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Democratic Assemblyman Joaquin Arambula of Fresno said Wednesday that the child abuse allegation he faces stems from spanking his 7-year-old daughter. Arambula said he spanked his daughter Sunday night and it’s a punishment tool he rarely uses, The Fresno Bee reported. He said he has no plans to resign.

Arambula faces a March 13 court date. “Everyone who knows us in the community and has seen us in the community knows that I’m a loving father,” Arambula said while standing next to his wife, Elizabeth. “I care about my daughters deeply. And I’m just going through a process and trying the best I can to be a husband and father who’s putting us back together again.”

Arambula Is Former Emergency Room Doctor
Arambula is a former emergency room doctor who was elected in 2016 to represent parts of Fresno County. He has three daughters, ages 3, 6 and 7. He was arrested Monday after officials at Dailey Elementary Charter School reported a child with an injury, Fresno Police Chief Jerry Dyer said.

Arambula said he believes his daughter went to school angry and told a teacher about what had happened. He thanked the school, child protective services, and the police for doing their jobs.

Arambula was released shortly after his arrest and has not been formally charged. His daughters stayed with his parents for two nights until child protective services said they could go back home Wednesday, the newspaper reported.

“Everyone who knows us in the community and has seen us in the community knows that I’m a loving father.” — Assemblyman Joaquin Arambula

Dyer’s Department Intends to Prosecute the Case
Dyer said Wednesday that the victim had a “small injury,” but didn’t identify where it was. He also said that his department intends to see the case prosecuted.

Arambula’s arrest was for a misdemeanor, not a felony, because the injury did not require medical attention, Dyer said, according to The Bee. Spanking a child is generally legal if it’s in a fleshy area such as the buttocks but not if it’s in a place likely to cause injury like the face, he said.

Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon hasn’t commented on the arrest.

ARAMBULA SAYS HE SPANKED HIS DAUGHTER NIGHT BEFORE ARREST

December 13, 2018 | AP News

will strive to do.” Authorities will check in on the Arambulas in 30 days and suggested the family seek therapy, he said.

Information from: The Fresno Bee
School holiday concerts and plays are a source of great pride for parents. The singing, acting, and costumes often provide joyful lifetime memories. But the holiday program Wednesday night at Figarden Elementary School triggered anguish in Chrissy and Michael Kelly.

Special Needs Class Excluded
That’s because the school excluded Parker Kelly, along with his special needs classmates, from taking part in the event—an inexcusable mistake by Fresno Unified School District.

When Chrissy picked up Parker, a first-grader, from school Wednesday afternoon, she heard the “sweetest sound” coming from the school cafeteria. Remembering a holiday performance mentioned in the school’s newsletter, she asked in the office, “When is the Christmas program?”

The secretary said, “Tonight.”

Question: “Who’s in it?”

Answer: “Kindergarten through fourth grade.”

Question: “Is Parker’s class performing?”

A phone call and then the answer: “No.”

Understand: Parker Kelly has autism. He is part of what is called a Special Day Class.

Chrissy Kelly Shares Her Pain on Facebook
With Parker and 9-year-old Greyson, who also has autism and is home-schooled, in the back of the car, Chrissy faced the...
NEWSOM WAFFLES ON VALLEY APPOINTMENTS TO UNIVERSITY BOARDS

December 7, 2018 | David Taub

Gov.-elect Gavin Newsom hedged on a campaign promise to appoint Valley members to the University of California and California State University boards. Newsom paid Fresno his first visit since winning election last month. He appeared at three events during the day. Newsom said he couldn’t make a Valley appointment, even if he wanted to, “and I do want to,” he noted, because there are no current openings.

“My goal is for over the course of time to solve for those things. Unfortunately, with one appointment, maybe in the first two years — I think by definition disappoint somebody in that process. I’m going to do my best to try and balance it.” — Gavin Newsom

“There are probably two dozen other groups that also feel like they are not represented — the Asian community, African-American community, and geographic parts of the state — the Inland Empire, the northern part of the state that feel underrepresentation. So the challenge for me is, when you get one appointment over a two-year period, you can’t solve for all of that,” he said. Three UC Board of Regents terms are set to expire during Newsom’s term. The board has no Valley representatives since Fred Ruiz’s term expired in 2106. The CSU board will have more spots over the next four years (since the CSU terms are shorter). Currently, Hugo Morales (Fresno) and John Nilon (Kern County) are from the Valley.

