

**From:** The Washington Post <email@washingtonpost.com>

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**Subject:** The Daily 202: As a baseball season like no other begins, escaping coronavirus proves impossible

**Date:** Thu, 23 Jul 2020 17:45:53 +0000



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The Daily 202

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By [James Hohmann](#)  
with Mariana Alfaro  
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## As a baseball season like no other begins, escaping coronavirus proves impossible

A reporter approached Sen. Mitt Romney in the Capitol on Wednesday afternoon to ask: “Do you have confidence in the president’s handling of this crisis right now?”

“Which? There are so many crises going on,” replied Romney (R-Utah). “I’m not sure which.”



Mitt Romney arrives for this week's Senate Republican lunch. (Stefani Reynolds/Bloomberg)

Mitt Romney arrives for this week's Senate Republican lunch. (Stefani Reynolds/Bloomberg)

The 2012 GOP presidential nominee was not trying to be flip and lamented President Trump’s response to the novel coronavirus when the reporter clarified. But our nation faces cascading crises: the worst civil unrest since

1968, the worst economic upheaval since 1933 and the worst public health emergency since 1918. This morning's [jobs report](#) shows another 1.4 million workers filed for unemployment benefits last week, the 18th straight week that more than a million Americans have filed claims.

Other ongoing crises get less attention because of the contagion, but that does not mean they have been solved. There is an opioid crisis causing deaths of despair, the climate crisis that imperils the future of the planet, a looming sovereign debt crisis that [most political leaders seem nonchalant about](#), rising great-power conflict with China, including [a new space race](#), and [fresh complications overnight](#) in Afghanistan as America struggles to exit her longest war.

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**It's time to remove hurdles to cancer care.**



Congress addressed the affordability of Covid-19 testing and treatment. Cancer care needs the same. It's time to reduce out-of-pocket costs and ensure cost-sharing assistance benefits cancer patients.

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Professional sports offer a comfortable getaway from the challenges of life and the burdens of reality. For a few hours, and a few bucks, you can go to the ballpark and escape. That has always been part of the joy that comes with the price of admission.

On this Opening Day of the Major League Baseball season, delayed by nearly four months because of the coronavirus, such escapism is impossible. Largely, this is because no one is safe from covid-19. To wit, the Kansas City Royals revealed Wednesday that Hunter Dozier, who hit 26 home runs last season, tested positive and will be placed on the injured list.

This abridged 60-game season, instead of the usual 162, will not be baseball as we know it; it might better be described as covidball. First off, there will be no spectators allowed in the stands, so all of us will be watching on television and fake crowd noise will be piped into the ballparks.



There is supposed to be social distancing – and mask wearing – in the dugout. Players have been told not to give high-fives. Or spit. Or chew sunflower seeds. Coaches have been told they are not allowed to touch their faces.



Tradition-bound Major League Baseball has made rule changes that would have been considered sacrilege not long ago, including introducing designated hitters in the National League and starting extra innings with an automatic runner [on second base](#).

Historically and culturally, baseball has been far less political and polarized than professional football and basketball. Players have tended to be less outspoken than their counterparts in other sports. ([I touched on this in 2017](#) after completing a personal quest to watch games at all 30 major league stadiums.)

But times are changing. The sport has not been immune to the national reckoning on racial injustice. San Francisco Giants manager Gabe Kapler and several of his players [knelt](#) during the national anthem earlier this week before an exhibition game, provoking an attack by Trump. “Looking forward to live sports,” he tweeted on Tuesday, “but any time I witness a player kneeling during the National Anthem, a sign of great disrespect for our Country and our Flag, the game is over for me!”

In a show of solidarity, “Black Lives Matter” will be stenciled on several mounds across the league this weekend, including in Washington. The league has also given players the option to wear patches on their jerseys that use the phrase.

The topsy-turvy process that got us to Opening Day has itself been a metaphor for the country’s broader struggle to control the virus. Baseball is the first of the big four sports to play a regular season game since March. The United States has lagged Europe and Asia in restarting professional sports. Players are being tested regularly now, but there have been long delays in turning around results – just like for the rest of society – that limit the values of the tests.



So often, it has felt like America just cannot catch a break these past few months. It is perhaps apt that [the forecast](#) calls for scattered thunderstorms to linger in Washington into the evening before tapering off after sunset.

