



Inside C2

# Southern DAILY

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## Parkland, Florida, school district rejects funds to arm teachers

(Reuters) - The Florida school district that includes the high school where a gunman massacred 17 people has rejected its share of new state funding to be used for arming teachers, county officials said on Wednesday.

The Feb. 14 attack at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland ramped up a long-running U.S. debate on gun rights and sparked a youth movement led by survivors of the attack, many of whom have been critical of the idea of arming teachers.

The Broward County School Board, which oversees Stoneman Douglas and other schools, said in a statement it had voted unanimously against accepting money from a \$67 million statewide program, signed into law last month by Governor Rick Scott as part of a package of gun-control and school safety measures. Board members want Scott, a Republican who earlier this week launched a run for the U.S. Senate, to allow them to allocate the money in other ways, such as providing additional funding for school resource officers (SROs) - trained law enforcement officers that are often already armed.

"For them to dictate to us that this money can only be spent to arm our employees is a travesty," school board member Robin Bartleman said in a phone interview on Wednesday.

"What I want to see happen is the legislature free up that money to districts so we can use it for mental health programs or to hire more SROs."

In addition to creating the fund to allow school staff to be trained and deputized to carry guns on the job, Scott signed measures that raised the state's minimum age to buy any firearm to 21 and imposed a three-day waiting period on gun purchases.

The \$67 million Aaron Feis Guardian Program,



FILE PHOTO: Students from Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School attend a memorial following a school shooting incident in Parkland

named after a coach who was among those killed in the Parkland massacre, allows local sheriffs and school districts to opt out if they wish. Most classroom teachers are excluded from volunteering for the program, a compromise aimed at earning the support of the governor and many lawmakers who had initially opposed the idea.

A 19-year-old man who had been kicked out of

Stoneman Douglas used a legally purchased AR-15 assault-style rifle in the February attack. An armed sheriff's deputy had been present at the school campus in suburban Fort Lauderdale when the third-deadliest school shooting by a single gunman in U.S. history began, but failed to enter the building where the shooting was occurring.

## Trump signals strikes against Syria, lays into Assad backer Russia

WASHINGTON/BEIRUT (Reuters) - U.S. President Donald Trump warned Russia on Wednesday of imminent military action in Syria over a suspected poison gas attack, declaring that missiles "will be coming" and lambasting Moscow for standing by Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

Trump was reacting to a warning from Russia that any U.S. missiles fired at Syria over the deadly assault on a rebel enclave near Damascus would be shot down and the launch sites targeted.

His comments raised the prospect of direct conflict over Syria for the first time between the two world powers backing opposing sides in the seven-year-old civil war, which has aggravated instability across the Middle East.

"Russia vows to shoot down any and all missiles fired at Syria. Get ready Russia, because they will be coming, nice and new and 'smart!'," Trump wrote on Twitter.

"You shouldn't be partners with a Gas Killing Animal who kills his people and enjoys it!" Trump tweeted, referring to Moscow's

alliance with Assad.

In response, Russia's Foreign Ministry said: "Smart missiles should fly towards terrorists, not towards the lawful government".

Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said any U.S. missile salvo could be an attempt to destroy evidence of the reported gas attack in the town of Douma. Damascus and Moscow have denied any responsibility and say the incident is bogus.

Putin talks to Netanyahu, says respect Syria's sovereignty

U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, striking a cautious tone after Trump's threat of missile strikes, said the United States was assessing intelligence about the suspected attack.

Asked if he had seen enough evidence to blame Assad, Mattis said: "We're still working on this."

The U.S. military was ready to provide military options, if appropriate, he added. It was unclear if his remarks reflected unease about Trump's apparent move toward military action.

Two U.S. government sources told Reuters

the United States still did not have 100 percent solid evidence of what nerve agent was used in Syria and where it came from. However, there is some evidence it was sprayed from helicopters, they said.

