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Trump defends cabinet member Acosta embroiled in Epstein sex-abuse case



Courtney Wild, who claims to be a victim, leaves following the arraignment of U.S. financier Jeffrey Epstein after the Southern District of New York announced charges of sex trafficking of minors and conspiracy to commit sex trafficking of minors, in New York, U.S., July 8, 2019. REUTERS/Andrew Kelly

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - U.S. President Donald Trump on Tuesday defended his Labor Secretary Alexander Acosta, who is under pressure from Democrats to resign over his handling of a decade-old sex abuse case against financier Jeffrey Epstein, but said he, too, would look into it.

Federal sex trafficking charges were brought against Epstein on Monday, raising new questions about Acosta's handling of a related case in Florida in 2008. Federal prosecutors including Acosta reached a plea deal with Epstein that has since come under scrutiny as being too lenient.

Top Democratic lawmakers and many Democratic candidates vying to run against Trump in the 2020 presidential election called for Acosta to step down.

Trump backs Labor chief Acosta, says will look into matter amid Epstein case

"I feel very badly actually for Secretary Acosta because I've known him as being somebody that works so hard and has done such a good job," Trump told reporters at the White House. "I feel very badly about that whole situation. But we're going to be looking at that, and looking at it very closely."

It was not the first time that Trump has defended a Cabinet member casting a shadow on his administration. Trump stuck by his former head of the Environmental Protection Agency, Scott Pruitt, and his former Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke, in the face of months of investigations into spending and expenses. Both men eventually left the cabinet.

Trump made no reference to the crimes that Epstein is charged with or the victims who have come forward. He said he knew the financier, but had a "falling out" with him long ago and they have not spoken in 15 years. Trump did not comment on what the disagreement was about.

He said Acosta had been an "excellent" secretary of labor and that he thought there were many others involved in the decisions involving the earlier Epstein case. And, he added, "you're talking about a long time ago."

After leading Democrats called for him to step down, Acosta defended his actions on Twitter and called Epstein's crimes "horrific."



Michelle Licata walks outside Manhattan Federal Court after the arraignment of Jeffrey Epstein when the Southern District of New York announced charges of sex trafficking of minors and conspiracy to commit sex trafficking of minors, in New York, U.S., July 8, 2019. REUTERS/Shannon Stapleton



傳承永續恆久懷念

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Hong Kong leader says extradition bill is dead, but critics unconvinced

HONG KONG (Reuters) - Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam said on Tuesday the extradition bill that sparked the Chinese-ruled city's biggest crisis in decades is dead and that government work on the legislation had been a "total failure", but critics accused her of playing with words.

The bill, which would allow people in Hong Kong to be sent to mainland China to face trial in courts controlled by the Communist Party, sparked huge and at times violent street protests and plunged the former British colony into turmoil. In mid-June, Lam responded to protests that drew hundreds of thousands of people on to the streets by suspending the bill, but that did not stop demonstrations that shut government offices and brought parts of the financial center to a standstill.

Mental health issues in Hong Kong surging amid tumultuous protests, experts say

Exclusive: China's PLA signals it will keep Hong Kong-based troops in barracks

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Her latest attempt to restore order did not satisfy many protesters who stood by demands that she completely withdraw the bill.

"There are still lingering doubts about the government's sincerity or worries whether the government will restart the process in the Legislative Council," Lam told reporters on Tuesday.

"So, I reiterate here, there is no such plan, the bill is dead." The government's work on the bill had been a "total failure", she said

The bill triggered outrage across broad sections of Hong Kong society amid concerns it would threaten the much-cherished rule of law that underpins the city's international financial status.

Lawyers and rights groups say China's justice system is marked by torture, forced confessions and arbitrary detention, claims that Beijing denies.

Hong Kong returned to Chinese rule in 1997 with the promise of a high degree of autonomy, including an independent legal system and right to protest, but in recent years there has been growing concern about the erosion of those freedoms at the hands of Beijing.



Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam speaks to media over an extradition bill in Hong Kong, China July 9, 2019. REUTERS/Tyrone Siu

Critics of the extradition bill fear Beijing could use it to crack down on dissent.

Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam speaks to media over an extradition bill in Hong Kong, China July 9, 2019. REUTERS/Tyrone Siu

University students who have been out in force during the protests denounced Lam's comments.

"What we want is to completely withdraw the bill. She is playing word games," said Chan Wai Lam William, general officer of the Student Union of Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Demonstrators have also called for Lam to resign as Hong Kong chief executive, for an independent investigation into police actions against protesters, and for the government to abandon the description of a violent protest on June 12 as a riot.

"It is not a simple thing for CE (chief executive) to step down, and I myself still have the passion and undertaking to service Hong Kong people," Lam said when asked about the protesters' demands.

"I hope that Hong Kong society can give me and my

team the opportunity and room to allow us to use our new governance style to respond to people's demand in economy and in livelihood."

China has called the protests an "undisguised challenge" to the "one country, two systems" model under which Hong Kong is ruled.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang, asked about Lam's remarks, referred to the central government's statement on June 15 supporting Hong Kong's decision to shelve the extradition bill. He said he had nothing further to add.

Fernando Cheung, a pro-democracy lawmaker who has been aligned with the protesters, said Lam's response was insufficient.

"She still doesn't get it. If she doesn't establish an independent inquiry commission, it's the death of her administration, not just the bill. The crisis cannot be settled without some heads rolling," he told Reuters.

meet the protesters' demands and stop using "words to cheat the public".

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Editor's Choice



A wild cow leaps over revellers during the running of the bulls at the San Fermín festival in Pamplona, Spain, July 9, 2019. REUTERS/Susana Vera TPX IMAGES OF THE DAY



H. Ross Perot at the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School in Fort Bragg, North Carolina



A group of Iranian Kurdish women who have joined Kurdish peshmerga fighters take part in a training session in a military camp in Erbil



Orange chief executive Stephane Richard speaks to reporters inside the courthouse in Paris



Weapons and drugs are displayed prior to their destruction in a nickel smelting plant near Kavadarci



U.S. soccer players Julie Ertz, Rapinoe and Morgan celebrate as they exit the plane with the Trophy for the FIFA Women's World Cup while the U.S team arrive at the Newark International Airport, in Newark, New Jersey



Tennis - Wimbledon - All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club, London, Britain - July 8, 2019 Spain's Rafael Nadal celebrates winning his fourth round match against Portugal's Joao Sousa REUTERS/Carl Recine TPX IMAGES OF THE DAY



Cycling - Tour de France - The 215-km Stage 3 from Binche to Epernay - July 8, 2019 - Deceuninck-Quick Step rider Julian Alaphilippe of France celebrates on the podium, wearing the overall leader's yellow jersey.

HOUSTON (March 13, 2018) – A \$4.4 million grant awarded to Texas A&M University from the National Science Foundation will provide a boost to Houston Community College students pursuing careers in cybersecurity.

With the award from the NSF Foundation CyberCorps Scholarships for Service Program, the Texas A&M Cybersecurity Center will administer the Cyber Leader-Scholars Program in partnership with HCC.

The program will combine the academic experience at both institutions to develop and mentor a group of students over a five-year period. In return for their scholarships, which include generous stipends, the students agree to work for a government agency for a period equal to the length of the scholarship.

NSA \$4.4 Million Grant To Help HCC Cybersecurity Students

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



“We are fortunate to have highly motivated partners from Houston Community College who will administer the program on their campus,” said Daniel “Rags” Ragsdale, director of the Texas A&M Cybersecurity Center. Doug Rowlett, dean of HCC Digital and Information Technology Center of Excellence, said the grant is a big boost for HCC.

“We are very pleased to be working closely with Dr. Ragsdale,” he said. “Our two programs complement each other, and the foundation we can give students transferring to A&M will help them be successful as they pursue their careers.”

HCC’s designation by the Department of Homeland Security and the National Security Agency insures that the com-

munity college’s programs meet the highest federal standards for cybersecurity, Rowlett said.



