkas as DHS secretary, “ending what has been the most contentious confirmation process of Biden’s cabinet picks.” The Post adds Mayorkas “is the son of Jewish refugees from Cuba who goes by the nickname ‘Ali,’” and the [New York Times](#) (2/2, Fandos, Haberman, 20.6M) emphasizes that he is “the first Latino and the first immigrant to hold that job.” The Times highlights that Sens. Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV), Susan Collins (R-ME), Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), Rob Portman (R-OH), Mitt Romney (R-UT), and Dan Sullivan (R-AK) “voted with all the Democrats to confirm Mr. Mayorkas,” who was “a former deputy secretary of homeland security as well as a

former director of the department's legal immigration agency, Citizenship and Immigration Services," but the [AP](#) (2/2, Fox) reports the vote was "the narrowest margin yet for a Biden Cabinet nominee." According to the AP, "Biden's team had hoped to have Mayorkas confirmed by Jan. 20," but Sen. Josh Hawley (R-MO) had "placed a hold before the inauguration, forcing a delay in the confirmation vote."

[The Hill](#) (2/2, Beitsch, 5.69M) reports Hawley, "a possible 2024 GOP presidential candidate who objected to the Electoral College results," had "objected to Mayorkas over his statement that he would support Biden's efforts to stall construction of the border wall that was President Trump's signature issue." According to The Hill, "Hawley's decision to push back a vote on Mayorkas was controversial, angering not just Democrats but former DHS secretaries on both sides of the aisle who saw swift confirmation as critical while the U.S. is confronting several emergencies."

In addition, [Bloomberg](#) (2/2, Courtney, 3.57M) reports Senate Minority Leader McConnell "opposed Mayorkas' confirmation, saying he doesn't deserve a role in government after he turned U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services into an 'unethical favor factory.'" Bloomberg says McConnell was referencing a 2015 DHS Inspector General's report that "faulted Mayorkas' heavy-handed approach while serving as the head of USCIS to visas for politically connected people including then-Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) and Hillary Clinton's brother, Anthony Rodham."

However, the [Los Angeles Times](#) (2/2, O'Toole, 3.37M) reports that Senate Majority Leader Schumer described Mayorkas' nomination as "history-making" and said his qualifications were "unassailable," while [Roll Call](#) (2/2, DeChalus, 130K) reports incoming Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Chairman Gary Peters "said Mayorkas couldn't come on board soon enough." The [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/2, Hackman, Mann, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) says his confirmation "ends nearly two years during which DHS has gone without a confirmed secretary or deputy secretary, a period marked by rapid personnel turnover and actions including the agency's intervention in protests last year in Portland, Ore."

Meanwhile, [Politico](#) (2/2, Rodríguez, 6.73M) says Mayorkas "is expected to get to work immediately, after attending an event at the White House on Tuesday afternoon where President Joe Biden signed three immigration-related executive orders." Politico adds Vice President Harris "did a ceremonial swearing-in for Mayorkas directly afterward." [Fox News](#) (2/2, Shaw, 23.99M) reports on its website that Mayorkas "takes control of the department at a time when it faces the challenge of the continued threat of violence in the wake of the Jan. 6 riots in Washington D.C., as well as the implementation of sweeping immigration changes by the Biden administration."

[USA Today](#) (2/2, Wu, Behrmann, 12.7M) also reports that as DHS secretary, Mayorkas "will lead a task force on family separation, focused largely on reuniting migrant parents and their children." [Axios](#) (2/2, Perano, 1.26M) reports Mayorkas will "further be tasked with addressing the SolarWinds cyberattack on the U.S., which intelligence says was conducted by Russian operatives."

Senate Confirms Buttigieg As Transportation Secretary On 86-13 Vote.

The [New York Times](#) (2/2, Verma, 20.6M) reports the Senate on Tuesday in an [86-13 vote](#) "confirmed Pete Buttigieg, a former mayor of South Bend, Ind., and a 2020 Democratic presidential candidate, to be transportation secretary, putting in place the official who will help oversee President Biden's overhaul of the nation's infrastructure." The Times adds the vote "made Mr. Buttigieg, 39, the nation's first openly gay cabinet secretary to be confirmed by the upper chamber and Mr. Biden's youngest cabinet member." [USA Today](#) (2/2, Wu, Behrmann, 12.7M) reports incoming Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Chair Maria Cantwell "praised him Tuesday as a 'young, energetic mayor' who could 'help us usher in a new era of transportation.'"

In addition, [Politico](#) (2/2, Snyder, Mintz, Beasley, 6.73M) highlights that in contrast to "after four years of leadership under former President Donald Trump's Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao, a Washington, D.C., insider who was notoriously unavailable to reporters," Buttigieg brings his "political celebrity and legion of super fans to a mammoth agency that's not used to headlines – unless they're jokes about 'Infrastructure Week.'" The [Washington Post](#) (2/2, Laris, Duncan, 10.52M) says that since Inauguration Day, Buttigieg has been in "a media blitz that offers a view into his role as transportation secretary and efforts to advance the Biden administration's broader agenda." The Post adds Buttigieg "has taken the new administration's broader message to people who might miss it," and, "in the process, he's seeking to expand views of what it means to be transportation secretary – a job Biden says will have an outside role in pushing his priorities but one that comes with sharp limits on formal powers."

The [AP](#) (2/2, Yen) reports that Buttigieg "takes over a Transportation Department with 55,000 employees and a budget of tens of billions dollars." The AP adds he has "pledged to quickly get to work promoting safety and restoring consumer trust in America's transportation networks as airlines, buses, city subway systems and Amtrak reel from plummeting ridership in the coronavirus pandemic." He is also "expected to play an important role in promoting Biden's sweeping green initiatives, helping to oversee stronger automotive fuel economy standards to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and support the president's push later this year on a \$2 trillion climate and infrastructure plan." [CNBC](#) (2/2, Josephs, 7.34M) reports on its website that under Buttigieg, DOT "could become a driving or limiting force in the adoption of emerging technologies, specifically autonomous and electric vehicles." However, [Roll Call](#) (2/2, Wehrman, 130K) labels Buttigieg as "an anomaly and a lingering sign of partisan strife: Of the other secretaries of Transportation dating back to the Carter administration, only Trump's nominee, Elaine Chao, received any opposing votes. Six senators voted against her in 2017."

Civil Rights Groups, Black Farmers Critical Of USDA Nominee Vilsack.

A [Washington Post](#) (2/2, Reiley, 10.52M) article titled "With Hunger Surging And Farms In Crisis, Biden's Controversial USDA Nominee Lays Out His Plans" says that if confirmed as secretary of agriculture, Tom Vilsack "will reprise his role in a political and economic landscape vastly different from that during his eight years in the same job during the Obama administration." The Post adds that while Vilsack "is expected to enjoy a smooth confirmation process with broad bipartisan support, he has come under

criticism from civil rights groups and Black farmers who say he didn't go far enough last time to eradicate long-standing racial discrimination in farming and at the department."

Environmentalists Reportedly Concerned About Regan's Willingness To Work With Republicans.

The [New York Times](#) (2/2, Friedman, 20.6M) reports that Michael Regan's "willingness to reach across the aisle helped secure his nomination to be the next administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency," and "on Wednesday, Mr. Regan will testify before the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works for his first test of whether he can win over Republicans in Washington as well." However, according to the Times, "environmental activists say a consensus approach is precisely what the E.P.A. doesn't need." The Times adds, "The next E.P.A. administrator must complete major new regulations on power plants, automobile tailpipes, mercury emissions and waterways – and be willing to anger Republicans in the process."

Senate To Hold Tanden Confirmation Hearing Next Week.

[Politico](#) (2/2, Emma, 6.73M) reports the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee has scheduled its first confirmation hearing for Neera Tanden for next Tuesday, where senators will "press the nominee on her plans for leading the Office of Management and Budget," though the Senate Budget Committee "has yet to schedule a confirmation hearing." Politico says that while the President and CEO of the Center for American Progress "is expected to face an easier path to confirmation now that Democrats hold a narrow majority in the Senate, she will likely field tough questions from Republicans and a more partisan vote than some of Biden's other nominees, like Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, whose nomination sailed through the upper chamber with bipartisan support."

Biden Considers Rahm Emanuel For Ambassador Role, Sources Say.

[NBC News](#) (2/2, Lederman, Lee, 4.91M) reports on its website that President Biden "is considering former Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel for a high-profile ambassadorship, potentially to China, three people with knowledge of the discussions said," or to Japan, but [Fox News](#) (2/2, Singman, 23.99M) reports on its website that when asked about the report, the National Security Council "told Fox News that they do not have any personnel announcements to make at this point." According to Fox News, there has been "speculation around Biden appointing Emanuel to some sort of role in his Cabinet or his administration for months."

Austin Dismisses DOD Advisory Boards, Including Controversial Trump Appointees.

The [Washington Post](#) (2/2, Ryan, Lamothe, 10.52M) reports Defense Secretary Austin on Tuesday "suspended the work of dozens of Pentagon advisory boards and asked hundreds of appointees to step down in what officials described as partly an effort to counteract a flurry of appointments that took place in the Trump administration's final days." The Post adds Pentagon spokesman John Kirby "said that the work of more than 40 boards would be halted over the next five months while Austin conducts a 'zero-based review,' which also seeks to optimize the bodies' work."

[Politico](#) (2/2, Seligman, 6.73M) says the announcement, which was "first reported by The [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/2, Youssef, Subscription Publication, 8.41M), affects only members who were appointed by the defense secretary, or one of the civilian or military leaders of the armed services, not to those appointed by the president or Congress." According to Politico, "The ousting comes just days after Austin halted the in-processing of new members, effectively preventing a number of...Trump's acolytes, who were still completing paperwork and undergoing security checks, from actually serving on the panels."

The [AP](#) (2/2, Baldor) says Austin's action "essentially purg[es] several dozen who were appointed last-minute under the Trump administration." According to the AP, former Acting Defense Secretary Christopher Miller had "removed a number of longtime members from several defense policy, health, science and business boards and replaced many with loyalists of former President Donald Trump," and now "more than 30 of those replacements will...be forced to resign, including former GOP House Speaker Newt Gingrich, retired Brig. Gen. Anthony Tata and former Trump campaign manager Corey Lewandowski." However, [Reuters](#) (2/2, Ali) reports the review "does not affect at least two well-known Trump aides: Sean Spicer, a former White House spokesman who was appointed to the Naval Academy Board of Visitors, and Kellyanne Conway, a senior Trump aide who was appointed to the Air Force Academy Board of Visitors."

FBI Investigating After Two Agents Killed, Three Others Shot While Serving Warrant In Florida.

Norah O'Donnell opened the [CBS Evening News](#) (2/2, lead story, 3:00, 4.87M) by reporting on a "bloody shoot-out in a quiet neighborhood north of Miami," that has left "two veteran FBI agents...dead and three others...shot after they were ambushed outside of an apartment complex in sunrise, Florida. The shooter, who was being investigated on child pornography charges, reportedly used a doorbell video camera to watch the agents approach his home before blasting gunfire through his unopened front door." O'Donnell added the shooter "is dead after a standoff that shut down traffic and locked down parts of the city and the entire FBI is reeling, trying to figure out how a routine operation turned into a horrible massacre." Manuel Bojorquez continued that President Biden "expressed his condolences to the families of those agents on this, one of the deadliest days for the FBI in decades."

On [NBC Nightly News](#) (2/2, story 2, 1:35, Holt, 6.35M), Sam Brock reported Tuesday "is now the deadliest day for the FBI since 9/11 and the first time that two FBI agents have been killed in the line of duty in more than 30 years, since south Florida in 1986,"

while [Reuters](#) (2/2, Lynch, Hosenball, Chiacu) highlights that the last fatal shooting of an FBI agent on duty “was on Nov. 19, 2008, which also unfolded during the execution of a warrant.”

On [ABC World News Tonight](#) (2/2, lead story, 2:50, Muir, 8.01M), Victor Oquendo said sources “tell us there is no such thing as executing a safe warrant. When you enter a home, a hallway can create a bottleneck. Law enforcement describes that as a fatal tunnel.” The [New York Times](#) (2/2, Diaz, Goldman, 20.6M) reports a law enforcement official “said it appeared [the suspect] killed himself before agents were able to arrest him.” According to the Times, “His identity was not released until his family could be notified of his death.”

Law enforcement sources told the [Miami Herald](#) (2/2, Neal, Rabin, Weaver, Ovalle, 647K) that the gunman “is believed to have monitored the approach of the agents with a doorbell camera and ambushed them through the unopened door with a hail of bullets from an assault-style rifle.” [CNN](#) (2/2, Campbell, Levenson, Flores, Weisfeldt, 89.21M) reports on its website that the FBI “said its Inspection Division is investigating the shooting.”

Meanwhile, the [AP](#) (2/2, Spencer, Balsamo) reports FBI Director Wray has “identified the two slain agents as Daniel Alfin and Laura Schwartzenberger, both of whom specialized in investigating crimes against children.” The AP adds that Schwartzenberger, 43, “had been an agent with the FBI since December 2005 and worked in the Miami field office on a squad of agents handling violent crimes against children, according to court records,” while Alfin, 36, “who also investigated child exploitation cases, had previously worked at FBI headquarters handling major cases involving violent crimes against children, according to court records.” The [Washington Post](#) (2/2, A1, Zapotosky, Firozi, 10.52M) reports Wray in a statement said Alfin and Schwartzenberger “exemplified heroism today in defense of their country. The FBI will always honor their ultimate sacrifice and will be forever grateful for their bravery. We continue to stand by our FBI Family, and the families of these Special Agents, in the days to come, bringing every resource we can to get through this together.” The [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/2, Gurman, Campo-Flores, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) provides similar coverage.

[The Hill](#) (2/2, Chalfant, 5.69M) reports the President said, “I can only imagine how these families are feeling today.” Biden continued, “One of the things when you’re in a combat zone of the military or you’re an FBI agent or a police officer, every family ... dreads the possibility of a call, receiving that phone call.” He added, “My heart aches for the families.” According to the President, “They put their lives on the line and it’s a hell of a price to pay.”

[Fox News](#) (2/2, Rambaran, 23.99M) reports on its website that lawmakers “also offered their condolences.” Sen. Marco Rubio (R-FL) said, “Our prayers are with their families and the three agents who were injured in the cowardly attack.” Rubio added, “It serves as yet another reminder that the courageous members of our law enforcement community put their lives on the line every day to make our communities safer from the type of sick, depraved people who would exploit and prey on our children.”

Manhattan DA Considers Prosecuting Bannon For Border Wall Fundraising Scheme.