In Moscow, the head of a Russian parliamentary defense committee, Vladimir Shamanov, said Russia was in direct contact with the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff about the situation.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a British-based war monitor, said pro-government forces were emptying main airports and military air bases. The Syrian military has also been repositioning some air assets to avoid the fallout from possible missile strikes, U.S. officials told Reuters.

The Russian military said it had observed movements of U.S. Navy forces in the Gulf. Any U.S. strike would probably involve the navy, given the risk to aircraft from Russian and Syrian air defenses. A U.S. guided-missile destroyer, the USS Donald Cook, is in the Mediterranean. The Syrian foreign ministry accused the

United States, which has supported some rebel groups in Syria's conflict, of using "fabrications and lies" as an excuse to hit its territory.

"We are not surprised by such a thoughtless escalation by a regime like the United States regime, which sponsored terrorism in Syria and still does," the state news agency SANA cited a ministry official as saying.

After the Douma attack, the insurgent group dug in there, Jaish al-Islam, finally agreed to withdraw. That sealed a huge victory for Assad, crushing a long rebellion in the eastern Ghouta region near the capital Damascus.

In London, British Prime Minister Theresa May said all the indications pointed to Syrian government responsibility for the attack and such "a shocking and barbaric act" could not go unchallenged.

"We're rapidly reaching an understanding of what happened on the ground," she told reporters. "We'll be working with our closest allies to consider how we can ensure that those responsible are held to account."

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# U.S. saw record natural gas production in 2017

By Katherine Blunt

U.S. natural gas production reached record levels last year, according to the U.S. Department of Energy, an increase that substantially boosted exports even as Texas, the largest gas-producing state, lost some of its momentum.

Gross withdrawals reached 90.9 billion cubic feet per day in 2017, the agency's highest volume on record. Marketed natural gas production, which does not include gas vented, flared, used for re-pressuring or removed during processing, also reached record levels. Louisiana's gross withdrawals increased from 4.8 billion cubic feet per day to 5.8 billion cubic feet per day, marking the largest annual gain of any state. And the

Appalachian region, which includes the Marcellus and Utica shale fields in Ohio, West Virginia and Pennsylvania, also saw substantial volume growth.

Texas, however, saw production volume decline from 22.2 billion cubic feet per day in 2016 to 21.7 billion cubic feet per day last year. But the state remained the nation's top producer, outpacing Pennsylvania's production by about 7 billion cubic feet per day.

Nationally, gross withdrawals increased for five consecutive months starting in July and reached a record monthly high of 96.7 billion cubic feet per day in December, the Energy Department reported. Marketed natural gas production set an annual record at 78.9 billion cubic feet per day.

Natural gas exports increased 36 percent amid the surge in production, making the nation a net natural gas exporter for the first time in nearly 60 years.



# OPEC political crises threaten to double its million-barrel Cut

The deal OPEC struck in 2016 to clear a global glut by halting a significant chunk of oil production took almost a year of bargaining and brinkmanship. By year-end, the group may have lost the same amount of crude unintentionally.

The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries is already cutting daily production by much more than its pledged 1.2 million barrels. Venezuela's economic crisis is battering its oil industry and pushing output to the lowest level in decades, with a further decline likely. If U.S. President Donald Trump also reimposes sanctions on Iran, the cartel's unplanned losses could swell to double the targeted cut. That would pose a dilemma for Saudi Arabia and Russia, the leaders of the cuts agreement. Should they let the oil market get even tighter, but run the risk that higher prices hurt demand or spur an even bigger wave of American shale-oil? Or should they fill the gap by increasing production, but in the process unravel their historic agreement prematurely?

"When we think about the year end, it's Iran in combination with Venezuela," said Helima Croft, head of commodity strategy at RBC Capital Markets LLC in New York. "We could have a snap-back in U.S. sanctions on Iran. In Venezuela, it's a slow bleed -- the losses just keep adding up."

Saudi Arabia and Russia, for years oil-market rivals, assembled a coalition of 24 OPEC nations and non-members to eliminate the surplus created by the U.S. shale boom. The accord has exceeded expectations. Excess inventories will be gone in two to three months, according to the International Energy Agency, and Brent crude prices are above \$70 a barrel, the highest in three years.

