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Southern News Group

Gov. Greg Abbott commutes death sentence minutes before Bart Whitaker's scheduled execution



**Inside C2** 

Monday, February 26, 2018

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Southern

# With rates still low, Fed officials fret over next U.S. recession

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Federal Reserve policymakers fretted on Friday that they could face the next U.S. recession with virtually the same arsenal of policies used in the last downturn and, with interest rates ability to help curb any future recession. still relatively low, those will not pack the same punch.

In the midst of an unprecedented leadership transition, Fed officials are publicly debating whether to scrap their approach to inflation targeting, how much of its bond portfolio to retain, and how much longer unexpectedly large boost from tax cuts and deficit above \$1 trillion next year and government spending.

After years of near-zero rates and \$3.5 trillion in bond purchases all meant to stimulate the economy in the wake of the 2007-2009 recession, the Fed has gradually year low could set the stage for overheattightened policy since late 2015. Its key rate ing that ends one of the longest economic is now in the range of 1.25 to 1.5 percent, and while the Fed plans to hike three more about halfway to its goal.

That could leave little room to provide stimulus when the world's largest economy, which is heating up, eventually turns

"We would be better off, rather than thinking about what we would do next time when we hit zero, making sure that we don't get back there. We just don't want Business, Krugman said every recession to be there," Boston Fed President Eric Rosengren told a conference of economists sector over-reach" and not Fed tightening, and the majority of his colleagues at the

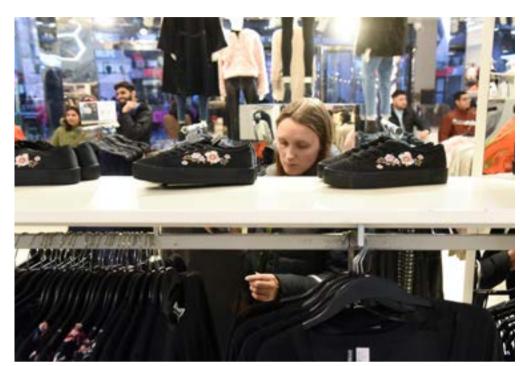
Rosengren, one of only a few sitting policymakers who also served during the last downturn, said the expanding U.S. deficits could further erode the government's

'With the deficits we are running up, it's not likely (fiscal policy) will be helpful in the next recession either." he said. Since mid-December the Republican-controlled Congress and U.S. President Donald Trump aggressively cut taxes and boosted spending limits, two fiscal moves they can raise interest rates in the face of an that are expected to push the annual budget expand the \$20 trillion national debt. That stimulus, combined with synchronized global growth, signs of U.S. inflation perking up, and unemployment near a 17-

'We want more shock absorbers out there times this year it has also forecast that it is and really ... the main shock absorber is the ability to reduce the fed funds rate, which means that you want to get to a higher inflation rate so that the pre-shock fed funds rate is 4 and not 2," said Paul Krugman, the Nobel Prize-winning economist and professor at City University of New York. In a speech to the conference hosted by the University of Chicago Booth School of since 1982 has been caused by "private as in decades past.

expansions ever.

The conference's main research paper argued the central bank should focus on



an shops at an H&M store in New York City, U.S. December 23, 2017. REUTERS/ Stephanie Keith/ File Photo GLOBAL **BUSINESS** WEEK **AHEAD** 

**SEARCH** 

FILE PHO-TO: A wom-

cutting rates in the next recession and avoid relying on asset purchases that are less effective in stimulating investment and growth than previously thought.

In October the Fed began trimming some of its assets and it has yet to decide how far it will go. William Dudley, president of the New York Fed, told the conference that, to be sure, the ability to again purchase bonds if and when rates

The Fed's approach to any economic slowdown would likely be to cut rates, pledge further stimulus, and only then buy bonds. Rosengren and others dismissed the possibility of adopting negative interest rates, as some other central banks have done. Yet five years of below-target inflation, combined with an aging

population and slowdown in

debate over ditching a longstanding 2-percent price target. Some see this month's succession of Fed Chair Janet Yellen by Jerome Powell as ideal timing to consider new frameworks that could help drive inflation, and rates, higher. Cleveland Fed President Loretta Mester, who the White House is considering naming Fed Vice Chair, told the conference the central bank could hit zero "seems like a good tool to labor force growth, has sparked a begin to reassess the framework.

## Numbers starting to add up for Tesla trucks: DHL executive

(Reuters) - The numbers behind Tesla Inc's (TS-LA.O) long-distance Semi electric trucks are close to making sense for hauliers looking at a shift away from diesel that may save them tens of thousands of dollars a year, according to an executive with DHL. Jim Monkmeyer, president, Transportation at DHL Supply Chain, was among the first to order the trucks Silicon Valley billionaire Elon Musk's company is expected to begin churning out in 2019. He says the 10 trucks ordered are a test run and that he is still years away from switching the majority of his fleet of trucks to electric. But he is taking heed of a major shift away from diesel and the money it could save DHL.

He says he could potentially pay off the difference between the purchase price of a Tesla Semi and a traditional diesel truck in less than two years, thanks to savings on maintenance and fuel.

