



President approves Nashville disaster declaration for Christmas bombing

[After nearly 10 days, President Trump finally signed an emergency declaration to provide from the Federal Emergency Management Agency \(FEMA\) assistance for recovery efforts following the Christmas day bombing downtown.](#) The declaration includes emergency assistance to the state, local government, and nonprofits to save lives, protect property, removal of debris, as well as funds to permanently restore the community's infrastructure affected by the bombing. The declaration also allows the launch of a local Individuals and Households Program (IHP), which provides financial and direct services to people affected by a disaster who have uninsured or underinsured necessary expenses and serious needs. Governor Lee made the request the day after the bombing.

+Jim [said](#), "A Major Disaster Declaration for Nashville has been approved following the bombing on Christmas Day. This will help local residents and businesses start to rebuild."

[#nashvillestrong](#)



Republicans plan to challenge Electoral College votes in an attempt to overturn election

[At least thirteen Senate Republicans - including both of Tennessee's Senators, Marsha Blackburn and Bill Hagerty - plan to challenge the Electoral College results](#) for multiple states tomorrow, including Georgia, Arizona, and Pennsylvania, in a cynical but doomed attempt to overturn the election results. Dozens of House Republicans have also committed to this undemocratic plot. Over twenty Senators have said they oppose any attempt to challenge the results and will vote to certify Biden's victories, including Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell. Senator Ben Sasse has been particularly outspoken in his opposition to any challenge to the results, saying the effort threatens our "legitimate self-government." The other dozen or so Republican Senators have not made their position clear. A simple majority in the Senate and House is all that is needed to fully reject a challenge, although the process is expected to take several hours and last well into the night. All 10 living former Defense Secretaries, representing both parties, signed onto an op-ed that said [challenging the results of the election creates the possibility of instability and an opportunity for our adversaries to take advantage of the situation](#). The Mayor of Washington, DC has [asked for the National Guard to be deployed](#) across the city due the possibility of violent protests by the Proud Boys and other supporters of the President.

+Jim [said](#), “This is an embarrassment for Tennessee and our country. Voters chose President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris to lead our country for the next four years. To say otherwise is false and contrary to our principles of democracy and everything it stands for. Maybe these elected Members and Senators shouldn’t be sworn-in today if they think they were not fairly elected.”

Read an explanation of the process when the certification of the election is challenged [here](#).

President pressures Georgia official to overturn election results

[President Trump pressured Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger and his office’s general counsel to overturn the results of the election and award him the state’s electoral votes](#) in a phone call on Saturday. The full audio of the call was released by Raffensperger after the President publicly mischaracterized the call. In the audio, the President suggests to the Georgia officials that they could be charged with a crime if they didn’t change the results in his favor, stating, “You know, I mean, I’m notifying you that you’re letting it happen. So look. All I want to do is this. I just want to find 11,780 votes, which is one more than we have because we won the state.”

Raffensperger, a Republican, refused, telling the President the election was fair and accurate despite false claims on the internet and disproven conspiracy theories. Some prosecutors, election lawyers, and public officials are calling for criminal investigations into whether the President broke any laws during the hour-long call. In Georgia it is a felony to solicit election fraud and it is a federal crime to attempt to defraud the residents of any state by procuring false ballots.

Jim has cosponsored a resolution censuring Trump for his actions.

+Jim [said](#), “Everyone should listen to this recording of President Trump’s call to the Georgia Sec. of State. Trump’s attempt to overturn the election in GA, after 3 recounts & many frivolous lawsuits, is worse than Watergate because it strikes at the heart of our democracy & the rule of law. Every living Sec. of Defense (led by no less than Dick Cheney) is now worried that Trump will demand that our military, effectively, stage a coup to keep him in power. Thank goodness we only have 16 more days of this madness but Trump can still do lasting damage in that time.”

The full transcript and audio recording of the call are [here](#).

