FUSD TRUSTEE SAYS BULLARD STUDENT THREATENED TO KILL HIM

NEWSOM VOWS ENERGY WILL FLOW DESPITE PG&E BANKRUPTCY

TRUMP FEELS GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN PRESSURE FROM ECONOMISTS
Fresno Unified is investigating an incident involving Trustee Terry Slatik, his aide, and a male student at Bullard High School that took place Friday (Jan. 11) afternoon. The school board has scheduled a special meeting at 4:30 p.m. Tuesday at district headquarters to discuss the incident and potential litigation stemming from it. While the district isn’t providing details, Slatik said Monday that he and his aide, Michelle Asadoorian, were sworn at and threatened by the student.

The district emailed GV Wire the following statement: “We can confirm that there was an incident at Bullard High School on Friday afternoon, January 11, 2019 and consistent with normal protocol, the matter is currently under investigation. This matter is confidential and therefore, we are not at liberty to provide any specifics. We anticipate that additional information may be forthcoming, but we cannot say anything further at this time.”

What Slatik Says Happened
Slatik says he and Asadoorian were on campus to observe an after-school snack program. The student made some unsolicited comments to Asadoorian. She didn’t quite hear the student and asked him to repeat his words. The male student then shouted profanities directed personally at Asadoorian, the trustee said. “I can see her turn white as a sheet, giant eyes and trembling,” Slatik recalled. Slatik said that he approached the student and suggested they walk to the office.

The student then directed profanities at the trustee and threatened to kill him, Slatik said. “At this point, he begins reaching for his backpack, I closed the distance. I made no physical contact with this young man, but grabbed a backpack strap so he cannot get the backpack.” — Terry Slatik after allegedly being threatened

Student Ran Off After Slatik Grabbed at Backpack
Slatik said that as he grabbed the strap the student repeated the threat. The student then yanked the backpack away and ran to a nearby picnic table ending the incident. Slatik and Asadoorian reported the incident to a school vice principal and a Fresno police officer on campus, the trustee said. Asadoorian told Slatik she was shaken up and needed school staff to escort her back to her car. Slatik, a retired U.S. Marine officer who served in the Middle East wars, said he was concerned by the student’s threats.

Related Story: Security Video Shows Confrontation Between Bullard Student and Slatik
“Based on my training, when somebody says they will kill me and shoot me, I take those threats seriously.”

Cazares Concerned for Safety
Asked to comment, board President Claudia Cazares echoed the district’s official statement. “The safety of our children and staff on campuses are of the utmost importance,” she said. “When we are faced with any issues, we promptly are made aware of them by staff, and initiate an investigation as need be.”

Investigation Ongoing
The Fresno police department referred all questions back to the school district. Slatik said he was told after the confrontation Friday that police would contact the student when school resumed Monday. There was no confirmation as of Monday afternoon that police had talked to the student.
Rep. TJ Cox’s first bill in Congress will help provide immediate financial relief for federal workers caught up in the government shutdown. Cox (D-Fresno) spoke to the media Thursday on Capitol Hill, flanked by seven other lawmakers, including Jim Costa (D-Fresno).

“I have farm workers in my district that are unable to get the funding they need to keep their farms open. I have 250 federal prison workers in Mendota, who are putting their lives on the line, in a dangerous line of work, who don’t know when they’ll see their next paycheck,” Cox said.

Costa blasted the White House for the shutdown. “For the president to manufacture this crisis, for a political purpose for his border wall is just inappropriate. And harmful,” Costa said. The bill would offer employees zero-interest loans of up to $6,000. Cox’s bill comes as the U.S. Labor Department is reporting that the number of furloughed federal employees seeking unemployment benefits has jumped. Fewer than a thousand per week applied before the shutdown. More than 10,000 applied the week ending Jan. 5. President Donald Trump signed legislation Wednesday to guarantee employees will get back pay when the shutdown ends. But that also means those who collect unemployment to survive the shutdown will have to pay back the money. Watch the full news conference here.

City Offers Help to Federal Employees

The city already offers a hardship program for those who need help paying utility bills. The city wants federal workers to know that the program applies to them as well. “We’re happy to defer their utility payments for as long as the federal shutdown lasts and will set up a payment schedule that will get them caught up once they’re back to work,” city spokesman Mark Standriff tells GV Wire.

For more information, the utilities billing department can be reached at 559-621-6888.

Diabetes, Hodgkin’s disease, chronic B-cell leukemias, ischemic heart disease, chloracne, multiple myeloma, non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma, prostate cancer, respiratory cancer, and soft-tissue sarcomas are just of few of the health challenges Vietnam veterans are facing. Each of them has a direct link to exposure to Agent Orange/dioxin.

