

U.S. vaping-related deaths rise to 47, cases of illness to 2,290

(Reuters) - U.S. health officials on Thursday reported 2,290 confirmed and probable cases and 5 more deaths from a mysterious respiratory illness tied to vaping, taking the total death toll to 47 so far this year. Last week, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recorded 2,172 cases and 42 deaths from the illness.

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Factbox: U.S. vaping-related deaths rise to 47

U.S. officials recently said vitamin E acetate — believed to be used as a cutting agent in illicit vaping products containing marijuana components — was found in all lung samples from 29 patients who were tested.

CDC has called vitamin E acetate a “chemical of concern” and recommended not adding it to e-cigarettes, or vaping products, while the investigation is underway. Investigators had earlier pointed to vaping oils containing THC, the psychoactive ingredient in marijuana, as being especially risky.

The spate of serious respiratory illnesses has led to U.S. officials urging people to stop vaping, especially those products containing THC.

As of Nov. 20, confirmed deaths were reported in 25 states and the District of Columbia, the CDC said. Louisiana became the newest state to report a death from the illness. (bit.ly/349bjM1)



A man uses a vaping product in the Manhattan borough of New York, New York, U.S., September 17, 2019. REUTERS/Carlo Allegri

The highest number of deaths were from Illinois, which has so far reported 5 deaths and 187 illnesses.

The Trump administration announced a plan in September to remove all flavored e-cigarettes from store shelves, as officials warned that sweet flavors had drawn millions of children into nicotine addiction.

President Donald Trump will host a meeting on vaping at the White House on Friday with a range of groups, including industry and public health representatives, a White House spokesman said on Wednesday.





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German influencer and rapper Shirin David poses with her award at the Bambi 2019 Awards ceremony in Baden-Baden, Germany, November 21, 2019. REUTERS/Arnd Wiegmann



U.S. marshals guard the U.S. District Courthouse after the arraignment of former Baltimore mayor Catherine Pugh, in Baltimore



U.S. Attorney Robert Hur delivers a news conference after the arraignment of Catherine Pugh, outside of the U.S. District Court, in Baltimore, Maryland, U.S., November 21, 2019. REUTERS/Michael A. McCoy



Director Bora Dagtekin and cast members of "Das perfekte Geheimnis" film Florian David Fitz, Jella Haase, Jessica Schwarz and producer Lena Schomann pose with an award at the Bambi 2019 Awards ceremony in Baden-Baden, Germany, November 21, 2019. REUTERS/Arnd Wiegmann



Tennis - Davis Cup Finals - Caja Magica, Madrid, Spain - November 21, 2019 Australia's Alex de Minaur celebrates after winning his match against Canada's Denis Shapovalov REUTERS/Sergio Perez

Adoptees Still Pushing For Citizenship; Legislation Re-introduced In 2018



Members of the Adoptee Rights Campaign took their story to the Hill for a briefing co-hosted by Sen. Mazie Hirono (D-Hawaii) and Adam Smith (D-Wash.), as well as former Rep. Bill Delahunt, who led the effort to pass the Child Citizenship Act in 2000. The Adoptee Citizenship Act of 2018 was introduced on March 8. Photo from the Adoptee Rights Campaign.

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

The Adoptee Citizenship Act of 2018 will provide U.S. citizenship for adoptees whose parents failed to finalize citizenship for them during their childhood despite being adopted as young children by U.S. citizens.

"International adoptees who were adopted by American parents and raised as Americans should have the same rights of citizenship as biological children," said Hirono in a press release yesterday. "I'm proud to work with Senator Blunt to close the loophole in the Child Citizenship Act and right this wrong."

The loophole has received widespread attention in the last few years with high profile cases like Adam Crapser who was deported to Korea, despite having been adopted by American citizens as a toddler. Crapser, like Korean adoptee Phillip Clay, was deported after an arrest that flagged their citizenship status. Once deported to their country of birth adoptees face any number of challenges, starting with not knowing the language and not being connected to anyone there. At age 42, Clay jumped from the 14th story of a Korean apartment building to his death May 21, 2017.

Despite these high profile cases, The Adoptee Citizenship Act failed to pass during the 114th Congress in late 2016. But adoptees haven't given up advocating for the passage of this bill.



An estimated 35,000-75,000 international adoptees are impacted and living in the United States without citizenship despite being adopted by American citizens and raised in this country their entire lives, according to statistics from the Adoptee Rights Campaign.