 Tony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, adjusts his face mask during a Senate health committee hearing on June 30. (Al Drago/Reuters)

Tony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, adjusts his face mask during a Senate health committee hearing on June 30. (Al Drago/Reuters)

Tony Fauci, the government’s top infectious-disease expert, will throw the ceremonial [first pitch](#) of the first game at 7 p.m. Eastern in Washington as the Nationals take on the New York Yankees. ESPN will broadcast it live. In a [video](#) released Wednesday by the Nationals, the 79-year-old Fauci said he was nervous about getting the ball past home plate. Washington star Ryan Zimmerman told him not to worry. “If you bounce it, there’s nobody there to boo you,” he quipped.

I will never forget flying to Houston last October to watch the Nationals [win in the World Series](#) with my dad. But it feels hard to believe [that](#) incredible playoff run was just nine months ago. It feels like nine years.

The season opener is a doubleheader: The Dodgers will play the Giants tonight in Los Angeles after the Nationals-Yankees game. But San Francisco's star catcher Buster Posey will not play. He has opted to sit out the season because he and his wife adopted identical twin girls who were born prematurely, and he doesn't want to put them at risk. Among the dozen or so other stars skipping this season are Zimmerman, Atlanta's Nick Markakis, Los Angeles's David Price and Colorado's [Ian Desmond](#).

The members of my fantasy baseball league normally gather in the basement of a Capitol Hill bar for an annual draft. This year, we gathered virtually to respect social distancing protocols. We also waited to hold our draft until late last night because so many players kept announcing that they wouldn't play this season. None of us wanted to pay for pitchers and hitters who will not generate any stats for our teams.

(For those who care about the game, the roster for "The 202s" includes Gerrit Cole, Francisco Lindor, Clayton Kershaw, Nelson Cruz, Javier Baez, Jose Altuve, Matt Olson, Eddie Rosario and Kyle Schwarber. Picking Cole as one of my starting pitchers creates a somewhat awkward dynamic tonight because I will be cheering for the Nationals as the new Yankees ace starts against them. So it goes.)

Everything comes with some risks amid the pandemic. The first road game for the Nationals will be against the Toronto Blue Jays. But no one knows where that game will take place because Canada is not allowing its sole MLB team to play in the country. On Wednesday, the state of Pennsylvania [told](#) the Blue Jays that they will not be allowed to play their home games this season at PNC Park in Pittsburgh, as they had hoped to do.

“In recent weeks, we have seen a significant increase in the number of COVID-19 cases in southwestern Pennsylvania,” said Rachel Levine, secretary of the state Department of Health, in a statement. “To add travelers to this region for any reason, including for professional sports events, risks residents, visitors and members of both teams. We know that this virus does not discriminate and can even make professional athletes very sick. We are committed to protecting the health and well-being of all Pennsylvanians.”

## More team coverage:

- [Thomas Boswell](#): “This MLB season will be weird and not without risk. I can’t wait.”
- [Jesse Dougherty](#): “This was not the Opening Day the Nationals had planned, but at least it’s here.”
- [Dave Sheinin](#): “The baseball season starts Thursday. How it ends is anyone’s guess.”
- [Jerry Brewer](#): “Sports are doing what they can to remain viable, just like the rest of us.”
- [Scott Allen](#): “Shut out from Nationals Park, fans look for other ways to make Opening Day memorable.”
- George Will created his annual baseball trivia quiz for Opening Day. ([You can take it here.](#))

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## The coronavirus

 Sophie Cunningham, seen here on the right after a win in last year's NCAA women's college basketball tournament, believes she has had the coronavirus twice. (Charlie Neibergall/AP)

Sophie Cunningham, seen here on the right after a win in last year's NCAA women's college basketball tournament, believes she has had the coronavirus twice. (Charlie Neibergall/AP)

**Anecdotal evidence is mounting that you can get covid-19 twice, but doctors remain unsure.**

“When Sophie Cunningham, a guard for the WNBA’s Phoenix Mercury, returned to training last week after a bout with covid-19, she ... said she believed she had been infected twice — once in March and then again in June or July,” [Carolyn Johnson and Ariana Eunjung Cha report](#). “Daniel Griffin, an infectious diseases doctor and researcher at Columbia University Medical Center, said that with every virus — including chickenpox, for which antibodies are supposed to last a lifetime — there are cases of people who become sick again after recovering from the initial illness. When it comes to Ebola, American doctor Ian Crozier was declared free of the virus but then doctors found it lurking in his eye. In HIV/AIDS, a baby in Mississippi born to an HIV-positive mother was thought to be cured but then the virus reemerged 27 months after therapy was stopped. So in a world where 14.5 million people have had the coronavirus, a small number with resurgent sickness should not be cause for alarm. ...