The collapse of Venezuela's oil industry has aided the wider group's efforts. The nation's daily production of 1.5 million barrels is 560,000 barrels lower than October 2016 -- the starting point specified in the cuts agreement. That's more than five

times its pledged reduction.

The Latin American country's economic crisis shows no sign of abating and output may slump to 1.1 million barrels a day by the end of the year, according to consultant Rapidan Energy Group in Washington. The decline will be even steeper if the U.S. follows through on threats to impose new sanctions after elections scheduled for May, Rapidan said.

The loss of that much Venezuelan crude would tighten oil markets significantly more than OPEC and its allies intended. The growing tensions between the U.S. and Iran could make the supply deficit even more severe. Next month, President Trump will review America's commitment to an international agreement that restricted Iran's nuclear activities in exchange for relief from sanctions. He has been fiercely critical of the accord and recently fired top officials who were supportive of the deal, replacing them with more hostile figures.

There's a 70 percent likelihood that Trump will abandon the pact and



reintroduce sanctions on oil sales, said Mike Wittner, head of oil market research at Societe Generale SA. That would curb Iran's exports by about 500,000 barrels a day, he estimates. Under the terms of the 2016 OPEC deal, Iran didn't have to reduce production because it was still recovering from the last round of international sanctions. So a half-million-barrel drop in its output, combined with the loss of 900,000 barrels a day of

Venezuelan crude beyond its pledged reduction, would double the group's intended cut.

The situation in both countries is highly uncertain and the direst predictions may not be fulfilled. America's European allies are keen to preserve the accord with Iran, which could mean the impact of renewed U.S. restrictions on oil sales would be limited, said Olivier Jakob at consultants Petromatrix GmbH in Zug, Switzerland. Venezue-

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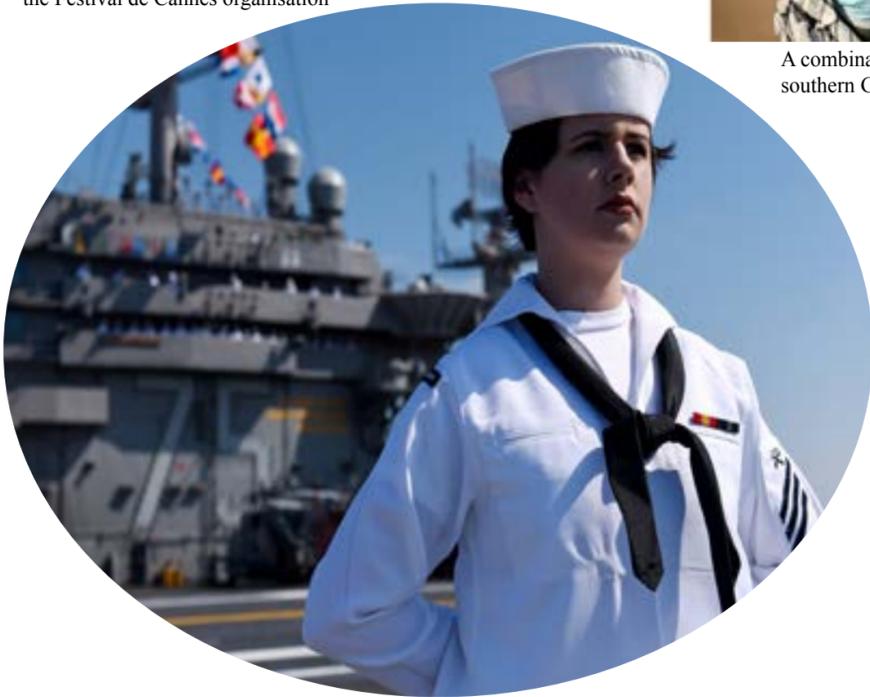
Editor's Choice Pictures



The official poster for the 71st Cannes Film Festival is released in Paris by the Festival de Cannes organisation



