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WEEKLY DIGEST
JANUARY 8, 2021



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JIM COSTA SAYS PHOTO CAPTURES THE MOMENT RIOTERS STORMED DOORS

January 6, 2021 | David Taub and Jim Jakobs

Hours after sheltering in place in the House of Representative, Congressman Jim Costa said rioters who breached the U.S. Capitol are

“We were not properly prepared and we should have been. It has been known for weeks that these protesters were going to come here.” —Congressman Jim Costa (D-Fresno)

“traitorous.” Costa (D-Fresno) spoke to the media from his Washington, DC office via Zoom. The Capitol was in lockdown and a 6 p.m.

curfew in the District was already in effect. He was planning to return to the House later in the evening to fulfill Congress’s constitutionally-mandated role to certify the Electoral College vote.

The process was disrupted by the rioters after a speech President Donald Trump gave at a rally. “Today is a sad day because it has been a day in which a group of traitorous folks have taken it upon themselves to storm the Capitol,” Costa said. While he supports First Amendment activity, he said protesters took it too far. “We saw a group of people that decided that they would take the law into their own hands and take upon a treasonous act, because that’s what this is, a treasonous act to, in fact, thwart the will of the voters of the United States,” Costa said.

Capitol Police Unprepared

“We were not properly prepared and we should have been. It has been known for weeks that these protesters were going to come here,” says Costa. He says protestors are not an unusual sight at the Capitol, and he’s

seen plenty of them during his 16 years there. “It’s every American’s right to come and peacefully demonstrate and let their views be known,” says Costa. “But we know that, in fact, the President urged these folks on.” Costa says over the next several weeks he and others will look very closely at the actions of Capitol police on Wednesday to ensure this type of scenario never plays out again.

Impeachment Unlikely, But Would Support Censure

Costa placed the blame of today’s actions on Trump. “It’s unacceptable for our president to cheer these folks on as somehow this was a football game. It’s not. It’s our country. It’s our democracy. It’s our basic foundations of the freedom we hold most dear,” Costa said. “We looked like for a short period of time a third world banana re-

public,” Costa said. Costa doubted the effectiveness of impeachment proceedings against Trump, with just two weeks remaining in the president’s term. “I think it’s time to close this chapter. There may be a measure of censure. And if there is, I will certainly support that. But at this point in time, we need to move on. We need to heal the wounds that have been created and the divisions that seems to be the hallmark of this presidency,” Costa said. Costa doubted anyone in Trump’s cabinet would evoke the 25th Amendment, which allows for removal of a president if it’s determined he is unable to perform...

As rioters broke into the building, evacuations started in the chambers — first on the floor, then in the gallery where Costa was at.

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VALLEY PATIENTS COULD BE DIVERTED TO OUT OF AREA HOSPITALS UNDER NEW HEALTH ORDER

AP/Damian Dovarganes

January 6, 2021 | AP News

California is so swamped by the coronavirus pandemic that the state has ordered hospitals with room to accept patients from others that have maxed out on intensive care beds.

The public health order issued late Tuesday is the latest attempt by authorities to confront a surge in coronavirus infections and hospitalizations, a deteriorating situation that could worsen before it gets better, as gatherings during the recent holidays could accelerate cases. The order, which will last three weeks, could result in patients being shipped to Northern California from Southern California and the San Joaquin Val-

ley, where 14 counties were immediately ordered to delay nonessential "and non-life threatening" surgeries in order to provide beds. The directive also applies to any county where ICU capacity to treat COVID-19 patients is bottoming out.

"If we continue to see an alarming increase of COVID-19 patient admissions at hospitals statewide, some facilities may not be able to provide the critical and necessary care Californians need, whether those patients have COVID-19 or another medical condition," said Dr. Tomás J. Aragón, the state's public health officer. The order could be a bellwether...