The [Washington Post](#) (2/2, Jacobs, 10.52M) reports the Manhattan District Attorney’s Office “is weighing whether to bring a state court case against Stephen K. Bannon, who was indicted on federal fraud charges for his role in a fundraising scheme to build a border wall but received a last-minute pardon from President Donald Trump, according to people familiar with the matter.” According to the Times, Bannon “and three others were charged by federal prosecutors in Manhattan with falsely claiming that they would not take compensation as part of their ‘We Build the Wall’ fundraising campaign to underwrite part of the construction of a wall on the U.S.-Mexico border. The three others charged with Bannon were not pardoned by Trump.”

New Port Richey, Florida, Police Charged Only BLM Activists After Clash With Proud Boys.

The [Washington Post](#) (2/2, Craig, 10.52M) reports that when local Black Lives Matter activists “started marching through the small, coastal town of New Port Richey, Fla., last summer – shouting slogans through bullhorns demanding racial justice – it took only a few days for the Proud Boys and other counterprotesters to show up and confront them,” and police subsequently “started enforcing the town’s rarely used noise ordinance, which essentially forbids disturbances louder than a close conversation between two people. But only the Black Lives Matter protesters were cited.” The Post says police last month “dropped the citations,” but “not before the Tampa-suburb became another front in the national debate over whether authorities treat left-wing protesters too harshly while cozying up to far-right extremists.”

Six Arrestees Recount “Abuse By Officer Who Knelt On George Floyd.”

Under the headline “‘Don’t Kill Me’: Others Tell Of Abuse By Officer Who Knelt On George Floyd,” the [New York Times](#) (2/2, A1, Lartey, Vansickle, 20.6M) reports that in “interviews with The Marshall Project, three people who were arrested by” Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin “and a witness in a fourth incident described him as an unusually rough officer who was quick to use force and callous about their pain.” According to the Times, “The interviews provide new insight into the history of a police officer whose handling of Mr. Floyd’s arrest, captured on video, was seen around the world and sparked months of protests in dozens of cities.”

Football Team Faces Protests After Addition Of Officer In Tamir Rice Shooting.

The [New York Times](#) (2/2, Eligon, 20.6M) reports the involvement of Timothy Loehmann, the white police officer who fatally shot 12-year-old Tamir Rice in 2014, with the Cleveland Warriors has prompted protests against the team this week by fellow players and the community. However, according to the Times, “Loehmann is still trying to regain his job as a Cleveland police officer – he

is currently appealing his firing in state court,” and his lawyer, Henry Hilow, “said it was unfair for people to criticize Loehmann for being on the football team.”

Education Department Orders Navient To Repay \$22.3M To Government.

The [New York Times](#) (2/2, Cowley, 20.6M) reports that Acting Education Secretary Zais has ordered Navient, the federal loan servicing arm of Sallie Mae, to repay \$22.3 million after a 2009 investigation by the department’s inspector general found that the company overcharged the government for student loan subsidies. The overpayments “were brought to light when an Education Department whistle-blower raised alarms during President George W. Bush’s administration about a tactic multiple student loan financiers had adopted to manipulate a subsidy program intended to incentivize lending.” The Times says, “The unpaid debt has long been a sore point for progressive lawmakers like” Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), “who frequently have blasted the department for leaving the money uncollected.”

Media Analyses: Biden’s Immigration Orders Disappoint Migrant Advocates.

[ABC World News Tonight](#) (2/2, story 5, 0:50, Muir, 8.01M) reported that “President Biden [is] taking new executive action tonight. This time, rolling back Trump Administration immigration policies,” including the “family separation policy.” The President is “creating a task force to reunite migrant children with their parents.” ABC’s Mary Bruce added, “Some advocates are critical of the President, saying he’s not doing enough here, but Biden says by creating this task force, he’s just taking the first step to try and undo what he calls the, quote, ‘moral and national shame’ caused by the previous Administration.”

On the [CBS Evening News](#) (2/2, story 6, 1:05, O’Donnell, 4.87M), Ed O’Keefe reported that President Biden “is trying to reverse some of the former President’s most controversial decisions regarding immigration.” New executive orders signed Tuesday “seek to reunite about 600 children separated from their parents under President Trump’s zero-tolerance border crackdown,” and “to reverse the Trump-era policy requiring thousands of asylum seekers to stay in Mexico as their cases are processed.” However, O’Keefe added, “The White House said today the changes are not an invitation for migrants to start heading towards the US border.” The majority “of the changes set in motion by the President today...will be overseen by” DHS Secretary Mayorkas, who “is the first immigrant to oversee the department responsible for most immigration policy.”

The [Washington Post](#) (2/2, Miroff, Kim, Sacchetti, 10.52M) reports, “President Biden signed executive actions Tuesday ordering the review and potential reversal of the Trump administration’s deterrent policies along the Mexico border and the barriers it created to legal immigration, calling his predecessor’s actions ‘very counterproductive to our security.’” Biden’s orders “also create an interagency task force to reunite families separated by former president Donald Trump’s ‘zero tolerance’ border crackdown.” However, according to the Post, “senior administration officials...acknowledge that some of Trump’s border control measures will remain in place for the time being in a sign of their concern about a new migration wave building in the middle of the pandemic.” The [New York Post](#) (2/2, Nelson, 7.45M) reports that President Biden said, “There’s a lot of talk, with good reason, about the number of executive orders that I signed. I’m not making new law, I’m eliminating bad policy.” The President said, “We’re going to work to undo the moral and national shame of the previous administration that literally – not figuratively – ripped children from the arms of their families and mothers and fathers at the border, and with no plan, none whatsoever to reunify children.”

[Bloomberg](#) (2/2, Fabian, Wingrove, 3.57M) reports that the remaining Trump policies are “a signal that the Biden administration is taking a cautious approach out of concern about inducing a surge in migration during the coronavirus pandemic.” White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said Tuesday, “This is not the time to come to the United States,” as the Administration “needs some time” to set up a “humane” immigration system.

White House Communications Director Kate Bedingfield said on [CNN](#) (2/2, 3.06M), “The President today signed an executive order directing the...Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security to chair up this task force, to work to move quickly to begin...to undertake this daunting task of returning these children to their families. You know, there are approximately 600 to 700 children who need, desperately, need to be reunited with their families. We are moving as quickly as possible and we’ll use every lever available to us to make this happen. This is all part of President Biden’s commitment to restore humanity and humane values to our immigration policy.”

Asked on [MSNBC](#) (2/2, 2.22M) about criticism that the orders fail to address families that have already been reunited outside the US, White House Deputy Communications Director Pili Tobar said, “We want to make sure that we address the harms that were done to these families, and this is why this task force is going to be working on looking at all of the options that are available and making recommendations to the President and to the Administration about what are the things that we can do. We expect them to give often their report back to the President in order for us to be able to make those determinations and to work across agencies and throughout the entire government to figure out what that will look like.”

[USA Today](#) (2/2, Morin, 12.7M) reports that the task force created by the order will be led by Mayorkas and “will work to identify the children and parents or guardians who were separated at the border, facilitate and enable reunification of children with their families, and then provide a report to the president on recommendations to ensure that the federal government does not have policies in place that separate families, senior administration officials said.” As of December, “there are still at least 628 parents who were separated from their children at the border that are still missing.” The directives also “create a framework to address the underlying causes of migration” and reestablish “an Obama-era task force called the Task Force on New Americans to help integrate immigrants.”

The [New York Times](#) (2/2, Shear, Kanno-Youngs, 20.6M) says the orders “help satisfy promises that Mr. Biden made on the campaign trail to reverse Mr. Trump’s immigration agenda. But they also underscore the difficulty that the new president faces in

unraveling scores of individual policies and regulations.” The Times reports that, according to senior Administration officials, “most of Mr. Biden’s directives...would not make immediate changes. Rather, they are intended to give officials at the Department of Homeland Security, the Justice Department and the State Department time to evaluate how best to undo the policies.” The Times says that is “likely to disappoint advocates for migrants, who are eager for action that will help people immediately.”

[Reuters](#) (2/2, Hesson, Holland) reports that Biden “mandated a review of the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP), a Trump program that ordered 65,000 asylum seekers to wait in Mexico for their U.S. court hearings.” According to Reuters, “The Biden administration has already stopped adding people to the program but has not yet outlined how it will process the claims of those already enrolled. ‘I can’t tell you exactly how long it will take to put in an alternative to that policy,’ a senior administration official told reporters on Monday in response to a question about processing MPP enrollees.”

The [AP](#) (2/2, Spagat) reports that the announcement brings “to nine the number of executive actions on immigration” the President has taken, though “details were thin” and the White House “warned that” an overhaul of previous policies “will take time, which may cause grumbling among some pro-immigration advocates.” However, the AP goes on to report that the move demonstrates “that, just as Trump remade immigration policies from the White House, Biden can undo them with the stroke of a pen.”

Likewise, [Politico](#) (2/2, Rodríguez, 6.73M) reports that “Administration officials’ description of the task force falls short of what immigrant advocates and human rights groups have been urging the Biden administration to do.” According to Politico, the ACLU “has called on the Biden administration to allow families to settle in the U.S., be given some type of legal status and offer funds for basic needs and medical care.”

The [New York Daily News](#) (2/2, Sommerfeldt, 2.51M) reports that “while pleased that Biden took action to undo Trump’s policies, lawyers who worked on family separation cases suggested he didn’t go far enough.” ACLU attorney Lee Gelernt said, “All 5,500-plus separated families need immediate action – they cannot wait 120 days for a task force to make recommendations. These families deserve citizenship, care and resources.”

The [Washington Post](#) (2/2, Sieff, 10.52M) reports that the ACLU “says it’s likely that at least 1,000...families remain separated – parents scattered mostly across Central America and children living with relatives in the United States.” However, “because of poor government record keeping, it remains unclear how many parents were deported without their children and where they are currently living – a major challenge facing any reunion effort.”

[CNN](#) (2/2, Alvarez, 89.21M) reports on its website, “The orders signed Tuesday largely direct reviews of policies and do not have an immediate impact, concerning immigration advocates and attorneys scrambling for answers on the future of migrants subject to Trump-era policies.” FWD.us VP of Advocacy Alida Garcia said there is “frustration around the urgency that exists for service providers to have clarity in their ability to advise people in life or death situations,” and added, “We hope to hear more hard logistics soon.”

[CNBC](#) (2/2, Clark, 7.34M) reports on its website that a “senior Administration official” said, “President Trump was so focused on the wall he did nothing to address the root causes of why are people are coming to our southern border – it was a limited, wasteful and naive strategy, and it failed. People continue to migrate to the United States – even today – because of it. President Biden’s approach is to deal with immigration comprehensively, fairly and humanely.”

[Fox News](#) (2/2, Shaw, 23.99M) reports on its website that “the dramatic changes – on top of a slew of orders in Biden’s first week...face stiff Republican opposition.”

Tobar: Administration Is Committed To Ending Deportations. Asked on [MSNBC](#) (2/2, 2.22M) about criticism of ongoing deportations, Tobar said, “We made a commitment to stop deportations for the first 100 days. Obviously, we’re seeing that this is still in motion and that...there’s a pause on that at the time being, but our commitment is there. We are also trying to work with our champions in Congress. We sent a bill to Congress on day one, just like President Biden promised, and we’re looking forward to working with Senate and the Congress to make sure that we can pass a bill that restores our immigration to a place of humanity, of decency, of justice, and also of order.”

Fox News Report: Border Patrol Agents See Rise In Migrants At The Border. [Fox News](#) (2/2, Shaw, 23.99M) reports on its website that “the number of migrants along parts of the U.S.-Mexico border is increasing as they await what they hope are dramatic liberalizations in border security and immigration policy from President Biden – who has already taken significant action to reverse Trump-era policies.” According to Fox, “Border Patrol agents from California to Texas told Fox News that they are seeing steady increases in apprehensions, especially among Central American families and unaccompanied children in their sectors – specifically the Rio Grande Valley and Tucson, Ariz., sectors.” Fox adds, “One agent in Texas told Fox News that in three out of the last seven days, there were at least 800 arrests in their sector, up from about 450 a day just a few months ago.”

Advocates May Propose Presidential Pardon For Undocumented Migrants. [USA Today](#) (2/2, Wagner, 12.7M) reports that as the President’s “executive orders are not permanent, and the White House already has begun tamping down hopes for passage of an omnibus reform measure,” some advocacy groups are “looking at an untested fallback plan: a mass presidential pardon for at least some of the estimated 11 million” undocumented people in the US. The League of United Latin American Citizens president Domingo Garcia said, “We believe this is a viable option if the Senate fails to act on comprehensive immigration reform.” USA Today says, “It is unclear how Biden would respond” to such a proposal and, “moreover, not all immigrant-rights advocates want to pursue that controversial path while there is a chance Congress could act.”

Cornyn Backs Texas Coalition To Grant Dreamers Legal Status. The [Dallas Morning News](#) (2/2, Benning, 772K) reports that the Texas Opportunity Coalition, a business group that launched Tuesday with backing from Sen. John Cornyn (R-TX), “is urging Congress to pass legislation that would provide permanent legal status to ‘Dreamers.’” Cornyn said, “After years of being yanked around from court ruling to court ruling...these young men and women deserve certainty to be able to plan their future. The only way to do that is through legislation.” The coalition is “hoping to capitalize on Joe Biden’s ascent to the presidency and

Democrats' control of the House and Senate. But their push is bipartisan, a nod to the tricky dynamics of getting immigration legislation passed," with a sole focus on DACA recipients.

San Francisco Chronicle Analysis: "Waiting Game" For Those Impacted By Muslim Travel Ban. The [San Francisco Chronicle](#) (2/2, Moench, 2.44M) reports that President Biden's "action on the first day of his presidency unraveled one of Trump's earliest and most contentious policies, which triggered chaos at airports and legal challenges all the way to the Supreme Court." The travel ban "from an evolving list of up to seven countries at a time" during the four years of Trump's presidency drew support from those who "argued that the ban protected the U.S. from terrorist attacks by foreign nationals, while its opponents argued it discriminated against Muslims and separated families trying to immigrate." While "those families are now rejoicing...lifting the ban is not a magic wand that opens borders, with an already arduous immigration system now backlogged with years of applications. For many, it's still a waiting game."

WPost: Biden Should Phase Out For-Profit Migrant Detention Centers. The [Washington Post](#) (2/2, 10.52M) editorializes that President Biden's announcement that "he would phase out federal contracts for privately run prisons" delivers "on half a campaign pledge but omit[s] the other, more difficult half – to also scrap privately operated migrant detention centers." The Post says the "administration's wavering has disappointed immigrant advocates, who have rightly called attention to substandard and occasionally appalling conditions" in such centers, and argues that "the president's instincts on the campaign trail were right and should remain the administration's goal: For-profit detention facilities, where pre-pandemic problems have burgeoned into humanitarian danger zones during the covid-19 era, should be phased out."