“It is one of the reasons we were chosen to partner with A&M on this NSF grant, and it opens a wonderful opportunity for our students to move forward with their studies in a prestigious cybersecurity center like the one at A&M,” he said. In today’s world, computer networks are an essential part of business operations. With accessing information over

the network and the high availability of multiple resources, administrators of enterprise networks have to be aware and understand all potential threats to the network.

Cyber security, also referred to as information technology security, focuses on protecting computers, networks, programs and data from unintended or unauthorized access, change or destruction.



The courses offered at HCC through the Cyber Leader-Scholars Program will include Security Certification, CompTIA Advanced Security Practitioner and Enterprise Network Security (Firewalls & Network Security).

Cybersecurity, also known as computer security or information technology security, is a field that covers the tools and systems used to monitor, mitigate, and prevent online threats. Cybersecurity professionals use innovative technology to combat hackers, cyberterrorists, network outages, and other technical problems that could compromise network security. Due to our growing reli-

ance on web-based technology at home and in the workplace, this fast-paced profession has grown quickly over the past two decades. Today, the U.S. government maintains a National Cybersecurity Division under the Department of Homeland Security; additionally, the



Internet Crime Complaint Center is comprised of personnel from the FBI, the National White Collar Crime Center, and the Bureau of Justice Assistance. Most careers in cybersecurity are attainable with a bachelor’s degree. While some schools offer standalone cybersecurity programs, most students pursue a cybersecurity specialization or concentration as part of a larger major, such as criminal justice, information technology, or network administration. Often, cybersecurity programs facilitate internship opportunities for their students, allowing them to spend time at a practical worksite, where they receive supervised training from experienced

professionals. Today, many students are choosing to earn their bachelor’s in cybersecurity online. The best online cybersecurity degree programs equip students with the knowledge and skills needed to launch a career in this dynamic field. The asynchronous format used by most web-based programs is particularly convenient for students with part-time jobs, childcare responsibilities, or other commitments that make it difficult to attend class on campus.

Students who graduate with a bachelor’s degree in cybersecurity will be qualified for most entry-level positions in the field, along with some managerial roles normally reserved for candidates who have completed a four-year education. Common careers for cybersecurity degree recipients include data analysts, software development, network administration, and digital forensics.



For more information about the Cyber Security program at HCC, go here: <http://www.hccs.edu/continuing-education/departments/information-technology-it/cyber-security/>

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 single-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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Will Offer A Path To Citizenship U.S. House Passes Immigration Bill To Protect 'Dreamers'



The U.S. House of Representatives passed a sweeping immigration bill on June 4 that would grant citizenship to more than 2 million undocumented immigrants, including "dreamers." (Photo/Reuters)

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

The House on Tuesday passed a bill that would offer a path to citizenship to more than 2 million undocumented immigrants, including "dreamers" who were brought to the United States as children. The vote was 237 to 187 for the American Dream and Promise Act of 2019, which would grant dreamers 10 years of legal residence status if they meet certain requirements. They would then receive permanent green cards after completing at least two years of higher education or military service, or after working for three years. Cheers erupted in the chamber when the bill received the necessary votes, along with chants of "Yes we can!" Seven Republicans broke ranks to join all 230 Democrats present in backing the bill. The measure would provide long-awaited clarity to the millions of dreamers who have been caught in legal limbo amid years of partisan maneuvering on the issue. The Obama administration granted work permits to many of them through the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, but President Trump ended the program in late 2017. Its fate rests with the Supreme Court, which may take up the issue in the coming months.

Democrats are proposing the bill as Trump and Republicans argue that more needs to be done to address the humanitarian crisis at the U.S.-Mexico border, underscoring that the parties are approaching the issue of immigration overhaul from markedly different perspectives.

Rep. Joe Neguse (D-Colo.), a freshman congressman and the son of Eritrean refugees, prompted cheers and a standing ovation from Democrats as he quoted President Ronald Reagan to defend immigration as integral to the fabric of the country. He also described dreamers as "young people all across our country who know no other home but the United States."