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TRAUMA CENTER TURNS TO FORMER GANG MEMBER TO HELP REDUCE VIOLENCE

January 1, 2021 | Sponsored by Community Medical Centers

Armando Alvarez II's family members led him into and out of gang life, introducing him to drugs and alcohol before he entered junior high and then eventually to drug dealing and violence. It was an older brother...

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CRMC

POLICE SAY 68% ARRESTED IN FRESNO VIOLENCE CRACKDOWN ALREADY RELEASED. OPERATION EXTENDED.

January 6, 2021 | Jim Jakobs

The Fresno Police Department launched a violent crime suppression operation on October 6 in response to an increase in murders and shootings. It was scheduled to end after the holidays, but in a Wednesday news release, Police Chief Andy Hall said, "we are continuing to see an unacceptable amount of brazen violent crime and tragic loss of life in our city."

Hall said the operation will resume over the upcoming weekend. "On Friday January 8th, approximately 40 officers making up 6 different proactive elements will be deployed to try and further stop the violence," the release said. On Monday, Jan. 11, incoming Police Chief Paco Balderrama will start his new role as Fresno's top cop. The initial crime suppression operation...

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STATE

NEWSOM PROPOSES \$600 PAYMENT FOR LOW-INCOME CALIFORNIANS

January 6, 2021 | AP News

Millions of low-income Californians would get a \$600 payment from the state under a budget proposal by Gov. Gavin Newsom. The proposed payment, announced Wednesday, would go to people with annual incomes of less than \$30,000, including immigrants living in the country illegally who file taxes with the state. Roughly 4 million people would be eligible for the payment, for a total state cost of \$2.4 billion. Newsom is also asking the Legislature to extend a moratorium on evictions.

“Californians who have been impacted by this pandemic will get help to provide for their families and keep a roof over their heads,” he said in a statement. State lawmakers normally pass the budget in June, but Newsom is asking them to act early on several proposals to provide faster relief to people suffering due to the coronavirus pandemic. California’s unemployment rate was 8.2% in November, the most recent month with available state data. But that doesn’t reflect the true number of out-of-work Californians, as many people have stopped seeking work. The \$600 payment matches a federal stimulus payment approved by Congress, meaning some Californians could receive \$1,200 in relief. Newsom hopes payments of the state stimulus go out to Californians in February and March. If his plan is approved and signed into law, it will take three to four weeks

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to get payments out to people who filed their taxes electronically, said H.D. Palmer, spokesman for the California Department of Finance.

Beyond the Cash Payments, Newsom’s Proposal Aims to Help Californians Struggling to Pay Rent

Taxpayers who received the California Earned Income Tax Credit, available to people making less than \$30,000 annually, last year would receive the \$600 payment. That covered about 3.9 million filers in 2020, Palmer said. The \$600 payment would also go to people with Individual Taxpayer Identification Numbers who would be eligible to receive the tax credit this year. Those taxpayers are mostly immigrants living in the country illegally. The state estimates about 125,000 of those filers would be eligible for the payment, Palmer said.

The \$600 payment matches a federal stimulus payment approved by Congress, meaning some Californians could receive \$1,200 in relief.

Beyond the cash payments, Newsom’s proposal aims to help Californians struggling to pay rent or losing out on money that would normally come in from tenants. The Legislature passed an eviction moratorium last year, and it bars landlords from evicting people who suffered economic loss due to the pandemic. They must be able to pay at least 25% of their monthly rent. Newsom wants to extend the moratorium, though his office did not give a...

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AP File



UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE BENEFITS

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Provides:

EDD Employment Development Department
State of California
P.O. Box 9052
Gray, TN 37615-9052

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U.S. POSTAGE
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KRB

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CALIFORNIA SUSPENDS 1.4 MILLION VIRUS UNEMPLOYMENT CLAIMS

January 7, 2021 | AP News

California has frozen 1.4 million unemployment claims as it battles fraud in its massive coronavirus unemployment relief program, it was reported Wednesday.