“At the University of Pennsylvania, there was the pregnant woman infected in March who was fine for two months and then became so sick during childbirth she had to be put on a ventilator. At Cleveland Clinic, there was a patient with very mild symptoms in February — just a loss of smell and taste — who was well for two months, but then needed to be hospitalized in early May and was confirmed to have the virus again. And at ProHealth Care in Long Island, there was a man infected at the end of March who was never sick enough to be hospitalized. He showed up again in July, this time very ill. ‘He thought he had an immunity shield, so he took care of his son when he got covid,’ Griffin said. ‘Two weeks later, he was in the ER.’ The man, who had a very high antibody response the first time and donated his plasma so it could be used to treat other coronavirus patients, had barely any when doctors recently tested his blood in the hospital.”

There are conflicting explanations for what’s going on. “For severe acute respiratory syndrome, or SARS, and Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS), the antibodies seem to last for a year or longer. But other coronaviruses, such as the four that cause the common cold, act differently.

People seem to be able to get them each season, over and over again,” Carolyn and Ariana report. “Last week, a British study posted to a preprint server added to the body of evidence that virus-fighting antibodies drop off steeply two to three months after infection ... It was quickly followed by another study, also not peer-reviewed, of antibodies in nearly 20,000 New Yorkers with mild or moderate covid-19 symptoms. After retesting 120 of those people three months later, researchers at Mount Sinai Health System found virus-fighting antibodies were largely stable and had even increased in people that started with lower levels right after their infections.”

## **The Senate GOP scrapped Trump's demand for a payroll tax cut.**

Senate Republicans have cast aside one of Trump's key demands in their emerging coronavirus stimulus package, refusing to include a payroll tax cut in their opening offer to Democrats, which Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) is aiming to announce later today. “The development came amid a frantic GOP effort to try and salvage other parts of the package, though the entire process remained fluid and there was confusion among Republican aides about when a deal might be reached,” per [Erica Werner, Seung Min Kim and Jeff Stein](#).

- Ascena Retail Group, the conglomerate behind women's apparel brands Ann Taylor, Lane Bryant and Catherines, filed for bankruptcy and said it would close some of its 2,800 stores. ([Abha Bhattarai](#))
- LinkedIn, which is laying off 960 staff, joins a growing group of employers announcing layoffs for white-collar jobs, as coronavirus losses continue to ripple beyond low-wage work to better-paying jobs in auto manufacturing, technology and consulting. “Economists and human resources experts said the job cuts at LinkedIn were further evidence that hiring for white-collar jobs has stalled and did not bode well for a short-term recovery,” [Jena McGregor reports](#).
- The top executives of biotechnology company Novavax stand to collect millions even if their vaccine never makes it to the market. The stock options earmarked for CEO Stanley Erck and three other executives

are worth more than \$100 million. They're contingent on the vaccine making it to a Phase 2 trial, which is said to be imminent. ([Hamza Shaban](#))

### **The U.S. will soon surpass 4 million confirmed cases.**

“Trump painted a wishful view Wednesday of the U.S. response to the coronavirus pandemic, in which existing treatments can almost cure patients flooding hospitals, all schools will safely reopen this fall, and the country’s soaring cases are confined to a handful of states,” [William Wan and Jacqueline Dupree report](#). “The rosy assessment he issued at a White House news briefing ... was undermined by the alarming reality that on Wednesday, almost every metric showed just how badly America is losing its fight against the virus. **The number of daily deaths on Wednesday surpassed 1,100**, the first time that mark had been reached since May 29. And total deaths in the United States since the start of the pandemic increased to more than 140,000. California on Wednesday passed New York in the number of total confirmed coronavirus cases ...

“With transmission rapidly spiking in many areas, **governors in Indiana, Minnesota and Ohio joined the growing number of states mandating face coverings statewide**. More than 30 states require people to wear masks. ... [Trump] declined to press for a nationwide mandate for masks, despite the near-universal urgings of public health experts. ... On Wednesday, [an influential model](#) created by the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation ... said wider mask-wearing by Americans had caused the institute to revise projections on how many people will die of covid-19 by Nov. 1. Earlier, it had forecast 224,500 deaths by that date. Now, it estimates 219,900 deaths by Nov. 1 — a decrease of about 5,000 deaths. If 95 percent of Americans wore masks when leaving their homes, that number would drop further to 185,900, IHME researchers said.”

