

Kentucky AG says he did not recommend charges against two Breonna Taylor officers | Reuters

Clip source: [Kentucky AG says he did not recommend charges against two Breonna Taylor officers | Reuters](#)

By [Daniel Trotta](#)

(Reuters) - Kentucky's attorney general, who presented evidence to a grand jury in the police shooting death of Breonna Taylor, said he did not recommend any charges against the two police officers who shot her as the grand jury needed to make that decision on its own.

The revelation, in a Louisville television interview, pre-empts one of the main points of interest that was to be unveiled on Wednesday when a recording of the proceedings is to be made public.

"They are an independent body. If they wanted to make an assessment about different charges, they could have done that. But our recommendation was that (Jonathan) Mattingly and (Myles) Cosgrove were justified in their acts and their conduct," Attorney General Daniel Cameron told WDRB television in an interview on Tuesday.

The case of Breonna Taylor, a 26-year-old Black woman, has revived street protests across the United States against racism and police brutality, further polarizing the country as some voters are already casting early ballots in the Nov. 3 presidential election.

The grand jury last week decided against indicting either Mattingly or Cosgrove. Cameron said the shooting was justified as self-defense since Taylor's boyfriend fired first at the officers, believing they were criminal intruders.

The panel did, however, indict a third white officer, Brett Hankison, for wanton endangerment for stray bullets that hit a neighboring apartment.

Critics of Cameron including civil rights attorney Ben Crump, who represents the Taylor family, have been questioning the presentation to the grand jury, suggesting that Cameron, a Black Republican, was protecting the officers. Crump helped the family win a \$12 million wrongful death settlement against the city of Louisville.

Cameron previously said he presented the grand jury with "all the evidence" and walked the panel through six possible homicide offenses under Kentucky law.

But prosecutors have wide leeway in how to present evidence to a grand jury, which then decides whether to bring charges.

Cameron told WDRB, a Fox-affiliated channel in Louisville, he only recommended the one charge that was brought.

"Ultimately our judgment is that the charge that we could prove at trial beyond a reasonable doubt was for wanton endangerment against Mr. Hankison," Cameron said.

The case has put the spotlight on Cameron, a potential rising star in a Republican Party that greatly lags Democrats with the Black vote.

Salt Bae's restaurant Nusr-Et faces Licensing Board, promises to comply with COVID-19 restrictions - The Boston Globe

Clip source: [Salt Bae's restaurant Nusr-Et faces Licensing Board, promises to comply with COVID-19 restrictions - The Boston Globe](#)

'We're not making any excuses. We should have done a better job,' a representative says

By Diti Kohli Globe Correspondent, Updated September 29, 2020, 10:01 a.m.

Salt Bae's top managers promised Tuesday to bring the Internet sensation's new Boston restaurant into compliance with COVID-19 regulations as the Licensing Board was told the soft opening of the restaurant caused "pandemonium" and "chaos" in its downtown neighborhood.

"We take COVID measures, rules, and regulations very seriously, and safety comes first," said Naki Ufuk Soy Turk, representing the restaurant, Nusr-Et. "We're not making any excuses. We should have done a better job to be in compliance with the safety and security rules. . . . We will be a fine-dining model establishment and an excellent neighbor."

Soy Turk delivered his statement at a hearing before the board, which shut down the restaurant and confiscated Nusr-Et's liquor license Saturday after fielding complaints from neighbors, Boston police, and the city's Inspectional Services Department.

Advertisement

"The board felt this was a necessary action due to the strain on city resources to responding to calls of lack of social distancing repeatedly since this restaurant was open," said Kathleen Joyce, the board's chairwoman.

The board discussed three formal complaints of code violations Tuesday that cited a failure to adhere to pandemic safety protocols, to prevent lines from forming, and to maintain unobstructed fire exits. Board members asked Nusr-Et representatives for a copy of the restaurant's updated security and safety plan before they vote later in the week on how to proceed.

More than 60 people — many of whom did not turn on their cameras — attended the hearing, held on Zoom. Separate complaints about Pink Taco, Pollo Centro, La Gran Mananza, and Bartaco were also on the agenda.

Nusr-Et representatives said Salt Bae, whose real name is [Nusret Gökçe](#), is still in Boston. But he did not appear at the meeting.

