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Judge strikes down Texas mandatory fetal burial law



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Publisher: Wea H. Lee
General Manager: Catherine Lee
Editor: John Robbins, Jun Gai
Business Manager: Jennifer Lopez
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Trump targets Nike as Kaepernick ads spark boycott calls

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - U.S. President Donald Trump on Wednesday criticized Nike Inc for its new advertising campaign featuring Colin Kaepernick, the NFL quarterback who sparked controversy by kneeling in protest during the national anthem.

Trump, without offering evidence, said in a post on Twitter that the sportswear company was "getting absolutely killed with anger and boycotts." He also continued to blast National Football League players for their protests over racial and social injustice.

Representatives for Nike could not be immediately reached for comment on Trump's tweet. Shares of the company were up less than one percent in midmorning trade on Wednesday; the stock had dropped nearly 4 percent at one point on Tuesday.

The footwear and apparel maker's campaign this week further stoked a national debate over social justice that Kaepernick and other NFL players sparked with their protests aimed at addressing police brutality against minorities, racial injustice, and reforming the criminal justice system.

Trump has embraced the issue as a political cause, frequently criticizing players for taking a knee at games and questioning their patriotism. Critics have defended their protests as a fundamental American right to free speech. On Tuesday, he criticized Nike's decision but also appeared to defend the right for such movements.

Marketing experts predicted that the brand recognition sparked by the ads would be successful in the long run, despite current calls for boycotts on social media.



Colin Kaepernick appears as a face of Nike Inc advertisement marking the 30th anniversary of its "Just Do It" slogan

U.S. trade deficit surges to five-month high as exports fall



FILE PHOTO: A truck hauls a container at the port of Los Angeles in Los Angeles, California.

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The U.S. trade deficit rose to a five-month high in July, with the politically sensitive gap with China hitting a record high, which economists said could embolden the Trump administration to aggressively pursue its "America First" agenda.

The administration's protectionist trade policy has left the United States embroiled in tit-for-tat tariffs with the European Union, Canada and Mexico as well as an escalating trade war with China. President Donald Trump claims the United States is being taken advantage of by its trade partners.

The deterioration in the trade deficit reported by the Commerce Department on Wednesday came a day before the end of a public comment period on a list of \$200 billion worth of Chinese goods widely expected to be hit with tariffs soon.

"America still isn't getting a fair deal on trade and that can only mean one thing," said Chris Rupkey, chief economist at MUFU in New York. "President Trump is going to unleash another \$200 billion in tariffs on China imports."

Atlanta Fed pares U.S. third-quarter GDP growth view to 4.4 percent

The Commerce Department said the trade deficit increased 9.5 percent to \$50.1 billion as exports of soybeans and civilian aircraft dropped and imports hit a record high. The trade gap has now widened for two straight months.

Economists polled by Reuters had forecast the trade shortfall swelling to \$50.3 billion in July.

The government imposed import duties on goods including steel, aluminum, washing machines and solar panels early this year to protect American industries from what Trump says is unfair foreign competition. In addition, the United States and China have slapped retaliatory tariffs on a combined \$100 billion of products since early July.

Washington is also seeking to revamp the North American Free Trade Agreement. The United States struck a deal with Mexico last week, but negotiations with Canada have been contentious.

The administration says eliminating the trade deficit will put the economy on a sustainable path of faster growth. But economists say some of the government's policies such as a \$1.5 trillion tax cut package early this year will worsen the trade deficit.

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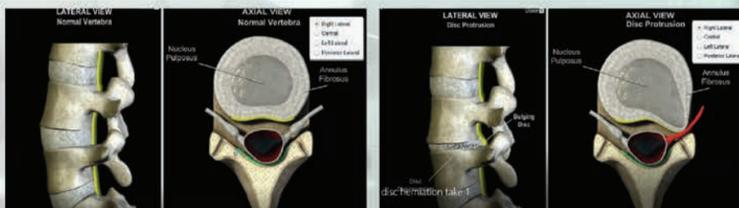
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Judge strikes down Texas mandatory fetal burial law

By Andrea Zelinski

AUSTIN — A federal judge on Wednesday struck down a Texas law that requires fetal and embryonic tissue from most failed pregnancies be buried or cremated, striking a blow to anti-abortion activists and delivering another defeat to the Texas Attorney General's Office, which defended the law in court. It is the third Texas law restricting abortion to be overturned by the courts in recent years, but the state's lawyers are expected to quickly appeal Wednesday's decision by U.S. District Judge David Ezra. That would send the case to the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, considered one of the most conservative federal appellate courts in the nation. Texas lawmakers approved the fetal burial law in 2017, testing out a new anti-abortion strategy focusing on the fetus. The law would require hospitals and abortion clinics to arrange for fetal and embryonic remains to be buried or cremated, regardless of the woman's wishes or religious beliefs. The law does not apply to at-home abortions but does apply to the remains from miscarriages and ectopic pregnancies.