"We are estimating that we could have pay back within a year-and-a-half based on energy usage as well as lower maintenance cost," Monkmeyer told Reuters in an interview from his office in Columbus, Ohio.

"The maintenance savings can be enormous as well. Just because the engines are much simpler in terms of the number of parts and the complexities of the

The payback benefit is one of the keys to the success of the new generation of electric trucks and DHL, a unit of Germany's Deutsche Post (DPWGn.DE), has a history in the area, having already introduced 5,000 of its own electric "scooter" vans for local deliveries.

The two-year timeline also chimes with ass being given by Daimler AG's van unit to customers interested in its forthcoming electric Sprinter van that the total cost of ownership will be the same as the cost to own and operate a conventional van over a few years. Monkmeyer says he does not expect to buy just Tesla electric trucks, but the in-depth discussions on price and feasibility that DHL is running on the trucks are in line with several small and large international hauliers who

spoke to Reuters. A truck runs around 65,000-100,000 miles a year, and Tesla has promised a 20-percent saving on the per-mile operating costs truckers pay now, estimating its new Semi will cost \$1.26 per mile compared to what it says are industry standards of around \$1.51 for diesel trucks. Analysts, however, say the figures continue to evolve; the \$1.51 cost assumes prices for diesel fuel and that fuel economy costs remain static.



A Tesla dealership is seen in West Drayton, just outside London

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## LOCAL NEWS

## Gov. Greg Abbott commutes death sentence minutes before Bart Whitaker's scheduled execution

### By Keri Blakinger

AHUNTSVILLE - Kent Whitaker was praying when he got the news: The governor had spared his son. In an unexpected last-minute decision, Gov. Greg Abbott granted clemency to the Sugar Land man slated for execution Thursday, just minutes before he was to be strapped to the gurney in Huntsville.

Thomas "Bart" Whitaker was sent to death row for targeting his own family in a 2003 murder-for-hire plot aimed at landing a hefty \$1 million inheritance.

Thomas Whitaker's family speaks out minutes after his clemency ruling was announced by Governor Greg Abbott on Thursday, February 22.

"I'm thankful not for me, but for my dad," Whitaker said upon learning the news, according to a prison spokesman. "Whatever punishment I would have or will receive is just but my dad did nothing wrong. The system worked for him today."

The commutation came after years of desperate pleas from the condemned man's father - the only other survivor of the attack - spurred the seven-member Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles to make a rare unanimous push on Tuesday for clemency, sending the final decision to the governor's desk.

After two days of weighing the options - life in prison or death - Abbott announced his decision less than an hour before Whitaker was scheduled to die by lethal injection at 6 p.m. It is the first time a Texas governor has commuted a death row prisoner's sentence following a board recommendation since 2007.

"In just over three years as Governor, I have allowed 30 executions. I have not granted a commutation of a death sentence until now," Abbott said late Thursday in a statement.

"The murders of Mr. Whitaker's mother and brother are reprehensible. The crime deserves severe punishment for the criminals who killed them. The recommendation of the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles, and my action on it, ensures Mr. Whitaker will never be released

In his reasoning, the governor cited father Kent Whitaker's passionate opposition to the execution and the condemned man's willingness to waive all parole claims as factors in his decision.

Now, the 38-year-old will spend the rest of his life in prison - and not on death row.

"I'm so grateful," Kent Whitaker told reporters outside the death chamber. Hours earlier, he'd already said his goodbyes to his son, who'd been given his last meal and withdrawn his final remaining motion for a stay.

"What a fantastic outcome," said Houston-based defense attorney James Rytting. "This is confirmation that victims' rights matter in Texas."

The December 2003 killings took place just after celebratory dinner marking Whitaker's supposed graduation from Sam Houston State University - a milestone that never happened. Before the ruse of a dinner, Whitaker had arranged for two friends to wait at the family's Sugar Lakes subdivision home and stage a fake burglary.

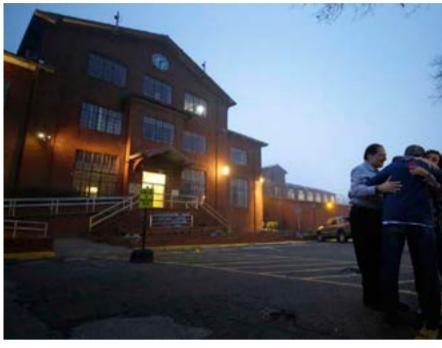
When the family of four returned from the restaurant, a gunman opened fire as they walked through the door, killing 51-year-old Patricia Whitaker and 19-year-old Kevin.

Initially, the case baffled police. But then, authorities learned — after reading an article in the Houston Chronicle, one detective later said — that Whitaker was no longer enrolled in college. He'd been out on academic

As police zeroed in on him as a suspect, Whitaker stole \$10,000 from his father and fled to Mexico, where authorities eventually captured him and brought him back

The pair of slayings came after three years of planning and at least two previous murder plots - a fact that was not lost on the Fort Bend County jury.