The state Employment Development Department said it had examined existing claims from people who said they lost their jobs during the COVID-19 pandemic and found about 3.5 million claims were “potentially fraudulent,” the San Francisco Chronicle reported. Nearly 2 million of those claims already

have been disqualified and payment was suspended for about 1.4 million until they could be verified. The EDD said it would contact claimants to tell them how to prove their identities, the paper said.

California, the nation’s most populous state, has processed more than 16 million unemployment benefits since March, a byproduct of the pandemic that prompted Gov. Gavin Newsom to order businesses to close. The EDD has struggled to keep up with the demand, facing intense pressure to work through a...

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Michelle Steel for Congress

CALIFORNIA CONGRESS-WOMAN TESTS POSITIVE FOR CORONAVIRUS

January 7, 2021 | AP News

LOS ANGELES — California Rep. Michelle Steel has tested positive for coronavirus, her office announced Wednesday. The newly elected Orange County, California, Republican said in a statement that she learned had been in contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19. Steel, 65, said he had no symptoms but had a test out of an abundance of caution. It came back positive for the virus.

She said she will quarantine, at the advice of her doctor and to protect the health of her colleagues in the House. Steel — who previously headed the Orange County Board of Supervisors — defeated Democratic Rep. Harley Rouda in November. Last spring Steel questioned the need for a countywide...

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PALM SPRINGS OFFICERS EXPOSED TO CORONAVIRUS BY SPITTING MAN

January 5, 2021 | AP News

PALM SPRINGS — Four Palm Springs police officers were placed on quarantine for 10 days after being exposed to COVID-19 by a man who spit on them while being detained. The four responded Saturday night to a report of a man throwing things at vehicles, running in and out of traffic and breaking the window of a truck, the Palm Springs Police Department said in a statement.

Two sergeants and two officers had to physically subdue the man, who resisted, the department said. The man yelled and spit on the four law enforcement officers during the entire event and also spit all over the back of a police car where he was placed, the department said. The man, who could not be identified...

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BIDEN WIN CONFIRMED AFTER PRO-TRUMP MOB STORMS US CAPITOL

January 7, 2021 | AP News

WASHINGTON — Congress confirmed Democrat Joe Biden as the presidential election winner early Thursday after a violent mob loyal to President Donald Trump stormed the U.S. Capitol in a stunning attempt to overturn America's presidential election, undercut the nation's democracy and keep Trump in the White House.

Lawmakers were resolved to complete the Electoral College tally in a display to the country, and the world, of the nation's enduring commitment to uphold the will of the voters and the peaceful transfer of power. They pushed through the night with tensions high and the nation's capital on alert.

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Before dawn Thursday, lawmakers finished their work, confirming Biden won the election. Vice President Mike Pence, presiding over the joint session, announced the tally, 306-232. Trump, who had repeatedly refused to concede the election, said in a statement immediately after the vote that there will be a smooth transition of power on Inauguration Day. "Even though I totally disagree with the outcome of the election, and the facts bear me out, nevertheless there will be an orderly transition on January 20th," Trump said in a statement posted to Twitter by an aide. The Capitol was under siege Wednesday, as the nation's elected representa-

tives scrambled to crouch under desks and don gas masks while police futilely tried to barricade the building, one of the most jarring scenes ever to unfold in a seat of American political power. A woman was shot and killed inside the Capitol, and Washington's mayor instituted an evening curfew in an attempt to contain the violence. The rioters were egged on by Trump, who has spent weeks falsely attacking the integrity of the election and had urged his supporters to descend on Washington to protest Congress' formal approval of Biden's victory. Some Republican lawmakers were in the midst of raising objections to the results on his behalf when the proceedings were abruptly halted by the mob.

Trump, who had repeatedly refused to concede the election, said in a statement immediately after the vote that there will be a smooth transition of power on Inauguration Day.