A combination picture shows Palestinian demonstrators during a protest at the Israel-Gaza border in the southern Gaza Strip



Logistics Specialist Seaman Alison Wise mans the rails aboard the U.S. Navy aircraft carrier USS Harry S. Truman in Norfolk



U.S. Navy sailors take in all lines aboard the guided-missile destroyer USS Arleigh Burke in Norfolk



Jia Guide, China's ambassador to Peru, speaks during an interview with Reuters at the Chinese embassy in Lima



Facebook CEO Zuckerberg testifies before House Energy and Commerce Committee hearing on Capitol Hill in Washington



A model presents a creation by Kazakhstan's designer Dinara Satzhan during Kazakhstan Fashion Week at National Academic Theater of Opera and Ballet in Almaty



Teachers rally outside the state Capitol for the second day of a teacher walkout to demand higher pay and more funding for education in Oklahoma City



**Ebonie Sophus' striking "Oscar de la Ruffles" design, winner of the Audience Choice Award.**

HOUSTON (March 29, 2018) – The MFAH has once again teamed up with Houston Community College's award-winning fashion program for the annual Fashion Fusion event! A competition that culminates in a live runway show and judging at the Museum, Fashion Fusion encourages students and alumni to create garments centered around the art on view in an MFAH exhibition.

Who: Welcoming guests was Dr. Caroline Goeser, chair of the MFAH's Department of Learning and Interpretation, and Suzanne Brimmer, chair of Consumer Arts and Sciences at HCC; Vi Hua and Andrea Bonner of HCC's Design and Merchandising Program (Bonner was not able to attend); Nicholas Champroux, a HCC Design and Merchandising professor who mentored the Fashion Fusion contestants; and discerning fashion disciples including the MFAH's Chris Goins and HCC's Alex Chapman as emcees; Angela Parrish; Marc Nguyen; Tatiana Massey; benefactor Alex Martinez; gallerist Barbara Davis with upcoming designer William Baldwin (an HCC graduate); handbag designer Debra Linse; and the show's creative director and producer Tamara Klosz Bonar. For the fourth annual Fashion Fusion, The Glamour and Romance of Oscar de la Renta inspired the students' stunning gowns, which were organized into the same four categories as the exhibition. These groupings reflect themes that run throughout the renowned designer's decades-long career: The East, Gardens, Icons, and Spain.

**Project Runway Comes To MFAH – College Designers Get A Taste Of The Big Time With A Fierce Show**

**HCC Students Win Big At MFAH Fashion Show**

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

Out of the 24 garments that made it to the catwalk, a panel of judges selected two winners in each of the four categories—one current student and one alum. The audience voted for a favorite garment, too! Here are this year's winning Fashion Fusion designs:



Houston Community College fashion design students and alumni walked away with free courses, fabric and sewing supplies and other prizes after competing in the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston Oscar de la Renta inspired "Fashion Fusion" show.

The fashion show featured garments created by student designers in HCC's award-winning fashion program. Each design was judged on construction, creativity, stage presence and its "wow" factor. Top honors went to current students Jing Cao, Inge Duran, Shanda Phillips and Ebonie Sophus, who received the Audience Choice Award for her crimson ruffled design, appropriately named "Oscar de la Ruffles." Each of the winners was awarded one studio and one art history course from the MFAH's Glassell School of Art. In the alumni group, Erica Medrano, David Valdez, Teresa Rangel and Maria Hammond received fabric and sewing supplies from the Martinez-Arpin Foundation.

Additional prizes for all of the winners included Tootsies gift cards, tickets to the MFAH's current "Peacock in the Desert:

The Royal Art of Jodhpur, India" exhibit, tickets to an upcoming MFAH Mixed Media Party and other items.

The runway show was held as a follow-up to the recent blockbuster Oscar de la Renta exhibit at MFAH. Judges included Fady Armaniou from Tootsies, Sameera Faridi Design Studio Creative Director Sameera Faridi, and PaperCity Art Editor Catherine Anson.