"We tried to find a way to not kill the guy as a jury," said one former juror, who asked to remain anonymous, citing concerns for her safety. "We tried really hard to follow the law - the law said he needed to be a continuing danger to society and we finally decided that he was because his method of killing was to get other people to kill



for him. If he could convince college kids to kill for him, what would prevent him from getting other inmates to do it?"

Triggerman Chris Brashear, Whitaker's housemate, pleaded guilty to murder and took a life sentence, while the getaway driver - neighbor Steve Champagne - agreed to a 15year plea deal.

From the outset, Kent Whitaker - who was wounded in the attack argued against the state's harshest sentence.

"I wrestled with God about my anger and desire for revenge," he said. "It's difficult to explain but he led me to a miracle of forgiveness where I forgave Full of graphic descriptions of the everyone involved with the crime long before I realized it was my son." In the years that followed, his father led the fight against death, speaking out passionately about his son's case,

penning a book on it and forming the centerpiece of the clemency petition that moved the notoriously tough seven-member Texas parole board. "There is only one person on Earth

who is intimate with the murderous

attack, the lives and deaths of the other victims, and the life of Thomas Whitaker - Mr. Whitaker's father, Kent. Kent was there," the condemned man's attornevs wrote in their clemency petition. "For the rest of us, the case against commutation to a life sentence seems clear. We can't forgive; we have no sympathy. But clemency is not about something so simple as sympathy or as formidable as forgiveness." crime and Old Testament references, the petition was bolstered by a few dozen letters from friends, family, fellow death row inmates and even prison

guards.



Monday, February 26. 2018



# A Snapshot Of The World



Stamp sheets are seen on display at the 'Made in North Korea: Everyday Graphics from the DPRK' exhibition in London



Trump speaks at the CPAC conference at National Harbor, Maryland



Visitors look at items on display at the 'Made in North Korea: Everyday Graphics from the DPRK' exhibition in London



Figure Skating - Pyeongchang 2018 Winter Olympics - Women Single Skating free skating competition final - Gangneung Ice Arena - Gangneung, South Korea - February 23, 2018 - Alina Zagitova, an Olympic Athlete from Russia, comp



Usipa fish and locally manufactured sugar, both used to deal with fall armyworm in the absence of chemicals, Chambu village in Lilongwe district, Malawi, February 7,2018



Protesters rally during a student-organizedanti-government demonstration in Budapest



Feb 23, 2018; Tampa, FL, USA; New York Yankees and Detroit Tigers wear the caps of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School (MSDHS) baseball team, the Stoneman Douglas Eagles, prior to the game at George M. Steinbrenner Field to honor the victims of this senseless act of violence and to show support for the Parkland, Fla., community.



Mossos d'Esquadra officers remove people from the door of the Catalonia's Supreme Court during a protest called by the "Defense Committee of the Republic" in Barcelona



Hostesses pose on the podium at the end of the biathlon comp titions at the Alpensia Biathlon Centre in Pyeongchang



# COMMUNITY



"A lot of people are eating seafood all the time, and fish are eating plastic all the time, so I think that's a problem," says a marine toxicologist.

We've long known that the fish we eat are exposed to toxic chemicals in the rivers, bays and oceans they inhabit. The substance that's gotten the most attention because it has shown up at disturbingly high levels in some fish — is mercury.

But mercury is just one of a slew of synthetic and organic pollutants that fish can ingest and absorb into their tissue. Sometimes it's because we're dumping chemicals right into the ocean. But as a study published recently in Nature, Scientific Reports helps illuminate, sometimes fish get chemicals from the plastic debris they ingest.

"The ocean is basically a toilet bowl for all of our chemical pollutants and waste in general," says Chelsea Rochman, a postdoctoral researcher at the University of California, Davis, who authored the study. "Eventually, we start to see those contaminants high up in the

food chain, in seafood and wildlife."

For many years, scientists have known that chemicals

will move up the food chain as predators absorb the chemicals consumed by their prey. That's why the biggest, fattiest fish,

HOUSTON



they tested the fish two months

highest levels of mercury, polychlorinated

(PCBs) and other dioxins. (And that's

concerning, given that canned tuna was

the second most popular fish consumed in

the U.S. in 2012, according to the National

What scientists didn't know was exactly what role plastics played in transferring

these chemicals into the food chain. To

find out, Rochman and her co-authors fed

medaka, a fish species often used in exper-

One group of medaka got regular fish

food, one group got a diet that was 10 per-

cent "clean" plastic (with no pollutants)

and a third group got a diet with 10 per-

cent plastic that had been soaking in the

San Diego Bay for several months. When

iments, three different diets.

biphenvls

Fisheries Institute.)

Seafood in grocery stores may have been caught in parts of the polluted ocean.

"Plastics — when they end up in the ocean - are a sponge for chemicals already out there," says Rochman. "We found that when the plastic interacts with the juices in the [fish's] stomach, the chemicals come off of plastic and are transferred into the bloodstream or

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food counter has consumed this much plastic, Rochman's findings do have implications for human health, she notes. "A lot of people are eating seafood all the time, and fish are eating plastic all the

so I think that's a problem."