Ezra ruled that the law created "substantial obstacles" for women, doctors and abortion clinics while offering "absolutely no health benefit in return." The judge offered a glimmer of hope to the supporters of the fetal burial law, saying the state has a legitimate interest in protecting the dignity of life. However, in issuing a permanent injunction on the law, Ezra concluded that its speedy implementation and the lack of resources to facilitate the burials and cremations created an undue burden on women. "What we do know is that these laws get introduced and passed under the sham of protecting women, when in reality it's a political agenda," said Andrea Ferrigno, a vice president of Whole Woman's Health, one of the plaintiffs in the case. Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton called the ruling disappointing and vowed to appeal the case. "I remain confident the courts will ultimately uphold the Texas law, which honors the dignity of the unborn and prevents fetal remains from being treated as medical waste," Paxton said in a statement.



Abortion rights advocates, left, protest in the State Capitol in July 2013 as anti-abortion rights supporters pass them in Austin, Texas. A judge has struck down Texas rules requiring the burial or cremation of fetal remains of ended pregnancies.

Houston home listed for \$1 sells for \$270,000

Julian Gill

A home that captured a wave of attention when it hit the market in June at \$1 recently sold for \$270,000, Houston real estate agent Wes Stoyanov said. The low listing price attracted dozens of "serious" offers and more than 100 people to the first two open house events at the remodeled home in west Houston. In the end, the \$270,000 selling price wasn't even the highest offer, Stoyanov said. "This particular marketing strategy worked out really well for the seller," Stoyanov said. "I sold the house five times times quicker than the market average." The home, located at 18531 Berry Leaf Court, was appraised at just over \$250,000 last year. Stoyanov

said the seller listed the price so low because they wanted public to determine its worth. The seller chose to take the \$270,000 offer because she "felt a connection to" the family buying the home, Stoyanov said. "They're going to raise the family in that house," he said. The home includes five bedrooms, two-and-a-half bathrooms and more than 3,100 square feet. It features new floors, counters, paint, stainless steel appliances, air-conditioning system and a backyard patio inside the Estates at Cullen Park community. Stoyanov said a portion of his commission will be donated to the Periwinkle Foundation, a nonprofit dedicated to helping young adults and families diagnosed with cancer and other life-threatening illnesses. The property at was developed in the 1940s by Chevron predecessor Texaco as a geophysical lab.



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Editor's Choice



Pope Francis poses with a group of Mexican faithful during the Wednesday general audience in Saint Peter's square at the Vatican



U.S. Supreme Court nominee Kavanaugh appears before Senate Judiciary Committee confirmation hearing on Capitol Hill in Washington



Colin Kaepernick appears as a face of Nike Inc advertisement marking the 30th anniversary of its "Just Do It" slogan



U.S. President Donald Trump speaks during his meeting with the Emir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah at the White House in Washington, U.S., September 5, 2018. REUTERS/Kevin Lamarque TPX IMAGES OF THE DAY



A coca grower holds a sign that reads "Bolivia no es Nicaragua ni Venezuela", during a protest rally after coca growers died last week, during clashes with police forces, who have the task of eradicating illegal coca plants in La Asunta, La Paz



Reuters journalists pose together in the Buenos Aires newsroom to show solidarity for Reuters journalists Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo who are imprisoned in Myanmar, in Buenos Aires



U.S. Supreme Court Nominee Judge Kavanaugh looks at Fred Guttenberg during his Senate confirmation hearing in Washington



Burned cars are seen on an artificial island after Typhoon Jebi hit the area, in Nishinomiya, western Japan



Innovative HCC summer research program helps engineering students advance in STEM fields

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



HOUSTON (August 29, 2018) - Former Houston Community College student Christian Oviedo has been nominated to present his research project, Characterization of Environmentally Sustainable and Degradable Epoxy Resins, at the 2018 Council for Undergraduate Research Conference in Alexandria, Va. in late October. Oviedo, who is now studying chemical engineering at the University of Houston, was one of 13 HCC students who participated in an innovative summer research program funded by the National Science Foundation.