Dennis Quilty, the Boston attorney representing Nusr-Et, called a confluence of factors that led to crowds around the 100 Arlington St. restaurant a "perfect storm." He said Nusr-Et was dealing with the rush of opening weekend, including a swarm of patrons who arrived without reservations, hoping to spot Salt Bae.

The company said it did not advertise the soft opening but acknowledged that Salt Bae used his social media platforms to announce his plans for the Boston restaurant.

Exclusive: China preparing an antitrust investigation into Google - sources | Reuters

Clip source: [Exclusive: China preparing an antitrust investigation into Google - sources | Reuters](#)

BEIJING/SINGAPORE/SHENZHEN, China (Reuters) - China is preparing to launch an antitrust probe into Alphabet Inc's [GOOGL.O](#) Google, looking into allegations it has leveraged the dominance of its Android mobile operating system to stifle competition, two people familiar with the matter said.

The case was proposed by telecommunications equipment giant Huawei Technologies Co Ltd last year and has been submitted by the country's top market regulator to the State Council's antitrust committee for review, they added.

A decision on whether to proceed with a formal investigation may come as soon as October and could be affected by the state of China's relationship with the United States, one of the people said.

The potential investigation follows a raft of actions by U.S. President Donald Trump's administration to hobble Chinese tech companies, citing national security risks.

This has included putting Huawei on its trade blacklist, threatening similar action for Semiconductor Manufacturing International Corp [0981.HK](#) and ordering TikTok owner ByteDance to divest the short-form video app.

It also comes as China embarks on a major revamp of its antitrust laws with proposed amendments including a dramatic increase in maximum fines and expanded criteria for judging a company's control of a market.

A potential probe would also look at accusations that Google's market position could cause "extreme damage" to Chinese companies like Huawei, as losing the U.S. tech giant's support for Android-based operating systems would lead to loss of confidence and revenue, a second person said.

The sources were not authorised to speak publicly on the matter and declined to be identified. Google did not provide immediate comment, while Huawei declined to comment.

China's top market regulator, the State Administration for Market Regulation, and the State Council did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

EUROPE'S EXAMPLE

The U.S. trade blacklist bars Google from providing technical support to new Huawei phone models and access to Google Mobile Services, the bundle of developer services upon which most Android apps are based.

Google had a temporary licence that exempted it from the ban on Huawei but it expired in August.

It was not immediately clear what Google services the potential probe would focus on. Most Chinese smartphone vendors use an open-source version of the Android platform with alternatives to Google services on their domestic phones. Google's search, email and other services are blocked in China.

7-Day Forecast for Latitude 42.36°N and Longitude 71.07°W (Elev. 13 ft) (Text-Only)

Clip source: [7-Day Forecast for Latitude 42.36°N and Longitude 71.07°W \(Elev. 13 ft\) \(Text-Only\)](#).

Today: Showers likely, mainly before 1pm. Cloudy, then gradually becoming mostly sunny, with a high near 74. Southwest wind 14 to 17 mph, with gusts as high as 40 mph. Chance of precipitation is 60%. New precipitation amounts between a tenth and quarter of an inch possible.

Tonight: Mostly cloudy, then gradually becoming clear, with a low around 58. Southwest wind around 8 mph.

Thursday: Sunny, with a high near 76. Southwest wind 8 to 11 mph, with gusts as high as 22 mph.

Thursday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 53. Southwest wind around 5 mph becoming calm in the evening.

Friday: A chance of showers, mainly after 1pm. Partly sunny, with a high near 67. Calm wind becoming east 5 to 7 mph in the afternoon. Chance of precipitation is 40%.

Friday Night: A chance of showers, mainly before 11pm. Partly cloudy, with a low around 49. South wind 5 to 7 mph becoming west in the evening. Chance of precipitation is 50%.

Saturday: Sunny, with a high near 65. Northwest wind around 8 mph.

Saturday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 47. Light northwest wind.

Sunday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 62. North wind 5 to 7 mph becoming east in the afternoon.

Sunday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 49. Southeast wind 3 to 5 mph.

Monday: A chance of showers. Partly sunny, with a high near 62. East wind 6 to 9 mph. Chance of precipitation is 30%.