How Plastic In The Ocean Is

Contaminating America's Seafood

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

And there's a lot of plastic out there in the open ocean. As Edward Humes, author of Garbology, told Fresh Air's Terry Gross in 2012, the weight of plastic finding its way into the sea each year is estimated to be equivalent to the weight of 40 aircraft

TOP 10 ITEMS FOUND 611.048 • 521,730 1.065.171

1,019,902

958,893

Top items found in the "Great Pacific Garbage Patch."

339,875

298,332

Consider the five massive gyres of trash particles swirling around in the Indian, Atlantic and Pacific oceans alone. Those gyres, Hume told Gross, contain "plastic that has been weathered and broken down by the elements into these little bits, and it's getting into the food chain."

One of those gyres is the infamous Great Pacific Garbage Patch. Fish could encounter the plastic in those gyres, but also

much closer to shore, says Rochman. Even so, the consensus in the public health community still seems to be that the benefits of eating fish — because of their omega-3 fatty acids, among other assets — exceed the potential risks. And many researchers advocating for Americans to increase their fish consumption argue that the levels of dioxins. PCBs and other toxic chemicals in fish are generally too low to be of concern.

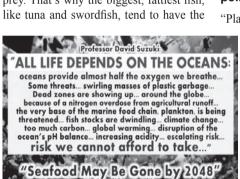
The Environmental Protection Agency does put out advisories to warn consumers when fish get contaminated with chemicals in local U.S. waters. But a lot of our seafood now comes from foreign waters, which the EPA does not monitor. Just a tiny fraction of imported fish get

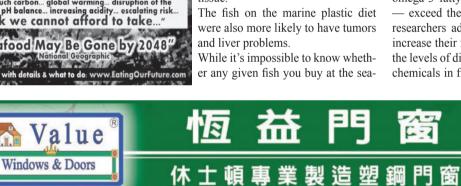
tested for contaminants. As for Rochman, she says her

research in marine toxicology has persuaded her to eat seafood no more than twice per week. And she now avoids swordfish altogether. (Courtesy https:// www.npr.org/sections)



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## BUSINESS

SEOUL, Feb. 22 (UPI) -- North Korea's nuclear weapons provocations have often been blamed for stealing attention from human rights and responsible for decisions to cut off international food

But South Koreans who are no strangers to North Korean belligerence told UPI last Thursday they still favor providing humanitarian assistance to North Koreans as a way to alleviate some of the regime's gravest human rights abuses. The violations they addressed remained confined to issues that could be resolved with outside help, like food or medical assistance.

Cho Hoi-soo, 28, a marketer living in Seoul, acknowledged that North Korea's human rights situation is not an issue that comes to her mind on a day-to-day basis.

"I know North Korea human rights violations are a critical part of the larger problems in the country," she said. "It's a serious problem. I have no background in North Korea human rights, but it would be good for the South to help the North."



Cho and others, who have been bearing witness to the rapid detente between North and South Korea at the 2018 Pveongchang Winter Olympics, are implicitly endorsing South Korean President Moon Jae-in's cautious approach to North Korea human rights.

"Human rights should get an equal amount of interest" as nuclear weapons, Cho said. "But it should be addressed in a careful way."

Cho, who had been waiting at Seoul Station for a visiting American friend to arrive from the Olympics, also said the Winter Games have brought peace and that the unified Korea team entry at the opening ceremony had left a positive impression.

Her friend, an expatriate in China, said she attended the women's ice hockey match between the unified Korea team and Sweden.

South Korean President Moon Jae-in Using Cautious Approach South Koreans Favor Humanitarian Aid To North Korea To Fight Abuses

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor



South Koreans who have been bearing witness to the rapid detente between North and South Korea at the 2018 Pyeongchang Winter Olympics strongly endorse South Korean President Moon Jae-in's cautious approach to North Korea human rights. (Photo/UPI)

"There was such an interesting energy," said Cho's friend, who asked not to be identified. "As a third-party spectator, just to see the energy in the room as people cheered, 'You're doing great,' or 'Let's go,' was a very unique experi-



But forgiving views like Cho's could collide with policy approaches in Washington, where the Trump administration is still leaving military options on the table, and the government continues to withhold humanitarian aid after provocations increased in 2017.

Not all South Koreans like the policies, and some said they have succumbed to Trump fatique.

Shin Jun-yeong, 43, said there should be no restrictions placed on providing humanitarian assistance, including medical aid.

He also aired grievances about U.S. President Donald Trump and his brash approach to threatening North Korea on social media.

"It's not even their [the Americans'] problem. Trump is excessively intervening in affairs," he said.

Older South Koreans are less critical of the United States and are more cautious about North Korea's friendly overtures.



A 75-year-old man who asked to be identified only by his surname Jeong said he has reservations about aid.

"I don't think we should help [the North

Koreans] at this point. Unless the North Korean government changes, I don't think new developments can come about, including unification or human

As the decades pass and division continues, different generations of South Koreans are no longer on the same page about how to alleviate North Korea's human rights situation, according to Kim Hyun-jung, a professor at Dong-a University Graduate School of International Studies.

rights improvements," he said. "North-

South relations have improved a bit, on

the outside. But realistically, there are no

changes."