## **A Texas county is storing bodies in trucks because so many residents are dying.**

“Texas, which reported 197 deaths and 10,893 hospitalizations, has been one of the states hardest hit by the resurgent coronavirus. Hidalgo County, at the southern tip of the state on the U.S. border with Mexico, has seen cases rise 60 percent in the last week … with deaths doubling to more than 360,” [Reuters reports](#). “Crematoriums in the Hidalgo area have a wait list of two weeks … forcing the county to use five refrigerated trucks that can hold 50 bodies each. Hidalgo’s top medical official, Dr. Ivan Melendez, partly blamed (Republican Gov. Greg) Abbott’s move to override local officials for the spike in coronavirus infections, which he said has jammed the local medical system at every level.”

## **Banks face a unique coronavirus problem: Robbers in masks.**

Financial regulators and banks fear masks could double as handy disguises for would-be bank robbers, and there have been a few mask-involved attempted robberies. “In one case, a man walked into a Houston bank with a bandanna covering his face and handed a teller a note: ‘I didn’t get a stimulus or that 10k loan. I lost my business to Covid so please make this easy and comply,’” [Renae Merle reports](#). “Another would-be robber in Florida, entered a Wells Fargo branch wearing sunglasses, gloves and a white cone-like mask over his face. He approached a teller’s window demanding money, according to the arrest warrant. But the bank employee had trouble hearing the robber’s demands — through the mask. ‘The male got upset and repeated himself several times’ and eventually left empty-handed, according to the arrest warrant. … Despite the robbery attempt, Wells Fargo began requiring customers to wear masks July 13. They are also required by Bank of America. JPMorgan Chase said its employees are required to wear masks but they would comply with local ordinances when it comes to their customers.”

## **D.C. imposed one of the most stringent mask requirements in the country.**

“Mayor Muriel E. Bowser said her order requires people older than 2 to wear a mask when they leave the house and are likely to come into contact with others. It’s one of the strictest mask ordinances in the country — and came on the same day the city recorded 102 new coronavirus cases, the highest daily number since early June,” [Julie Zauzmer, Ovetta Wiggins, Dana Hedgpeth and Rachel Chason report](#). “John Falcicchio, the mayor’s chief of staff, said D.C. police will be empowered to fine people not wearing a mask, although the city expects such fines to be limited. As the city’s case counts rise, Health Director LaQuandra Nesbitt said Wednesday that an increasing proportion of those newly diagnosed infections involve younger people.”

- The virus could push 250,000 into hunger in the D.C. region, according to a report by the Capital Area Food Bank. About half of the food bank’s 450 partner groups and food pantries are still closed because of the pandemic. ([Kyle Swenson](#))
- Southwest Airlines said it will no longer let travelers fly without masks, thus enacting the strictest mask policy among U.S. airlines. ([Lori Aratani](#))
- Trump attended a fundraiser at his D.C. hotel without a mask. The city sent an investigator to inspect the hotel. ([Fenit Nirappil and Julie Zauzmer](#))
- Two cafeterias used by staff in the White House complex were closed after an employee tested positive. ([NYT](#))

## **Colleges are creating special quarantine housing for students who get infected or exposed.**

Michigan State University will quarantine sick students in a 500-person “isolation dorm.” Penn State will quarantine sick students at an on-campus hotel, while the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill will convert two dorms — one for students who have been exposed to the virus and another for those confirmed to have it. ([Teo Armus](#))

- Education Secretary Betsy DeVos said children are “stoppers” of the virus. While there is evidence that younger children especially may not transmit the virus as easily, claiming that children may stop the spread of the disease shows a stunning lack of due diligence, [writes Post fact checker Glenn Kessler](#).
- A new poll shows 60 percent of parents with school-age children say they’d rather wait for schools to reopen later to minimize infection risks, even if their kids miss out on academics, [according the Kaiser Family Foundation](#).
- Trump said he would be comfortable sending his son and grandchildren back to school. ([Colby Itkowitz](#))
- Teachers across Arizona protested against reopening schools in “motor marches.” ([Arizona Republic](#))
- Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis (R) reiterated his plan to let parents choose between sending their kids back to school or educating them online. ([Miami Herald](#))