Monday Night: A chance of showers. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 50. East wind around 7 mph. Chance of precipitation is 30%.

Tuesday: A chance of showers. Partly sunny, with a high near 63. West wind 7 to 10 mph. Chance of precipitation is 30%.

Pompeo warns Italy over China's economic influence | Reuters

Clip source: [Pompeo warns Italy over China's economic influence](#)

By Reuters Staff

ROME (Reuters) - U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said on Wednesday he was concerned about China's plans to extend its economic influence in Italy, while Rome promised to be on its guard as it developed new 5G technologies.

The United States has repeatedly urged Italy, home to several large U.S. military bases, not to deepen ties with China and Pompeo said he had reiterated the message at meetings with Italian Foreign Minister Luigi Di Maio.

"The foreign minister and I had a long conversation about the United States' concerns at the Chinese Communist Party trying to leverage its economic presence in Italy to serve its own strategic purposes," Pompeo told a joint news conference.

"The United States also urges the Italian government to consider carefully the risks to its national security and the privacy of its citizens presented by technology companies with ties to the Chinese Communist Party."

Di Maio said Italy remained fully committed to its Western partners and understood the U.S. position.

"On the issue of the 5G, I told Secretary Mike Pompeo that we are well aware of the concerns of our U.S. ally and fully realise the responsibility faced by every country when dealing with security," the Italian minister said.

Italy raised hackles in Washington last year when it became the first major Western economy to join China's international infrastructure project, the Belt and Road Initiative. However, the tie-up has yielded little economic gain thus far.

Reporting by Angelo Amante; Writing by Crispian Balmer, editing by Gavin Jones

Our Standards: [The Thomson Reuters Trust Principles.](#)

Cole fans 13, Yanks belt 4 homers in rout of Indians | Reuters

Clip source: [Cole fans 13, Yanks belt 4 homers in rout of Indians | Reuters](#)

By Field Level Media

Gerrit Cole struck out 13 batters over seven innings to lift the visiting New York Yankees to a 12-3 romp over the Cleveland Indians on Tuesday in Game 1 of their American League wild-card series.

Gleyber Torres belted a two-run homer to highlight his four-hit, three-RBI performance. Brett Gardner and Aaron Judge also launched two-run shots and Giancarlo Stanton added a solo blast for the fifth-seeded Yankees, who will look to finish off the fourth-seeded Indians on Wednesday in Game 2 of the best-of-three set.

Cole (1-0) became the first pitcher in major league history to record three postseason performances with at least 12 strikeouts. The 30-year-old veteran, who overcame Josh Naylor's solo homer in the fourth inning, allowed two runs on six hits without walking a batter.

The dominant effort perhaps was what New York had in mind when it signed Cole to a nine-year, \$324 million free agent contract last December. Just two months earlier, Cole posted a 4-1 record with a 1.72 ERA and 0.87 WHIP in five postseason starts for the Houston Astros.

The Yankees wasted little time gaining the early advantage on AL Cy Young Award favorite Shane Bieber (0-1), who was victimized for a career-high-tying seven runs on nine hits in 4 2/3 innings in his postseason debut. By comparison, Bieber surrendered a total of seven earned runs in his first eight starts this season.

DJ LeMahieu, who won the AL batting title, singled to right field to open the first inning before Judge deposited a first-pitch fastball from Bieber over the wall in right-center field. The homer was the ninth of Judge's postseason career.

New York's Luke Voit and Cleveland's Jose Ramirez traded RBI doubles in the third inning before Gardner added one of his own to give the Yankees a 4-1 lead in the fourth inning. Gardner later came around to score on LeMahieu's infield single.

Naylor, who had four hits, belted a solo blast in the fourth inning before the Yankees answered in the fifth. With two outs, Gio Urshela singled and Torres chased Bieber by sending a 2-2 fastball over the wall in center field for a two-run homer and a 7-2 lead.

New York didn't stop there, with Urshela's sacrifice fly igniting a four-run seventh inning that produced an 11-2 lead. Torres added an RBI single before Gardner sent a 1-1 fastball from Cameron Hill over the wall in center field.

