

World News Roundup

Justice

Solid conservative

Trump 'nominates' Kavanaugh for SC

WASHINGTON, July 10, (RTRS): President Donald Trump nominated **Brett Kavanaugh** for the US Supreme Court on Monday as he aimed to entrench its conservative control for years to come, but the federal appeals court judge faces a tough confirmation fight in the bitterly divided Senate.

While some Democrats promised a stern effort to block the 53-year-old Kavanaugh — who has served



Kavanaugh

12 years on the most influential US appeals court — Trump's fellow Republicans control the Senate by a narrow margin and can ensure confirmation if they avoid defections from their ranks.

If confirmed, Kavanaugh would replace long-serving conservative Justice Anthony Kennedy, who announced his retirement on June 27 at age 81. Kavanaugh became Trump's second lifetime appointment to the nation's highest judicial body in his 18 months in office.

Kavanaugh is a well-known figure in Washington and has been involved in some of the biggest controversies of the past two decades. He helped investigate Democratic former President Bill Clinton in the 1990s working for independent counsel Kenneth Starr. He was on Republican George W. Bush's team in the contentious Florida recount fight in the 2000 presidential election, then served as a senior official in Bush's White House.

"Throughout legal circles he's considered a judge's judge, a true thought leader among his peers," Trump, who named conservative Justice Neil Gorsuch to the court last year, told an applauding audience in the White House East Room.

Effective

"He's a brilliant jurist with a clear and effective writing style, universally regarded as one of the finest and sharpest legal minds of our time. And just like Justice Gorsuch, he excelled as a legal clerk for Justice Kennedy," Trump added, saying Kavanaugh "deserves a swift confirmation and robust bipartisan support."

The appointment will not change the ideological breakdown of a court that already has a 5-4 conservative majority, but nevertheless could move the court to the right. Kennedy sometimes joined the liberal justices on key rulings on divisive social issues like abortion and gay rights, a practice his replacement may not duplicate.

Kavanaugh has amassed a solidly conservative judicial record since 2006 on the influential US Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, the same court where three current justices including Chief Justice John Roberts previously served. Some conservative activists have questioned whether he would rule sufficiently aggressively as a justice.

Like the 50-year-old Gorsuch, Kavanaugh potentially could serve on the high court for decades. Trump's other leading candidates for the post were fellow federal appellate judges Thomas Hardiman, Raymond Kethledge and Amy Coney Barrett.