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'South Koreans' interest in North Korean citizens that they've never met before is getting weaker," Kim said. "That is why it is also hard to reach a consensus on humanitarian assistance.'

But South Koreans who see humanitarian aid as an unconditional way of keeping in contact with the North, and not politicizing aid regardless of Pyongyang's military provocations, might be on the right track, according to Signe Poulsen, representative of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Seoul.

"I think it is important to understand the

issues of humanitarian assistance and

human rights are not an 'either or,' it's an 'and'," Poulsen told UPI Thursday. "Through providing humanitarian assistance you provide engagement and get a picture into North Korea, what's happening, and how things could be better." Poulsen said that progress in the North's human rights situation goes hand in hand with attaining peace and security. What our ultimate goal is for people in

North Korea to live their lives freely with dignity, and the rights we take for granted -- with enough food, education and the capacity to make choices about their own lives.



Both U.S. and South Korea aid to North Korea has dropped precipitously since 2009 in response to the nuclear standoff and the sinking of the South Korean warship Cheonan in 2010, an attack that may have been ordered by Kim Yong Chol, the North Korean vice chairman of the ruling Workers' Party Central Com-

There are signs that times are changing, however.

Kim visited South Korea on Sunday for the Winter Olympics closing ceremony and was seated near Ivanka Trump - a subtle indication détente may be building momentum on the peninsula. (Courtesy https://www.upi.com)



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# Lanier Middle School Chinatown Field Trip

星期-











To truly experience Chinese New Year, students from Lanier middle school had a field trip to Bellaire Chinatown for the first time. The field trip was sponsored by Houston ISD Confucius Institute and organized by Lanier Chinese teacher Mrs. Shaoting Lin. 200 students with Chinese teacher Mrs. Shaoting Lin and more than 20 parent chaperones went on this

exciting field trip.
The first stop was at Sarah Place, a Chinese restaurant located in Sterling Plaza, to enjoy an au-

thentic family style Chinese meal. The New Year meal was designed by the renowned Chef DeZhong Ding. Chef Ding's soup dumpling (xiaolong bao) has been featured in Houston's dining magazine "My Table". Ms. Emily Smith, the manager at HISD Confucius Institute and Mr. Christopher Gillpatrick, the assistance principal from Lanier also took time out from their busy schedule to join the group at Sarah Place to celebrate.

After lunch, parent chaperones led their small group of students for a scavenger hunt together with Chinese teacher Mrs. Lin at Dun Huang Plaza in Chinatown.



During the scavenger hunt, the students looked for clues and symbols related to Chinese New Year and used Chinese to ask shoppers questions. It was a unique experience for many students to walk around The Great Wall supermarket discovering a wide range of merchandise that they had never seen before.

The New Year celebration ended with a lion dance in the cafeteria for the whole school campus. Master Shi Yan Chan (Jimmy) and his troop from the Shaolin Temple Cultural Center put on an amazing lion dance performance for 3 different lunch periods.

With the support from Lanier Principal Dr. Bradarich, Assistance Principal Mr. Gillpatrick and HISD Confu-

cius Institute Manager Mrs. Emily Smith, the students were able to take the learning out of the classroom and into the real world.









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# 佛州枪案后美控枪呼声高涨 枪械管制仍存法律问题

据美国《世界日报》报道,面对 枪械管制呼声高涨,美国特朗普下令 司法部采取行动,禁止去年的拉斯维 加斯枪击事件中使用的那种快速连发 撞火枪托,然而,美国司法官员不确 定他们能否这样做。

隶属美国司法部的烟酒枪械管理 局 (ATF)早就在检讨如国会不采取行 动,他们能否管制这类装置,而特朗 普下令加速检讨作业。

ATF接到民众的大约10万件评论 ,许多来自愤怒的拥枪者,因为他们 担心撞火枪托如受到管制,会使情况 急转直下,导致全面禁枪。

撞火枪托使半自动步枪能模仿机 枪快速连发,可是要予以禁止并不简 单。ATF如自行颁布这种禁令,可能 与枪械厂商陷入长期司法抗争。

但是,要国会制定任何管制枪械 的新法,都需要主张拥枪权的共和党 多数派支持,而共和党一直试图放松 枪械法,在佛罗里达校园枪击案发生 后,也只主张对购枪者加强背景审查 , 拒绝更进一步。

虽然特朗普向司法部加强施压, 一些ATF官员仍认为只有国会能够禁 止这类装置,而且由国会修法或重新 立法,比由部会制定法规更快速有效

专家说,撞火枪托当初经过

ATF 审查, 2010年获准上市,而 ATF 现在如出尔反尔,可能惹上 法律问题和政治风暴,因为这有 如承认它原来的决定有法律缺失 ,因此应由国会澄清或修订现行

近年来一些伤亡最惨重的枪击案 ,凶手都使用火力强大的冲锋枪,使 其成为枪械辩论的一个焦点。联邦最 高法院2008年首次裁定宪法第二修正 案保障个人拥有枪械的权利,但表明 这种权利"不是毫无限制"。

