SHOOTINGS DOWN 60%, POLICE SAY. TASK FORCE WILL CONTINUE THROUGH HOLIDAYS. »
AP DECLARES NUNES, COSTA WINNERS IN CONGRESSIONAL CONTESTS »
AP VOTECAST: MANY TRUMP VOTERS SKEPTICAL OF VOTE COUNT »
Fresno police say shootings in the city have dropped 60% since a violence suppression task force was formed on October 6. Chief Andy Hall told reporters at a Monday afternoon news conference that the task force will continue in force through the end of the year. “So far, this operation has resulted in 279 felony arrests,” said Hall. “209 of those felony arrests involve gang members. We’ve also removed 128 illegal guns from our streets.”

Prisoner Releases Blamed for Violence
Hall has blamed the early release of prisoners and $0 bail policies as reasons for an increase in shootings in Fresno starting in September. In October, the Fresno County Superior Court approved changes to local bail rules, exempting various weapons and gang involvement charges from the plan. The $0 bail policy was implemented to reduce the potential for COVID-19 outbreaks within the jail population. Hall said he recently learned that the state prison system is accepting transfers from local jails again. He said the move will free up about 100 more beds at the Fresno County jail.

Community Cooperation
Hall also said increased community cooperation with law enforcement is helping to tamp down violence. Two recent events — a community-organized City Hall rally and a “crime summit” at the fairgrounds — sought to open lines of communication among the police, political leaders and community members.

“Like Seattle alone, they recently saw about 118 officers leave that department. We’re hoping to capitalize on some of that dissatisfaction and hopefully bring some of those officers to Fresno.”—Todd Frazier, President FPOA

Karbassi Restates Goal for 1,000 Cops
Councilmember Mike Karbassi stood next to Hall and Fresno Police Officers Association President Todd Frazier at the news conference to reiterate his support for law enforcement. Karbassi says he is committed to a goal of increasing the size of the police department to 1,000 sworn officers. “We approved a significant budget that did not defund our police department,” said Karbassi. “Public safety is still the number one responsibility. It was my number one responsibility when I signed that pledge (a campaign promise to add more officers). And it’s going to stay my number one throughout my time as a councilmember.” Funding for two additional police officers and two more community service officers was added to the department’s 2021 budget. Hall praised the increased funding as well. “I believe this budget from the mayor and the city council is an important step to showing support for the men and women who serve this community.”—Fresno Police Chief Andy Hall

“I believe we are starting to see that cooperation,” said Hall. “But that only works when we’re part of the community. We need to continue moving forward with our community policing efforts.”

November 2, 2020 | Jim Jakobs
COUNTING YOUR VOTE IS MORE WORK THAN YOU THINK. HERE’S HOW IT’S DONE.

Record numbers of voters have already cast ballots across California and many more will do so before polls close on Tuesday night. Ballots have been returned to county election offices by mail, through drop boxes and with direct voting at polling locations. As of Monday morning, the state’s 22 million registered voters have returned 11.2 million ballots, according to tracking information from Political Data Inc.

So, what happens to a ballot once it is received by the local elections office? To find out, GV Wire visited Fresno County’s vote processing center for a step-by-step demonstration and explanation from Registrar of Voters Brandi Orth. The video here tells details the various processes and checks a ballot goes through after it is cast, and before it is tabulated and reported in the county’s official results.

November 2, 2020 | David Taub

The birth of a child can be one of life’s happiest milestones. But most mothers will tell you the changes that come with a baby can hit in unexpected and powerful ways. Hormone changes, sleep deprivation...

November 1, 2020 | Sponsored by Community Medical Centers

DA SAYS VOTERS ALLOWING BAD BEHAVIOR TO CONTINUE WITH PROP. 20 LOSS

California’s Proposition 20 on Tuesday’s ballot aimed to roll back criminal justice reforms state voters approved in 2014 that reclassified some theft and drug possession offenses from felonies to misdemeanors. Under Prop. 20, prosecutors would have flexibility to charge certain property crimes of more than $250, such as “serial shoplifting” and car theft, as felonies rather than misdemeanors.

But, the measure has gone down to defeat, with 62% of voters saying ‘No’ vs. 38% in the ‘Yes.’ column. “I’m sorely disappointed that it didn’t pass, but I think we have to as elected officials, we have to respect what the voters are voting for,” Fresno County District Attorney Lisa Smittcamp said on Wednesday...