“My goal is for over the course of time to solve for those things. Unfortunately, with one appointment, maybe in the first two years — I think by definition disappoint somebody in that process. I’m going to do my best to try and balance it,” Newsom continued. During a campaign stop to the very same Teamsters building in central Fresno in June, Newsom promised to appoint Valley members. See video of his promise below. Fresno State President Joseph Castro was one of approximately 60 business, labor, and agricultural leaders who met with Newsom in a roundtable-style event. Castro asked Newsom to support growing CSU enrollment and on-campus infrastructure. He also asked Newsom to appoint a Valley member to one of the two public university governing boards. “I also asked him on the side to have more Valley folks on the CSU Board of Trustees and UC Regents,” Castro told GV Wire. How did Newsom respond? “Positively on all those things,” Castro said.

Newsom’s Day
Newsom met with a broad range of Valley leaders in downtown Fresno at the Peerless Pump building for a noontime roundtable. Former Fresno mayor and current Central Valley Community Foundation CEO Ashley Swearengin arranged the meeting. Swearengin also serves as an ambassador on Newsom’s transition team. Newsom heard economic reports from the Valley and members of the Bay Area Council. He also heard updates on the high-speed rail.

Next, he met with agriculture leaders, followed by a semi-public town hall at the Teamsters 431 Hall. There, an overflow crowd of more than 300 came to hear what Newsom. Even some of those who had returned RSVPs could not get in the building. Newsom spent approximately 90 minutes sharing his thoughts on the state, as well as taking questions. Topics: healthcare, prison reform, the economy, and high-speed rail.

Leaders Impressed
Assemblyman Adam Gray (D-Merced) helped arrange Newsom’s visit. “The governor-elect has spent more time in the Central Valley than frankly any governor in recent history that I recall. It’s a great opportunity to...
SACRAMENTO — California’s increasingly deadly and destructive wildfires have become so unpredictable that government officials should consider banning home construction in vulnerable areas, the state’s top firefighter says.

Department of Forestry and Fire Protection Director Ken Pimlott will leave his job Friday after 30 years with the agency. In an interview with The Associated Press, he said government and citizens must act differently to protect lives and property from fires that now routinely threaten large populations. That may mean rethinking subdivisions in thickly forested mountainous areas or homes along Southern California canyons lined with tinder-dry chaparral. Los Angeles County supervisors on Tuesday were considering whether to allow a 19,000-home development in fire-prone mountains amid heavy criticism of the location’s high fire danger.

California residents should also train themselves to respond more quickly to warnings and make preparations to shelter in place if they can’t outrun the flames, Pinlott said. Communities in fire zones need to harden key buildings with fireproof construction similar to the way cities prepare for earthquakes, hurricanes or tornadoes, and should prepare commercial or public buildings to withstand fires with the...
WASHINGTON — Arguing heatedly in public with Democratic leaders, President Donald Trump threatened repeatedly on Tuesday to shut down the government if Congress doesn’t provide the money he says is needed to build a wall at the Mexican border. Trump’s comments came as he opened a contentious meeting with Democratic Senate and House leaders Chuck Schumer and Nancy Pelosi, with the government looking at a possible partial shutdown on Dec. 21 when funding for some agencies will expire.

In his first encounter with the newly empowered Democrats after their midterm victories in the House, Trump heckled the leaders as they said legislation to keep the government open and provide additional border security could pass both houses of Congress. Previewing what is expected to be a tense relationship in the new year, the group squabbled on national TV in the Oval Office as Trump said major wall funding was vital. “If we don’t get what we want, one way or the other, whether it’s through you, through military, through anything you want to call, I will shut down the government,” Trump said. “I will take the mantle. I will be the one to shut it down.”

Seeking Far More for Long-Stalled Wall

Barely a half hour passed before the Democrats had exited a private meeting with the president, issuing stern warnings. “This Trump shutdown, this temper tantrum that he seems to throw, will not get him his wall and will hurt a lot of people,” said Schumer. Republican House Speaker Paul Ryan acknowledged Tuesday that the GOP-led House has yet to pass legislation that includes the $5 billion in border wall funds that Trump has been requesting. The reality is he likely lacks the votes from his Republicans who will lose their majority at the end of the month. Trump is seeking far more for his long-stalled border wall than the $1.6 billion the Senate has agreed to for border security, including physical barriers and technology along the U.S. southern border. The public Oval Office meeting between Trump, Vice President Mike Pence and the Democrats began civilly, with Trump noting progress for criminal justice legislation in the Senate. But the session quickly unraveled as he mentioned his promised wall along the U.S.-Mexico border.

Trump Squabbles With the Democrats Over Funding

Said Trump with a smile: “And then we have the easy one, the wall. That will be the easiest of all, what do you think Chuck?” Schumer shot back sternly: “It’s called funding the government.” Constantly interrupting, Trump squabbled with the Democrats over whether wall funding could be approved in the House or Senate without Democratic votes. When Pelosi said he did not have support in the House, Trump interjected: “Nancy, I do.”