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## Quote of the day

*“This is everything I was trying to warn people about,” said Rebekah Jones, a Florida Department of Health employee who created the state’s coronavirus dashboard and was fired by DeSantis after being labeled an “alarmist” for predicting that the state would suffer 4,000 covid-19 deaths. ([Yahoo News](#))*

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## Divided America

Portland, Ore., Mayor Ted Wheeler joins protests in his city. (Jonathan Maus/Bikeportland via Reuters)

Portland, Ore., Mayor Ted Wheeler joins protests in his city. (Jonathan Maus/Bikeportland via Reuters)

**Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler got tear-gassed by federal agents.**

“Wheeler choked on tear gas late Wednesday as he stood outside the federal courthouse in downtown Portland, where federal agents set off explosives and fired chemicals into a crowd of hundreds,” [Marissa Lang reports](#). “The Democratic mayor ... had strapped on lab goggles to help protect his eyes, but still, the mayor said, his face burned and eyes watered. ‘It’s hard to breathe — it’s a little harder to breathe than I thought,’ Wheeler told The Washington Post while a man with a leaf blower turned the nozzle on the mayor to clear away any gas still hanging in the air. ‘This is abhorrent. This is beneath us.’ As Wheeler stood at the fence, he was heckled and insulted. ... For hours before Wheeler’s brush with chemical irritants, the mayor made a contentious and, at times, tense attempt to talk with protesters. On the wall of the justice center behind him, activists had displayed a list of demands. The last demand on the list, which included defunding the Portland Police Bureau by 50 percent and expelling federal forces from the city, was for Wheeler to resign. ... After nearly an hour, Wheeler had enough. A thick cloud of gas hung over the place where he stood as he and two security officers pushed through the crowd and away from the federal building.”

### **The House voted to remove Confederate statues from the Capitol.**

The chamber also voted to “replace the bust of Roger B. Taney, the U.S. chief justice who wrote the Supreme Court decision that said people of African descent are not U.S. citizens,” [Felicia Sonmez and Donna Cassata report](#). “The vote was 305 to 113 for the bill that would replace the bust of Taney, which sits outside the old Supreme Court chamber on the first floor of the Capitol, with one of Thurgood Marshall, the first black member of the Supreme Court. ... Democrats were unified in backing the measure; all the no votes came from Republicans, who were divided with 72 GOP lawmakers voting for the bill and 113 opposed.”

- The GOP-controlled Senate is poised to defy Trump's veto threat and force the renaming of 10 military bases that honor Confederate

generals. The name changes are included in the \$740 billion military spending bill, a final version of which the Senate has yet to pass. But the chamber voted yesterday to end the debate period for amendments without taking up a measure from Sen. Josh Hawley (R-Mo.) that sought to strip the legislation's requirement to rename the bases. ([Karoun Demirjian](#))

- George Washington University will consider retiring the school's "Colonials" moniker and renaming the campus's community center. The center is named after Cloyd Heck Marvin, a former university president credited with expanding the school but also known for being a segregationist who resisted admitting black students. ([Lauren Lumpkin](#))

## **Trump announced a surge of federal law enforcement into Chicago and Albuquerque.**

"Appearing at an event with top federal law enforcement officials and the family members of crime victims, Trump delivered fiery talking points that took direct aim at those who have advocated redirecting funding from law enforcement to other endeavors. He blamed the recent increases in violence in some cities on leaders who have endorsed such steps and said he planned to increase federal law enforcement's presence to reduce crime," [Matt Zapotosky reports](#). "Soon after he finished speaking, Chicago's mayor accused Trump of seeking to distract from his handling of the coronavirus pandemic. ... The deployments, at least at first, will be focused in Chicago and Albuquerque, where Attorney General William P. Barr said the Justice Department will roll out a program it launched earlier this month in Kansas City, Mo., to increase the number of agents from the FBI, the U.S. Marshals Service, the Drug Enforcement Administration and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. The program was named 'Operation Legend' to honor 4-year-old LeGend Taliferro, who was shot and killed in Kansas City last month."