Most Vietnam veterans are in their mid-60’s and older, and there are those among us who have been fighting these diseases for years — sometimes decades. After all these years and study after study and endless hearings, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs refuses to acknowledge the science that shows the route between Agent Orange exposure and these diseases...

“While granting the applicant’s request to rescind his development permit is regrettable because it delays when new jobs could come to deserving Fresnans, I support the decision because it is the right thing to do to move this project forward in a responsible manner and bring more investment, jobs, and opportunities to our community,” said Fresno Mayor Lee Brand. “I would also like to add that under my leadership the city of Fresno is moving full speed ahead on a Programmatic EIR to study over 6,000 acres of land in order to spur industrial...
SAN FRANCISCO — The nation’s largest utility said Monday it is filing for Chapter 11 bankruptcy because it faces at least $30 billion in potential damages from lawsuits over the catastrophic wildfires in California in 2017 and 2018 that killed scores of people and destroyed thousands of homes. The move by Pacific Gas & Electric Corp., expected by the end of the month, would be the biggest bankruptcy by a utility in U.S. history, legal experts said. California’s new governor, Democrat Gavin Newsom, said in a statement that he will make sure customers continue to receive affordable energy and that wildfire victims are treated fairly.

“Throughout the months ahead, I will be working with the Legislature and all stakeholders on a solution that ensures consumers have access to safe, affordable and reliable service, fire victims are treated fairly, and California can continue to make progress toward our climate goals,” Newsom said.

Bankruptcy Would Shelter PG&E From Jury Verdicts

The bankruptcy would allow PG&E to hold off creditors and continue providing electricity and natural gas without interruption to its 16 million customers in Northern and central California while it tries to put its finances in order. The filing would not make the lawsuits disappear, but would result in all wildfire claims being consolidated into a single proceeding before a bankruptcy judge, not a jury. That could shield the company from excessive jury verdicts, and also buy time by putting a hold on the claims. Chapter 11 reorganization represents “the only viable option to address the company’s responsibilities to its stakeholders,” Richard Kelly, chairman of PG&E’s board of directors, said in a statement. “The Chapter 11 process allows us to work with these many constituents in one court-supervised forum to comprehensively address our potential liabilities and to implement appropriate changes.”

Fire That Killed 86 Under Investigation

State officials are investigating whether the utility’s equipment sparked the deadliest, most destructive wildfire in California history, a blaze in Northern California in November that killed at least 86 people and burned down 15,000 homes. In addition, state investigators have blamed PG&E power lines for some fires in October 2017. Authorities are also looking into the cause of a blaze that destroyed thousands of homes and killed 22 people in Santa Rosa last year. California law requires utilities to pay damages for wildfires if their equipment caused the blazes — even if the utilities weren’t negligent through, say, inadequate maintenance.

PG&E Is Nation’s Largest Utility

PG&E, which is the nation’s largest utility by revenue and is based in San Francisco, said it is giving the required 15 days’ notice that it plans to file for bankruptcy protection. It said it will continue working with regulators and stakeholders to consider how it can safely provide energy “in an environment that continues to be challenged by climate change.” The announcement follows the resignation of chief executive Geisha Williams a day earlier. In a Monday filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission, the company said the liabilities it faces from 2017 and 2018 wildfires could exceed $30 billion, not including punitive damages, fines, and penalties.

The largest bankruptcy filing on record by a utility was Energy Future Holdings Corp. in 2014, which had $49.7 billion in liabilities in today’s dollars, according...
WITH EMPLOYEES ON STRIKE, COURTS OPEN BUT NOT AT FULL STRENGTH

January 15, 2019 | David Taub
Fresno Superior Court still operated Tuesday (Jan. 15), but it was anything but normal. Outside, a constant drizzle did not deter hundreds of striking court workers — judicial assistants, clerks, and court reporters. "Rain or shine, we stay on the line," was one of the many mantras SEIU 521 members chanted.

Inside the Courts
Inside, many courtrooms were closed — cases consolidated to just a few judges for the day. At the criminal courthouse, only two of the 28 courtrooms were in use during the 11 a.m. hour, both on the seventh floor. Things were packed in the rooms of Judge Gary Hoff and Jon Conklin. Some bailiffs told GV Wire that instead of hearing five cases at a time, they stuffed 15 prisoners in the room.

Just a few blocks away at civil court, the shortage of workers led to many closed courtrooms. Things were operating as normal when business did take place. The line was long at the family clerk’s office, where only a few windows were open. That is not necessarily uncommon. Over at the civil clerk’s office, nearly every window was open and no one was in line. Judge David Kalemkarian heard a paternity law case in Dept. 203. On the floor above, newly minted arbiter...