Pelosi later said: “This has spiraled downwards.” After Pelosi and Schumer noted Democratic success in the midterm elections, the president asked whether Republicans had won the Senate in the November election. “When the president brags he has won North Dakota and Indiana, he’s in real trouble,” retorted Schumer with a smile.
NEW YORK — Michael Cohen, who as President Donald Trump’s personal lawyer and fixer once vowed he would “take a bullet” for his boss, was sentenced Wednesday to three years in prison for an array of crimes that included arranging the payment of hush money to two women that he says was done at the direction of Trump.

The sentence was in line with what federal prosecutors asked for. Sentencing guidelines called for around four to five years behind bars, and prosecutors asked in court papers that Cohen be given only a slight break. He is ordered to surrender March 6. Cohen, standing alone at the defense table, shook his head slightly and closed his eyes briefly as the sentence was announced by the judge.

U.S. District Judge William H. Pauley III said Cohen deserved modest credit for his decision over the summer to admit guilt and cooperate in a federal investigation of efforts by Russians to influence the presidential election, but his assistance “does not wipe the slate clean.” “Somewhere along the way Mr. Cohen appears to have lost his moral compass,” the judge said. “As a lawyer, Mr. Cohen should have known...
Charity organizations throughout the U.S. are struggling to provide ongoing assistance to Palestinians living in the Middle East following cuts in funding ordered by the Trump Administration.

“We have funding to continue doing Palestinian community infrastructure development work over the next few months, but some of that funding has been cut so we won’t be able to do as much for as long as we had hoped,” said the leader of one such aid organization. Sean Carroll is president of Anera (American Near East Refugee Aid), which helps refugees and others hurt by conflicts in the Middle East by providing humanitarian and development assistance. Carroll visited Fresno recently to thank local donors for their contributions to the international non-profit agency.

Anera is based out of Washington, D.C. It works on the ground with partners in West Bank, Gaza, Lebanon and Syria.”We mobilize resources for immediate emergency relief and for sustainable, long-term health, education, and economic development,” Carroll said.

**Improved Literacy and Life Expectancy**

Since its inception in 1968, the organization has distributed half a billion dollars in aid. The U.S. government provided the lion’s share of the funds, Carroll said. That help, he said, has resulted in higher literacy and better child and maternal health. It has also increased life expectancy by nearly 20 years for those living in the Middle East.

“We know that we have made an impact,” Carroll said. However, because of U.S. aid cuts, Anera will have to find other sources of funding. Earlier this year, President Trump ordered cuts of more than $200 million in aid for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza and a $25 million reduction in aid for East Jerusalem hospitals.

**Greenhouse Gardens Enhance Food Security**

Carroll said Anera will continue seeking support to help bridge the gap. “I think we can get people to step up to meet the gap, but it is a tough time right now,” Skylar Lawrence said it is people like Granville Homes’ president Darius Assemi that help Anera continue doing its work. (Assemi is the publisher of GV Wire.) “Darius and his family have been generous donors to Anera for over 10 years,” said Lawrence, the director of donor development for Anera. “They primarily support our emergency response and agriculture work in Gaza.”

Most recently, Assemi has supported Anera’s Gaza Home Gardens and Food Security Enhancement Program. Lawrence said the programs help marginalized and food-insecure families in Gaza establish greenhouse gardens. “It gives them a way to put healthy food on the dinner table and earn extra income for urgent household needs,” she said.

**Expanding Footprint to Aid Refugees**

Lebanon is also suffering, specifically in the Beqaa Valley near the Syrian border, Carroll said. Anera’s work in Lebanon has been largely focused on the country’s garbage crisis, due to an influx of new residents. Incompetence and corruption on the part of the government are partly to blame, as well, Carroll said. “Municipalities have literally been struggling with how to take care of garbage.” To help, Anera has started solid waste management projects, which have not only abated the problem but also helped create a sense of camaraderie among the community, Carroll said...
WASHINGTON — Senators voted Thursday to recommend that the U.S. end its assistance to Saudi Arabia for the war in Yemen and put the blame for the death of journalist Jamal Khashoggi squarely on Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, in a direct challenge to both the longtime Middle East ally and President Donald Trump’s handling of the relationship.

The succession of bipartisan votes came two months after the Saudi journalist’s slaying at the Saudi consulate in Istanbul and after Trump persistently equivocated over who was responsible. U.S. intelligence officials concluded that bin Salman must have at least known of the plot, but Trump has repeatedly praised the kingdom. Senators made clear where they put the blame. The resolution, passed by unanimous agreement, says the Senate believes the crown prince is “responsible for the murder” and calls for the Saudi Arabian government to “ensure appropriate accountability.”

Senators voted 56-41 to recommend that the U.S. stop supporting the war in Yemen, a direct affront to the administration’s war powers abilities. The floor action brought an unusual show of bipartisan resolve in the Senate over U.S. foreign policy, even amid an uncertain outcome as the...