The Research Experiences and Exploration in Materials Science for HCC Science and Engineering Students Program provided students the opportunity to share

summer research experiences with other students, faculty, family and the public. Oviedo was selected as the outstanding participant by a panel from the U.S. Air Force, HCC, the University of Texas Health Science Center-Houston, the University of Texas at San Antonio and a member of the West Houston Center for Science and Engineering Advisory Council.

The REEMS program, which is managed by HCC's Bartlett M. Sheinberg, provides a series of multidisciplinary learning experiences in chemistry, physics, engineering, the biological sciences, medicine, computational science, economics, and public policy. REEMS students represent diverse cultural, economic, educational

backgrounds and ages. While their backgrounds, academic and career goals may vary, each student has an intense motivation to learn, a willingness to explore new challenges, and a desire to accomplish his or her educational and career goals.

"The data gathered to date presents a strong correlation of participation in REEMS with an enhanced appreciation of the content and concepts of basic science, mathematics and engineering courses, and the ability to integrate these concepts to solve problems, whether working in the lab or addressing societal issues," said Sheinberg. "This program is helping prepare our students for the rigor of engineering studies at four-year universities."

Ten of the 13 participating HCC students

are transferring to four-year universities for the fall semester and eight of them are pursuing engineering degrees.

concentration of ideas and innovation in the city. Maldonado describes this alliance between HCC and Apple as one that brings innovation to the classroom.



Related

HCC And Apple Unveil Historic Academic Development Program

HOUSTON [May 24, 2017] - Houston Community College (HCC) is about to become one of the first institutions of higher learning in the nation to use Apple's newly released Swift curriculum, an educational model that will provide the tools to teach future app developers how to work in the thriving iOS community.

The official announcement of the new HCC/Apple partnership took place at 2:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 24, 2017, at the Houston Public Library's Julia Ideson Building, 550 McKinney in downtown Houston.

Speakers at the event included HCC Chancellor Cesar Maldonado, Lisa Jackson, Apple's Vice President of Environment and Social Initiatives, Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner, and Bob Harvey, President and CEO of the Greater Houston Partnership.

The goal of this initiative is to shorten the gap between computer science training for minorities and women throughout the country and to provide the latest iOS training for developers.

A recent study cited Houston as one of 19 world knowledge capitals because of the

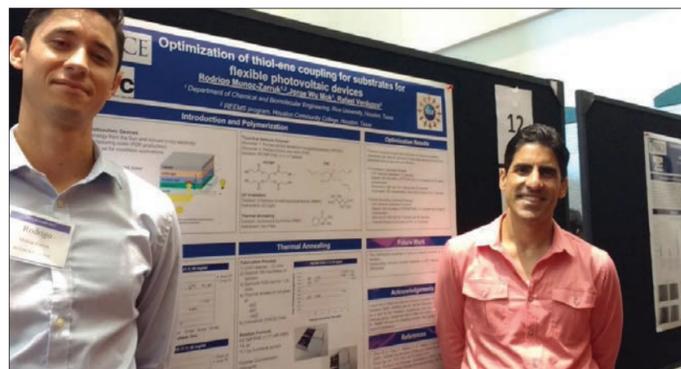
"This partnership is one that will benefit our community by making computer coding easier to understand while teaching critical thinking and problem solving, skills that are transferable across platforms," Maldonado says. "It will benefit Apple by providing developers who are trained specifically for the needs of the iOS community."

At the announcement, dignitaries unveiled information on how community members can access this academic program and become future app developers.

The event was live-streamed on hccs.edu/livestream.

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.



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Overview

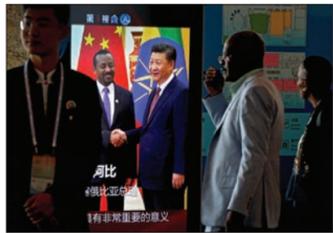
Why it matters: Chinese investment is improving African infrastructure and spreading Beijing's influence abroad. It's also trapping some countries under debts they will likely never be able to repay.