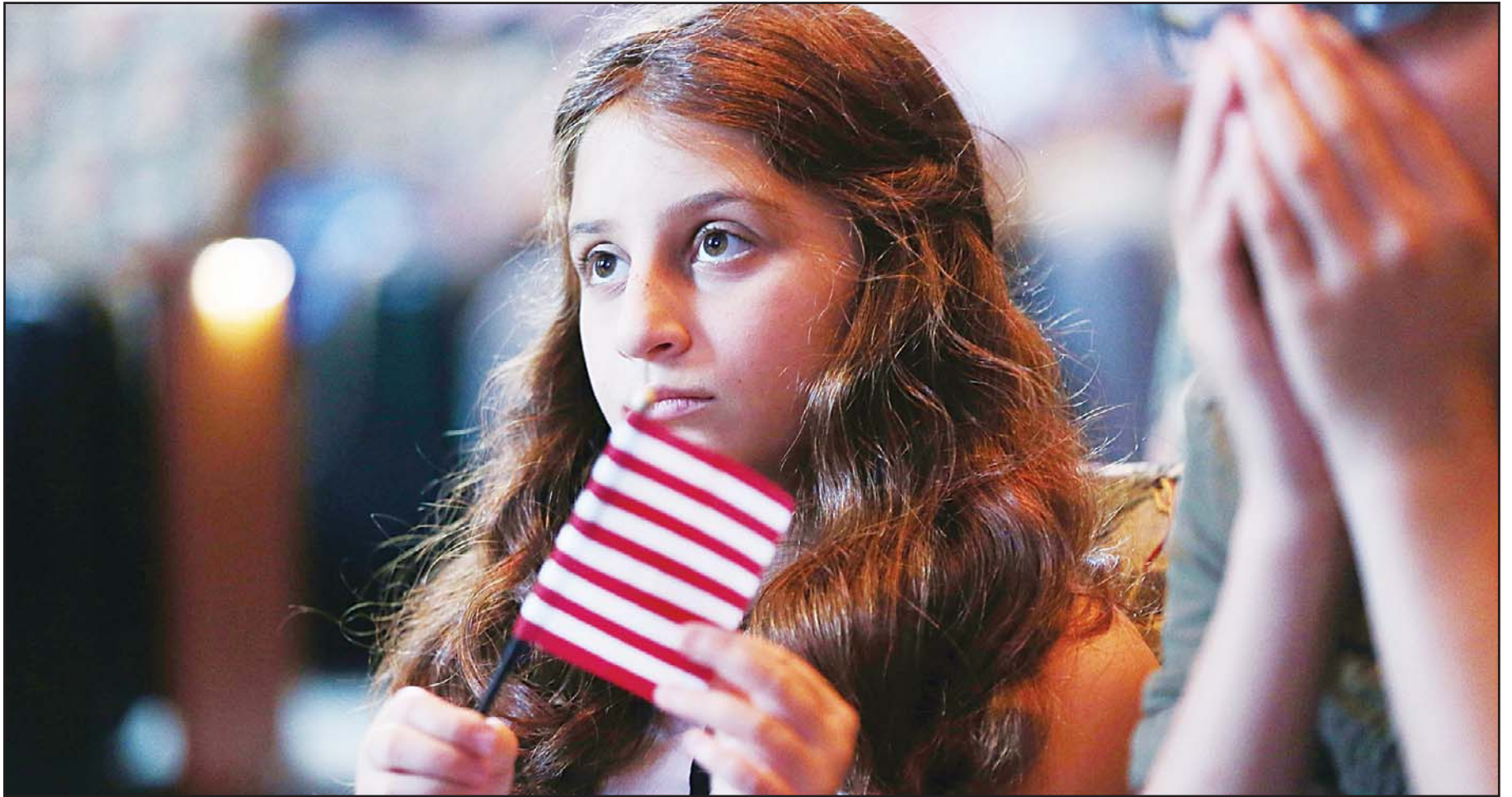
Philosophy

"My judicial philosophy is straightforward: a judge must be independent and must interpret the law, not make the law. A judge must interpret statutes as written. And a judge must interpret the Constitution as written, informed by history, and tradition and precedent," Kavanaugh said during the ceremony in which he emphasized his family and his Roman Catholic faith.

Kavanaugh survived a protracted confirmation fight after Bush picked nominated him to the appeals court in 2003. Some Democrats accused him of excessive partisanship, and it took three years before the Senate eventually voted to confirm him.

Republicans hold a slim 51-49 Senate majority, and with ailing Senator John McCain battling cancer in his home state of Arizona they currently can muster only 50 votes. Senate rules still leave Democrats with scant options to block confirmation by themselves, though Trump must prevent Republican defections.

Moderate Republican Senators Susan Collins and Lisa Murkowski said they could carefully vet Kavanaugh before deciding how to vote. Democratic senators serving in Republican-leaning states including Joe Manchin of West Virginia, Joe Donnelly of Indiana and Heidi Heitkamp of North Dakota made similar remarks, though top Senate Democrat Chuck Schumer blasted Trump's pick.



Young US citizen Revital Moghaddam, 11, originally from Iran, holds an American flag during a celebration where she received her citizenship papers, conducted by US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), on July 9, in Los Angeles, California. (AFP)

America

GOP drops support for NJ candidate:

The House GOP's campaign committee is dropping its support for a New Jersey Republican running for Congress over his racially charged writings on social media and online.