这项裁决没有特别提到冲锋枪, 可是过去十年联邦上诉法庭已四度裁 定禁止这种攻击武器并不违宪,主要 有两个理由:禁止冲锋枪并不损害宪 法保障的自卫权利,民众还有手枪等 很多武器可用;冲锋枪对学校、无辜 旁人和警察构成的危险,使州市有正 当理由予以禁止。

### 人们为何会相信假新闻? 心理学家给出解释

社交媒体和其他媒体里,大大小 小的假消息比比皆是。而当某个消息 符合我们的世界观时,我们往往会选 择相信其真实性。心理学家认为,这 和人的群体心理有关。

据报道,在2月20日出版的专业 杂志《认知学趋势》上,纽约大学社 会心理和神经学家扎伊·范·巴维尔 (Jay van Bavel)提出了一个假说。他写 道: "我们的社会认同感决定了我们 相信或怀疑某件事。"

这个理论也可以解释为什么有些 人会对所谓的"假新闻"深信不疑。 显而易见的假消息,在这些人看来却 是完全可以相信的,因为这个新闻符 合他对世界的认知。也就是说,对自 己身份的爱护远比信息的准确性更重

范· 巴维尔说:"同我们构建我们 的价值观一样,神经经济学也越来越

他表示: "因为群体给予了我们归属 感,帮助我们定义自我,它也加强了 我们的自信。"

"如果我们认为,撰写新闻的那 个人属于另一个群体,那么无论新闻 源的质量多么高,对我们的意义都不 大。"在这种情况下,无论调查性记 者多么优秀,编辑标准多么高,都不 会有什么帮助。

人们也会不断修正自己的观点: 如果某人被迫在群体之外,独立搜集 和评估信息,并得出自己的结论,那 么结果会非常不同。这有点类似于法 庭的陪审员。范: 巴维尔表示, 陪审员 在进行评判时,不受某个社会群体的 影响,他必须投入很多时间,对各种 观点进行全面地斟酌。

此外,借助一个小花招,可以让 人们以更具评判性的态度去评估一个 信息的可信度。"你愿意打赌吗?" 将这个核心问题同一个标价牌一并抛 出。如果某人因为相信某个假新闻时 ,需要为此付出金钱代价,那他就会 变得犹豫不决。范: 巴维尔写道,这种 情况下,他宁愿谨慎评估之后,才会 做出信与不信的决定。

# 除了枪械管制,美国还能 怎样防止校园枪击?

美国佛罗里达州校园 发生造成19人死亡的枪 击案后,舆论的焦点又再 次落在枪械管制上。总统 特朗普说,他已经指示司 法部提案,立法禁止称为 "撞火枪托"的配件,指

它可以加强枪械的杀伤力 。但除了枪械管制,美国 校园还有甚么方法可以应 对校园枪击案?

"不要把焦点放在枪 手身上"

亚利桑那州立大学 (Arizona State University) 统计学学者纳布塔(Sherry Towers)认为,一些媒 体报道枪击案时,把焦点

放在枪手身上,会在短期内增加其他 人仿效枪手犯案的可能。

她在2015年发表研究报告,指美 国每发生一宗枪击案,平均在13天内 便会诱发第二宗枪击案。报告指,每 个州份持枪人口越高,越有可能发生

她认为公众有情权,每当有枪击 案发生,媒体仍然应该报道。但她认 为,如果传媒把焦点放到枪击案的受 害人身上,而不是枪击案嫌犯的背景 ,有可能减少其他人仿效枪手犯案。

她说,目前传媒报道枪击案都一 定会公开枪手的名字,因此她未能证 明不公开枪手的名字会否减少其他人 仿效枪手犯案。但她透露,她自己就 枪击案接受媒体采访时不会提及枪手 的名字,"除非有特别原因"。

德州大学学者布莱尔(Pete Blair)认 同纳布塔的看法。他认为,大部份枪 击案的枪手都是为了"成名"而犯案 , 质问: "我们知道这是他们其中 个动机,为甚么还要满足他们?"

正是因为这个原因,部份美国媒 体报道枪击案时,都会略去枪击案嫌 犯的名字和照片。

### 让学校职员持枪

2012年美国桑迪胡克小学(Sandy Hook)枪击案中,警方在当地时间早 上9时35分接报,警员不到四分钟后 便到达现场。警员到达学校一分钟内 ,听到枪手吞枪自杀的声音。但在这 短时间内,枪手已经射杀了26人,包 括20名小童和六名成人。

俄亥俄州有居民在桑迪胡克小学 枪击案后成立组织,提倡让学校职员 持枪上班,也让他们接受枪械训练, 应付枪击案。

组织成立至今,已经训练超过 1300名学校职员。组织其中一名成员 伊顿(Joe Eaton)透露,这包括老师、

办公室职员、校长、校巴司机、甚至 饭堂的职员。

他承认,要教师接受携枪上班不 是容易的事,正如当初要美国民航客 机的机师携枪也不是容易的事,但九 一一事件发生后,他们才改变主意。

他认为,桑迪胡克小学的枪击案 在这方面带来的影响,不逊于"9・11

### 每个课室加装第二个出入口

得州大学学者布莱尔认为,这是 一种能减少枪击案伤亡数字的简单方 法。他说:"许多时候枪击案伤亡严 重的原因,是因为受害者被困在一个 狭小的的空间,无法保护自己。"