PG&E, FACING COLOSSAL LIABILITY, SEEKS BANKRUPTCY PROTECTION

January 14, 2019 | AP News
Pacific Gas and Electric said it plans to file for bankruptcy protection amid potentially massive liabilities resulting from the deadly California wildfires. The announcement Monday follows the resignation of the power company’s chief executive Geisha Williams a day earlier. John Simon, the company’s general counsel since 2017, will serve as interim chief executive.

Officials are investigating whether the utility’s equipment sparked a wildfire in Northern California in November that killed at least 86 people and destroyed 15,000 homes. Damages from that fire have been estimated in the billions. In addition, state investigators blamed PG&E power lines for some fires in October 2017. Chapter 11 reorganization represents “the only viable option to address the company’s responsibilities to its stakeholders,” said Richard Kelly, chairman of the board of directors of PG&E, in a statement. “The Chapter 11 process allows us to work with these many constituents in...
WASHINGTON — Shutdown pressure on President Donald Trump mounted Wednesday as House Speaker Nancy Pelosi called on him to delay his State of the Union address and his own economists acknowledged the prolonged standoff was having a greater economic drag than previously thought. In a letter to Trump, Pelosi cited security concerns, noting that both the Secret Service and the Homeland Security Department are entangled in the partial government shutdown, now in its fourth week. She added that unless the government reopens this week, they should find another date — it’s now Jan. 29 — or Trump should deliver the address in writing.

The White House did not immediately respond to the high-stakes move on the 26th day of the shutdown, as Trump and Democrats are at an impasse over Trump’s demands for $5.7 billion to build a wall along the Mexican border. Pelosi is refusing money for the wall she views as ineffective and immoral; Democrats say they will discuss border security once the government has reopened. “I am running out of ideas,” said Sen. Lindsay Graham, a South Carolina Republican who has been working on bipartisan strategies to resolve the shutdown. “The Democrats are not going to negotiate with the government shut down. People in the White House don’t like hearing that. I don’t know what to tell them other than what I actually think. If you’ve got a better idea … count me in.”

“The Democrats are not going to negotiate with the government shut down. People in the White House don’t like hearing that. I don’t know what to tell them other than what I actually think. If you’ve got a better idea … count me in.”

— Sen. Lindsay Graham

“Lost Nearly a Half-Percentage Point of Growth

An economic shift could rattle Trump, who has tied his political fortunes to the stock market and repeatedly stressed economic gains as evidence that his tax-cut package and deregulation efforts are succeeding. Economic optimism had already cooled somewhat as Trump’s trade fight with China shook the markets. Hassett told reporters the White House is doubling its…

Shutdowm Is Causing Greater Economic Harm

Graham and Democratic Sen. Chris Coons of Delaware were organizing a bipartisan letter asking Trump to agree to the idea of reopening the government for three weeks to allow time for negotiations on border security. Trump rejected that approach earlier. The letter, a copy of which was obtained by The Associated Press, states that the senators will make their best efforts to have “Congress develop and vote on a bipartisan agreement that addresses your request” for border money if he agrees to support legislation reopening the government for those weeks. Seven Democratic lawmakers were in a bipartisan group that went to the White House on Wednesday to explore a solution.

The White House has been trying to peel lawmakers away from Pelosi but Trump’s invitations to Democrats earlier this week were declined. The seven Democrats, mostly freshmen, come from areas where Trump remains popular. Several did not back Pelosi as speaker. Yet there was prevailing pessimism that anything could break the logjam soon. Even as administration officials projected confidence in their course, Trump’s economists indicated the shutdown is causing greater economic harm than expected. Kevin Hassett, chairman of the White House Council of Economic Advisers, said Tuesday the shutdown is slowing growth more than predicted.
REPUBLICAN LEADER SAYS STEVE KING SHOULD QUIT CONGRESS

January 15, 2019 | AP News

The No. 3 House Republican is suggesting that Rep. Steve King leave Congress over his remarks about white supremacy. Wyoming Republican Liz Cheney on Tuesday said of King, "I think he should find another line of work.

Republican leaders have made serving in Congress uncomfortable for King over his remarks in the New York Times last week questioning how white supremacy and white nationalism became offensive terms. House and Senate leaders condemned the remarks, and GOP leaders moved this week to deny him any committee assignments.

Republican leaders noted that King has for years made racially insensitive remarks. Cheney said the most recent ones are "absolutely abhorrent. It's racist. We do not support it or agree with it." The nine-term Iowa congressman says he's advocating for Western civilization, not racism.