An attorney who has hosted talk shows, Seth Grossman is the GOP nominee for an open seat in the 2nd District, which stretches inland from coastal Atlantic City. Grossman has posted disparagingly of African-Americans.

The National Republican Campaign Committee's chairman, Steve Stivers, says in a statement, "Bigotry has no place in society — let alone the US House of Representatives."

Stivers says the NRCC "withdraws our support" and urges Grossman "to reconsider his candidacy."

The campaign committee hopes to find a new candidate swiftly. It's a swing district that experts say is likely to flip to Democrats in November. (AP)



Firefighters gain on wildfires:

Firefighters are gaining momentum as they battle several wildfires that have destroyed dozens of homes and forced the evacuation of thousands of residents in California.

Across the state, milder weather over the last couple of days has helped firefighters to hold the line against several blazes, allowing them to lift evacuation orders for residents forced to flee their homes.

Temperatures are expected to fall this week in parts of the state, the National Weather Service said, after scorching heat, high winds and low humidity fanned dozens of fires this summer in a particularly intense fire season across the US West.

"The weather is starting to cooperate, so it's letting firefighters get the upper hand on the fires," said Lynette Round, a spokeswoman for the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, called Cal Fire.

US wildfires have already burned more than 3.3 million acres (1.3 million hectares) this year, more than the annual average of about 2.6 million acres over the past 10 years, according to the National Interagency Fire Center. (RTRS)



Trump most followed: US President Donald Trump is by far the most followed world leader on Twitter, with the Pope trailing him by some 4.5 million followers, a study showed Tuesday.

The number of Trump's followers has "more than doubled since taking office", the study authors said.

With more than 52 million followers, the @realDonaldTrump account also counts nearly 10 million more followers than third-place holder, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, according to the latest "Twiplomacy" study by communications firm Burson Cohn & Wolfe (BCW).

In terms of interactions with followers — in the form of likes and retweets — Trump's lead is even more impressive, the study showed.

Over the past 12 months, the US president has had nearly 264.5 million interactions with his followers — more than five times more than runner-up Modi, and 12 times as many as Pope Francis, in third place.

However, in terms of retweets alone, Saudi Arabia's King Salman easily dwarfs Trump.

Salman only tweeted 11 times between May 2017 and May 2018, but each of those tweets generated an average of 154,294 retweets, compared to just 20,319 retweets per Trump tweet, the study showed.

It also pointed out that the US State Department is the only US governmental department which does not follow the personal account of @realDonaldTrump.

Tuesday's report found that leaders around the world have jumped on the Twitter train, with the governments of only six countries — Laos, Mauritania, Nicaragua, North Korea, Swaziland and Turkmenistan — still lacking an official presence on the platform. (AFP)



Trump

Dozens of children will be reunited with parents

SAN DIEGO, July 10, (AP): Dozens of immigrant children under the age of 5 will be released from government custody and reunited with their parents Tuesday after being separated at the border under President Donald Trump's zero-tolerance immigration policy.

A government lawyer said Monday at least 54 children under the age of 5 would join their parents by a court-ordered deadline, only about half the 100 or so children covered by the order. The Trump administration was working on final background checks for another five children ahead of Tuesday's deadline.

Parents in US Immigration and Customs Enforcement custody "for the most part" are being taken to locations near their children and the families will be released, Justice Department attorney Sarah Fabian said in court. She said locations would not be publicly disclosed, but children have been sent to shelters across the country.

More than 2,000 children were separated from their parents by US immigration authorities at the border this spring before Trump reversed course on June 20 amid an international outcry. Last week, US Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar said there were "under

3,000" separated children in all.

Late last month, US District Judge Dana Sabraw in San Diego set a 14-day deadline to reunite children under 5 with their parents and a 30-day deadline for older children. The 30-day deadline is up July 26.

American Civil Liberties Union attorney Lee Gelemt sought assurances from the government Monday that advocates would be in position to guide parents when they are released in a foreign land. The parents will be free while their cases wind through immigration court, which can take years, and may be required to wear ankle monitors.



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