他承认加装出入口"无法阻止枪 击案发生",但可以"减少伤亡数字

他也建议学校在校园内每扇门都 装上锁,称这是一种 做法。

### 不让精神有问题的人管有枪械

加州2014年发生枪击案,造成六 人死亡。当方警方调查后形容,枪手 埃略特·罗杰(Elliot Rodger)精神问题 "十分严重"。

四个月后,加州州议会通过法例 ,如当地居民认为他们的家人或室友 在生活上"遇到严重问题",可申请 要求法庭颁令,暂时替他们保管他们 持有的枪械。法例也授权当地警方作 同类申请。法例通过后第一年,法庭 有86次根据这法例颁下命令。

美国现时已经有全国性法例,禁止 有精神病病历的人购买枪械,但这联邦 法例的规定比加州的法例要宽松。

俄勒冈州和华盛顿州分别已经通过 ,实施跟加州法例差不多的措施。美 国抵抗枪支暴力组织(Coalition to Stop Gun Violence)更认为,加州的制 度应该推广至全美国。

佛州枪击案发生后,一名来自肯 塔基州的律师罗明斯(Shane Romines) 发起筹款,资助当地学校购买金属探 测器,防止有人带枪到学校。他自己 捐款25000美元,数天内另外筹得约 75000美元。

加强校园保安检查

一些美国学校早已实行这措施。 美国政府的数字显示,在2014年全美 约8.7%的学校有进行随机金属检测。

但有专家认为,金属探测器不能 真正防范校园枪击案重演。肯宁•特 朗普(Ken Trump)从事校园保安工作30 多年,他认为金属探测器只会让公众 心理上"好过一点",但"没有实际用

他指出,许多学校一天24小时开 放,换句话说,校方必须安排职员24 小时操作金属探测器,否则将造成保 安漏洞。他认为,校园保安工作是 件"复杂的事情",不会一下子就成 功。

### 撤回宪法"第二修正案"

美国国会在1791年通过宪法第二 修正案,规定"公民持有和携带武器 的权利不得侵犯"。

但宪法是可以修改的。美国宪法 第五条规定了两种修改宪法的程序。 一种是国会两院进行投票,当出席议 员达到法定出席人数,并且有三分之 二的议员赞成,可以提出修正案。另 一种是各州三分之二州议会请求,可 提出修正案。

最后需要经过各州四分之三州议 会或者四分之三州制宪会议批准

但除了宪法第二修正案,美国还 有44个州的宪法赋予当地居民持有和 携带武器的权利。废除修正案后,只 不过表示公民持有和携带武器的权利 不再获得宪法保障,不等于自动禁止 居民持有武器。

接近理解力。"至关重要的是,将自 己归属于某一个群体。"我们总是选 择那些对我们重要的、帮助我们认知 世界的东西。无论是早上选择什么报 纸来读,还是选择什么早餐。"巴维 尔称之为"基于身份的相信模式"。

## 森友学园丑闻发酵 安倍拒绝重要证人出席国会



本月13日,日本副首相兼财务相 麻生太郎及首相安倍晋三在该国众院 预算委员会会议上,就让国税厅长官 佐川宣寿出席国会一事表明了否定意

此前,佐川因有关向学校法人 "森友学园"出售国有土地问题的国 会答辩而受到批评。麻生明确表示:

"我认为佐川能胜任国税厅长官。希 望他继续履职"。日本首相安倍晋三 也称"正如财务相所言",认为不必 撤换。

行国会上,作为财务省理财局长屡次

进行了各种答辩,但他作为国税厅长 官无需就以前的职务作答",质疑在 国会答辩的必要性。

据报道,佐川在2017年的日本例

答辩称已将与森友学园的谈判记录 "销毁"。然而日本财务省本月9日 公布了20份关于该问题的内部文件, 表明还存在新的文件和音频数据。

麻生称,"(佐川)在担任前职时

麻生同时表示, "我听说也有人 对(佐川的)人事任命持否定意见,但到 目前为止他的工作并没有受到特别影响 ,解释称对佐川的批评并未影响到征

税工作。但他也承认"很有可能会造成 影响",没有否定这种可能性

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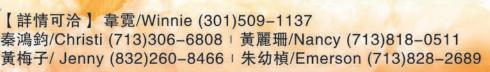
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業,休斯頓僑界人士、中藥武術界同行、各大 新聞媒體記者都應邀出席,美國國會參議員候 選人 Stefano De Stefano 和國會衆議員參選人 Ivan Sanchez 出席典禮並發表講話,大休斯頓 地區合作委員會沈健生主任和德州醫療中心醫 學專家範玉新博士也發表講話,對王醫生給予 了高度評價,範玉新博士還拿諾貝爾獎得主屠 呦呦的研究方向和事跡與王醫生的發明做了比 較,認為王醫生的抗癌療法將會引起西方醫學 界的重視和震動,鼓勵王醫生也向諾貝爾獎發 起進攻,以弘揚祖國醫學,傳播中華文化,造 福世界人民。