Bidens Pay Tribute To Sicknick At Capitol.

The [AP](#) (2/2) reports, "Slain Capitol Police Officer Brian Sicknick lay in honor Tuesday night in the U.S. Capitol, allowing his colleagues and the lawmakers he protected to pay their respects and to remember the violent attack on Congress that took his life." The President and First Lady "traveled to the Capitol to pay tribute to Sicknick shortly after the ceremony began Tuesday night, briefly placing his hand on the urn in the center of the Capitol Rotunda, saying a prayer and sadly shaking his head as he observed a memorial wreath nearby." Senate Majority Leader Schumer, House Speaker Pelosi, "and a handful of other congressional leaders also paid their respects."

The [New York Times](#) (2/2, Rogers, 20.6M) reports, "On Tuesday around 9:30 p.m., Mr. Sicknick's remains were delivered to a silent Capitol on a cold and windy evening. Officers from Mr. Sicknick's unit, some on mountain bikes, lined up near the steps outside." The memorial "was not open to the public, but police officers and lawmakers are scheduled to be given the opportunity to pay their respects before Mr. Sicknick is buried at Arlington National Cemetery." [USA Today](#) (2/2, Santucci, 12.7M) reports, "A viewing period for Capitol Police officers will last through the night. Members of Congress will be able to pay their respects beginning on Wednesday at 7 a.m., and congressional leaders will speak at a ceremony later Wednesday morning."

The [Washington Post](#) (2/2, Duggan, Flynn, 10.52M) reports Sicknick is "the fifth deceased person not a public official or military leader to lie in the Rotunda. Congress approved the honor for the Rev. Billy Graham in 2018; civil rights hero Rosa Parks in 2005; and two other members of the Capitol police force, officer Jacob Chestnut and detective John Gibson, who were killed in 1998 by a gunman in the building."

House Approves Fines For Lawmakers Who Refuse To Use Metal Detectors.

The [New York Times](#) (2/2, Edmondson, 20.6M) reports that the House of Representatives "voted on Tuesday night to begin fining lawmakers who refused to pass through metal detectors before walking onto the House floor, the latest move in a series of security measures taken after the deadly Jan. 6 riot at the Capitol." The proposal, "tucked in a procedural package of rules, will fine lawmakers who bypass the metal detectors installed outside the House floor \$5,000 for a first offense and \$10,000 for a second offense, with the amounts deducted directly from their salaries." The passage of the provision "infuriated many Republicans, who have argued that the measure is overly onerous and infantilizing for members of Congress to endure."

The [Washington Post](#) (2/2, Sonmez, 10.52M) reports, "The measure passed on a [216-to-210 vote](#), with all but three Democrats present voting in favor and all Republicans present voting 'no.'" House Rules Chairman Jim McGovern "defended the move in an impassioned floor speech in which he blasted the 'elitist mentality' of those who have ignored the screening procedures." McGovern said, "Some are acting as though by being elected to Congress, they have been anointed to some sort of special club – one that gets to pick and choose what rules to follow."

Capitol Riot Investigation Boosts Focus On Rioters Who Assaulted Police.

Citing interviews and court filings, the [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/2, Viswanatha, Ailworth, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports that investigators into the Capitol siege on January 6 are increasingly focused on identifying and charging rioters who assaulted or obstructed police officers using evidence from body camera footage, subpoenas, and search warrants. Authorities say at least 139 officers were assaulted during the riot, including 81 Capitol Police and 58 Metropolitan Police Department officers.

The [Baltimore Sun](#) (2/2, Fenton, 629K) reports that a search warrant for David Blair, who was "arrested at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6," reveals that "he swung a Confederate flag attached to a lacrosse stick at police officers." The FBI "says body camera footage shows Blair positioning himself between police and other protesters on the west lawn," and struck one "officer in the chest with his lacrosse stick." Police recovered Blair's bag, which "contained a knife" and tape. Blair said he carried the knife because he was "worried about Antifa and other people trying to jump me," and "said [the tape] was used to affix the flag to his lacrosse stick."

In an op-ed for the [Washington Post](#) (2/2, 10.52M), Richard B. Zabel, who oversaw terrorism prosecutions as deputy US attorney in the Southern District of New York from 2011 to 2015, writes that the US "faces a rising threat of violent extremism yet has no

law targeting the problem.” Currently, “a prosecutor cannot charge a defendant with domestic terrorism alone. Instead, prosecutors have to use other available statutes, such as firearms or assault statutes.” Zabel adds that “the definition of domestic terrorism is too narrow, even if it were to carry criminal penalties.” The definition “excludes common tools of terrorism such as criminal threats, non-life-threatening physical assaults, damage to property and other acts intended to intimidate or coerce,” all of which “were on brazen display on Jan. 6” during the US Capitol riot. Congress, he argues, “needs to stand up.”

NYTimes Analysis: Prosecutors Weigh Possibility Of Felony Murder Charges. The [New York Times](#) (2/2, Dewan, 20.6M) reports that since the attack on the Capitol on January 6, many “have been saying that the rioters have blood on their hands,” leading to debate over felony murder charges. The limited provision, which “has raised a host of legal and moral questions about complicity and fairness,” enables prosecutors to hold “a person who commits a crime responsible for any deaths that result.” The Acting Attorney for the District of Columbia Michael Sherwin “has said that felony murder charges are among those under consideration in the sprawling federal investigation.” However, the rule, which has been abolished in many other countries, “has been used in the United States in ways that have been widely decried,” and any use in cases surrounding the riot “will be highly dependent on the facts that emerge and what prosecutors think a jury will accept.”

Ginni Thomas Apologizes To SCOTUS Clerks After Riot. The [Washington Post](#) (2/2, Barnes, 10.52M) reports that “conservative political activist Virginia Thomas told her husband Justice Clarence Thomas’s former law clerks that she was sorry for a rift that developed among them after her election advocacy of President Donald Trump and endorsement of the Jan. 6 rally in D.C. that resulted in violence and death at the Capitol.” Thomas wrote to the Thomas Clerk World email list, “I owe you all an apology. I have likely imposed on you my lifetime passions.” She continued, “Let’s pledge to not let politics divide THIS family, and learn to speak more gently and knowingly across the divide.” Multiple “former clerks, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because the listserv is private, verified the dispute in what is normally an affable setting.”

The [New York Times](#) (2/2, Liptak, 20.6M) reports, “The former clerks, like many Republicans, were deeply split over whether Mr. Trump’s efforts to overturn the election were legitimate.” Thomas “has been an enthusiastic proponent of Mr. Trump and expressed support for the Jan. 6 rally in the days leading up to it,” though “she has expressed no public views supporting Mr. Trump’s false claims that the election was stolen.” [USA Today](#) (2/2, Fritze, 12.7M) reports that Thomas’ “apology comes at a time of reckoning for conservatives, who must decide whether to continue to embrace Trump or return to a more traditional Republican approach to politics,” a debate that “is playing out visibly in the House of Representatives.”

January 6 Rally Organizers Plan MAGA Tour Targeting Republican Lawmakers. [ABC News](#) (2/2, Steakin, 2.44M) reports on its website that organizers for “March for Trump,” one of the groups behind “the Jan. 6 Trump rally that led to the deadly storming of the Capitol,” are preparing “another series of events across the country, along with a recruiting effort to attract 2022 primary challengers against Republicans who they say ‘betrayed’ former President Donald Trump.” March for Trump organizer Dustin Stockton “posted late last week” on the platform Substack “that he’s launching a cross-country ‘MAGA Sellout’ tour” from February to May, especially “targeting Republicans who voted to impeach” Trump, including Reps. Liz Cheney (R-WY), Adam Kinzinger (R-IL), and Tom Rice (R-SC).

Judge Delays Guantánamo Arraignments Amid Pandemic.

The [New York Times](#) (2/2, Rosenberg, 20.6M) reports that on Tuesday, Col. Charles Pritchard, a military judge, “indefinitely postponed the arraignment of three prisoners at Guantánamo Bay who were scheduled to make their first court appearance in 17 years of detention, finding that the coronavirus pandemic made it too risky to travel to the Navy base.” An “Indonesian prisoner known as Hambali, who has been held since 2003 as a former leader of a Southeast Asian extremist group, and two accused accomplices were scheduled to appear at the war court on Feb. 22.” Pritchard is the latest military judge “to postpone a proceeding as too risky in nearly a year of cancellations over the coronavirus,” and “suggested” in a seven-page order “that traveling to the base might not be safe until” fall.

Video Shows Greene Saying “Idiot” Parkland Survivor Is “Trained” Like “A Dog.”

[NBC News](#) (2/2, 4.91M) reports on its website that “a previously unreported video” shows Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-GA) “mock[ing] a Parkland shooting survivor as an ‘idiot’ who ‘only talks when he is scripted’ in a 2019 interview with a Georgia gun group.” In an April 2019 interview with Georgia Gun Owners, Inc. Greene said of David Hogg, “He is very trained. He’s like a dog. He’s completely trained.” Greene also “gleefully recounted her encounters with the teenage Hogg.” She said, “I confronted David Hogg twice and he ran away from me,” and she “bemoaned the ability of Hogg and other gun safety advocates to meet with lawmakers during a trip to the Capitol.”

Greene Liked Facebook Post Suggesting She Use Assault Rifle To “Clean House” In Congress. The [New York Daily News](#) (2/2, Sommerfeldt, 2.51M) reports Greene “indicated support on Facebook last year for using her assault rifle to ‘clean house’ on Capitol Hill.” On January 20, 2020, Greene posted a [photo](#) of herself “firing an MK18 assault rifle in a wooded area.” A Facebook user named Barry Wallace commented, “If she will do that in Washington, now that is how you clean house. If she does that their (sic) will be no pond to drain in Washington.” Greene “liked Wallace’s comment in response.” The Daily News says the post adds to “a tranche of disturbing social media posts for which the Georgia Republican is facing calls to be expelled from Congress.”

GOP Senators “Pile On” After McConnell Criticizes Greene. [CNN](#) (2/2, Zaslav, Raju, 89.21M) reports on its website that Republican senators “are losing patience” with Greene. After Senate Minority Leader McConnell “issued a rare and strong rebuke against the controversial Georgia lawmaker,” calling “looney lies and conspiracy theories” a “cancer” to the GOP, Republican senators “piled on.” Sen. Mitt Romney (R-UT) said, “I think our party has to make it very clear that she does not represent us in

any way. ... Our big tent is not large enough to both accommodate conservatives and kooks.” Sen. Kevin Cramer (R-ND) “went as far to say Tuesday that he’d have a ‘hard time’ supporting Greene staying on the House Education and Labor Committee after she sided with the notion that the 2018 Parkland massacre was a “false flag” operation.” Cramer said, “Personally I’d have a hard time supporting, for example, her positions on the school shootings being staged and being on the Education Committee. ... Real authority has moral authority.” [The Hill](#) (2/2, Carney, 5.69M) also reports on Romney’s comments.

A [Washington Post](#) (2/2, 10.52M) editorial says McConnell’s statement “was reassuring: At least there is a battle over the soul of the Republican Party.” The Post adds that McConnell “is nothing if not shrewd, and presumably his statement also reflects a calculation that Ms. Greene and her type of politics are bad for the Republican Party. That provides some hope – however slim – that this once-proud party might return to its senses.”

Greene responded to the criticism in a [tweet](#) Tuesday. She wrote, “Too bad a few Republican Senators are obsessing over me, instead of preparing to defend President Trump from the rabid radical left. Focus on ending the witch hunt. Do your job!”

Republicans To Discuss Greene, Cheney In Private Meeting Wednesday. The [New York Times](#) (2/2, Edmondson, 20.6M) says Republicans “face a turning point on Wednesday as House leaders confront dueling calls to punish two members: one for spreading conspiracy theories and endorsing political violence, and the other for voting to impeach former President Donald J. Trump.” While Trump critics want to “strip [Greene] of her committee assignments for endorsing false claims, bigoted language and violent behavior, including calling for the execution of top Democrats,” Trump “loyalists want to strip” Rep. Liz Cheney (R-WY) of her leadership post “as payback for her vote to impeach.” The Times says their fates, “which are expected to be discussed at a private meeting among Republicans on Wednesday, are now a proxy battle for the party’s future, prompting a clash among its top leadership.”

The [Washington Post](#) (2/2, DeBonis, Kane, 10.52M) says House Republicans are “facing pressure to swiftly remove” Greene from two House committees. House Minority Leader McCarthy is “at the center of the pressure.” McCarthy, who “has maintained his position as the top House Republican leader by hewing closely to Trump and an evolving GOP electorate that eagerly embraced the former president’s hard-edge populism while casting aside much of the party’s conservative orthodoxy,” is “well-positioned to succeed [House Speaker] Pelosi...in the upcoming midterm elections, but he is now facing an intraparty crisis following the Capitol riot – one that some Republicans say has been exacerbated by McCarthy’s own vacillations in the four weeks since.”

A [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/2, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) editorial says if House Republicans choose to punish Cheney but remain silent about Greene, they deserve to remain in the minority.

DCCC Ads Tie Republicans To Greene And QAnon. The [New York Times](#) (2/2, Epstein, 20.6M) reports that “as Republicans splinter over how to deal with” Greene, “Democrats are seizing on the infighting to make her the avatar for an array of G.O.P. lawmakers.” On Tuesday, the DCCC “began a \$500,000 advertising campaign on television and online tying eight House Republicans,” including McCarthy, “to Ms. Greene and QAnon, an effort to force them to make a public affirmation about Ms. Greene.” The Times adds, “Like the Republican ads that flooded the airwaves last year featuring grainy images” of Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY), the Democratic ads feature Greene and Rep. Lauren Boebert (R-CO), “who has also expressed support for QAnon, as much as the candidates they are attacking.”

Ocasio-Cortez Says Capitol Riot Compounded Previous Trauma From Sexual Assault.

The [New York Times](#) (2/2, Glueck, 20.6M) reports Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY) revealed Monday that “she was a sexual assault survivor, a disclosure she made during a strikingly personal and harrowing recounting of her experiences during the pro-Trump riot at the U.S. Capitol last month.” During an [Instagram Live](#) appearance, Ocasio-Cortez said, “I’m a survivor of sexual assault. ... And I haven’t told many people that in my life. But when we go through trauma, trauma compounds on each other.”

[NBC Nightly News](#) (2/2, story 7, 1:25, 6.35M) reported Ocasio-Cortez “shar[ed] a harrowing and emotional account of what happened to her during the Capitol riot. ... Afraid rioters were coming after her, she hid in a bathroom inside her private office.” Ocasio-Cortez: “And I’m like this. And the door hinge is right here. And I just hear, ‘Where is she? Where is she?’ I mean, I thought I was going to die.”