King will be blocked from committee assignments for the next two years, House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy said Monday night. King served on the Agriculture, Small Business and Judiciary committees in the last Congress, and he chaired Judiciary's subcommittee on the Constitution and...

OREGON BEGINS KILLING SEA LIONS AFTER RELOCATION FAILS

January 12, 2019 | AP News

PORTLAND, Ore. — Oregon wildlife officials have started killing California sea lions that threaten a fragile and unique type of trout in the Willamette River, a body of water that's miles inland from the coastal areas where the massive carnivorous aquatic mammals usually congregate to feed. The state Department of Fish and Wildlife obtained a federal permit in November to kill up to 93 California sea lions annually below Willamette Falls south of Portland, Oregon, to protect the winter run of the fish that begin life as rainbow trout but become steelhead when they travel to the ocean.

As of last week, wildlife managers have killed three of the adult male sea lions, which weigh nearly 1,000 pounds each, have learned that they can loiter under the falls and...

NUMBER OF FEDERAL WORKERS SEEKING US JOBLESS AID DOUBLES

January 17, 2019 | AP News

WASHINGTON — The number of furloughed federal employees seeking unemployment benefits jumped in the first two weeks of the shutdown, topping 10,000 during the week of Jan. 5. The Labor Department said Thursday that is double the number of federal workers who sought aid in the previous week. Typically fewer than a thousand former federal employees apply for jobless benefits each week.

Federal employees who aren't working during the partial government shutdown are eligible to claim unemployment aid, while those working without pay are not, the Labor Department has said. Yet even those sent home will have to repay the unemployment aid if they receive back pay once the shutdown ends. The number of Americans overall who sought unemployment benefits last week declined 3,000 to 213,000, the government said. That figure doesn't include...
BEIRUT — A number of U.S. service members were killed in an explosion while conducting a routine patrol in Syria on Wednesday, the U.S. military said, an attack that came less than a month after U.S. President Donald Trump announced his intention to withdraw troops from the war-torn country. The Islamic State group claimed responsibility for the rare morning attack, which local groups said killed 16 people in the U.S.-patrolled town of Manbij. The claim, which could not be independently confirmed, calls into question Trump’s claim that IS has been defeated in Syria — his stated reason for pulling 2,000 American troops out of the country. “We have defeated ISIS in Syria, my only reason for being there during the Trump Presidency,” Trump tweeted in December in announcing his intention to bring back U.S. troops “NOW.”

Is Islamic State Really Defeated?
Trump has been clear about his desire to pull out of Syria, a country he described as “sand and death.” But critics have said a pullout was premature, that IS was still not defeated and a pullout could lead to a power vacuum that would fuel even more violence. Video released by local activists and news agencies showed a restaurant that suffered extensive damage and a street covered with debris and blood. Several cars were also damaged. Another video showed a helicopter flying over the area. A security camera showed a busy street, and then a ball of fire and people running for cover as the blast went off.

Blast Happened Outside Restaurant
A local town council and a Syrian war monitoring group said the blast occurred outside a restaurant near the town’s main market, near a patrol of the U.S.-led coalition, killing and wounding more than a dozen people.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said 16 people were killed including nine civilians and others were wounded in the blast. It added that at least five U.S.-backed Syrian fighters were also among the dead. The U.S. military released a statement on Twitter that said: “U.S. service members were killed during an explosion while conducting a routine patrol in Syria today. We are still gathering information and will share additional details at a later time.” It was not the first time that forces of the U.S.-led coalition were subjected to attacks in the area, although they have been rare. In March last year, a roadside bomb killed two coalition personnel, an American and a Briton, and wounded five in Manbij.

“"We have defeated ISIS in Syria, my only reason for being there during the Trump Presidency."”
— President Donald Trump

January 16, 2019 | AP News
TEHRAN, Iran — An Iranian satellite-carrying rocket blasted off into space on Tuesday, but scientists failed to put the device into orbit in a launch previously criticized by the United States as helping the Islamic Republic further develop its ballistic missile program.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has alleged that Iran’s space program could help it develop a missile capable of carrying a nuclear weapon to the mainland U.S., criticism that comes amid the Trump administration’s maximalist approach against Tehran after withdrawing from the nuclear deal. Iran, which long has said it does not seek nuclear weapons, maintains that its satellite launches and rocket tests do not have a military component. Tehran also says they don’t violate a United Nations resolution that only “called upon” it not to conduct such tests. The rocket carrying the Payam satellite failed to reach the “necessary speed” in the third stage of its launch, Telecommunications Minister Mohammad Javad Azari Jahromi said.

Jahromi said the rocket had successfully passed its first and second stages before developing problems in the third. That suggests something went wrong after the rocket pushed the satellite out of the Earth’s atmosphere. He did not...