Each design was judged on construction, creativity, and "wow" factor, not to mention the all important "stage presence." The panel of judges included Tootsies' Fady Armaniou; Sameera Faridi, creative director at Sameera Faridi Design Studio and designer at Poshak Fashion & Style; and PaperCity's arts editor Catherine D. Anson.

The much-heralded winners breathed a sigh of relief when they heard their names announced: Jing Cao, Inge Duran, Shanda Phillips, and Ebonie Sophus, who received the Audience Choice Award for her bold crimson ruffled gown, cleverly named "Oscar de la Ruffles." These winners, who are all current HCC students, were awarded with one studio and one art history course from the museum's Glassell School of Art. Additionally, top honors among the alumni group went to Erica Medrano, David Valdez, Teresa Rangel and Maria Hammond who all received fabric and sewing supplies from Martinez-Arpin Foundation.



Each winning designer took home a swell swag bag whose contents included a Tootsies gift card, two tickets to the current "Peacock in the Desert: The Royal Art of Jodhpur, India" exhibit, two tickets to an upcoming MFAH Mixed Media party, and more, including certificates to hotspots like Tease Color, Style Bar, Azur West, and Lucille's, as well as an Oscar de la Renta floral tote.

**Photo "Peek" At The Event**



**About HCC**  
Houston Community College (HCC) is composed of 15 Centers of Excellence and numerous satellite centers that serve the diverse communities in the Greater Houston area by preparing individuals to live and work in an increasingly international and technological society. HCC is one of the country's largest singly-accredited, open-admission, community colleges offering associate degrees, certificates, workforce training, and lifelong learning opportunities. To learn more, visit [www.hccs.edu](http://www.hccs.edu).

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People wait in line for an emergency food pantry. (Photo/Getty Images)

President Donald Trump is making a big push to expand work requirements in the nation's social safety net, calling on his administration to propose tougher rules for America's most vulnerable population to benefit from welfare programs. Trump quietly signed the Reducing Poverty in America by Promoting Opportunity and Economic Mobility executive order privately Tuesday, ordering secretaries across the government to review their welfare programs — from food stamps to Medicaid to housing programs — and propose new regulations, like work requirements. The executive order calls on federal agencies to enforce current work requirements, propose additional, stronger requirements, and find savings (in other words, make cuts), and to give states more flexibility to run welfare programs.



"Since its inception, the welfare system has grown into a large bureaucracy that might be susceptible to measuring success by how many people are enrolled in a program rather than by how many have moved from poverty into financial independence," the executive order reads.

The order calls on the Treasury, Agriculture, Commerce, Labor, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Transportation, and Education departments to use the next 90 days to submit a report with their recommended policies to the White House.

The order doesn't yet set any new policy, but it does reflect a hardline conservative view of the nation's entitlement system — one that welfare experts say relies on faulty arguments and could cut off the nation's neediest from lifesaving safety net programs.

Trump's executive order implies tougher requirements for safety net programs. The text of the executive order calls for a review of all welfare programs across agencies, something a senior White House

official calls a push for a "coordinated" effort across federal and state agencies to reform the welfare system.



But the result could be recommendations that propose drastic changes to programs like Medicaid, which offers health care for low-income individuals; food stamps; and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), which gives poor families financial aid. The administration is also looking at housing programs, the White House official said.

Agencies are ordered to follow nine "Principles of Economic Mobility" to guide their proposed policy changes, including adding work requirements, giving states more flexibility — usually in the form of block grants — consolidating duplicative programs, and encouraging involvement from the private sector.

Put together, this order outlines much of the conservative welfare agenda, which has long promoted cutting welfare programs, either through pushing people off the federal rolls with harsher work requirements or block-granting funding to the states, giving them more purview over how to allocate money to welfare programs.



## The President And His Cabinet Propose Stronger Work Requirements For Welfare Across The Board

# Trump Wants To Slash Welfare With Stricter Work Requirements

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

Trump has long called for tougher requirements to receive welfare benefits but hasn't been specific on what policies he would like to see and which programs he'd like to target. His order is now calling on his administration to iron out the specifics. The White House is citing faulty evidence that work requirements work.