Pence Reopened the Senate and Directly Addressed the Demonstrators
Together, the protests and the GOP election objections amounted to an almost unthinkable challenge to American democracy and exposed the depths of the divisions that have coursed through the country during Trump's four years in office. Though the efforts to block Biden from being sworn in on Jan. 20 were sure to fail, the support Trump has received for his efforts to overturn the election results have badly strained the nation's democratic guardrails. Congress reconvened in the evening, with lawmakers decrying the protests that defaced the Capitol...

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OSSOFF WINS IN GEORGIA, HANDING DEMS SENATE CONTROL

AP/Branden Camp

January 6, 2021 | AP News

ATLANTA — Democrats won both Georgia Senate seats — and with them, the U.S. Senate majority — as final votes were counted Wednesday, serving President Donald Trump a stunning defeat in his last days in office while dramatically improving the fate of President-elect Joe Biden’s progressive agenda.

Jon Ossoff and Raphael Warnock, Democratic challengers who represented the diversity of their party’s evolving coalition, defeated Republicans David

Perdue and Kelly Loeffler two months after Biden became the first Democratic presidential candidate to carry the state since 1992.

Warnock, who served as pastor for the same Atlanta church where civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. preached, becomes the first African American from Georgia elected to the Senate. And Ossoff becomes the state’s first Jewish senator and, at 33 years old, the Senate’s youngest member. Their...

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AP File

CAPITOL POLICE CHIEF DEFENDS RESPONSE TO ‘CRIMINAL’ RIOTERS

January 7, 2021 | AP News

WASHINGTON — Capitol Police Chief Steven Sund on Thursday defended his department’s response to the violent breach at the Capitol, saying officers “acted valiantly when faced with thousands of individuals involved in violent riotous actions” as they stormed the building.

Rioters “actively attacked” Capitol police and other law enforcement officers Wednesday with metal pipes, discharged chemical irritants, and took up other weapons against our officers,” Sund said in a statement. The attack on the Capitol was “unlike any I have ever experienced in my 30 years in law enforcement here in Washington, D.C.,” said Sund, a former city police officer. “Make no mistake: these...

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US UNEMPLOYMENT CLAIMS SLIP TO STILL-HIGH 787,000

January 7, 2021 | AP News

WASHINGTON — The number of Americans seeking unemployment aid fell slightly last week to 787,000, a historically high number that points to a weak job market held back by the viral pandemic. Thursday’s figure from the Labor Department, a slight decline from the previous week, shows that even with the pandemic recession in its 10th month, many businesses are still laying off workers.

Before the recession, weekly jobless claims typically numbered around 225,000. The renewed surge in virus cases has caused millions of consumers to avoid eating out, shopping and traveling. And states have imposed new restrictions on restaurants, bars and other businesses. Economists at TD Securities...

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Douglas R. Clifford/Tampa Bay Times via AP



WORLD

WHERE IS JACK MA, CHINA'S E-COMMERCE PIONEER?

January 5, 2021 | AP News

BEIJING — China's best-known entrepreneur, e-commerce billionaire Jack Ma, made his fortune by taking big risks. The former English teacher founded Alibaba Group in 1999, when China had few internet users. Online payments service Alipay launched five years later, before regulators said such businesses would be allowed. Both long shots grew to dominate their industries.

Ma's latest gambit backfired after he called regulators too conservative in an Oct. 24 speech and urged them to be more innovative. They halted the impending stock market debut of Ant Group, an online finance platform that grew out of Alipay. Alibaba's share price sank, possibly

Ma's latest gambit backfired after he called regulators too conservative in an Oct. 24 speech and urged them to be more innovative. They halted the impending stock market debut of Ant Group, an online finance platform that grew out of Alipay.

costing Ma his status as China's richest tycoon. Since then, the normally voluble Ma has stayed out of the public eye, canceled a TV appearance and avoided social media. That has prompted a flurry of speculation about what might

happen to Ma, China's biggest global business celebrity and a symbol of its tech boom. "The Jack Ma Era is ended," wrote a blogger under the name Yueyue Talks Technology. "It's too late to say goodbye." Spokespeople for Alibaba and Ant didn't respond to questions about why Ma hasn't appeared in public. Some see Ma's travails as a warning from the ruling Communist