[USA Today](#) (2/2, Dastagir, 12.7M) reports that following “her harrowing account of how she hid from a violent mob on Jan. 6, Ocasio-Cortez received an outpouring of support from colleagues and other survivors who saw themselves in her story. But some critics derided her and claimed she was weaponizing trauma for political gain.” According to trauma experts, her “reaction is normal and expected, and her account aligns with what science shows happens to a mind and body under extreme forms of stress.”

Robin Givhan writes in the [Washington Post](#) (2/2, 10.52M) that Ocasio-Cortez “had the tone of someone who had been told more than once that her concerns were an overreaction and that her fears about her safety were unfounded – which is to say that her voice rang with the exasperation that’s familiar to so many women and people of color. She was the very definition of a rattled and shellshocked citizen, someone who had been through an acute trauma but one that had been brewing for a long time.”

House Managers And Trump Defense Team File Briefs For Impeachment Trial.

All three broadcast networks covered the filing of briefs from both the House managers and the defense team in former President Donald Trump’s impeachment trial, set to begin next Tuesday. On [ABC World News Tonight](#) (2/2, story 4, 2:45, 8.01M), David Muir said House Democrats “will argue the former president was, quote, ‘singularly responsible for the deadly Capitol siege.’” ABC’s Rachel Scott said Trump’s lawyers say Trump “did nothing wrong, claiming when he told this to his supporters...” Trump:

"We fight like hell. And if you don't fight like hell, you're not going to have a country anymore." Scott: "...that he was talking 'about the need to fight for election security in general.' They say the First Amendment entitles Trump to 'express his belief that the election results were suspect,' claiming there is 'insufficient evidence' to prove him wrong. This is not true. There have been multiple audits and recounts, and judges rejected more than 60 lawsuits."

Kris Van Cleave said on the [CBS Evening News](#) (2/2, story 2, 2:25, O'Donnell, 4.87M) that Democrats call Trump "'singularly responsible' for inciting the assault on the Capitol January 6, while Mr. Trump's legal team argues his remarks that day are protected by the First Amendment. ... Trump's team also plans to argue his second impeachment trial is unconstitutional, since he's no longer president, a view not shared by most legal experts. His lawyers also plan to reference Mr. Trump's debunked claim of a stolen election, a move criticized even by Senate Republican jurors." Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC): "That's not a winning argument." Van Cleave: "Still, after 45 Republicans voted to dismiss the trial in a test vote last week, some Democrats see conviction as virtually impossible." [NBC Nightly News](#) (2/2, story 6, 1:55, Holt, 6.35M) similarly summarized the two sides' positions.

The [AP](#) (2/2, Tucker, Jalonick) says "the dueling filings offer the first public glimpse of the arguments that will be presented to the Senate beginning next week. The impeachment trial represents a remarkable reckoning with the violence in the Capitol last month, which the senators witnessed firsthand, and with Trump's presidency overall. Held in the very chamber where the insurrectionists stood on Jan. 6, it will pit Democratic demands for a final measure of accountability against the desire of many Republicans to turn the page and move on."

The [New York Times](#) (2/2, Fandos, Haberman, 20.6M) reports, "In [an 80-page brief](#) filed on Tuesday, the managers outlined the arguments they planned to make" next week, "spinning a vivid narrative of a harrowing day when lawmakers were forced to flee as a violent pro-Trump mob breached the Capitol." In Trump's "own shorter filing, specked with typos and stripped of the former president's usual bombast, his lawyers flatly denied that he had incited the attack and repeatedly argued that the Senate 'lacks jurisdiction' to try a former president." [USA Today](#) (2/2, Jansen, 12.7M) reports, "Trump's team argues in the [14-page Tuesday filing](#) that remarks Trump made about the election were protected by free speech and denied he played any part in inciting the deadly attack" at the Capitol.

The [Washington Post](#) (2/2, Gardner, Demirjian, 10.52M) reports, "The House's nine impeachment managers...argued that [Trump] is guilty of high crimes and misdemeanors, the threshold for conviction laid out in the Constitution, primarily because he used the powers of his office to advance his personal political interests at the expense of the nation." While Trump's attorneys "stopped short of embracing his baseless claims that the election was rigged, they defended his right to argue that massive fraud led to his defeat." The [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/2, Ballhaus, Hughes, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports that Senate Democrats "were watching to see whether the impeachment managers planned to focus solely on Mr. Trump's speech on the Ellipse the day of the attack or to argue that his remarks were part of a larger effort to stir up an angry mob."

[Politico](#) (2/2, Desiderio, 6.73M) reports that Trump's lawyers, Bruce Castor and David Schoen, "advanced the former president's false claims that the election results were 'suspect,' asserting that Trump has a First Amendment right to express that view. 'Insufficient evidence exists upon which a reasonable jurist could conclude that the 45th president's statements were accurate or not, and he therefore denies they were false,' Castor and Schoen wrote, adding that Trump 'denies' it is false to say he won the election 'in a landslide.'" The [New York Daily News](#) (2/2, Goldiner, 2.51M) notes that "Trump's legal team embarrassingly misspelled the word 'United' – you know, as in United States Senate – on the first page of their impeachment defense brief." In an op-ed for the [New York Times](#) (2/2, 20.6M), Bob Bauer, who served as White House counsel to President Barack Obama, says the Republican argument "that a president can escape the consequences of egregious, impeachable conduct, and in particular disqualification from future office, so long as the Senate runs out of time to try the case before" a president's term ends "wholly misconstrues the text, history and structure of the Constitution's impeachment clause." Republican senators "are effectively seeking to establish a 'loophole' in the critical constitutional mechanism for holding presidents accountable for high crimes and misdemeanors."

Ruth Marcus writes in the [Washington Post](#) (2/2, 10.52M) that while Trump "will be acquitted because not enough Republicans will vote to make up the two-thirds majority needed for conviction," that "disappointing reality does not mean the trial will be a waste of time or even counterproductive. To the contrary...the magnitude of Trump's misconduct requires that the Senate proceed regardless of the outcome." Marcus argues that "dropping the matter" would "represent an enormous collective shrug at Trump's abuses."

Jennifer Rubin writes in the [Washington Post](#) (2/2, 10.52M) that the impeachment trial "is necessary to remind the country of the Big Lie that Republicans embraced and the horrendous violence that ensued. It is necessary to force Republicans to make a choice: Support secession, or support the Constitution." Rubin argues, "The vast majority of Republicans will refuse to convict because it would mean acknowledging their own complicity in riling up the MAGA base." [Reuters](#) (2/2), [Bloomberg](#) (2/2, Niquette, House, 3.57M), the [Los Angeles Times](#) (2/2, 3.37M), [Axios](#) (2/2, Perano, 1.26M), [The Hill](#) (2/2, Easley, 5.69M), and the [CNN](#) (2/2, Herb, Raju, 89.21M) website also have reports.

Kaine Drops Censure Effort, Citing Lack Of Support. [USA Today](#) (2/2, Elbeshbishi, 12.7M) reports, "After floating the idea last week of filing a motion to censure" Trump, Sen. Tim Kaine (D-VA) said Tuesday that he will not do so "due to the lack of support from his colleagues." Kaine said, "We don't have enough support on the Republican side because they don't want to bar Trump from running from office and I don't have enough support on the Democratic side because for most of my colleagues, it's impeachment or nothing." However, [Fox News](#) (2/2, Barrabi, 23.99M) reports on its website that Senate Majority Leader Schumer "left open the possibility Tuesday that Democrats could move to censure" Trump if he is not convicted. Schumer told reporters, "I think [Trump] should be tried. I hope he will vote to be convicted. Anything past that is something we can discuss, but he deserves

conviction, nothing less.”

Wyoming Republicans Angry Over Cheney’s Impeachment Vote. The [Washington Post](#) (2/2, Samuels, 10.52M) reports that Rep. Liz Cheney (R-WY), “a star of the Republican Party widely seen as a potential future House speaker,” has “suddenly emerged as a vivid example of something completely different – a traditional Republican who may no longer have a home in a party dominated by Trump and the far right.” The Post adds, “No matter that she voted with [President] Trump more than 90 percent of the time,” her “reputation has boiled down to a simple question: whether she is for Trump or against Trump. And, as far as many people [in Wyoming] are concerned, with her Jan. 13 impeachment vote, Cheney staked her claim.”

Study: US Cities Undercounting Greenhouse Gas Emissions.

The [New York Times](#) (2/2, Schwartz, 20.6M) reports [a study](#) published Tuesday in the journal Nature Communications says US cities are undercounting the amount of greenhouse gasses they emit. The Times says the “average error is nearly 20 percent,” according to the study. The researchers “suggested that if that error was consistent across all American cities, the resulting annual missed emissions would be nearly one-quarter higher than those of the entire state of California.” The Times says since hundreds of US cities “have pledged to greatly reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, accurate measurement is an essential element of knowing where they stand and whether they are making progress toward meeting their goals,” but “there is not yet a consistent way for them to measure the amount of carbon dioxide or to gauge any reductions. The new research shows that voluntary efforts by cities to measure those emissions are inconsistent and flawed.”

MSNBC Leads Cable News Networks In Prime-Time, With Fox Third.

The [AP](#) (2/2, Bauder) reports, “Several programs on MSNBC and CNN had their most-watched months ever in January,” Nielsen said Monday. For the weekday prime-time schedule, “MSNBC averaged 3.31 million viewers, CNN had 3.12 million and Fox News Channel had 2.89 million. Fox has been the top-rated cable news network for 19 years, and this represented the first month it finished third to its rivals since 1999.”

WPost Analysis: Hannity “Working Through A Process.” The [Washington Post](#) (2/2, Ellison, Barr, 10.52M) has a feature on the role of Sean Hannity at Fox, writing that since President Donald Trump lost his reelection bid, Hannity “seems to have been working through a process, live and on camera. ... For a few weeks, it manifested as the denial shared by his fellow believers in the ex-president’s unsupported claims of election fraud.” After President Biden was sworn in, Hannity “pivoted to the next stage – anger. ... More recently, he has displayed something closer to depression, as he engages his viewers in a session of public mourning.”

Politico CEO To Leave Company.

The [New York Times](#) (2/2, Robertson, 20.6M) reports Politico CEO Patrick Steel “said on Tuesday that he will leave the company this summer. In an email to the staff, Mr. Steel, a former investment banker who was a special assistant to President Bill Clinton, said he had decided it was ‘the right time to start the next chapter of my career.’” Steel became CEO in 2017.

Nevada Democrats Push For First-In-The-Nation Primary.

The [AP](#) (2/2) reports Nevada Democrats are making an effort to move their state to first in the presidential primary season “as early as 2024 – a timeline that reflects doubts that [President] Biden will seek a second term and early preparation for the possibility of a competitive nomination fight.” The “behind-the-scenes lobbying, led by former Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, seeks to capitalize on the party’s discontent with Iowa’s and New Hampshire’s performances last year.” The state is also considering switching from a caucus to a primary.

Progressive PAC Takes Aim At Manchin And Sinema, Up For Reelection In 2024.

[Politico](#) (2/2, Barron-Lopez, Otterbein, 6.73M) reports the “progressives” at the No Excuses PAC “are starting a search for candidates to challenge incumbent Democrats they say are standing in the way of ambitious action to end the coronavirus pandemic and revive the economy,” primarily Sens. Joe Manchin (D-WV) and Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ), “who aren’t up for reelection until 2024.” The [New York Times](#) (2/2, Medina, 20.6M) reports Arizona Democrats are expressing frustration with Sinema’s moderate stance, as well as that of new Sen. Mark Kelly (D-AZ), and “are eager for their senators not just to embrace the middle, but also to adopt the policies the left is pressing for as well.”

North Carolina Democrats Prepare For Crowded Senate Primary.

Under the headline “North Carolina Dems Brace For A Messy Senate Primary,” [Politico](#) (2/2, Arkin, 6.73M) previews the open-seat 2022 race in that state, where state Sen. Jeff Jackson “entered the race last week with a splashy video promising a 100-county grassroots campaign and dismissing an agenda ‘imported from D.C. or donors,’ a not-so-subtle dig at the unsuccessful 2020 campaign.” State Sen. Sydney Batch, former state Supreme Court Chief Justice Cheri Beasley, ex-DOT Secretary Anthony Foxx, Charlotte Mayor Vi Lyles, ex-state Sen. Erica Smith, and Attorney General Josh Stein are seen as other possible contenders.

Republican Bartos Planning Pennsylvania Senate Run.

The [Philadelphia Inquirer](#) (2/2, Tamari) reports Republican real estate developer Jeff Bartos, a 2018 candidate for lieutenant governor, “is taking steps toward a run for U.S. Senate, signaling that he is likely to formally join the race in the coming weeks.”

Bartos said in an interview, "I am very seriously considering a run for the Senate. We're taking the next steps towards making it official." Sen. Pat Toomey (R-PA) is retiring.

Poll Shows Decline In Newsom's Popularity, But Skepticism About Recall Election.

The [Los Angeles Times](#) (2/2, Wilson, Luna, 3.37M) reports a UC Berkeley Institute of Governmental Studies shows California Gov. Gavin Newsom (D) has suffered a drop in popularity, "driven largely by dissatisfaction over the state's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and adding fuel to a Republican-led recall campaign." The poll "found that just 31% of those surveyed thought that Newsom and other state government leaders have done an excellent or good job handling the pandemic, while 23% said they have done a fair job, and 43% called it a poor job." However, the [San Francisco Chronicle](#) (2/2, Gardiner, 2.44M) reports the poll found that backers of the recall "still have an uphill climb. ... A total of 45% of registered voters who responded said they opposed a recall, versus 36% who would vote to remove the governor and 19% who were undecided." [Fox News](#) (2/2, McFall, 23.99M) reports on its website, "California Republicans say they have so far collected 1.3 million signatures, just shy of the 1.5 million needed by mid-March to prompt a mid-year election."

Schiff Reportedly Seeking Appointment As California AG.

[Axios](#) (2/2, Nichols, Goba, 1.26M) reports Rep. Adam Schiff (D-CA) "is quietly lobbying" California Gov. Gavin Newsom (D) "and his allies to appoint him California's next attorney general, according to people familiar with the matter." The job is being vacated by HHS Secretary-designate Becerra. Axios says if Newsom "selects Schiff, chair of the House Intelligence Committee and a confidant of Speaker Nancy Pelosi, House Democrats would lose a powerful party voice in the U.S. House and temporarily give up a seat in their slim 221-211 majority." But Pelosi "has given her approval to Schiff's bid, a clear sign she thinks she can manage without him, according to people familiar with the matter."

WPost Analysis: Dr. Biden Made Clear She Plans "To Make A Mark."