王淑霞醫生在現場做了精彩演講,短小精 悍地將她平生絕學濃縮成 108 句順口溜,贏得 了熱烈的掌聲。王醫生是聞名國際的著名中醫 腫瘤專家,傑出醫藥發明家。出訪過39個國家 ,曾為多國首腦政要診治過疾病。1969年,她 是世界當今首次發現三氧化二砷治療白血病的 醫學科學家。1970年以來,她先後研究發明了 馳名中外的砒霜701穴位註射液,蛇精抗癌註 射液、蛇精幹擾素、蛇精 01 膠囊、HBS 桑黃抗 癌膠囊及防治艾滋病的天然中藥"艾生平"膠 囊。她的重大發明成果,多次在日內瓦、美國 、巴黎、新加坡等國際發明成果大會上,榮獲 腫瘤專項發明金銀大獎。蛇精抗癌註射液 1992 年3月18日獲中國"發明創造專利權",使無 數臨近死亡的癌癥患者提高了生存質量,延長 了壽命。她是唯一被布什總統請進白宮的中醫 腫瘤專家。她擁有50年的中醫腫瘤診治臨床經 驗,病人遍布世界多個國家。臨床幾十年來, 她擅長用中醫藥治療各種腫瘤,療效十分顯著 。她在國際醫學界享有很高的知名度。王淑霞 醫生以「享受名中醫的絕技醫術、幫助調理疾 病的痛苦 | 做為宣傳訴求,藉以讓身受癌癥患 者受到良好的醫療服務

王淑霞醫生與中醫的淵源很深,她12歲開 始學習中醫,16歲隨著名中醫針灸專家戚寶海 學習針灸醫術,80年代畢業於黑龍江中醫學院 ,是黑龍江中醫藥大學博士生導師、中國著名 的針灸專家孫申田教授的得意門生。也是中國

長針療法的繼承人。王淑霞醫師現任美國癌癥 康復中心主任,美國國際中醫腫瘤研究院院長 ,首席中醫腫瘤專家,美國加州中醫藥大學博 士生導師。

王醫生在國際國內獲獎無數。她發明的神 康01膠囊在新加坡首屆國際發明博覽會榮獲大 會金獅獎

1996年她發明的神康01膠囊在巴黎第87 屆國際發明成果大會上榮獲 "對人類的重大 貢獻發明獎"。

1997年她發明的蛇精抗癌註射液在日內 瓦第25屆國際發明成果大會上榮獲 "腫瘤專 項金獎"

1997年 HBS 桑黃抗癌膠囊治療中晚期 原發性肺癌 1500 例臨床研究報告, 榮獲巴 黎首屆國際疑難病大會論文一等獎。

1998年神康01膠囊治療中晚期乳腺癌 516例臨床報告在印尼獲得首屆中醫腫瘤大 會上榮獲金質三等獎

2000年針刺療法治療眼底976例臨床報 告榮獲越南首屆疑難病大會"卓越醫家貢獻

2002年在香港國際疑難病大會上01膠 囊治t療前列腺癌356例臨床研究報告榮獲 大會論文一等獎。

因為王醫生的傑出成就,1992年王淑霞 教授被中國婦聯授予"中國婦女500傑稱號 榮譽稱號。

這些年來,王醫生一直堅持臨床治療,

積累了非常豐富的經驗,此次來到休斯頓在 Medical Center 開辦國際癌癥康復中心,就是 要讓那些被世界最權威的德州癌癥中心宣判了 死刑的病人重新燃起對生活的希望,用神奇偉 大的中醫中藥以及王醫生的獨門秘方延長癌癥 病人的生命,造福一方。

王醫生咨詢電話:702-526-6288















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班学生于除夕前,在中国城举办校外教学。此 项活动由休士顿学区孔子学院赞助, 拉尼尔 (Lanier)中学中文班林少婷老师规划。

首站抵达锦江酒店享受道地的中国佳肴 。锦江酒店位于百利大道黄金广场内,锦江 酒店名厨丁德忠先生设计筹备午宴 此趟中国城春游分两梯次,有二百

位学生及二十余位辅导家长参加 . 拉尼尔中学副校长 Mr. Gillpatrick和休士顿学区孔子学院负责 人 Emily Smith 女士更是全力支 持,抽空来到现场共襄盛举。

多道美味菜色:宫保鸡、菊花 鱼、富贵虾、无锡排骨、蜜汁牛排

、干扁四季豆、水晶虾饺、小笼包、红豆年 糕等让师生和家长都大快朵颐,吃得滋滋有 味,个个赞不绝口。丁德忠名厨的菜肴设计 和锦江酒店的厨艺深获好评。

餐后学生分队由老师及辅导家长带到敦 煌广场作寻宝游戏。这些老美学生好兴奋地 练习在中文班课堂里学到的基本会话

> ,纷纷以中文和当地商家及购物者 对话, 举如: "你好吗?", "请问您贵 姓?", "可以和你打功夫拳吗?" 。学生兴致高昂,看到看板上有 他们熟悉的中

文字, 兴奋地指出并大 声的念了出来。一位学 生还买了个上刻有'恭喜

中华文化,是一颇 有意义的美华文化

交流契机.







