



Democrats approve budget bill as first step in passing COVID-19 relief bill

[Senate Democrats passed a budget bill that paves the way for approval of President Biden's \\$1.9 trillion COVID-19 relief package.](#) Vice President Harris cast the tie-breaking vote. [The House followed suit](#) on the amended bill today. Jim voted for the measure. President Biden continues to hope that any package will have bipartisan support, though that is increasingly unlikely. [He insists that \\$1,400 direct payments are necessary to provide relief to struggling Americans, but expressed willingness to the possibility of limiting the benefits](#) by narrowing eligibility requirements. [Many members of the Senate remain opposed to including increasing the federal minimum wage to \\$15 an hour.](#)



President Biden delivers first foreign policy address

In a speech yesterday at the State Department, [President Biden laid out the foreign policy priorities for his Administration](#), pledging that diplomacy will be central to America's dealings with international partners and adversaries. He committed the United States to a central role in world affairs going forward and pledged to work closely with allies on issues like fighting the coronavirus pandemic and mitigating climate change's effects. In the address, the President announced that [the U.S. will end support for offensive operations by Saudi Arabia in Yemen](#), calling the war a "humanitarian and strategic catastrophe." He will appoint a special envoy to negotiate an end to the conflict. Additionally, he said that the Administration will hold Russia and China accountable for their cyberattacks and attempts to undermine American democracy by interfering in our elections. He also said that he will end troop redeployments and reduction from Germany, [raised the cap on refugees entering the country to 125,000 per year](#), and called on Myanmar's military to stand down.

+Jim has long-supported an end to U.S. involvement in Yemen, voting in favor of multiple amendments and resolutions aimed at ending support. President Trump vetoed one resolution that passed the House and Senate in 2019.



DOD takes step to identify domestic extremism in troops

[DOD Secretary Lloyd Austin has ordered all branches of the military to “stand down” for 60 days in order for commanders to focus on tackling extremism within their ranks.](#) The move comes as reports of active duty and former members of the military attended the January 6 rally that led to the insurrection and attack on the Capitol. The DOD expressly prohibits extremist activities. [The FBI has opened 143 investigations into troops and veterans believed to be involved in such activities.](#) The investigation includes 68 cases involving domestic terrorism.



House votes to remove Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene from committee assignments

[The House of Representatives voted to strip Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene of her committee assignments](#) for her embrace of racist, anti-Semitic and QAnon conspiracy theories, as well as her support for executing prominent Democrats. The Democratic-controlled House voted 230-199 for a resolution to remove Greene from the House Education and Labor Committee and the Budget Committee. Every House Democrat, including Jim, voted to remove her. Only 11 Republicans voted for the resolution. Speaking on the House floor yesterday, Taylor Greene again did not apologize, and today doubled down on some of her past remarks. The extraordinary step was taken by the full House after the [House Republican Caucus failed to take action](#) in a closed door meeting on Tuesday evening, instead giving her a standing ovation. In that meeting, [House Republicans did not discipline Greene, but did support Rep. Liz Cheney in a secret ballot vote](#), who was under fire for her vote to impeach former President Trump. That vote was conducted via secret ballot.

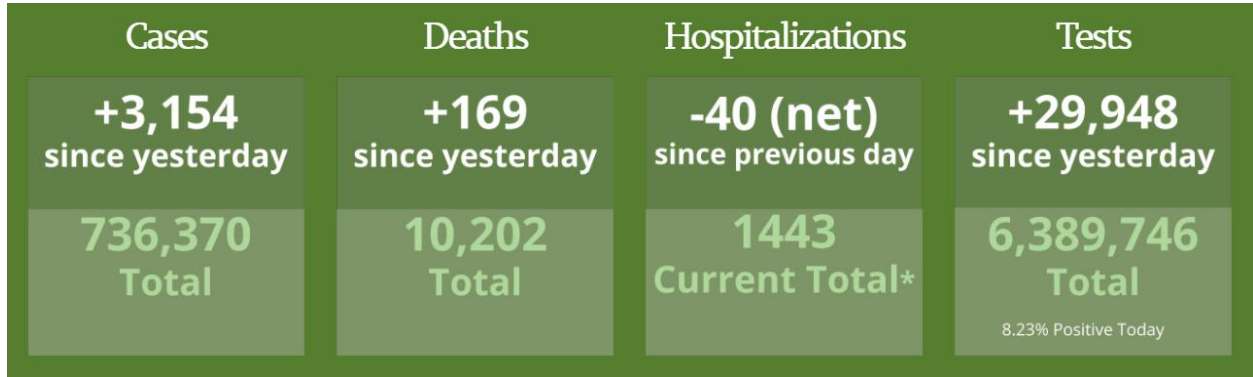


Johnson & Johnson files for emergency use authorization for COVID-19 vaccine

[Yesterday, Johnson & Johnson applied for emergency approval of its single-shot COVID-19 vaccine.](#) Data from U.S. clinical trials show that [the vaccine is 72% effective at preventing moderate and severe cases of COVID-19 in U.S. trials, but 85% effective at preventing the virus' most serious symptoms.](#) However, the vaccine is less effective during trials in South Africa, likely due to the local variant of the virus. If approved by the FDA, the vaccine could be available to Americans within a few weeks. The company said it could deliver 100 million doses within the U.S. by the end of June. While not as effective at preventing COVID-19 as those created by Moderna and Pfizer, which are both around 95% effective at doing so, the Johnson & Johnson requires only one shot and can be stored in regular refrigerators for months. This lack of second dose scheduling and supply, as well as not needing to be transported in ultracold freezers like the other approved vaccines, makes it much more accessible.

Confirmed COVID-19 cases, deaths, vaccinations in Tennessee

Since yesterday, the [Tennessee Department of Health](#) reported 3,154 new cases, bringing the total to 736,370 confirmed COVID-19 cases statewide. There have been 10,202 deaths, an increase of 169 since yesterday. There are 1,443 people currently hospitalized with the virus. There have been 6,389,746 tests statewide, more than 29,948 since yesterday, with an 8.23% positivity rate. As of today in [Davidson County](#), there have been 85,718 confirmed cases, and 597 total deaths.



As of yesterday, [757,488 vaccinations have been administered in Tennessee](#), which is roughly 7.79% of the state's population. Of all people vaccinated in the state, one third have received a second dose and are fully vaccinated. [A total of 108,199 vaccinations have been administered by Metro Public Health and other Nashville health care providers](#). Currently, 7.8% of the Davidson County population have received their first dose and 3.6% are fully vaccinated.

To find out your phase and book your appointment for a vaccine visit covid19.tn.gov or covid19.nashville.gov.