Stanton went deep in the top of the ninth, and Tyler Naquin's RBI single off Luis Cessa in the bottom of the ninth capped the scoring.

--Field Level Media

Remains of Jurassic sea predator found in Chile's Atacama desert | Reuters

Clip source: [Remains of Jurassic sea predator found in Chile's Atacama desert](#)

By [Natalia A. Ramos Miranda](#)

Daunting marine predator's fossil uncovered in Chile

(Reuters) - Scientists have unearthed the remains of Jurassic sea predators resembling killer whales in the world's driest desert in Chile.

Pliosaurus were reptiles from about 160 million years ago with a more powerful bite than Tyrannosaurus rex, according to University of Chile researchers. The fossils are the second oldest record of this species in the Southern Hemisphere.

Chile's vast Atacama desert, once largely submerged beneath the Pacific Ocean, is now a moonscape of sand and stone with parts untouched by rain for years. Pliosaurus reined the region, with their large skull, elongated face, short neck, menacing teeth on a hydrodynamic body and fin-like limbs.

Scientists found jaw, tooth and limb fragments of the creatures "ecologically similar" to killer whales at two sites in the Loa river basin near the mining city of Calama.

The find helps scientists fill gaps in evolution, said Rodrigo Otero, a University of Chile paleontologist who led the research.

The complete fossil, under excavation since 2017, is likely to measure six to seven meters (19.7 to 23 feet). The skull is around a meter (3.3 feet) long, with teeth each around eight to 10 centimeters (3.1 to 3.9 inches) long, Otero said.

The study was published in the Journal of South American Earth Sciences in early September.

Reporting by Natalia Ramos; Writing by Dave Sherwood; Editing by Richard Chang

Our Standards: [The Thomson Reuters Trust Principles.](#)

Congressional panel subpoenas top Homeland official in whistleblower probe | Reuters

Clip source: [Congressional panel subpoenas top Homeland official in whistleblower probe | Reuters](#)

By [Mark Hosenball](#)

3 Min Read

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - A congressional intelligence committee has issued a subpoena to compel a senior U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) official to testify about accusations that it had meddled in intelligence reports for political purposes.

The accusation stems from a whistleblower complaint made by former Homeland Security Department intelligence chief Brian Murphy, who has alleged that top DHS officials and a White House official sought to skew intelligence reports.

Adam Schiff, chairman of the U.S. House of Representatives Intelligence Committee, said he had subpoenaed acting DHS intelligence chief Joseph Maher to testify publicly on Friday. Schiff has said the department was seeking to stall the committee's investigation into Murphy's allegations.

Schiff said he also had issued a subpoena to force DHS to turn over "documents, communications, and other records" related to the committee's probe of Murphy's allegations.

"Adam Schiff's claims about DHS stonewalling his committee or obstructing the clearance process are completely false. DHS is doing no such thing and Chairman Schiff, despite the obvious political theater of this subpoena, knows this," a department spokesman said in a statement.

"In fact, the department has produced nearly 3,000 pages of documents and has provided two briefings and three transcribed interviews to date," the spokesman said.

Murphy has claimed he was pressured to stop providing assessments of the threat of Russian interference in the Nov. 3 U.S. election and to play down white supremacist activity.

He has also said acting DHS Secretary Chad Wolf told him in May to instead report on political interference threats posed by China and Iran and highlight the involvement of left-wing groups in domestic disorder.

The DHS has flatly denied Murphy's accusations.

Schiff originally announced that he planned to take a closed-door deposition from Murphy last week so Murphy could talk about classified material he dealt with while at DHS.

But Murphy's lawyers say DHS has moved slowly to grant them security clearances they would need to participate in such proceedings, and have also denied him pre-deposition access to all but unclassified materials he worked on.

Mark Zaid, a lawyer for Murphy, said it was still possible Murphy could be deposed by the committee on Friday if security clearances for his lawyers are approved by then.

Wind gust reaches 70 m.p.h. in Blue Hills as strong weather system leaves 69,000 without power in Massachusetts - The Boston Globe

Clip source: [Wind gust reaches 70 m.p.h. in Blue Hills as strong weather system leaves 69,000 without power in Massachusetts - The Boston Globe](#)

Strong winds knocked down trees and utility poles across Massachusetts, leaving more than 65,000 electricity customers without power, a number that was steadily climbing early Wednesday, according to the National Weather Service and the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency.