Trump signed a welfare executive order on April 10. Mark Wilson/Getty Images White House adviser Andrew Bremberg told reporters that Trump's executive order is meant to "highlight the success" of President Bill Clinton's 1996 reforms to TANF. Those reforms added work requirements to TANF and fundamentally adjusted how the program's funding worked, giving money to states in a lump sum and allowing the states to allocate their funding as they saw fit. In the early years, Clinton's TANF reforms were extremely popular.

But over the past decade, poverty experts have reached a consensus that TANF no longer works, because states stopped using the money for the safety net programs. "TANF is not an effective program," James Ziliak, director of the University of Kentucky's Center for Poverty Research, told Vox last year — it's served fewer and fewer families over the years.

This is a common misunderstanding of the longstanding effects of the 1996 welfare reform effort — and one that conservatives continue to push when proposing cuts to entitlement programs.



A misunderstanding of '90s welfare reform is not the only faulty evidence the White House used when promoting the order signed on Tuesday. In a fact sheet sent to reporters, the White House cites the effective-

ness of food stamp work requirements implemented in Kansas and Maine — the case studies often used to promote work requirements.

"Studies conducted after reforms in Maine and Kansas show that individuals who left welfare and went back to work saw their incomes increase, more than doubling on average; this increase more than offset the welfare benefits they lost. Welfare enrollment also dropped by 75 to 90 percent," the White House said.

But a decrease in welfare enrollment isn't an indication of much other than the federal government spending less money.

And a Center on Budget and Policy Priorities audit of the reports on Maine and Kansas found that when actually taking into account the loss of SNAP benefits after being cut off, the difference in income before and after reinstating the work requirements is much less stark than what the White House cited. The total resources (including earnings and SNAP benefits) available to SNAP participants who were cut off was 3 percent lower a year after the cutoff.



In other words, there is no clear indication that reimposing the three-month time limit reduced poverty levels. While CBPP did find some increase in wages, the slight differences aren't necessarily because of the policy changes.

The CBPP notes that the economy was getting better in 2014 — the same time those work requirements were put into place.

These safety net programs are the last resort for millions of Americans. Republicans have long demanded reforms to the American welfare system, decrying bloated federal handout programs that they claim disincentivize Americans from working. They argue that additional work requirements would encourage more people to get out of the cycle of poverty.

While poverty and welfare experts will point out there's always room for reforms, the statistics paint a very different picture of how some of these conservative reforms actually play out.

For example, food stamp recipients are mostly children and elderly or disabled people. The number of able-bodied adults without dependents is slim, and not nearly enough to make up the numbers in savings that the projections for this proposal indicate. Waste and fraud in the program are also relatively inconsequential.

There is strong evidence that SNAP reduces food insecurity and improves health outcomes, especially among children, who make up the majority of SNAP beneficiaries. But the evidence from randomized studies of work requirements shows that they have little or no effect on poverty — and leave many people who aren't induced to work without a safety net.



"It's a false narrative," Ziliak told me last year of a conservative proposal to cut food stamps. "The evidence shows that the program actually works. Not all programs work. But SNAP actually is one of those that does what it is supposed to be doing." As is, SNAP and TANF, which provide services like child care or income assistance, already have work requirements for able-bodied adults without dependents. Those requirements are often waived when the economy is doing poorly and reinstated when the job market is more stable, which is what Maine and Kansas did.

Already conservative lawmakers — like Rep. Jim Jordan (R-OH) have proposed harsher requirements at the federal level, like tightening the window individuals have to find a job from three months to one month, increasing the number of hours they have to work per month from 80 hours to 100, and extending the requirements to able-bodied adults with dependents.

It's not clear what the Trump administration plans to propose, but they said reforms to SNAP and Medicaid are front and center. (Courtesy <https://www.vox.com/>)

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