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

BEIJING — Chinese President Xi Jinping on Monday pledged \$60 billion in financing for projects in Africa in the form of assistance, investment and loans, as China furthers efforts to link the continent's economic prospects to its own.

Speaking to a gathering of African leaders in Beijing, Xi said the figure includes \$15 billion in grants, interest-free loans and concessional loans, \$20 billion in credit lines, \$10 billion for "development financing" and \$5 billion to buy imports from Africa.

In addition, he said China will encourage companies to invest at least \$10 billion in Africa over the next three years.



African delegates walk by a screen panel showing a footage of Chinese President Xi Jinping with Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed ahead of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in Beijing, Monday, Sept. 3, 2018. African leaders pressed their Chinese hosts at a conference this week to help narrow their trade deficits with Beijing by shifting more manufacturing to their continent, the chief executive of the biggest African bank said. (Photo/Associated Press)

China's outreach to Africa aims to build trade, investment and political ties with a continent often seen as overlooked by the

China's Xi Pledges \$60 Billion In Financing For Africa

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



Xi addresses Africa leaders in Beijing. Chinese President Xi Jinping hosted leaders from all but one of Africa's countries in Beijing (eSwatini, previously Swaziland, skipped). He has promised \$60 billion in development funding. (Photo/Pool/Getty Images)

U.S. and other Western nations. That has provided lucrative opportunities for Chinese businesses, while African nations are often happy to accept China's offers that come without demands for safeguards against corruption, waste and environmental damage.

No details were given on specific projects, although Xi said China was planning initiatives in eight areas, including providing \$147 million in emergency food aid, sending 500 agricultural experts to Africa, and providing scholarships, vocational training and trade promotion opportunities.

The pledge comes on top of a 2015 promise to provide African countries with \$60 billion in funding that Xi said had either been delivered or arranged.

Also Monday, Xi promoted Beijing's initiative to build ports and other infrastructure as a tool for "common prosperity" in a world facing challenges from trade protectionism.

Addressing businesspeople prior to the formal opening of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, Xi said the "Belt and Road" initiative will expand markets. He tried to mollify concern that Beijing wants to build strategic influence, promising Chinese investment comes with "no political strings attached."

"Unilateralism and protectionism are on the rise. Economic growth lacks robust drive," Xi said in a speech. "China-Africa cooperation under the BRI is a way to common prosperity that brings benefits to both our peoples."

African and other Asian leaders have welcomed "Belt and Road" but some projects have prompted complaints about debt and other problems. The initiative involves hundreds of projects, most of them built by Chinese contractors and financed by loans from Chinese state-owned banks, across an arc of 65 countries from the South Pacific through Asia to Africa and

the Middle East.



In a major blow to China's ambitions, Malaysia recently canceled Chinese-financed projects worth more than \$20 billion, saying they were unnecessary and would create an unsustainable debt burden. Deeply indebted Pakistan is also reportedly reconsidering some projects in the multi-billion dollar China-Pakistan Economic Corridor that is a key link in the BRI.

The Beijing forum brings together leaders from China and more than 50 African countries. Dozens of African leaders met

with Xi ahead of the conference.

Xi made no mention of the political and debt concerns that overshadow some BRI projects. But Chinese officials previously have rejected accusations that projects leave host countries too deeply indebted to Chinese lenders.

"China's investment in Africa comes with no political strings attached," Xi said. "China does not interfere in Africa's internal affairs and does not impose its own will on Africa." (Courtesy washingtonpost.com)

Related

African First Ladies Talked AIDS At 2018 China-Africa Summit



Close to fifty African leaders – mostly Presidents and Prime Ministers – visited Beijing where the Forum for China-Africa Cooperation, FOCAC, closed on Tuesday, September 4.

Some have described the event as a 'mini-African Union' summit being held outside of Africa. The presidents are in China with entourages but also most of them travelled with their wives – First Ladies.

While they do not share the high-table during discussions, the First Ladies are prominent when group photos are being taken.

Wife of Nigerian president Muhammadu Buhari disclosed that she and her compatriots attended a meeting on China-Africa AIDS Prevention and Control. They were hosted by the First Lady of China, Peng Liyuan.

"I also had the pleasure of meeting with other African First Ladies. I believe that together we can reverse the trend of HIV/AIDS in Africa," Aisha Buhari said in a tweet. (Courtesy africanews.com)

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