The winds, part of a weather system that is supposed to run out of steam by midmorning, impressed weather service meteorologists after the Blue Hills Observatory in Milton recorded a 70-mile-an-hour wind gust.

There were more than 69,000 customers in Massachusetts without power as of 9 a.m., according to the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency.

The outages were not limited to one geographic area but were reported in Plymouth County south of Boston, in Worcester County in the central part of the state, and in Berkshire County, the westernmost county, according to MEMA's online power outage tracking map.

Massachusetts State Police [tweeted](#) that part of the VFW Parkway in West Roxbury had to be shut down Wednesday morning due to a large tree that came down. "Troopers are currently turning traffic around as the roadway outbound is impassible," the tweet said. "The area from Charles Park Road to Spring Street is closed."

Police in Holliston, Upton, and Sharon [tweeted](#) that several roads were closed due to downed wires and trees.

U.S. economy contracts at 31.4% annualized rate in second quarter | Reuters

Clip source: [U.S. economy contracts at 31.4% annualized rate in second quarter | Reuters](#)

By Reuters Staff

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The U.S. economy suffered its sharpest contraction in at least 73 years in the second quarter because of the disruptions from the coronavirus, the government confirmed on Wednesday.

Gross domestic product plunged at a 31.4% annualized rate last quarter, the deepest drop in output since the government started keeping records in 1947, the Commerce Department said in its third estimate of GDP. Output was previously reported to have contracted at a 31.7% pace in the second quarter.

Reporting by Lucia Mutikani; Editing by Chizu Nomiyama

Our Standards: [The Thomson Reuters Trust Principles.](#)

Kuwait's new emir takes oath, calls for unity at tense time for region | Reuters

Clip source: [Kuwait's](#)

By [Ahmed Hagagy](#).

KUWAIT (Reuters) - Kuwait's new emir was sworn in at parliament on Wednesday as the country prepared to lay to rest late ruler Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah, a Gulf Arab elder statesman who helped steer his people through some of the Middle East's most turbulent decades.

The cabinet named designated successor Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf al-Ahmad al-Sabah as ruler on Tuesday after the death of Sheikh Sabah, 91, whose body arrived in Kuwait on Wednesday from the United States, where he had been hospitalised since July.

The plane was met by royal guard members, each carrying a flag pole at half-staff. At the tarmac, Sheikh Nawaf watched as the body, wrapped in a white shroud and a Kuwaiti flag, was carried to an ambulance.

Nawaf, 83, pledged to work for the OPEC member country's prosperity, stability and security after taking the oath of office, raising both hands to his head as lawmakers applauded.

"Our dear nation today faces difficult situations and dangerous challenges that can only be overcome ... by unifying ranks and working hard together," he told the National Assembly.

Sheikh Sabah will be buried at the Sulaibikhat cemetery alongside his kin. The funeral has been restricted to ruling family members due to concerns about coronavirus, which along with low oil prices has strained the wealthy petroleum producer's finances.

The emir of Qatar, which has been boycotted by Saudi Arabia and its allies in a dispute that Sheikh Sabah tried until his death to resolve, will attend the funeral, state media said.

SEASONED DIPLOMAT

When the previous emir, Sheikh Jaber al-Ahmad al-Sabah, died in 2006, thousands of Kuwaitis attended the funeral and many, along with expatriates, lined the streets.

"We honestly feel like we're going to be lost without his guidance," said Fajer, a Kuwaiti woman.

Dignitaries from around the world paid respects to the seasoned diplomat and savvy politician, widely respected as a humanitarian who strove to heal rifts in the Middle East, mending ties with former occupier Iraq, maintaining dialogue with Iran and championing the Palestinian cause.

Heat coach says LeBron's longevity is 'testament to his greatness' | Reuters

Clip source: [Heat coach says LeBron's](#)

By Reuters Staff

(Reuters) - Miami Heat head coach Erik Spoelstra on Tuesday paid tribute to his former player LeBron James, who will make a 10th NBA Finals appearance this week but in a different jersey than when the duo were celebrating titles together.