Georgia races will determine control of the Senate

[Two runoff races in Georgia today will determine which party controls the Senate](#). Democrat Jon Ossoff is running against Republican Sen. David Perdue, and Democrat Raphael Warnock is running against GOP incumbent Kelly Loeffler, who was appointed in 2019. If both Democrats win, each party will hold 50 seats, with Vice President Kamala Harris becoming the tie-breaking vote thereby shifting control to the Democrats. More than 3 million ballots have already been cast.



Cooper re-introduces bills to ensure the voting process is fair and equitable for all Americans

Jim re-introduced three bills on the first day of the 117th Congress:

- The John Tanner Fairness and Independence in Redistricting Act [eliminates partisan gerrymandering](#) from the congressional redistricting process by requiring each state to establish an independent, bipartisan redistricting commission to redraw congressional district lines once every 10 years that reflect contiguous communities. Redistricting commission language very similar to Jim's bill [was included in H.R. 1](#), the For the People Act, that passed the House [last Congress](#). The Senate did not bring it up for a vote.
- The Redistricting Transparency Act would require states to publicize redistricting information online, including the data used in the process, details of the process, proposed maps and public hearing dates. It also would require that the [public be allowed to comment before maps receive final approval](#).
- Jim also re-introduced a [constitutional amendment](#) that would give Americans, for the first time in history, a constitutional right to vote. This proposed amendment bans voter suppression and prevents the ability of any state to deny or abridge the right of its citizens to vote. The Constitution never explicitly created a right to vote, it only limits certain types of discrimination such as against African-Americans or women. Voter suppression tactics have been so effective, particularly in the south, because there is no guaranteed Constitutional right to vote.

+Jim [said](#) "I am honored that Nashvillians and Middle Tennesseans continue to believe in me and I will keep doing the best job I can to represent them in Congress. Sadly we are seeing as the new Congress begins that the right to vote is under attack, maybe more than ever. Everyone has something valuable to contribute to society and my constitutional amendment will help us improve elections and society. Voting rights can turn equality-under-the-law into reality. Voters should continue to choose their elected officials—not the other way around. The redistricting process shouldn't be about protecting the powerful and we need to fix it."



FDA says people being vaccinated must get both doses as rollout falls behind schedule

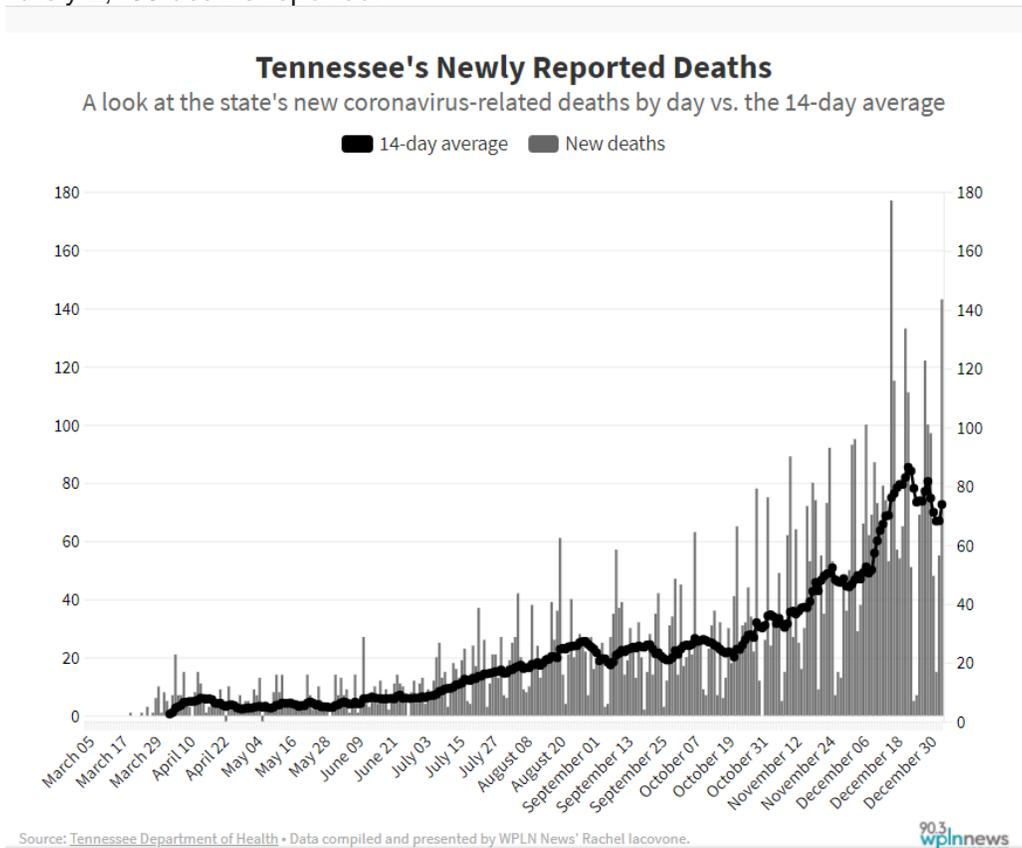
After an official with Operation Warp Speed suggested that those being vaccinated using the Moderna vaccine could receive only one dose, [the FDA shot down that idea saying those getting the vaccine must get both doses](#). The head of Operation Warp Speed, Moncef Slaoui, said that data from Moderna provided evidence that half doses for low risk people between 18 and 55 would have the same immune response as others taking two doses. Slaoui's comments lead many health experts to believe [the suggestion is an attempt to stretch out the number of vaccines available](#) and vaccinate twice as many people because of the extremely slow roll-out of vaccine efforts across the country. Initially, the Administration said that 20 million doses of the vaccine would be administered by the end of December. [As states struggle to establish](#)