A [Washington Post](#) (2/2, McCarthy, Yuan, 10.52M) analysis says that within "two-and-a-half days on the job," the First Lady "made it clear that she intends to make a mark. And quickly." Dr. Biden has not only "long acted as her husband's conscience and confidant," playing an instrumental role in "his selection" of Vice President Harris, but has "indicated that she will also be proactive in her role as an avatar of the administration," as well as "her own priorities." Dr. Biden, who is also the "only first lady to hold a paying job outside the White House during her tenure," clearly defined "her main issues – military families, education and cancer resources" before arriving in the White House, "and in the early weeks of the administration, she's reinforced her interest in those issues with visible gestures."

Financial International News

Central Banks Take Rare Step Of Flagging Currency Sales In Advance.

The [Financial Times](#) (2/2, Szalay, Subscription Publication, 1.48M) reports, "Several central banks have ventured into unusual territory in the opening weeks of this year, announcing currency sales in advance as they..."

IMF May Not Recoup \$350M Emergency Aid Package Sent To Myanmar Days Before Coup.

[Reuters](#) (2/2, Lawder) reports the IMF last week "sent \$350 million in cash to the Myanmar government, part of a no-strings-attached emergency aid package to help the country battle the coronavirus pandemic," days before "military leaders seized power and detained elected leader Aung San Suu Kyi and other elected officials, in what the U.S. State Department said on Tuesday constituted a coup." There seems to be "little the IMF can do to claw back the funds, part of rapid-disbursing COVID-19 financing programs with almost no conditions and approved by the IMF board on Jan. 13, sources familiar with the payments and international finance experts said." An IMF spokesperson said in an email, "We are following the unfolding developments closely. We are deeply concerned about the impact of events on the economy and on the people of Myanmar."

World Bank Suspends \$100M Education Aid Payment To DRC Over Fraud, Corruption.

[Bloomberg](#) (2/2, Kavanagh, 3.57M) reports the World Bank "has suspended a \$100 million payment to support the Democratic Republic of Congo's education system amid an investigation into fraud and misuse of public funds in the sector." The Bank "was set to make the initial payment on its four-year \$800 million program in December, to expand access to schooling throughout the country," but "decided to postpone the disbursement after an investigation by Congo's Inspector General of Finances 'revealed a number of shortcomings and alleged cases of fraud and corruption in connection with the use of public funds in the sector, as well as weaknesses in internal controls,'" according to a World Bank statement Monday.

Leading International News

Administration Says Burma Military Takeover Was A Coup, Will Review US Aid.

The [Washington Post](#) (2/2, Hudson, 10.52M) reports that the Biden Administration has concluded that the military takeover of

Burma “constituted a military coup d’etat, triggering a review of U.S. assistance to the country, according to State Department officials.” The Post says the determination “represents the strongest move President Biden has taken since the military rolled through Myanmar’s capital Monday.” On its website, [CNN](#) (2/2, Hansler, 89.21M) reports in a call with reporters, “a state Department officials” said, “After careful review of the facts and circumstances, we have assessed that Aung San Suu Kyi, the leader of Burma’s ruling party, and Win Myint, the duly elected head of government, were deposed in a military coup on February 1. ... We continue to call on the Burmese military leadership to release them and all other detained civil society and political leaders immediately and unconditionally.”

[Politico](#) (2/2, Toosi, Seligman, 6.73M) says as a result of the designation, the US “will move to end the little direct financial aid it offers the country’s government, State Department officials said. They added that U.S. assistance that goes directly to Myanmar’s people, including civil society or persecuted Rohingya refugees, will continue, but that the U.S. will be undertaking a broader review of its aid to the country.”

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/2, Mandhana, Strobel, Solomon, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports that the transition from military rule to democracy in Burma was hailed as a strategic victory for the US, but [Reuters](#) (2/2, Pamuk, Lewis) calls the coup “a significant blow for the Biden administration and its effort to forge a robust Asia-Pacific policy to stand up to China.”

[Reuters](#) (2/2) reports that Suu Kyi’s party, the National League for Democracy, “called on Tuesday for her immediate release.” Her “whereabouts remained unknown more than 24 hours after her arrest in a military takeover that derailed Myanmar’s tentative progress towards full democracy.” The [AP](#) (2/2) reports that as of Tuesday, “hundreds of members of Myanmar’s Parliament were under house arrest...confined to their government housing complex and guarded by soldiers.” A detained lawmaker “said he and about 400 others spent a sleepless night, worried they might be taken away, but were otherwise OK. ... He said Suu Kyi was not being held with them.”

A [New York Times](#) (2/2, Beech, 20.6M) analysis says Burma “presented a facade of democracy to the world,” but “the generals who had ruled the country for nearly half a century still dominated the economy and the halls of power.” By “reasserting their command, the generals have ripped apart a prized project: a carefully constructed political system decades in the making that allowed them to camouflage their fists behind a veneer of democracy.” The [Washington Post](#) (2/2, Mahtani, 10.52M) says the military leaders “appeared to have a plan for their coup. ... But a day after ousting the civilian government,” they “have not made clear what comes next.”

Biden Not Rushing To Engage With China.

[Reuters](#) (2/2, Brunnstrom, Lewis) reports the Biden Administration indicated Tuesday that “it is in no hurry to engage with China and would do so once it was in ‘lockstep’ with allies and partners.” During a briefing, White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said “she could not say when a call might take place between Chinese President Xi Jinping and President Joe Biden, who has spoken to many world leaders since taking office on Jan. 20.” With the confirmation of Secretary of State Blinken, she added, “there are additional layers to engage with the Chinese.” Reuters adds Psaki “and State Department spokesman Ned Price said speaking to allies and partners came first.”

Chinese Activist Disappeared While Trying To Fly To US.

The [New York Times](#) (2/2, 20.6M) reports that “after learning that his wife had cancer, Yang Maodong, a prominent democracy activist in China, rushed to get a visa and air ticket to join her in the United States. But Mr. Yang never landed there.” According to the Times, “Border inspection officers at Pudong International Airport in Shanghai stopped him from joining a flight to San Francisco last week,” and “calls to his phone over recent days have not been answered.” The Times adds that Yang ‘s case “may become an early sign of how Beijing and the Biden administration handle contentious human rights issues.”

Prominent Cleric Killed In Kabul Bombing.

The [AP](#) (2/2, Faiez) reports that “a prominent cleric and his driver were killed in an explosion from a bomb stuck to their car, one of a series of bombings around Kabul on Tuesday that also wounded seven people.” According to the AP, “The first bomb was attached to a military vehicle in central Kabul and wounded two military personnel. ... An hour later, the second bomb, in the northern part of the city, killed two people, including cleric Mohammad Atef, and wounded two others.” The AP says Atef “headed the central council of Jamiat-e-Eslah of Afghanistan, an Islamist nonprofit organization based.”

AEI’s Schieber: North Korea Stepping Up Efforts To Block Flow Of Outside Information.

In an op-ed for the [Washington Post](#) (2/2, 10.52M), Olivia Schieber of the American Enterprise Institute writes that as “life in North Korea looks likely to get even worse in the months ahead, the regime is doubling down on its efforts to prevent the flow of outside information into the country.” Last year, North Korea “passed a slew of new laws to rein in what it calls ‘reactionary ideology and culture.’” Schieber adds, “The regime has cause for concern. A 2019 study of 200 defectors showed that more than 90 percent had watched foreign or South Korean media before they defected.” While the US and South Korea “are favored scapegoats for North Korea’s woes,” as North Korean leader Kim Jong-un’s admission during last month’s party congress that “his country is in crisis” and “the ruthless crackdown on information make clear, the power Kim fears most is his people’s.”

Navalny Sentenced To More Than 2 1/2 Years In Prison.

The [AP](#) (2/2, Litvinova, Isachenkov) reports a court in Moscow “ordered Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny to prison for more than 2 1/2 years, finding that he violated the terms of his probation while recuperating in Germany from nerve-agent poisoning.” The [New York Times](#) (2/2, Troianovski, 20.6M) says the decision is likely to send Navalny “for a lengthy term in a far-flung penal colony for the first time.” While “the decision to send him to prison removes his direct voice from Russia’s political landscape,” it “could energize his supporters and further rally Russian opposition to [Russian President Vladimir] Putin around the figure of Mr. Navalny.”

The [Washington Post](#) (2/2, Khurshudyan, Dixon, 10.52M) says Navalny “again accused Putin of ordering the nerve agent attack that nearly killed him in August and rejected the case against him – alleged probation violations – as political retribution less than three weeks after he returned to Russia.” In “an emotional address to the court, Navalny said Putin would be remembered in history as a ‘Vladimir the poisoner.’” [Reuters](#) (2/2, Tsvetkova, Osborn) reports Navalny supporters, “on hearing the ruling, encouraged people to gather in central Moscow though riot police had already taken up position. The Moscow metro shut down three central stations. Reuters reporters saw hundreds of protesters and the police detain some of them.” [Axios](#) (2/2, Lawler, 1.26M) provides similar coverage.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/2, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports Secretary of State Blinken said the US was “deeply concerned” by the sentence. [Politico Europe](#) (2/2, 15K) reports that “more than a dozen Western diplomats also attended Tuesday’s hearing – which was open to the media but closed to film crews and photographers.” Russia’s Foreign Ministry “slammed their presence as an attempt at interfering with Russia’s domestic affairs.” [ABC World News Tonight](#) (2/2, story 7, 1:20, Muir, 8.01M) provided similar coverage.

A [New York Times](#) (2/2, 20.6M) editorial says while the ruling “would appear to be a clear victory for Mr. Putin,” in “this David v. Goliath saga, the 44-year-old Mr. Navalny has succeeded through raw courage and perseverance in putting Mr. Putin on the defensive. The imprisonment was Mr. Navalny’s move. Mr. Putin had tried for years to give him only brief sentences to avoid making him a martyr.” By voluntarily returning to Russia, “and then releasing a devastating YouTube video showing the obscenely opulent palace Mr. Putin was building himself on the Black Sea, Mr. Navalny left the president little choice but to dispatch him to a labor camp, and thus transform him into a powerful symbol of resistance.”

In an editorial, the [Washington Post](#) (2/2, 10.52M) calls on Western democracies to do “what they can to help this unprecedented challenge to Mr. Putin’s autocracy survive and grow.” While “the United States and many European capitals have been rhetorically supportive of Mr. Navalny,” the “Biden administration and European Union should follow up with sanctions against the Russian officials involved in the latest repression – and they should heed the pleas of Mr. Navalny for action to expose and freeze the illicit assets held by Mr. Putin and his cronies outside Russia.” Likewise, a [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/2, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) editorial calls for tougher Western sanctions. The Journal also warns Putin could launch an “external provocation” to draw attention away from Russia’s domestic situation.

Italy’s President Expected To Ask Draghi To Form Unity Government.

[Reuters](#) (2/2, Balmer, Amante) reports that it appears Italian President Sergio Mattarella will “ask former European Central Bank chief Mario Draghi to form a government of national unity to tackle the twin coronavirus and economic crises battering the country.” Mattarella “summoned Draghi for talks on Wednesday...after hearing that efforts to salvage the collapsed coalition of Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte had failed.” Mattarella told reporters, “I have a duty to appeal to all political forces [to support] a high-profile government.” The [New York Times](#) (2/2, 20.6M) says “news of Mr. Draghi’s entrance into the arena delighted some of Italy’s most pro-European politicians and those critical of Mr. Conte’s lack of experience.” But the [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/2, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) says it is unclear if a majority in Italy’s parliament would back Draghi as prime minister, even if he indicates an interest in the position.

Iran Agrees To Free Crew From Seized South Korean Vessel.

The [New York Times](#) (2/2, Choe, Fassihi, 20.6M) reports that the governments of Iran and South Korea on Tuesday announced that Iran agreed to free the 19 crew members of the Hankuk Chemi, a South Korea-flagged ship that the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps took into custody on January 4. The move “appeared to be the first significant gesture by the Iranians to de-escalate the problem,” and “may also have been intended to send an indirect signal to the Biden administration, which has indicated it wants to avoid a further deterioration in relations with Iran after they worsened sharply under” former President Donald Trump. In exchange, South Korea “said it had pledged speedy action to address Iran’s complaints about its inability to access \$7 billion in Iranian money that has been frozen in South Korean banks because of American sanctions reimposed by Mr. Trump.”

Housing

AEI: Use Of Appraisal Waivers Skyrockets Amid Pandemic.

[National Mortgage News](#) (2/2, Sinnock) reports that the use of appraisal waivers has “soared in the current low-rate environment, according to the American Enterprise Institute’s latest analysis of government-sponsored enterprise data.” Almost 46% of loans now have one, according to Tobias Peter, director of research at AEI’s housing center. He explained, “In the low interest-rate environment we have seen this hockey-stick phenomenon where waivers have become much more prevalent.” NMN reports, “Over the past several months, the gap between waiver use rates at Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac has narrowed, said Peter, who noted that Fannie originally had a lead because it has a first mover advantage. In November, however, Freddie’s share was 48%

and Fannie's was 46%."

Biden Administration Planning To Release Puerto Rico Aid.

[HousingWire](#) (2/2, 7K) reports the Biden Administration "has begun making plans to release \$1.3 billion in aid that Puerto Rico can use to protect against future climate disasters, alongside the removal of various spending restrictions Housing and Urban Development originally put in place by the Trump administration following Hurricane Maria in 2017, the New York Times reported." Administration officials reportedly "intend to ease the limits that HUD, under the Trump administration, placed on \$4.9 billion in aid on the morning of Jan. 20, prior to Trump leaving office. Officials told the Times this is the first step toward addressing racial inequality through climate change policies."

Urban Institute: Renting May Now Be A Better Financial Option Than Buying.

[DS News](#) (2/2, Babb) reports that although buying has historically "been a better investment than renting," this "may no longer be the case – one of several highlights from the Urban Institute's Housing Finance Policy Center." DS News says renting "may be more economical than buying, and the rates of growth for the highest- and lowest-priced homes are converging – a few key takeaways from the Urban Institute's Housing Finance Policy Center, authored by several research fellows."

Servicer Valon Raises \$50M In Series A Funding.

[Mortgage Professional America](#) (2/2, Kitai) reports Valon, a servicing firm, "has closed \$50 million in series A funding, while also obtaining approval from Fannie Mae to service its government sponsored home loans." CEO Andrew Wang is now "setting lofty goals and taking on big players as Valon prepares for its next stage of growth," challenging "the dominance of Black Knight by developing his proprietary technology and proving its efficacy within Valon's own servicing operations." [HousingWire](#) (2/2, 7K) provides additional coverage.

Analysis: Biden Administration Faces An Uphill Battle To Close Racial Homeownership Gaps.