The Los Angeles Lakers' James spent four seasons under Spoelstra in Miami where he reached the NBA Finals each year and won two championships before going on to win another with Cleveland.

James now finds his former Heat team standing between him and a fourth title.

Spoelstra, speaking to media on the eve of the NBA Finals, was asked how James is different to when he last wore a Heat uniform in 2014.

"He's seen everything," said Spoelstra, whose Heat team are underdogs against the Lakers in the best-of-seven series.

"At this point in his career, it's just about winning. And his ability to do what he does at his age is incredibly uncommon. But there's a lot of work that goes on behind the scenes to be able to maintain that."

By reaching the championship round, the 35-year-old James joins Bill Russell (12), Sam Jones (11) and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar (10) as the only players with 10 or more NBA Finals appearances.

Not only is James back in the NBA Finals, but he is doing it while still playing at an elite level, having recently finished runner-up for the league's Most Valuable Players honors.

"To see what LeBron has done, when he moved on to Cleveland and then to (Los Angeles), it really is just a testament to his greatness and his commitment to winning," said Spoelstra.

"To be able to do it with different rosters and uniforms is really remarkable."

Spoelstra said it took some time to digest the news in 2014 when James announced he would leave Miami and return to the Cleveland Cavaliers four years after he left his home state to join the Heat.

"I went through my own six-week reflection period that summer. But then you get back to work," said Spoelstra. "We knew what we were losing."

Reporting by Frank Pingue in Toronto; Editing by Toby Davis

Our Standards: [The Thomson Reuters Trust Principles.](#)

David Attenborough leads call for world to invest \$500 billion a year to protect nature | Reuters

Clip source: [David Attenborough leads call for world to invest \\$500 billion a year to protect nature | Reuters](#)

By [Matthew Green](#)

LONDON (Reuters) - British broadcaster David Attenborough led a call from conservation groups on Wednesday for the world to invest \$500 billion a year to halt the destruction of nature, warning that the future of the planet was in “grave jeopardy.”

Attenborough, whose new film “A Life on Our Planet” documents the dangers posed by climate change and the extinction of species, issued the call hours ahead of a U.N. summit aimed at galvanising action to protect wildlife.

“Our natural world is under greater pressure now than at any time in human history, and the future of the entire planet – on which every single one of us depends – is in grave jeopardy,” Attenborough, 94, said in a statement.

“We still have an opportunity to reverse catastrophic biodiversity loss, but time is running out.”

The call to redirect financing away from fossil fuels and other polluting industries and into locally-led conservation was launched by environmental group Flora & Fauna International and backed by more than 130 organisations.

The world spends an estimated \$80-90 billion on conservation each year, but studies show that hundreds of billions of dollars may be needed to save ecosystems from collapse.

In a pre-recorded message to the one-day U.N. summit on Wednesday, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said that there was growing evidence of a desire to avert “looming disaster.”

“Let this be the day that action begins. And let us leave the next generation a world every bit as diverse and wondrous as the one we inherited,” Johnson said.

Britain, Canada and others joined the European Union on Monday in pledging to protect 30% of their land and seas by 2030. U.N. officials hope to secure a global agreement on that target at a major round of negotiations on biodiversity due to take place in China in 2021.

Reporting by Matthew Green; Editing by Alistair Bell
Our Standards: [The Thomson Reuters Trust Principles.](#)

Massachusetts rejected nearly 18,000 primary ballots amid surge of mail-in voting - The Boston Globe

Clip source: [Massachusetts rejected nearly 18,000 primary ballots amid surge of mail-in voting - The Boston Globe](#)

Massachusetts election officials rejected nearly 18,000 ballots from this month's state primary, roughly half because they arrived too late, illustrating the pitfalls of hundreds of thousands of residents voting by mail for the first time.

The new data, released by the secretary of state's office in response to a Globe request, come amid intense scrutiny of the Nov. 3 election, when hundreds of thousands, if not millions, more people could vote in Massachusetts than during the Sept. 1 primary.

That anticipated load could further stress the state's decentralized election system, though state officials and experts say the surge in rejected ballots in the primary doesn't necessarily portend doom on Election Day, when the deadline for ballots to arrive is more forgiving.