House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), joined by other Democrats at the U.S. Capitol on Tuesday. (Photo/Shutterstock)

"We can't allow these young people to continue to live in fear, to be at risk," Neguse

said. Versions of the bill have been introduced in Congress over the years but never passed, despite support among members of both parties. The debate over the legislation has been emotional at times; in 2010, more than 60 young people crowded into the Senate gallery to push for passage of a previous version of the bill known as the Dream Act. The chamber ultimately defeated the measure.

"This is legislation that is consistent with who we are as Americans, as an aspirational people, as a nation of immigrants and as a place where people can come to pursue the American Dream," Rep. Hakeem Jeffries (D-N.Y.), chairman of the House Democratic Caucus, told reporters ahead of Tuesday's vote.

Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-Calif.), the lead sponsor of the current bill, noted that Tuesday marked "the first time the Dream Act will be passed by a chamber of Congress as a top Democratic priority."

The House measure was introduced in March. That month, two groups of senators introduced similar legislation that would protect dreamers. One bill was authored by Sens. Lindsey O. Graham (R-S.C.) and Richard J. Durbin (D-Ill.). The other was introduced by a group of Democrats, including Sens. Chris Van Hollen (Md.), Ben Cardin (Md.), Dianne Feinstein (Calif.) and Tim Kaine (Va.).



House Democratic leaders on Tuesday voiced optimism that Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) would bring up the legislation in the Senate.

"There should be nothing partisan or political about this legislation," House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) said at a news con-

ference, flanked by other Democrats and supporters of the measure. "We are proud to pass it, we hope, in a bipartisan way."

But it is unlikely that the Senate will consider the bill: McConnell and other Senate Republican leaders made no mention of the bill at their weekly news conference Tuesday afternoon.

The measure's consideration comes more than a year after the Senate rejected four competing immigration proposals. Among those proposals was one backed by Trump that included citizenship for dreamers, billions of dollars in funding for the president's U.S.-Mexico border wall and changes to laws to speed up deportations, as well as sharp cuts to legal immigration.

As the 2020 presidential race heats up, Trump has taken a host of actions — such as declaring a national emergency over his border wall and threatening tariffs on imports from Mexico — that suggest that immigration will be a central focus of his reelection campaign.

House Republicans contended Tuesday that Democrats have not offered a proposal to pay for the legislation, which the Congressional Budget Office estimates would cost more than \$30 billion.



They also argued that the bill does not include funding for border security or changes to U.S. asylum laws, an issue that Trump emphasized in a White House memo in April proposing fees for those applying for humanitarian relief.

"If Democrats were serious about immigration, they would do something about the humanitarian and national security crisis along our southern border, but Speaker Pelosi has chosen to spend the House's time on H.R. 6, an expensive, partisan show vote," House

Minority Whip Steve Scalise (R-La.) said in a statement.

Rep. Douglas A. Collins (R-Ga.), the top Republican on the House Judiciary Committee, said that his party wants to provide legal status to DACA recipients but that "we want to do it the right way — to minimize fraud, ensure criminals cannot get legal status and bolster border security."

"Sadly, Democrats are making us consider a bill to worsen the border crisis by incentivizing more people to cross our borders illegally in hopes of getting a piece of the amnesty pie," Collins said. "No doubt at this very minute, the smuggling cartels are getting the word out: Congress is going to legalize millions."

In addition to dreamers, Tuesday's bill would offer protections to people with temporary protected status, which has allowed people from El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras and other countries to avoid being deported to nations engulfed in war or affected by natural disasters.



A smaller group of Liberians who have been granted "deferred enforced departure" also would be protected. Trump also has sought to end these protections, spurring lawsuits that halted at least one of the efforts.

Immigrants with temporary protected status or deferred deportations could immediately apply for green cards if they have been in the country for at least three years, had their status as of September 2016 and passed background checks. Five years after obtaining a green card, members of both groups could apply for citizenship. (Courtesy washingtonpost.com)

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