November 4, 2020 | Jim Jakobs

1 IN 7 NEW MOMS SUFFER POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION. PEDIATRICIANS ON ALERT TO HELP.

The birth of a child can be one of life’s happiest milestones. But most mothers will tell you the changes that come with a baby can hit in unexpected and powerful ways. Hormone changes, sleep deprivation...
Jim Costa and Devin Nunes have been re-elected to Congress. The Associated Press has called the races in favor of both incumbents who represent parts of the city of Fresno. Nunes, a Tulare Republican, earned his 10th term, defeating Phil Arballo — a Fresno financial professional — 53.5% to 46.5% based on current results. Winning his ninth term, Costa (D-Fresno) defeated Kevin Cookingham — a retired educator living in Madera County — 60.5% to 39.5% results at this point show. While votes continue to be counted in both races, the news organization does not believe the outcomes will change.

Another “Close” Win for Nunes
For much of Nunes’ congressional electoral career, he experienced relatively easy and double-digit victories. In 2018, Fresno County prosecutor Andrew Janz came the closest any Nunes opponent had, falling by 5.4%. With all precincts reporting in the two counties that comprise the 22nd Congressional District, Fresno and Tulare, Nunes is poised for a seven-point win. Nunes raised more than $23 million in this election cycle, a record for him. He spent the money early and often, with television and radio advertisements criticizing his opponent. Arballo raised more than $4 million, far less than the $9 million haul Janz took in two years ago. Arballo campaigned that Nunes lost touch with Central Valley voters, more of an ally of President Donald Trump than the people he represented.

At a news conference at his Fresno campaign office Wednesday afternoon, Arballo refused to concede. “We still have to wait for every vote to be counted. But again, we expect this race to tighten,” Arballo said, surrounded by his wife and children. “We know it’s an uphill battle, but I think the proper thing to do is to make sure that every vote is counted.”

GV Wire℠ estimates there are 117,000 votes remaining at most, but exact figures are not available. Arballo said “sometimes the AP does get it wrong,” referring to TJ Cox defeating incumbent David Valadao in 2018. After election night, AP declared Valadao the winner. After this story updated with Arballo’s refusal to concede, he had a change of heart. “Following his remarks this afternoon, Phil had further deliberations with his family and is conceding the race. Again, he believes the race will tighten, but that we will come up short,” campaign manager Andrew Feldman said.

Costa Cruises to Another Term
Like Nunes, Costa enjoyed a significant advantage in fundraising. He raised nearly $2 million, compared to $245,000 Cookingham raised according to the last federal filings. Costa...
SAN FRANCISCO VOTERS APPROVE TAXES ON CEOs, BIG BUSINESSES

November 4, 2020 | AP News
SAN FRANCISCO — Addressing economic disparity laid bare by the coronavirus pandemic, San Francisco voters overwhelmingly approved several tax measures targeting landlords and big businesses whose CEOs earn far higher than their average workers.

Under the new law, any company that pays its top executive 100 times more than their average worker will pay an extra 0.1% surcharge on its annual business tax payment. If a CEO makes 200 times more than the average employee, the surcharge increases to 0.2%; 300 times gets a 0.3% surcharge and so on.

"We’re not gonna shed any tears if penthouse dwellers have to cough up," the San Francisco League of Pissed Off Voters wrote in its voter guide. The results “show that San Franciscans are concerned about growing economic inequality,” city...
WASHINGTON — Four years of partisan discord and a tumultuous election have left U.S. voters deeply divided on everything from public health, racial justice and the economy to whether votes would be counted fairly, according to AP VoteCast, a national survey of the electorate.

Supporters of President Donald Trump and former Vice President Joe Biden found little common ground on the top crises facing the nation. But among the few shared views: Trump has changed the way things work in Washington. Most Trump voters say he has changed Washington for the better; most Biden voters say he's changed it for the worse. Here's a snapshot of who voted and what matters to them, based on preliminary results from AP VoteCast, a survey of more than 133,000 voters and nonvoters nationwide conducted for The Associated Press by NORC at the University of Chicago.