The 17,872 ballots thrown out from the primary accounted for slightly less than 2 percent of the 1 million-plus cast early or by absentee. More than 1.7 million people voted in total.

Still, with roughly half of voters choosing to cast their ballot by mail amid the [ever-present coronavirus pandemic](#), the raw rejection totals soared beyond that of recent elections, and were largely driven by tardy ballots or in some cases, voter error.

"It's a very unfortunate statistic," said Oren Sellstrom, litigation director for Lawyers for Civil Rights. "It indicates that thousands of people were disenfranchised in the 2020 primary, and thousands more are at risk in the general election if we don't improve our practices."

Of those rejected, 8,419 ballots did not reach local election officials in time, and 3,029 were considered "failed delivery," either because the ballot was returned to the local election office by the Postal Service or the voter said they never received it.

Another 3,124 ballots were discarded because the mail-in ballot envelope voters had to sign either didn't have a signature or was missing, state data show. About 1,100 ballots were rejected for unspecified "other" reasons.

Massachusetts was among dozens of states [warned in late July by the Postal Service](#) that ballots cast by mail for the November election could arrive late even if sent before the state's legally imposed deadline. Any ballots in Massachusetts postmarked by Nov. 3 and received within three days — by 5 p.m. on Nov. 6 — will be counted in the general election, while the September primary had tighter restrictions, requiring ballots to make it to elections officials by 8 p.m. on primary day.

Secretary of State William F. Galvin said he could only speculate if Postal Service delays fueled the more than 8,400 late-arriving ballots for the primary, but he called the number "regrettable."

"Clearly, we're emphasizing to people to get it in early" for November, he said.

The total of rejected votes was more than three times the number from the 2018 and 2016 general elections, when turnout bulged to 2.7 and 3.4 million, respectively. About 5,100 absentee ballots were discarded in each of those elections,

U.S. airlines strap in for bailout suspense a day before furloughs

| Reuters

Clip source: [U.S. airlines strap in for bailout suspense a day before furloughs | Reuters](#)

CHICAGO/WASHINGTON (Reuters) - A day before mass furloughs, U.S. airline workers said they were gearing up for a full-court press to persuade Congress to pass a fresh \$25 billion bailout that would protect jobs for another six months.

With an airline payroll support package expiring at midnight, the clock is ticking.

American Airlines Chief Executive Doug Parker told CNBC the airline plans to move forward with furloughs on Thursday without action before the end of the day but he added he is "highly hopeful" of action by Congress in the coming hours.

International President of Flight Attendants-CWA Sara Nelson told CNBC, "we expect action from Congress" on Wednesday.

"It's pedal to the metal until 11:59:59 on Sept. 30, and then some," said Amanda Steinbrunn, a United Airlines [UAL](#) flight attendant who is among tens of thousands of airline workers to be furloughed beginning Thursday, if there's no action by Congress.

U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has said she hopes to have a coronavirus aid deal with the White House this week, but the prospects of a comprehensive bill passing before Thursday were dim, industry officials said, and a quicker standalone bill for airlines would face the challenge of unanimous support.

Weeks of intense airline lobbying has won over many but not all Washington lawmakers, while also drawing attention to the plight of other pandemic-hit industries as the crisis persists.

U.S. airline officials said earlier this week there were no plans in place to halt the furloughs without aid by Oct. 1, and it was unclear what would happen if a deal passes afterwards.

Thousands of employees have already been instructed to return their badges.

Airlines, which were also awarded a separate \$25 billion in federal loans under a first coronavirus relief bill in March and have also tapped capital markets to shore up liquidity, are operating about half their 2019 flying schedules and suffering a 68% decline in passenger volumes. [L1N2GR014]

The industry has argued it needs trained employees to help drive an economic recovery once the crisis subsides.

Allie Malis, a flight attendant on American Airlines' [AAL](#) furlough list, said she would keep pressing lawmakers on Wednesday.

"I've poured every ounce of my energy into passing this extension," she said.

"I don't have a Plan B."

Serena pulls out of French Open with Achilles injury | Reuters

Clip source: [Serena pulls out of French Open with Achilles injury | Reuters](#)

By Reuters Staff

PARIS (Reuters) - Serena Williams' search for a record-equalling 24th Grand Slam title will extend into another year after an Achilles tendon injury forced her to withdraw from the French Open on Wednesday.

