

## Politics

## Biden holds virtual fundraiser

## Trump looks to shore up 'support' in Iowa

DES MOINES, Iowa, Oct 15, (AP): President Donald Trump on Wednesday sought to shore up support from constituencies that not so long ago he thought he had in the bag: big business and voters in the red state of Iowa.

In a morning address to business leaders, he expressed puzzlement that they would even consider supporting his Democratic challenger, Joe Biden, arguing that his own leadership was a better bet for a strong economy. Later, the president held his third campaign rally in three nights, this time in Iowa, a state he won handily in 2016 but where Biden is making a late push.

Trump claimed to be leading in the most recent poll he saw. "For me to only be up six, I'm a little bit concerned," he asserted. Multiple polls have shown a much closer race.

Biden, for his part, held a virtual fundraiser from Wilmington, Delaware, and delivered pretaped remarks to American Muslims. He did not have any public campaign events, unusual for just 20 days out from Election Day.

The Democratic nominee used his appearance at the fundraiser to say that Trump was trying to rush through Amy Coney Barrett, his nominee for the Supreme Court, to help his efforts to repeal the Obama healthcare law, calling that "an abuse of power."

Biden was expected to spend much of the day preparing for a town-hall-style TV appearance in battleground Pennsylvania on Thursday, which was to have been the night of the second presidential debate.

## Candidates

Instead, the candidates will have dueling town halls on network television – Trump's in Miami and sponsored by NBC News, Biden's in Philadelphia and on ABC. Trump backed out of plans for the originally scheduled presidential faceoff after debate organizers shifted the format to a virtual event following Trump's coronavirus diagnosis.

Trump used his economic address Wednesday to play up his administration's commitment to lowering taxes and deregulation of industry, and he didn't hide his frustration with signs that some in the business community are tilting to Biden.

"I know I'm speaking to some Democrats, and some of you are friends of mine," Trump said in a virtual address to the Economic Clubs of New York, Florida, Washington, DC, Chicago, Pittsburgh and Sheboygan, Wisconsin. Should Biden be elected, he continued, "You will see things happen that will not make you happy. I don't understand your thinking."

The former vice-president has collected more than \$50 million in campaign contributions from donors in the securities and investment sectors, according to the private nonpartisan Center for Responsive Politics. During his decades in the Senate representing Delaware, a center for the credit card and banking industries, Biden built relationships and a voting record in the business sector that has raised suspicion on the left but provides Wall Street with a measure of ease at the prospect of a Biden administration.

After being sidelined by the coronavirus, Trump resumed a breakneck schedule this week, with aides saying he is expected to travel and host campaign rallies every day through Nov 3. Trump has appeared here in his public appearances since reemerging from quarantine, though at moments during his economic address on Wednesday his voice was raspy.

His trip to Iowa comes as the state this week surpassed 100,000 coronavirus cases and has seen a recent surge in hospitalizations. The number of people being treated in Iowa hospitals for COVID-19 reached a new high Wednesday of 473 people.

Biden has tried to make Trump's handling of the pandemic, which has killed more than 215,000 Americans, the central issue of the election.

"President Trump isn't coming to the Hawkeye State to offer words of comfort to those suffering, or a helping hand to the Iowans who are out of a job, or an actual plan to get the virus under control," Biden said in a statement. "Instead, he's here to spread more lies about the pandemic and distract from his record of failure."

Officials at the Des Moines airport were told to plan for up to 10,000 people, and such Trump campaign events typically feature little to no social distancing and only spot mask wearing.

## Declared

A public health emergency declared by Republican Gov Kim Reynolds in March remains in place and requires that organizers of mass gatherings "must ensure at least 6 feet (1.8 meters) of physical distance between each group or individual attending alone."

Trump acknowledged Reynolds' presence at the rally. "Thank you, honey," he said.

Trump had an extra treat in mind for Iowa voters, drawing on one of the perquisites of his office: Ahead of his visit, Trump said he would be awarding the Presidential Medal of Freedom to Iowa wrestling legend Dan Gable. The former University of Iowa coach won 15 NCAA team championships from 1976 to 1997.

Donning a red hat and tossing away his tie to fight off the stiff breeze on the airport tarmac, Trump made a direct appeal to the state's farmers, saying that he was responsible for \$28 billion in aid designed to help offset damage stemming from his trade war with China. "I hope you remember that on Nov 3," Trump said.

But after years of farmers supporting him despite the trade war, some Republicans say Trump's renewable fuel policy has sown some doubt.