In a paywalled analysis, [American Banker](#) (2/2, Berry, Subscription Publication, 27K) says, "Decades after redlining and housing discrimination were outlawed, nonwhite Americans still own their homes at far lower rates than white Americans." American Banker says "most homebuyers don't understand" the differences between FHA loans, VA loans, and GSE conventional loans, or their relative costs, and the "policies that end up steering minority borrowers away from conventional loans and toward costlier loans were largely a byproduct of the housing bubble and policies put in place by the Obama administration in its wake." According to the piece, "If the Biden administration wants to make the American Dream as real for nonwhite Americans as it has been for white Americans, it has its work cut out for it. But a significant part of closing that disparity of experience means finding sustainable ways to make homeownership more available and more profitable for nonwhite borrowers – and banks."

Markets

10-Year Yield Ticks Up Again.

[MarketWatch](#) (1/27, 2.64M) reports the 10-year Treasury yield rose to 1.115 percent.

Dollar Stays Flat.

[Reuters](#) (2/3, Buckland) reports, "The dollar traded near a two-month high versus the euro on Wednesday as investors looked to a widening disparity between the strength of the U.S. and Europe's pandemic recoveries." The dollar "was little changed at \$1.2043 per euro in the Asian session, after strengthening to \$1.20115 overnight for the first time since Dec. 1." The broader dollar index "was mostly flat at 91.046 after rising to a two-month high of 91.283 in the previous session." The US currency "was little changed at 104.985 yen after gaining to 105.17 overnight for the first time since Nov. 12."

Gold Edges Higher.

[Reuters](#) (2/2) reports spot gold on Wednesday "rose 0.1% to \$1,839.16 per ounce. U.S. gold futures added 0.4% to \$1,840.90."

Oil Rises.

[Reuters](#) (2/3, Zhang) reports, "Oil prices rose on Wednesday after hitting their highest in about a year in the previous session, boosted by an unexpected draw in U.S. crude and gasoline stocks, fuelling demand recovery hopes as OPEC+ forecasts the market will be in deficit in 2021." US West Texas Intermediate crude futures "climbed 39 cents, or 0.71%, to \$55.15 a barrel at 0744 GMT, for a third straight day of gains." Brent crude futures "rose 47 cents, or 0.82%, to \$57.93 a barrel, for a fourth day of gains after hitting \$58.05 on Tuesday, the highest since January last year."

Cybersecurity

Chinese Hackers Reportedly Tapped SolarWinds To Spy On US Payroll Agency.

[Reuters](#) (2/2, Bing, Stubbs, Satter, Menn) reports suspected Chinese hackers "exploited a flaw in software made by SolarWinds

Corp to help break into US government computers last year,” five people familiar with the matter told Reuters, “marking a new twist in a sprawling cybersecurity breach.” Two people briefed on the case “said FBI investigators recently found that the National Finance Center, a federal payroll agency inside the US Department of Agriculture, was among the affected organizations, raising fears that data on thousands of government employees may have been compromised.” Reuters was not able “to establish how many organizations were compromised by the suspected Chinese operation.” [Bloomberg](#) (2/2, 3.57M) reports suspected Chinese hackers “broke into US government computers last year by exploiting a flaw in software made by SolarWinds Corp.” The suspected Chinese hackers “exploited a different flaw in SolarWinds’s software than alleged Russian hackers used in a sprawling cyber-attack against the US government and private companies that was revealed in December.” [The Hill](#) (2/2, Castronuovo, 5.69M) reports a USDA spokesman initially “told Reuters that it had ‘notified all customers (including individuals and organizations) whose data has been affected by the SolarWinds Orion Code Compromise.’” In a follow-up statement, the agency “said that the NFC was not hacked and that ‘there was no data breach related to Solar Winds’ at the agency.” The Chinese foreign ministry “told the outlet that any reported cyberattack was a ‘complex technical issue.’”

FireEye CEO Discusses SolarWinds Hack Campaign. [Bloomberg](#) (2/3, 3.57M) reports FireEye Inc Chief Executive Officer Kevin Mandia “discusses the company’s fourth-quarter earnings with record revenue and what he has learned since discovering they were a victim in the sprawling SolarWinds espionage.” He “speaks with Emily Chang on ‘Bloomberg Technology.’”

Hackers Increase Healthcare-Related Attacks.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/2, Rundle, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports that hackers are expanding their efforts to steal information from healthcare-related institutions, and according to data from the US Department of Health and Human Services, more than 1 million people each month are affected by healthcare-related data breaches.

Sources Report On Efforts To Steal Information On Vaccine Programs.

[Business Insider](#) (2/2, Prothero, 2.74M) reports European and US intelligence officials “told Insider spies, hackers, criminals, and even economic analysts around the world are scrambling to access and steal information on various COVID-19 vaccine programs, with the most concerning activity being the theft of data from vaccine supply chains.” An intelligence official for a NATO member state, “It’s a mix of non-state actors – hackers trying to install ransomware on critical supply chains and maybe some of the more sophisticated terror groups probing for weaknesses – and state-backed intelligence services gobbling up all the information that can be found.” The source said, “The state actions are directed very clearly at vaccine supply chain information — some of which is open source, some not — and it’s basically everyone spying on each other.”

Defense Deputy Secretary Nominee Seeks Cyber Strategy Clarification.

[C4ISR & Networks](#) (2/2, Pomerleau) reports that, “while largely agreeing with the Defense Department’s more proactive approach to cyberspace in the last few years, President Joe Biden’s nominee for the No. 2 spot at the Pentagon has key questions about the defend forward concept.” Kathleen Hicks at her deputy defense secretary confirmation hearing February 2 before the Senate Armed Services Committee, said, “I am supportive of the approach. I think, if confirmed, what I would like to understand better is exactly how the authorities are being executed, what kind of oversight is involved, how we are consulting with allies and partners, whose systems we might operate on.” The DOD’s 2018 cybersecurity strategy “charges US Cyber Command to defend forward in cyberspace by getting as close to adversaries as possible to see what they’re planning, so the department can take action or inform others to prepare.” Hicks “recognized that the US has been forced to become more forward leaning in its posture.”

Opinion: The Government Needs To Improve Oversight Of Internet-Of-Things.

In a commentary in the [Washington Post](#) (2/2, 10.52M), Bruce Schneier writes, “large and small appliances, cars, medical devices, toys and...exercise machines are all computers at their core, and they’re all...vulnerable.” Every one of those devices “is a potential security risk, and all of those people are potential national security targets.” He argues, “Regulations that force manufacturers to provide better security for all of us are the only way to do that. We need minimum security standards for computers of all kinds.” He concludes, “I am much more worried about the political activists, journalists, human rights workers and oppressed minorities around the world who don’t have the money or expertise to secure their technology, or the information that would give them the ability to make informed choices on which technologies to choose.”

Legislators Seek Information On NSA Actions To Prevent Supply Chain Attacks.

[Gov Info Security](#) (2/2) reports that, “in light of the recent SolarWinds supply chain hack on government agencies and others, 10 Democratic lawmakers are asking the NSA to explain why it apparently did not take action after the 2012 Juniper Networks supply chain hack to help prevent similar attacks.” In a recent letter to NSA, the lawmakers state, “The American people have a right to know why NSA did not act after the Juniper hack to protect the government from the serious threat posed by supply chain hacks. A similar supply chain hack was used in the recent SolarWinds breach, in which several government agencies were compromised with malware snuck into the company’s software updates.”

TFI/Sanctions

Biden’s Options Limited In Responding To Myanmar Takeover.

[Reuters](#) (2/2, Lewis, Pamuk, Psadedakis) reports President Biden, “facing his first major international crisis after Myanmar’s military seized power, could impose a new program of sanctions, cut aid or target generals and the companies they run to pressure for a return to democracy.” How the Administration responds “will be an early test of Biden’s dual pledges to re-center human rights in U.S. foreign policy and work more closely with allies.” Biden “could establish a fresh sanctions program against Myanmar with an executive order that would declare a national emergency regarding developments in the country,” but experts say the US “has limited leverage over the generals that seized power, who have ties to powerful local companies but few overseas interests that could be impacted by financial sanctions.”

Commentary: US Must Ramp Up Sanctions Of Kremlin Elite’s “Entire Upper Ranks.”

In an op-ed for [The Hill](#) (2/2, 5.69M), Stephen Nix and Joshua Solomon say the Russian people “have embarked on one of the largest battles against kleptocracy, or the rule of thieves. They want their government to stop plundering their wealth and using it to hold onto power by any means.” The writers argue that while the Treasury Department “has a sanctions program that has frozen the assets of several dozen Kremlin officials and prevented them from traveling to the United States,” and Congress “has banned anonymous shell companies,” these measures “are insufficient in this fight.” The authors say the US “must dramatically increase its targeted sanctions program to include the entire upper ranks for the Kremlin elite, including top government officials, the heads of major corporations, and the leaders of the numerous Russian regions. Sanctions must also include the families and primary business associates of these individuals, in whose names the illicit wealth from such corruption are often registered.”

Federal Reserve

Fed Makes Headway With FedNow Payments Service; Aims For 2023 Release.

[American Banker](#) (2/2, Lang, Subscription Publication, 27K) reports the Fed has made substantial headway with its real-time payments system FedNow. The Fed has also narrowed its launch timetable to 2023. Kenneth Montgomery, first vice president and chief operating officer at the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, said, “In the 15 months we’ve been at this, we have made considerable progress and achievements in terms of getting the product to market, and all during a pandemic.”

NYTimes Analysis: Fed Has Poor Record Of Building A Diverse Workforce.

The [New York Times](#) (2/2, Smialek, 20.6M) reports in an analysis that while the Federal Reserve “dedicates research and attention to racial economic outcomes and publicly champions inclusion, it has had a poor record of building a work force that looks like the population it is meant to serve. ... When it comes to employing Black economists in particular, the central bank still falls short.” While officials have argued that “Ph.D. economists are heavily white and Asian,” a Times “analysis suggests the issue goes even beyond that. Black people are less represented within the Fed than in the field as a whole. Only two of the 417 economists, or 0.5 percent, on staff at the Fed’s board in Washington were Black, as of data the Fed provided last month. Black people make up 13 percent of America’s population and 3 to 4 percent of the U.S. citizens and permanent residents who graduate as Ph.D. economists each year.”

Kashkari Says COVID-19 Vaccination Key To Reviving MN Economy.

The [AP](#) (2/2, Karnowski) reports Minneapolis Fed President Neel Kashkari “said Tuesday that getting Minnesotans vaccinated against the coronavirus will be key to reviving the state’s economy.” Kashkari “told a legislative hearing that the country and state have made progress toward putting people back to work amid the pandemic.” Kashkari said, “We just need as many Americans and as many Minnesotans as possible to be vaccinated so that we can have confidence and we can restore much of the economy back to the way it was. ... But it’s really critical right now that the virus is in charge of the economy, and the sooner we can get the vast majority of Minnesotans and the vast majority of Americans vaccinated, the sooner we’ll be able to get back to normal.”

Kaplan Says No Systemic Concerns Amid GameStop Frenzy.

[Reuters](#) (2/2, Saphir) reports Dallas Fed President Robert Kaplan “said Tuesday that while the Fed’s massive bond-buying program is creating plenty of liquidity in financial markets, there are no signs of broad market instability at present.” Kaplan said during a CNBC interview, “I don’t see anything right now systemic,” though he “did not comment on GameStop directly, and instead addressed the broader question of how Fed policy affects financial markets.” Kaplan said, “Some of the current situation you are seeing – one of the factors – is there is a lot of liquidity, and some of that relates to Fed purchases of \$80 billion of Treasuries and \$40 billion of mortgage-backed securities every month: I think it’s wise for us to acknowledge that.”

[CNBC](#) (2/2, Cox, 7.34M) and [New York Magazine](#) (2/2, Dugan, 1.3M) also report.

Office of the Comptroller of the Currency

President Still Expected To Nominate Barr To OCC.

[CoinDesk](#) (2/2, De, 49K) reports, “We’re still waiting on confirmation hearings and votes for most of President Biden’s nominees for financial regulatory positions.” The President “has yet to officially confirm that Chris Brummer will be nominated to lead the Commodity Futures Trading Commission or that Michael Barr will be nominated to lead the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency.”

Olen Advocates For Biden To Name Baradaran To Helm OCC. In her [Washington Post](#) (2/2, 10.52M) column, Helaine Olen says the US “faces an overdue reckoning with how we’ve treated non-White Americans, such as the fact that for every dollar a White family with children possesses, a Black family with children has just 1 cent, while Hispanic families with children have 8 cents.” Olen adds the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency “is well positioned to help change this reality, as it implements and enforces laws on everything from fair housing to credit access in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods. And there is a perfect candidate to lead the agency: Mehrsa Baradaran.” A law professor at the University of California at Irvine, Baradaran “has spent her career explaining how financial injustice happens, why it persists and how to fix it. She understands that financial inclusion is central to the story of how people get ahead in America – and how financial exclusion keeps all too many down.”

Banks Rush Into Crypto-Custody Space After OCC Guidance.

[Forbes](#) (2/2, 10.33M) reports the OCC last July “published a letter stating that banks would now be permitted to provide custody services for crypto assets. It’s no surprise that financial institutions, preparing for a day when digital asset ownership is common, are rushing into the crypto-custody business.”

Separately, [Forbes](#) (2/2, Bambrough, 10.33M) reports, “The stablecoin market was set alight” by the OCC “when it said it would allow the use of stablecoins for bank payments.” [CoinDesk](#) (2/2, 49K) similarly reports that the growth in the stablecoin space “has corresponded with increased attention from regulators.” CoinDesk adds, “We can expect continued regulatory interest and activity in this area from around the world.”

Citi’s Fraser Creates New Operating Team To Address Concerns Raised By Regulators.

[Bloomberg](#) (2/2, Surane, 3.57M) reports Citigroup incoming CEO Jane Fraser “created a new global operating team aimed at improving accountability among its top executives, as the firm continues to address a litany of concerns raised by regulators last year.” The bank “was dinged last year by both the Federal Reserve and the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency for failings with its technology infrastructure and internal controls.” Citi “has vowed to rectify the problems regulators laid out, with Fraser leading much of the remediation effort.”

[Reuters](#) (2/2) provides similar coverage.

Bureau of Engraving and Printing

US Mint Struggles To Meet Demand For Silver, Gold Coins.

[Reuters](#) (2/2, Kumar) reports the US Mint “said on Tuesday it was unable to meet surging demand for its gold and silver bullion coins in 2020 and through January, due partly to pandemic-driven demand and plant capacity issues.” The Mint “had limited distribution of its silver coins to suppliers as it is currently changing the designs for its American Eagle Gold and Silver Bullion Coins.” The Mint in 2021 “has a limited window to produce its current gold and silver coins, with redesigned coins expected to debut in the summer. It is limiting distribution of its gold, silver and platinum coins to specific dealers because of heavy demand, and a limited number of suppliers of metals, it said in a statement.”