- Barr falsely claimed that federal agents have already arrested 200 people in K.C. as part of "Operation Legend." A Justice Department

later tried to clarify that his number included arrests dating back to last year and included state and FBI arrests in other joint operations. ([Kansas City Star](#))

- Philadelphia District Attorney Larry Krasner (D) said he's prepared to arrest federal agents if they bring the tactics they've used in Portland to his city. "Anyone, including federal law enforcement, who unlawfully assaults and kidnaps people will face criminal charges from my office," he said. ([Bloomberg News](#))
- The number of people trying to buy guns who are not legally allowed to own them has more than doubled this spring, according to internal FBI data. A year ago, in March, the FBI's National Instant Criminal Background Check System ran background checks on 823,273 attempted gun buys, blocking about 9,500 people from buying guns. This March, the system processed more than 1.4 million background checks and blocked 23,692 gun sales. ([Politico](#))
- The fired Minneapolis police officer who put his knee on George Floyd's neck was charged with felony tax evasion. Authorities allege that Derek Chauvin failed to claim more than \$460,000 in income — at least \$96,000 of that in his off-duty security work. ([Star Tribune](#))
- A Canadian court said sending asylum seekers back to the U.S. violates their rights. The court "threw out a long-standing deal that has allowed the country to send asylum seekers back to the United States, saying it violates their rights by exposing them to likely detention and possible removal on the U.S. side," [Amanda Coletta reports](#).
- Charles Evers, brother of slain civil rights activist Medgar Evers, died at 97. Charles picked up his brother's mantle by leading black voter registration efforts in Mississippi in the 1960s. He was elected the first black mayor of a mixed-race Mississippi town since Reconstruction. ([Olesia Plokhil](#))

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## The elections



## **At least 76 percent of American voters can cast ballots by mail this fall.**

“As of now, nearly 180 million Americans who are eligible to vote would be able to cast a ballot by mail. Of those, 22 million live in states that will accept fear of the coronavirus as an excuse to vote absentee, or have switched to become ‘no excuse’ states,” [Kate Rabinowitz and Brittany Renee Mayes report](#). “Thirty-four states and the District of Columbia already allowed anyone to vote absentee. But many of these places are making the process easier. California will start proactively mailing ballots to registered voters, joining universal vote-by-mail states such as Colorado. Many states will send every registered voter an absentee-ballot application. These types of statewide expansions affect another 63 million eligible voters. In some states like Nebraska, individual counties are planning to send mail-in voting applications in the absence of a statewide directive. For voters in nine states – Connecticut, New York, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, Texas and West Virginia – in-person voting remains the only option unless they can provide an approved reason not related to fear of the coronavirus. Traditional absentee excuses include military deployments or illness.”

## **Republican lawmakers are privately having conversations about what happens if Trump refuses to relinquish power.**

“Most legal experts said it is hard to envision that Trump would actually try to remain in office after a clear defeat by Biden, considering the uproar that would follow,” [Elise Viebeck and Robert Costa report](#). “But his unwillingness to commit to a smooth transition of power has forced academics and political leaders – including, privately, some GOP lawmakers – to contemplate possible scenarios. … Among the possibilities: Trump could claim victory before the vote in key states is fully counted – a process that could take days or even weeks this year because of the expected avalanche of absentee ballots. He could also spend weeks refusing to concede amid a legal war over which votes are valid and should be

included in the tally ... Or he could simply refuse to leave on Jan. 20. ... This year, the president has attacked the security of voting by mail at least 50 times ... There is no evidence that mail voting leads to the kind of massive fraud Trump has described. ...

**"In GOP circles, private talk about Trump's assertions veers from alarm to shrugging off his comments as simply incendiary political salvos.** One moderate Republican House member, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to comment candidly and avoid Trump's wrath, said he expects Trump to 'leave quickly' if it is a blowout defeat. But he said he worries about a narrow election and whether Trump would go to extreme lengths to 'protect his personal brand.' 'It's something we'd all rather not think about, but it's there,' he said. The president is being backed by a bustling Republican operation in 15 states to monitor voting locations and ensure a heavy GOP presence at polling sites. **Trump's reelection campaign and the RNC are working together to recruit 50,000 volunteers to serve as 'poll watchers,'** according to advisers to both groups, with \$20 million set aside for courtroom fights ... Democrats and voting rights advocates, meanwhile, are mustering their own legal effort to make it easier to cast ballots by mail, filing more than 50 lawsuits in 25 states."