Trump's Environmental Protection Agency granted dozens of waivers to petroleum companies seeking to bypass congressional rules requiring the level of the corn-based fuel additive ethanol that gasoline must contain. He has recently denied more waiver requests, but the EPA's previous action removed about 4 billion gallons of ethanol demand, resulting in the closure – at least temporarily – of more than a dozen ethanol plants in Iowa.

While mostly laying low on Wednesday, Biden has stepped up campaign travel in the past week, with visits to Arizona, Nevada, Florida and Pennsylvania. The former vice-president isn't introducing new themes in his pitch that he's a steady alternative to Trump. Biden and his aides believe the president's scattershot campaign messaging since his COVID-19 diagnosis proves the core of Biden's case.

Trump's return to Iowa comes as he has been forced into playing defense following a widely panned debate performance and his own coronavirus diagnosis. Republicans have raised alarm that enthusiasm among Trump's base has waned slightly after the one-two punch of those events, casting his reelection into doubt.



A supporter catches a hat before President Donald Trump's arrival at an airport rally on Oct 14, 2020, in Des Moines, Iowa. (AP)



In this December 2019 photo, provided by Barbara Trout, she poses with grandsons Grayson (center), and Garrett (left), in Keizer, Oregon. Trout, who suffers from asthma, was taken to ambulance to a hospital twice in September following exposure to smoke from wildfires that reached hazardous levels. (AP)



Jones



Tuberville

## America

**Charity filings raise questions:** US Sen Doug Jones on Wednesday criticized Republican challenger Tommy Tuberville's financial record after reports emerged that the former college football coach's nonprofit only gave a fraction of its money to charity while it spent tens of thousands of dollars to stage annual golf tournaments.

The Associated Press and The New York Times reported this week that the Tommy Tuberville Foundation, an organization he formed to support veterans, spent one-third or less of its money on charitable activities.

Jones, who is widely considered the Senate's most endangered Democrat, said his analysis indicated that only about 18 percent of the foundation's money went to veterans while the foundation hosted an annual golf tournament and owned a truck.

"Now this is a candidate that is supposed to be there for veterans ... I know this," Jones said. "His Foundation has not been good for veterans, but it's been good for somebody."

"Tommy Tuberville and his buddies can go play golf together and he charges money for it and they have a nice time, they spend a lot of money for the golf tournament," Jones said. (AP)

**Mother on trial for deaths:** A South Carolina mother on trial for placing two of her newborns in trash bags and throwing them away about a year apart told investigators she blacked out from the pain of delivering the second child alone, waking up 15 minutes later and finding the boy's face blue.

Alyssa Dayvault did not show up for her trial this week on two counts of homicide by child abuse, but the case is moving forward at the Horry County courthouse with her lawyers putting on a defense.

Prosecutors on Wednesday played a recording of Dayvault's interview with police who were called after Dayvault showed up at the hospital with an infection caused when she did not deliver the placenta along with the baby boy in December 2018.

Dayvault told investigators in the recording she hid the pregnancy from both her longtime boyfriend and her mother. She said she delivered the baby alone in her North Myrtle Beach home. And after passing out from the pain and discovering the unconscious baby, she put him in a trash bag and threw him away, the recording showed. (AP)

**White woman charged:** Amy Cooper, the white woman charged with filing a false police report for calling 911 during a dispute with a Black man in New York's Central Park in May, made a second, previously unreported call in which she falsely claimed the man had "tried to assault her," a prosecutor said Wednesday.

## Coronavirus

## COVID-19 spike arrives late in Gove County

## Virus hits Kansas county hard

TOPEKA, Kansas, Oct 15, (AP): As rural northwestern Kansas communities endured some of the state's biggest spikes in COVID-19 cases last week, a county sheriff who was among those testing positive found himself struggling to breathe and landed in a hospital room more than an hour from home.

The pandemic arrived late, but it's now stressing Gove County, which has had to send patients including Sheriff Allan Weber to hospitals in other towns. The county's 22-bed medical center only has a handful of beds dedicated to coronavirus patients and not enough staff to monitor the most serious cases around the clock.

The local nursing home had most of its 30-plus residents test positive, and six have died since late September. Besides the sheriff, the county's emergency management director, the hospital CEO and more than 50 medical staff have tested positive. Even so, some leaders are reluctant to stir up ill will by talking about how often friends and neighbors wear masks or questioning how officials responded.

"The hospital has a sales tax initiative that's on the ballot, and we just don't want to upset anybody," said David Caudill, chief executive officer of the Gove County Medical Center, who tested positive for the virus. The medical center includes both the community hospital and nursing home.

Gove County is perhaps best known for an isolated stand of chalk pyramids that can tower 60 feet above the prairie, and some of its 2,600 residents live closer to Denver than the Kansas capital of Topeka.