Party that even a wildly successful entrepreneur can't publicly defy regulators. But finance experts said President Xi Jinping's government already was uneasy about Alibaba's dominance in retailing. As for Ant, regulators worried it might add to financial risks seen by the ruling party as one of the biggest threats to China's economic growth. Shaun Rein, a business consultant in Shanghai who said he meets Alibaba managers and people who know Ma, said none of them reports the billionaire is in legal trouble.

Some see Ma's travails as a warning from the ruling Communist Party that even a wildly successful entrepreneur can't publicly defy regulators. But finance experts said President Xi Jinping's government already was uneasy about Alibaba's dominance in retailing.

"They spanked him. He's learned his lesson, and that's why he's been quiet for the past two months," said Rein, founder of China Market Research Group. "Some of his friends told me they can't believe how stupid he was." Ma, 56, stepped down as Alibaba's chairman in 2019 but is part of the Alibaba Partnership, a 36-member group with the right to nominate a majority of its board of directors. He is one of the biggest shareholders. Ma irked regulators with the speech at a business conference in Shanghai attended by some of the regulators he was criticizing. Chinese Vice President Wang Qishan also was in the audience. Ma complained regulators had an antique "pawnshop mentality" and were hampering innovation...

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GREEK CHURCH TELLS PRIESTS TO IGNORE PANDEMIC CLOSURE ORDER

AP/Petros Giannakouris

January 4, 2021 | AP News

ATHENS, Greece — Greece's powerful Orthodox Church is rebelling against a government order to briefly close places of worship under a weeklong drive to tighten virus restrictions before the planned reopening of schools.

The conservative Church's ruling body issued a statement Monday directing priests to admit worshippers during indoor services for Wednesday's feast of the Epiphany. The Holy Synod said it "does not accept" the new restrictions, in force from Jan.

3-10, and would send a letter of protest to the center-right government. The government responded with a mildly worded statement voicing hope that the Church "will realize, as it has so far responsibly done, how crucial this time is for (Greek) society."

It added that Greeks are still free to offer individual prayers in church, but not to attend services. This had not been specified when the restrictions were announced on Jan. 2. After Greece saw a spike of new COVID-19 infections and deaths in...

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Saudi Royal Court via AP

GULF ARAB LEADERS SIGN DECLARATION WITH QATAR TO EASE RIFT

January 5, 2021 | AP News

AL-ULA, Saudi Arabia — Gulf Arab leaders signed a declaration Tuesday in Saudi Arabia to mark a new page in relations following the kingdom's decision to end a 3 1/2-year embargo of Qatar, easing a rift that deeply divided regional U.S. security allies and frayed social ties across the interconnected Arabian Peninsula.

The Saudi decision to open its airspace and borders to Qatar was the first major step toward ending the diplomatic crisis that began in 2017, just as the Trump administration was raising pressure on Iran. The Saudi move was announced Monday night, on the eve of the gathering of Gulf Arab leaders in Saudi Arabia's ancient desert city of Al-Ula. It was...

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KHASHOGGI DOC, TOO EXPLOSIVE FOR STREAMING, DEBUTS ON-DEMAND

January 5, 2021 | AP News

NEW YORK — Even before "The Dissident" made its premiere at the Sundance Film Festival, director Bryan Fogel had a sense that his explosive Jamal Khashoggi documentary was going to be a tough sell.

The film was one of the most anticipated of last January's Sundance. Fogel's previous film, "Icarus," about Russian doping in the Olympics, won the Academy Award for best documentary. "The Dissident" features audio recordings of Khashoggi's murder, the participation of Khashoggi's fiancé, Hatice Cengiz, and details on Saudi hacking efforts, including the infiltration of the cellphone of Amazon founder Jeff Bezos. The audience at Sundance...

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