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Trump for months has sought to sow doubts about how the vote-counting — especially of mail-in ballots, which take longer to count and tend to favor Democrats — was being done fairly, according to AP VoteCast, a national survey of the electorate.

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OREGON LEADS THE WAY IN DECRIMINALIZING HARD DRUGS

November 4, 2020 | AP News
SALEM, Ore. — In a first in the nation, Oregon has rejected charging drug users with criminal offenses, with voters passing a ballot measure that decriminalizes possession of heroin, methamphetamine, LSD, oxycodone and other hard drugs.

"Today’s victory is a landmark declaration that the time has come to stop criminalizing people for drug use," said Kassandra Frederique, executive director of the Drug Policy Alliance, which was behind the measure. "Measure 110 is arguably the biggest blow to the war on drugs to date." The measure, which takes effect 30 days after Tuesday’s election, completely changes how Oregon’s justice system treats those who are found with personal-use amounts of the hard drugs.

Instead of going to trial and facing possible jail time, a person would have the option of paying a $100 fine or attending new “addiction recovery centers..."
BERLIN — The United States on Wednesday formally left the Paris Agreement, a global pact it helped forge five years ago to avert the threat of catastrophic climate change. The move, long threatened by U.S. President Donald Trump and triggered by his administration a year ago, further isolates Washington in the world but has no immediate impact on international efforts to curb global warming.

Still, the U.N. agency that oversees the treaty, France as the host of the 2015 Paris talks and three countries currently chairing the body that organizes them — Chile, Britain and Italy — issued a joint statement expressing regret at the U.S. withdrawal. "There is no greater responsibility than protecting our planet and people from the threat of climate change," they said. "The science is clear that we must urgently scale up action and work together to reduce the impacts of global warming and to ensure a greener, more resilient future for us all. The Paris Agreement provides the right framework to achieve this."

"We remain committed to working with all U.S. stakeholders and partners around the world to accelerate climate action, and with all signatories to ensure the full implementation of the Paris Agreement," they added. The next planned round of U.N. climate talks takes place in Glasgow, Scotland, in 2021. At present, 189 countries have ratified the accord, which aims to keep the increase in average temperatures worldwide "well below" 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit), ideally no more than 1.5C (2.7 F), compared to pre-industrial levels. A further six countries have signed, but not ratified the pact. Scientists say that any rise beyond 2 degrees Celsius could have a devastating impact on large parts of the world, raising sea levels, stoking tropical storms and worsening droughts and floods.

Scientists say that any rise beyond 2 degrees Celsius could have a devastating impact on large parts of the world, raising sea levels, stoking tropical storms and worsening droughts and floods. The world has already warmed 1.2 degrees Celsius (2.2 degrees Fahrenheit) since pre-industrial time, so the efforts are really about preventing another 0.3 to 0.7 degrees Celsius (0.5 to 1.3 degrees Fahrenheit) warming from now.

The Paris Accord Requires Countries to Set Their Own Voluntary Targets

"Having the U.S. pull out of Paris is likely to reduce efforts to mitigate, and therefore increase the number of people who are put into a life-or-death situation because of the impacts of climate change: this is clear from the science," said Cornell University climate scientist Natalie Mahowald, a co-author of U.N. science reports on global warming. The Paris accord requires countries to set their own voluntary targets for reducing greenhouse gases such as carbon...
VATICAN BREAKS SILENCE, EXPLAINS POPE’S CIVIL UNION COMMENTS

November 2, 2020 | AP News

ROME — The Vatican says Pope Francis’ comments on gay civil unions were taken out of context in a documentary that spliced together parts of an old interview, but still confirmed Francis’ belief that gay couples should enjoy legal protections.

The Vatican secretariat of state issued guidance to ambassadors to explain the uproar that Francis’ comments created following the Oct. 21 premiere of the film “Francesco,” at the Rome Film Festival. The Vatican nuncio to Mexico, Archbishop Franco Coppola, posted the unsigned guidance on his Facebook page Sunday.

In it, the Vatican confirmed that Francis was referring to his position in 2010 when he was archbishop of Buenos Aires and strongly opposed moves to allow same-sex marriage. Instead, he favored extending legal protections to gay couples under what is understood in Argentina as a civil union law. While Francis was known to have taken that position privately, he had never articulated his support while...