President Donald Trump is popular in the county, and local officials quickly abandoned a mask mandate this summer after getting heat from some local residents and amid the president's criticism of such policies. Funerals and weddings went on. So did a homecoming football game between its two high schools, eight players to a side, on the last Friday in September, though people were encouraged to wear masks.

Assistant District Attorney Joan Illuzzi-Orbon described the second call as Cooper was being arraigned by video in a case that had garnered worldwide attention but was put on hold for months because of the coronavirus pandemic. Cooper did not enter a plea to the misdemeanor charge.

In the first 911 call, which was captured on a widely seen video of the confrontation, Cooper told a dispatcher only that the man, a birdwatcher named Christian Cooper, was threatening her. The second call was not recorded on video, but a 911 dispatcher provided prosecutors with a sworn affidavit regarding the calls, Illuzzi said.

"Using the police in a way that is both racially offensive and designed to intimidate is something that can't be ignored. Therefore we charged her," said Illuzzi, whose last high-profile prosecution sent Harvey Weinstein to

prison in March for rape. The case was adjourned until Nov 17 to allow prosecutors and her lawyer to work on a possible resolution that Illuzzi said could see Cooper participating in a program to educate her and the community "on the harm caused by such actions." (AP)

**Spread**  
"We have community spread to the point that we have not been able to pin down the root cause of any of our cases for the past month," said Dr Scott Rempel, the county's health officer, one of five physicians in Gove County.

The county commission imposed a mask mandate starting Aug 6, when only a handful of cases had been reported, but repealed it 11 days later. Rempel said it was "heartbreaking, from a public health perspective."

In Quinter, the county's largest town with about 1,000 residents, public schools are holding in-person classes and requiring the 300 students and staff to wear masks. Students eat their lunches outdoors under tents, and the district has bought heaters and plans to use its bus barn if the winter weather gets too cold.

Superintendent Kurt Brown is careful to avoid the political debate about masks or to comment on rules elsewhere in the state.

"Every conversation surrounding this is a difficult conversation," Brown said. Gary Kraus, the superintendent in the

neighboring Grainfield and Wheatland school districts, said classes are small enough to accommodate social distancing with some changes in scheduling for the high school. He said the districts thought about imposing mask requirements as school was preparing to start, but "I didn't want to fight that political battle" because "it's so stressful and time-consuming."

With officials' response to COVID-19 politicized in an election year, Kansas' Democratic governor and the Republican-controlled Legislature have been at odds for months. More than two-thirds of Gove County's voters are registered Republicans, and Trump carried the county with nearly 85 percent of the vote in 2016.

In Grainfield, home to about 240 people, Terry Cox doesn't wear a mask in his farm supply store, nor do most of his customers. Now that it's so close to home, he sees the virus as no worse than "the regular flu." His store's bookkeeper and his sister-in-law have tested positive, and his brother, who lives two counties away, was hospitalized. Cox wears a mask when shopping in Quinter, though.

Quinter resident Judy Wolf, a cook at a senior center, said media outlets reporting on the pandemic need to "quit making a mountain out of a molehill."

"Everybody's going to get it and go on with your lives," she said. "The only ones that are dying are the ones with other health issues."

Doug Gruenbacher, another Gove County doctor, contracted the coronavirus in September and recovered along with his physician-wife, Shelly. He said county residents have concerns about personal liberties and "not wanting to be told what to do" prevalent across rural America.

"That's part of the reason of why we love it here, because of that spirit and because of that independence," he said. "But unfortunately, it's something that also contributes to some of the difficulties that we're having right now."

Forecasters expected dry air and strong wind to pose a challenge for firefighters into the weekend.

The fierce burning is occurring much later in the year than usual. Mountain snows usually are significant enough to end fire season well before mid-October.

The latest evacuations in the path of the Cameron Peak Fire affected mainly recreational properties – including hundreds of mountain cabins – in and around the communities of Glen Haven and Drake east of Rocky Mountain National Park. (AP)

**Barron was positive for virus:** Melania Trump says her 14-year-old son, Barron, had tested positive for the coronavirus but has since tested negative.

The White House initially said he had tested negative, after both of his parents tested positive earlier this month.

The first lady said Wednesday that subsequent testing showed Barron had also come down with COVID-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus.

He has since tested negative, she said, as have both she and President Donald Trump. After she and the president received their positive results Oct 1, Mrs Trump wrote that "naturally, my mind went immediately to our son."



Protesters kneel and raise their fists as they listen to speeches during a rally for the late George Floyd outside Barclays Center on Oct 14, 2020, in New York. Demonstrators gathered on what would have been Floyd's 47th birthday to call for action in correcting systemic racism in policing and for criminal justice reform. (AP)