[vaccination programs](#), a little over 5 million people have received their first dose of the vaccine as of today.

Confirmed COVID-19 cases and deaths in Tennessee

Today, the [Tennessee Department of Health](#) reported 5,399 new cases, bringing the total to 617,649 confirmed COVID-19 cases statewide. There have been 7,267 deaths, an increase of 99 since yesterday. There are 3,246 people currently hospitalized with the virus. There have been 5,686,497 tests statewide, more than 13,226 since yesterday, with a 20.85% positivity rate. As of today in [Davidson County](#), there have been 71,936 confirmed cases, 325 new today, and 495 total deaths. As of yesterday, [169,070 people in Tennessee have received a vaccination](#).

[Tennessee ended 2020 with nearly 7,000 deaths from COVID-19, a number that is higher than predicted](#). A model from the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation forecasts that that number could double by April 1. December is the deadliest month of the pandemic so far with approximately 2,400 deaths reported.



Iran restarts uranium enrichment program

[Iran has resumed enriching uranium to 20% purity](#), in direct violation of limits set in the 2015 Iran nuclear deal. The nuclear activity returns Iran to an enrichment level it last reached before entering the international agreement, brokered by President Obama. The decision to resume and increase enrichment levels is likely to inflame already volatile relations with the U.S. President Trump withdrew the U.S. from the deal in 2018 in favor of sanctions against the country. The action by Iran is viewed as [an attempt to pressure European countries to provide relief from the crippling sanctions](#) by the U.S. This move comes amid increasing tension between the two countries around the anniversary of the assassination of top Iranian General Qasem Soleimani in a drone strike by the U.S. last year.

Saudi Arabia and Qatar agree to end years-long political dispute and blockade

After three and a half years, [Saudi Arabia and Qatar have entered into an agreement to restore ties](#). Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Bahrain, and the UAE cut diplomatic, trade, and travel ties with Qatar in 2017 and imposed a blockade that separated families and businesses in the region. The countries accused Qatar of supporting extremist groups, including the Muslim Brotherhood, which Qatar denies, and pointed to Qatar's close relations with Iran. Qatar shares an offshore gas field with Iran and restored full diplomatic ties with the country amid the dispute. The agreement was brokered by Kuwait and the U.S.