[Bloomberg](#) (2/2, Li, 3.57M) also reports.

Editorial Wrap-Up

New York Times.

“Aleksandr Navalny Is Resisting Putin, And Winning.” The [New York Times](#) (2/2, 20.6M) says while the ruling by a court in Moscow putting Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny in prison for more than 2 1/2 years “would appear to be a clear victory” for Russian President Vladimir Putin, in “this David v. Goliath saga, the 44-year-old Mr. Navalny has succeeded through raw courage and perseverance in putting Mr. Putin on the defensive. The imprisonment was Mr. Navalny’s move. Mr. Putin had tried for years to give him only brief sentences to avoid making him a martyr.” By voluntarily returning to Russia, “and then releasing a devastating YouTube video showing the obscenely opulent palace Mr. Putin was building himself on the Black Sea, Mr. Navalny left the president little choice but to dispatch him to a labor camp, and thus transform him into a powerful symbol of resistance.”

Washington Post.

“The GOP Is Having A Reckoning, And McConnell Seems To Be On The Right Side.” The [Washington Post](#) (2/2, 10.52M) says Senate Minority Leader McConnell’s statement of rebuke against Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-GA) “was reassuring: At least there is a battle over the soul of the Republican Party.” The Post adds that McConnell “is nothing if not shrewd, and presumably his statement also reflects a calculation that Ms. Greene and her type of politics are bad for the Republican Party. That provides some hope – however slim – that this once-proud party might return to its senses.”

“Navalny’s Fiery Indictment Of The ‘Small Man In A Bunker’ Could Rattle Putin’s Autocracy.” The [Washington Post](#) (2/2, 10.52M) calls on Western democracies to do “what they can to help” Alexei Navalny’s “unprecedented challenge” to Russian President Vladimir Putin’s “autocracy survive and grow.” While “the United States and many European capitals have been rhetorically supportive of Mr. Navalny,” the “Biden administration and European Union should follow up with sanctions against the Russian officials involved in the latest repression – and they should heed the pleas of Mr. Navalny for action to expose and freeze

the illicit assets held by Mr. Putin and his cronies outside Russia.”

“It’s Good Biden Is Ending For-Profit Federal Prisons. Detained Immigrants Deserve No Less.” The [Washington Post](#) (2/2, 10.52M) editorializes that President Biden’s announcement that “he would phase out federal contracts for privately run prisons” delivers “on half a campaign pledge but omit[s] the other, more difficult half – to also scrap privately operated migrant detention centers.” The Post says the “administration’s wavering has disappointed immigrant advocates, who have rightly called attention to substandard and occasionally appalling conditions” in such centers, and argues that “the president’s instincts on the campaign trail were right and should remain the administration’s goal: For-profit detention facilities, where pre-pandemic problems have burgeoned into humanitarian danger zones during the covid-19 era, should be phased out.”

“Some Michigan Restaurateurs Are Ignoring Pandemic Restrictions. They’re Putting Everyone At Risk.” The [Washington Post](#) (2/2, 10.52M) says more than 60 restaurants in Michigan are openly ignoring pandemic restrictions. The restaurants “formed Stand Up Michigan, a group that held rallies against pandemic restrictions.” The Post says Stand Up Michigan “has taken the defense of rights too far. Personal freedom does not mean the right to endanger others. ... It is absolute madness to encourage the kind of behavior – indoor dining at restaurants – that will spread the disease and lead to sickness and death.”

Wall Street Journal.

“House Republican Reckoning.” The [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/2, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) says if House Republicans choose to punish Rep. Liz Cheney (R-WY), but remain silent about Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-GA), they deserve to remain in the minority.

“Where’s Biden On Opening Schools?” The [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/2, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) editorializes that the Biden Administration’s pledge to follow the science is being undermined in regard to schools reopening, arguing that the President is absent in supporting local government officials battling teachers unions that have resisted calls to return to in-person learning despite data that suggests it is safe to do so.

“Alexei Navalny’s Cause.” The [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/2, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) calls for tougher Western sanctions against Russia for imprisoning opposition leader Alexei Navalny. The Journal also warns Russian President Vladimir Putin could launch an “external provocation” to draw attention away from Russia’s domestic situation.

The Big Picture

Headlines From Today’s Front Pages.

Wall Street Journal:

[Jeff Bezos To Step Down As Amazon CEO: Andy Jassy To Take Over](#)
[GameStop Mania Hits A Wall Of Tighter Trading Terms](#)
[Coup Puts Myanmar At The Center Of US-China Clash](#)
[Trump, House Democrats Lay Out Impeachment Trial Strategies](#)
[The Hottest Job Market? Snow Shoveling](#)
[Vaccine Skeptics Join Forces With Antimask Advocates](#)

New York Times:

[Impeachment Case Argues Trump Was ‘Singularly Responsible’ For Capitol Riot](#)
[The Wealthy Are Getting More Vaccinations, Even In Poorer Neighborhoods](#)
[Russian Activist Navalny Sentenced To More Than 2 Years In Prison](#)
[Under Pressure To Rebuke Their Own, GOP Leaders Face A Critical Test](#)
[Jeff Bezos To Step Down As Amazon CEO](#)
[‘Don’t Kill Me’: Others Tell Of Abuse By Officer Who Knelt On George Floyd](#)

Washington Post:

[‘Holding The Line’ Gets Harder As GameStop Tanks](#)
[Two FBI Agents Killed While Serving Warrant In Florida](#)
[Biden Moves To Undo Key Trump Immigration Policies](#)
[Citing ‘Betrayal,’ Democrats Outline Case Against Trump](#)
[As Rift Grows, GOP Senators Blast ‘Nutty’ House Member](#)

Financial Times:

[Russian Activist Navalny Sentenced To 3½ Years In Jail](#)
[Big Oil Hit By Record Losses From Pandemic And Clean Fuel](#)
[Five Politicians And Financiers Jostle For Position In OECD Race](#)
[Germany To Beef Up Financial Regulator In Wake Of Wirecard Scandal](#)

Washington Times:

[‘Like A Loaded Cannon’: Trump Lit Fuse Of Capitol Riot, Democrats Charge](#)

[‘It’s About To Get Ugly’: Capitol Invaders Aided Feds With Facebook Posts, Analysis Finds](#)
[Pandemic Politics: Cuomo, Newsom Under Fire For Coronavirus Response](#)
[Democrats Weaponize ‘QAnon Cult’ Against Republicans: ‘No American Will Be Safe’](#)
[Biden’s Vow To Champion Global Human Rights Tested By Twin Crises](#)
[Biden’s Just-Confirmed Homeland Security Secretary Begins Dismantling Trump Policies](#)

Story Lineup From Last Night’s Network News:

ABC: FBI-Shooting; Nor’easter; Vaccines; Impeachment; Biden-Immigration; Amazon-Bezos; Alexei Navalny; SpaceX-Test Flight Ends In Explosion; Super Bowl; UK-WWII Vet Dies.

CBS: FBI-Shooting; Impeachment; Vaccines; Nor’easter; Biden-COVID Relief; Biden-Immigration; COVID-Recession; Amazon-Bezos; UK-WWII Vet Dies; Book Club Support.

NBC: Amazon-Bezos; FBI-Shooting; Nor’easter; Vaccines; COVID; Impeachment; AOC-Capitol Siege; UK-WWII Vet Dies; New York-Child Pepper Sprayed; Hunger Crisis; Groundhog Day.

Network TV At A Glance:

FBI-Shooting – 7 minutes, 25 seconds

Impeachment – 7 minutes, 5 seconds

Vaccines – 6 minutes, 50 seconds

Amazon-Bezos – 4 minutes, 10 seconds

Last Laughs

Late Night Political Humor.

Trevor Noah: “Until the pandemic is actually over, Americans will need more help getting through it. And the big question of what that help will look like is dominating Washington, DC right now. ... I get why Democrats and Republicans are having trouble agreeing. This is a difference of \$1.3 trillion. How do you compromise when you’re that far apart? It’s like deciding what’s for dinner. You want something nice, but your date wants to eat out of a gas station trash can. You can’t compromise and eat out of a nice trash can.”

Trevor Noah: “Let’s move to the second most talked about Instagram video from last night...the post by Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, who gave a harrowing account of her personal experience during the Capitol attack. ... I mean, AOC and other members of Congress literally thought that they were going to die. On a Wednesday afternoon, no less. Nobody should die in the middle of the week. That means you went to work on Monday and Tuesday for nothing.”

Trevor Noah: “To everyone who was saying how scared could [Ocasio-Cortez] really have been, think about how terrified you get when someone knocks on the bathroom door when there isn’t even a riot. ‘Someone’s in here! Oh, God, now they’re going to know that I pooped.’”

Jimmy Kimmel: “I don’t get Groundhog Day. Last year’s festivities shattered records, crowd-wise. Forty thousand people showed up, double the number from the year before, which I don’t understand at all. If I wanted to see a fat rodent hiding in a hole, I’d go to Mar-a-Lago.”

Jimmy Kimmel: “House Democrats are saying that if Republicans don’t strip [Rep. Marjorie Taylor] Greene of her committee assignments, they will. ... Greene is, of course, now trying to make money off her terribleness. She tweeted, ‘Democrats are trying to expel me from Congress. Help me raise \$50,000 today and send a message.’ What message? ‘I am crazy and careless with money’?”

Jimmy Kimmel: “Greene says she has spoken to Donald Trump on the phone and has his full support. They are even planning to get together soon. Oh-oh, look out, Melania, she’s coming for your guy.”

Jimmy Kimmel: “Donald Trump’s new lawyers today released their response to the impeachment charges they will defend him against in the Senate next week. And this is great. On the very first page of their first legal filing, they wrote, ‘To the honorable members of the Unites States Senate.’ They misspelled ‘United States.’ And we’re off!”

Jimmy Kimmel: “You know how much Ivanka and Jared made last year? Jared and Ivanka reported a combined income for 2020 of between \$23 million and \$121 million. Which raises a number of important questions, like, for what?”

Jimmy Kimmel: “You know Trump doesn’t like this, right? You know, the only thing more embarrassing than losing the election is having his son-in-law make more money than he does.”

Stephen Colbert: "There's big news today from the business world and the regular world, too, because Amazon announced that their CEO, Jeff Bezos, will be stepping down. Before leaving office, he will be cocooned in bubble wrap and put in a box eight times his size. ... I'm just impressed that the company that delivers my dog food and Nespresso pods had a more peaceful transfer of power than the United States government."

Stephen Colbert: "Speaking of [the US government], I've seen my shadow, and I predict we're going to have two more weeks of impeachment."

Stephen Colbert: "The disgraced former President's team argued that 'he cannot be convicted by the Senate because he is no longer in office.' So, okay, once you leave a job, you're immune from prosecution? 'Cannibalism? Nice try, your honor, but I don't even work at White Castle anymore.'"

Stephen Colbert: "House managers, like Eric Swalwell, have said that they're going to use news footage of the riot to prove their case. [Trump's lawyer David] Schoen believes that's a bad idea – for America. ... Yes, healing comes from not providing any evidence. As it says in the Hippocratic oath, 'First, snitches get stitches.'"

Stephen Colbert: "Schoen's not the only one who wants an evidence-free trial. So does South Carolina Senator...Lindsey Graham. ... You can always tell who the good guys are. 'Make sure there are no witnesses.'"

Stephen Colbert: "There's this little fringe group in the [GOP] who believes it's wrong to attack the Capitol building. And they're focusing their anger on Georgia Representative...Marjorie Taylor Greene. Greene's a public backer of QAnon. She's claimed that mass shootings, including school shootings, were staged, and she has supported the execution of Democratic leaders. So, a moderate Republican."

Stephen Colbert: "Yesterday, Greene's views inspired a strong reaction from Senate Minority Leader...Mitch McConnell. McConnell released a statement saying that the baseless conspiracy theories Greene supports 'are cancer for the Republican party and our country.' Yes, it's cancer, but I will point out that five years ago, the GOP found a suspicious lump and then nominated the tumor for President."

Stephen Colbert: "There is so much division in the Republican party, they really need a man of true integrity to unite them. Unfortunately, all they've got is House Minority Leader...Kevin McCarthy. McCarthy has resisted calls from Democrats to kick Greene off her House committees. Instead, he's promising to have a 'conversation' with her about the mounting controversies sometime this week. Well, that should be productive. As McCarthy proved with his recent trip to Mar-a-Lago, he knows how to put his foot down. And his knee down, then his other knee down, so he can smooch some crazy butt."

Stephen Colbert: "McConnell's not the only one upset with the conspiracy wing of the GOP. Yesterday, we found out that roughly 60 to 70 former Bush officials have decided to leave the party, and as one put it, 'The Republican party as I knew it no longer exists.' Yes, it's unrecognizable. We just had a Republican President who told over 30,000 lies about serious subjects like election fraud and a global pandemic. The previous Republican President only told lies about small stuff like weapons of mass destruction and government-sanctioned torture."

Stephen Colbert: "Now, we've all been doing this job for a while now, and we've seen a lot of evidence that this kind of behavior from Republicans was coming. Take former Bush adviser...Karl Rove. Back when Rove was in the White House, he sarcastically referred to his critics as 'the reality-based community,' and claimed that people like him 'create our own reality.' ... Now, when Rove said that, we all saw where this was headed. Because if that Republican administration could get away with creating their own little space-time continuum with the magic of make-believe, it just goes to figure that it was only a matter of time before everybody else did it. ... So when it comes to crazy conspiracy theories, you can't put the genie back in the bottle, and not just because those same Republicans 13 years ago were fine with rumors that the genie is a secret Muslim. Remember 'secret Muslim'? That was 2007, along with 'Obama was born in Kenya' and the 'terrorist fist bump,' now known as the only way we're allowed to touch each other."

Stephen Colbert: "So, if crazy conspiracy theories are, in fact, a cancer on the Republican party, people like Mitch McConnell and Karl Rove have spent the last 20 years selling cigarettes to their base."

Jimmy Fallon: "Well, guys, it must be Groundhog Day because we are living through Trump's impeachment again. That's right, today House Democrats filed a brief saying Trump's singularly responsible for the Capitol riots."

Jimmy Fallon: "Some good news today. The Biden Administration made a big announcement regarding vaccine distribution. ... After Trump, Biden looks like a genius for being like, 'I have an idea! All the places that give flu shots, they should give vaccine shots!' Thanks, professor! Wow! Amazing. Yeah, it sounds like a smart idea, although CVS already shelved the vaccine to make room for the Halloween decorations."