- A new Quinnipiac University poll finds Biden leading Trump by one point in Texas, 45 percent to 44 percent. Voters there say they like Trump better, but they're seriously considering breaking for the former vice president. ([Aaron Blake](#))
- Biden claimed that Trump is America's "first" racist president. That's not correct: A dozen presidents owned slaves. Others like Woodrow Wilson used racist language. And many others, think Andrew Jackson, enacted racist policies. Trump's spokeswoman also insists that he is not racist. ([Colby Itkowitz and John Wagner](#))

**Trump keeps bragging about passing a cognitive test, but it doesn't mean what he thinks it does.**

“In another Fox News interview [last night], Trump couldn’t resist revisiting what he said was the hardest part of the test — repeating five words, in order. Trump said he was first asked to repeat a set of words — ‘person,’ ‘woman,’ ‘man,’ ‘camera,’ ‘TV,’ he said, offering a hypothetical example — and then, later in the assessment after some time had elapsed, he was again asked whether he remembered those same words, in order,” [Ashley Parker and William Wan report](#). “And they say... ‘Go back to that question, and repeat them. Can you do it?’ Trump said, mimicking the doctors administering the exam. ‘And you go, ‘Person, woman, man, camera, TV.’ They say, ‘That’s amazing. How did you do that?’ I do it because I have, like, a good memory, because I’m cognitively there.’ ... Experts say the president’s fixation on the Montreal Cognitive Assessment ... is particularly puzzling because **the test is normally administered only if someone is concerned that they or their loved ones may be experiencing dementia** or other cognitive decline. Getting a perfect score — as Trump has repeatedly claimed he did — merely signifies that the test-taker probably does not have a cognitive impairment as measured by the exam.”

## **Senate primaries are exposing growing fissures inside the GOP.**

The Senate Leadership Fund formally took a side Wednesday in a contested GOP primary for a candidate to succeed retiring Kansas Sen. Pat Roberts (R). The super PAC’s aim is to stifle the chances of former Kansas secretary of state Kris Kobach. Kobach choked in a very winnable governor’s race [two years ago](#). SLF, which is closely aligned with McConnell and run by his former chief of staff, will launch a \$1.2 million ad campaign promoting Rep. Roger Marshall (R-Kan.) in the primary. The primary in Tennessee to replace retiring Sen. Lamar Alexander is also becoming nastier: The Trump-endorsed candidate, former U.S. ambassador to Japan Bill Hagerty, launched attack ads this week against

his main competitor, Manny Sethi, an orthopedic surgeon whom Ted Cruz endorsed. ([Seung Min Kim and Rachael Bade](#))

### **Trump's company applied to trademark the word "telerally." Then Trump held one.**

In an application to the trademark office, a subsidiary of the organization said the word will be used for “organizing events in the field of politics and political campaigning.” The trademark application could mark a shift in the company’s business model, which has always stayed one step away from politics and doesn’t market itself as a political company. By filing it, trademark experts said, the company is saying it intends to enter this business soon. ([David Fahrenthold and Colby Itkowitz](#))

### **Following weeks of erratic behavior by Kanye West, his wife addressed his bipolar disorder.**

Kim Kardashian West issued a statement requesting “compassion and empathy” from the public, as the rapper claims that he’s running for president. “We as a society talk about giving grace to the issue of mental health as a whole,” the reality TV star wrote, “however we should also give it to the individuals who are living with it in times when they need it most.” West held what was billed as a campaign rally in North Charleston, S.C., on Sunday, during which he attacked abolitionist Harriet Tubman and revealed that he and Kardashian had seriously considered terminating their first pregnancy. “For the following two nights, West sent — and, in most cases, deleted — tweets detailing a strained relationship with his family,” [Sonia Rao reports](#). “He also stated that Kardashian tried to get him medical attention and, later on, claimed he has been trying to divorce her.”

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## **Social media speed read**

The president joined his eldest son in attacking Rep. Liz Cheney (R-Wyo.), the No. 3 member of House GOP leadership and the highest-ranking conservative woman in Congress:



The newest branch of the military had a meta message:



Trump's description of the coordinator of his coronavirus task force was magical:



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## Videos of the day

Stephen Colbert was confused by Trump's message to Ghislaine Maxwell:



Seth Meyers said Trump is trying to convince America that he suddenly cares about the virus:



The Congressional Black Caucus hosted a special session on the House floor for members to remember the late Rep. John Lewis (D-Ga.):



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