The American, who turned 39 this week, had been due to play Bulgarian Tsvetana Pironkova in the second round later but after a warm-up decided the injury was too severe.

Williams, a three-time former champion at Roland Garros, said she may not play again this year.

"I warmed up and it was a very short warmup and then I spoke to my coach and said 'what do you think?' she said.

"I was struggling to walk so that's a tell tale sign that I should try to recover."

Williams had suffered the problem during her semi-final loss to Victoria Azarenka in the U.S. Open and said ahead of her Roland Garros campaign that she was not at 100% physically but had recovered sufficiently to play.

She spoke again of the injury after her first-round win over fellow American Kristie Ahn and aggravated it while practising for her second-round match.

"An Achilles injury is a real injury you don't want to play with as it can get worse and I don't want to get to that," she said. "This is not a nagging injury, it's an acute injury. If it was my knee it would be more devastating.

"It's just bad timing and bad luck."

Williams said she was yet to decide whether she would play again this season, saying she needed two weeks of complete rest.

Williams also pulled out of the French Open in 2018 with an abdominal injury before a last-16 clash with Maria Sharapova.

Since Williams resumed her career in 2018 after a maternity break she has remained tantalisingly one behind the record 24 Grand Slam titles claimed by Australian Margaret Court.

She lost in the Wimbledon and U.S. Open finals that year, as she did in 2019.

While her window of opportunity is narrowing to reach that milestone, Williams sounded a defiant note.

"I love playing tennis. I love competing," she said. "It's my job and I'm pretty good at it still... I'm so close to some things and I feel like I'm almost there... that's what keeps me going. My body is actually doing really well."

Tensions mount as Azerbaijan and ethnic Armenian forces fight for fourth day | Reuters

Clip source: [Tensions mount as Azerbaijan and ethnic Armenian forces fight for fourth day | Reuters](#)

YERVAN/BAKU (Reuters) - NATO allies France and Turkey traded angry recriminations on Wednesday as international tensions mounted over the fiercest clashes between Azerbaijan and ethnic Armenian forces since the mid-1990

Artillery pounds Nagorno-Karabakh line of contact

On the fourth day of fighting, Azerbaijan and the ethnic Armenian enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh accused each other of shelling along the line of contact that divides them.

Dozens have been reported killed and hundreds wounded in fighting since Sunday that has spread far beyond the enclave's borders, threatening to spill over into all-out war between the former Soviet republics of Azerbaijan and Armenia.

The skirmishes have raised concerns about stability in the South Caucasus region, a corridor for pipelines carrying oil and gas to world markets, and raised fears that regional powers Russia and Turkey could be drawn in.

Some of Turkey's NATO allies are increasingly alarmed by Ankara's stance on Nagorno-Karabakh, a breakaway region inside Turkey's close ally Azerbaijan that is run by ethnic Armenians but is not recognised by any country as an independent republic.

Echoing remarks by President Tayyip Erdogan, Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said on Wednesday Turkey would "do what is necessary" when asked whether Ankara would offer military support if Azerbaijan requested it.

Cavusoglu also said French solidarity with Armenia amounted to supporting Armenian occupation in Azerbaijan.

French President Emmanuel Macron, whose country is home to many people of Armenian ancestry, hit back during a visit to Latvia. He said France was extremely concerned by "warlike messages" from Turkey "which essentially remove any of Azerbaijan's inhibitions in reconquering Nagorno-Karabakh".

"And that we won't accept," he said.

NEW REPORTS OF FIGHTING

Nagorno-Karabakh, a mountainous enclave, broke away from Azerbaijan in the 1990s in a war that killed an estimated 30,000 people and displaced hundreds of thousands.

In Wednesday's clashes, the latest in decades of conflict, Armenian media said three civilians had been killed and several wounded by shelling in the town of Martakert in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Azerbaijan said 14 Azeri civilians had been killed since fighting began on Sunday, and released footage showing grey smoke rising from inside Nagorno-Karabakh as it was pounded by Azeri artillery. Photographs taken in the Azeri town of Terter showed people taking cover in dug-outs, and damaged buildings which residents said had been hit by Armenian shells.