Seth Meyers: “After meeting with President Biden for almost two hours about the coronavirus relief package, Republican Senator Shelley Moore Capito told reporters that Biden, quote, ‘seemed really happy to be in the game of negotiating. Also, it was kind of weird for a President to hold a two-hour meeting and not once mention the electoral map.’”

Seth Meyers: “Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell said yesterday that freshman Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene’s looney lies are a, quote, ‘cancer to the GOP.’ The key is to make the lies believable, like ‘you can live for eight months on \$600.’”

Seth Meyers: “Congresswoman Marjorie Taylor Greene responded yesterday to Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell criticizing her views as cancer and said, quote, ‘The real cancer for the Republican party is weak Republicans who only know how to lose gracefully.’ Well, at least they can agree that whatever the cancer is, no one should be able to afford the treatment.”

James Corden: “Today was the deadline for Trump to file. Trump is no longer President, and lawyers will be arguing that the trial is unconstitutional. I’m going to use this the next time a cop pulls me over. I’m gonna be like, ‘Well, I’m no longer speeding. I was, but I’m not now. Therefore, this ticket is unconstitutional.’”

James Corden: “This all comes after Trump’s previous legal team quit over the weekend. And according to new reports, it was more than just a difference in approach. Trump and his lawyers also had disagreements over how much he was going to pay them. That does not sound like the Donald Trump I know. There was a disagreement over money. The lawyers wanted \$3 million, whereas Trump wanted to pay them nothing and then make fun of them on cable news.”

James Corden: “President Biden is now looking into revoking Trump’s access to intelligence briefings, a courtesy traditionally given to ex-presidents. Revoking Donald Trump’s access to intelligence briefings. That’s like revoking a dolphin’s access to an Xbox.”

James Corden: “By the way, Trump famously skipped intelligence briefings when he was President of the United States. So this would be like if I got fired from this job and people were like, ‘Sorry, James, you can no longer go into Stu’s office.’ And I would be like, ‘Right. Who’s Stu?’”

Washington’s Schedule

Today’s Events In Washington.

White House:

- President Biden — Receives the President’s Daily Brief.
- Vice President Harris — Receives the President’s Daily Brief.

US Senate:

- [Senate Committee on Foreign Relations Business Meeting](#)

Location: Rm 106, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, DC; 10:00 AM

- [Senate committee votes on commerce secretary nominee](#) – Executive Session, with agenda including the nomination of Gina Raimondo to be Secretary of Commerce, ‘Rules Governing the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation’, and ‘Budget Resolution for the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation’

Location: Rm 325, Russell Senate Office Building, Washington, DC; 10:00 AM

- [Senate committee considers education secretary nominee](#) – Nominations hearing considers Miguel Cardona to be Secretary of Education

Location: Rm 430, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, DC; 10:00 AM

- [Senate committee votes on energy secretary nominee, holds hearing on addressing climate change](#) – Business Meeting, to consider the nomination of Jennifer Granholm to be Secretary of Energy

Location: Rm G50, Dirksen Senate Office Bldg, Washington, DC; 10:00 AM

- [Senate Small Business Committee considers SBA administrator nominee](#) – Nominations hearing considers Isabella Casillas Guzman to be Small Business Administration Administrator * Then-President-elect Joe Biden nominated the former SBA administrator’s deputy chief of staff last month

Location: Rm 301, Russell Senate Office Building, Washington, DC; 10:30 AM

- [Senate Environment Committee considers EPA administrator nominee](#) – Nominations hearing considers Michael Regan to be Environmental Protection Agency Administrator

Location: Rm 106, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, DC; 2:00 PM

- [Late U.S. Capitol police officer continues lying in honor on Capitol Hill](#) – Late U.S. Capitol Police Officer Brian Sicknick continues lying in honor in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda, following his 7 Jan death from injuries sustained during the attack on the U.S. Capitol the previous day * Viewing period for members of the U.S. Capitol Police continued overnight, with Members of

Congress invited to attend between 7:00 AM – 9:00 AM EST today. Congressional Tribute held at 10:30 AM (invited guests only). Ceremonial departure occurs at 12:00 PM EST, ahead of his interment at Arlington National Cemetery

Location: Rotunda, U.S. Capitol, Washington, DC

US House:

- [House Committee on Homeland Security virtual organizational meeting](#); 10:00 AM
- [House Commerce subcommittee hearing on increasing COVID-19 vaccinations \(virtual\)](#) – Health Subcommittee remote hearing on 'Road to Recovery: Ramping Up COVID-19 Vaccines, Testing, and Medical Supply Chain', held via Cisco Webex, with testimony from former FDA Acting Chief Scientist / former National Security Council Director for Medical and Biodefense Preparedness Luciana Borio; former U.S. Strategic National Stockpile Director Greg Burel; former Secretary of Health and Human Services / former Utah Governor Michael Leavitt; and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Executive Vice President Julie Morita; 11:00 AM
- [House Armed Services Committee hybrid organizational meeting](#) – House Armed Services Committee Organizational Meeting for the 117th Congress * Held via WebEx and in Rm 2118, Rayburn House Office Building; 11:00 AM
- [Press Briefing by White House COVID-19 Response Team and public health officials](#); 11:00 AM
- [House Financial Services Committee hybrid organizational meeting](#) – House Committee on Financial Services hybrid organizational meeting, with agenda including 'Resolutions appointing Majority and Minority members to subcommittees' and 'A resolution to adopt rules of the Committee on Financial Services pursuant to clause 2 of the Rule XI of the House of Representatives' * Held virtually and in Rm 2128, Rayburn House Office Building; 11:00 AM
- [House meets for legislative business](#) – House of Representatives meets for legislative business, with agenda for the week including 'H.R. 447 – National Apprenticeship Act of 2021' and legislation related to a budget resolution

Location: U.S. Capitol, Washington, DC; 1:00 PM

- [Press Briefing by Press Secretary Jen Psaki](#); 1:30 PM
- [House Committee on Foreign Affairs virtual organizational meeting, held via Cisco Webex](#); 2:00 PM
- [House Rules Committee hearing \(virtual\)](#) – Virtual hearing on 'H. Res. 72 – Removing a certain Member from certain standing committees of the House of Representatives', held via Cisco WebEx; 3:00 PM
- [Late U.S. Capitol police officer continues lying in honor on Capitol Hill](#) – Late U.S. Capitol Police Officer Brian Sicknick continues lying in honor in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda, following his 7 Jan death from injuries sustained during the attack on the U.S. Capitol the previous day * Viewing period for members of the U.S. Capitol Police continued overnight, with Members of Congress invited to attend between 7:00 AM – 9:00 AM EST today. Congressional Tribute held at 10:30 AM (invited guests only). Ceremonial departure occurs at 12:00 PM EST, ahead of his interment at Arlington National Cemetery

Location: Rotunda, U.S. Capitol, Washington, DC

Cabinet Officers:

- [No public schedules released.](#)

Visitors:

- [No visitors scheduled.](#)

General Events:

- [Department of the Treasury quarterly refunding announcement](#) – Department of the Treasury quarterly refunding announcement, outlining its funding needs for the next two quarters, including which securities will be offered and the dates of their announcement, auction, and settlement; 8:30 AM
- [POLITICO Live discussion on 'Women, Work, Care and COVID-19' \(virtual\)](#) – 'An Unequal Burden: Women, Work, Care and COVID-19' POLITICO Live 'Women Rule' virtual event, on women, work and caregiving during coronavirus (COVID-19). Panel features Democratic Rep. Joyce Beatty, Bipartisan Policy Center Fellow Maggie Cordish, National Employment Law Project Executive Director Rebecca Dixon, and RAND Corporation economist Kathryn Anne Edwards; 10:00 AM
- [Dem Rep. Sean Casten discusses President Biden's 'future agenda' \(virtual\)](#) – 'The Biden Administration's Future Agenda' New America Future Tense online event, with Democratic Rep. Sean Casten, Center for Global Development Senior Fellow Charles Kenny, and New America Open Technology Institute Director Sarah Morris; 12:00 PM
- [Washington Post Live conversation with U.N. Secretary General Guterres \(virtual\)](#) – Washington Post Live virtual conversation with United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres on coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine rollout, geopolitical stability and how the U.N. is encouraging countries to work together to face 'the most intractable problems of our time'; 1:30 PM
- [West Virginia Gov. Justice discusses state's vaccine rollout \(virtual\)](#) – U.S. Chamber of Commerce holds 'Path Forward: Navigating the Return to Work' event with West Virginia Governor Jim Justice, who discusses 'the unique approach his state has taken on the coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine rollout, which has allowed it to constantly rank as either the number one or number two state in the nation for vaccine doses administered per capita'; 2:00 PM
- [Brookings Institution discussion on improving Medicaid \(virtual\)](#) – 'How can the Biden administration improve the Medicaid program?' online discussion hosted by Brookings Institution, with featured speakers including former Lieutenant Governor of Alaska Valerie Nurr-araaluk Davidson, Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services Assistant Secretary for

MassHealth Dan Tsai, Community Oriented Correctional Health Services Chief Executive Officer Vikki Wachino and Center on Budget and Policy Priorities Director of Medicaid Eligibility and Enrollment Jennifer Wagner; 2:00 PM

- Washington FPC briefing on 'Addressing Racial Inequality in the Justice System' (virtual) – Washington Foreign Press Center On-The-Record Virtual Press Briefing on 'Understanding America: Addressing Racial Inequality in the Justice System', featuring Equal Justice Initiative founder/Executive Director Bryan Stevenson * Part of the FPC 'Understanding America: Black History Month Series', which explores topics including racial inequality in the justice system, resiliency in the Black business community, voting rights and political leadership, and African American representation on screen; 2:00 PM
- Late U.S. Capitol police officer continues lying in honor on Capitol Hill – Late U.S. Capitol Police Officer Brian Sicknick continues lying in honor in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda, following his 7 Jan death from injuries sustained during the attack on the U.S. Capitol the previous day * Viewing period for members of the U.S. Capitol Police continued overnight, with Members of Congress invited to attend between 7:00 AM – 9:00 AM EST today. Congressional Tribute held at 10:30 AM (invited guests only). Ceremonial departure occurs at 12:00 PM EST, ahead of his interment at Arlington National Cemetery

Location: Rotunda, U.S. Capitol, Washington, DC

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From: (b)(6)
To: (b)(6) | (b)(6)
Cc: (b)(6)
Subject: Re: FT - US ready to impose fresh sanctions on Democratic Republic of Congo
Date: Monday, August 6, 2018 11:16:12 AM

(b) (5)

From: (b)(6) (b)(6)
Date: August 6, 2018 at 11:15:07 AM EDT
To: (b)(6)
(b)(6)
Cc: (b)(6)
(b)(6)
Subject: FW: FT - US ready to impose fresh sanctions on Democratic Republic of Congo

(b)(6) (b) (5)
(b) (5)

From: Mandelker, Sigal
Sent: Monday, August 06, 2018 11:05 AM
To: (b)(6)
Subject: Fwd: FT - US ready to impose fresh sanctions on Democratic Republic of Congo

From: (b)(6)
Date: August 6, 2018 at 11:00:50 AM EDT
To: [DL_TFI_Alerts <DL_TFI_Alerts@do.treas.gov>](mailto:DL_TFI_Alerts@do.treas.gov)
Subject: FT - US ready to impose fresh sanctions on Democratic Republic of Congo
[US ready to impose fresh sanctions on Democratic Republic of Congo](#)
[Washington squeezes Joseph Kabila amid concerns he may seek re-election](#)

Katrina Manson in Washington

August 5, 2018

The Trump administration is ready to impose further sanctions against the regime of Democratic Republic of Congo president Joseph Kabila to dissuade him from trying to hold on to power, according to several people briefed on the matter.

Mr Kabila is constitutionally obliged to step down in the vast mineral-rich African country after two terms in office, but he has not ruled out seeking re-election this year despite repeated appeals from the US, France and Britain. Speculation is rife that he will put his name on the ballot this week.

"The US is trying to convince Kabila to go between now and August 8," said one of the people briefed, referring to the deadline for politicians to declare their candidacy for the presidency.

"They're trying to squeeze his family and his finances."

A US government source said Washington was prepared to sanction other allies of Mr Kabila if he did

not abide by his commitments. “Clearly that means having a process whereby Kabila is not a candidate,” said the person. “His name should not be on the ballot.”

Mr Kabila, 47, took over as president in 2001 after his father Laurent-Désiré Kabila was assassinated during a civil war. Despite its mineral riches, which include diamonds, copper and gold, the country ranks among Africa’s poorest.

In his confirmation hearings to the Senate this week, Michael Hammer, President Donald Trump’s pick for US ambassador to Congo, said many of its minerals, which also include uranium and the world’s largest reserves of cobalt, an essential input for mobile phones, “are critical to US industry”. The Trump administration has cumulatively increased the severity and range of its sanctions against Mr Kabila. In June 2017 the US Treasury imposed sanctions on one of Mr Kabila’s most senior military officials. In December, the same department imposed sanctions on Dan Gertler, an Israeli businessman and close friend of the president.

In June, at least one family member of Mr Kabila was targeted by a state department visa ban, three people briefed on the matter told the Financial Times.

The people said at least three more family members were under consideration for stronger Treasury designated sanctions that would include asset freezes under the Global Magnitsky Act, which targets corruption and human rights abuses.

The focus on Mr Kabila’s family has infuriated the president, two of the people said, adding that the Congolese government officials regularly bring up US sanctions with Washington. But a senior administration official told the FT the Trump administration was prepared to apply sanctions to anyone “regardless of who they are”.

“[We] stand ready to apply sanctions to individuals or entities, regardless of who they are, who undermine the democratic process, or threaten the peace and security of the country,” said the senior administration official, adding the Trump administration was closely following Congo’s electoral preparations.

Peter Pham, Africa director at the Atlantic Council, said US interests in Congo went far beyond electoral and humanitarian concerns, arguing that access to its mineral deposits were “critical to the technologies which will power this century”. He said Washington would have wide support to take further action should it see “a worrisome trajectory” during the election candidacy process.

Most recently, Mr Kabila has refused to meet Nikki Haley, US ambassador to the UN, as well as UN secretary-general António Guterres and the head of the African Union. He has also refused international money and technical assistance for the polls.

Some analysts in Washington and Kinshasa suspect Mr Kabila may ask the country’s constitutional court to rule that, despite 17 years as president, he has legally served only one term and so would be eligible for another.

Sasha Lezhnev at Washington-based advocacy group, The Enough Project, said that the US needed to go further still. “The administration has taken some important initial steps but a lot more is needed frankly to really impact Kabila’s calculations,” he said.

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Pending Consultation with other Federal Agencies