In 2000, the Child Citizenship Act was passed to help remedy this problem for intercountry adoptees, making citizenship automatic for children adopted internationally. But the passage of that law was only made applicable for international adoptions from 2000 forward, leaving all those adopted prior to that

without citizenship and vulnerable to deportation if they did not go through the naturalization process while they were minors.

"Closing the existing loopholes in the Child Citizenship Act will ensure international adoptees are treated equally under U.S. law," said Rep. Adam Smith, in a press release today. This bill will positively impact thousands of Americans, by granting citizenship they should have had in the first place and fostering stability in their lives and communities. I look forward to working with my colleagues to advance this important legislation."



In 2016, an immigration judge ruled that Korean American adoptee, Adam Crapser, will not be granted relief from pending deportation to South Korea. Crapser, who is married and has three small children, was adopted by an American couple at the age of three and is alienated from his birth country and culture.

Fortunately for Kim-Alessi, she has her permanent resident status, which allows her to remain in this country and be gainfully employed. But she is not allowed to vote, collect government benefits or apply for federal employment.

"This bill is going to monumentally life-changing," said Kim-Alessi who in recent years had succumbed to the idea that she would remain a permanent legal resident her entire life. "Since I've never been a citizen, it's hard to opine in all the ways this would impact me." (Courtesy

https://chronicleofsocialchange.org/) Related Bill aims to protect Korean-American adoptees from deportation



Korean-American adoptees are drawing attention to a petition and calling on Congress to support a law to prevent deportations of legal adoptees. File Photo by Kevin Dietsch/UPI | License Photo

NEW YORK, May 29 (UPI) -- Tens of thousands of international adoptees in the United States, many of them of Korean descent, are under threat of potential deportation because of neglected paperwork.

Adoptees legally adopted by U.S. citizens need better protection, and a new law could lift them out of immigration limbo, said Jenny Town, a leading analyst in Washington on North Korea affairs, and managing editor of 38 North.

The Adoptee Citizenship Act of 2019 would allow certain adoptees, whose applications for U.S. citizenship were never filed with the government before 2000, to acquire automatic citizenship, she said.



Town, herself a Korean-American adoptee, has been circulating the petition, calling on Congress to support the new law. But the request is being made at a time when the Trump administration continues to pursue a wall at the Mexico border, and the president's supporters want to curtail immigration.

The act, if passed, would also allow deported adoptees to return to the United States.

Town is concerned the current mood in Washington could hurt their chances.

"On the policy side of immigration, people view this as criminals coming back, or trying to come back, regardless of the type of crime," Town said.

The petition is being circulated online following the high-profile deportation of Adam Crapser, a South Korea-born adoptee brought to the United States at age 3 but deported in 2016 over criminal convictions, including unlawful possession of a firearm and assault.



Town said Crapser is one of many cases of deportations. Other adoptees were forcibly removed because of minor violations, even unpaid parking tickets, she said.

Town, who was adopted when she was 3 years old, said the South Korean experience with inter-country adoptions offers a cautionary tale.

While many children needed homes, others were "recruited from poor families" in past decades.

"The system wasn't regulated," Town said. "That's where the problem stems from." (Courtesy https://www.upi.com/)

Advertisement for the 2019 Houston Travel Shopping Guide, featuring various travel-related images and text in Chinese and English.

Advertisement for The MINT National Bank, listing various SBA and Conventional loan products with their terms and purposes.

Federal Government Starting To Apply Antitrust Heat On Big Tech

Broad U.S. antitrust action against Big Tech moved firmly from the speculative realm to the investigative mode in the last few days, as both Congress and regulatory agencies appeared to be moving forward with inquiries.

The big picture: While the pressure on the likes of Google, Facebook, Amazon and Apple has been mounting for years, the one-two punch of a public Congressional investigation into their dominance and possible antitrust probes by regulators marks a major escalation in tensions.

•Last year saw high-profile testimony by CEOs like Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg, but the action will now shift to more mundane yet substantial document and evidence gathering that would form the basis of court cases or settlements.

The House Judiciary Committee said Monday that it was launching a bipartisan investigation into whether big tech platforms are engaged in monopolistic practices.

•A person familiar with the investigation said that, in addition to public hearings, the inquiry would include requesting documents from a wide range of companies.

•That could allow the committee to receive information from small competitors of the tech giants who would otherwise be wary of testifying publicly, the person said.



•“Given the growing tide of concentration and consolidation across our economy, it is vital that we investigate the current state of competition in digital markets and the health of the antitrust laws,” said Rep. Jerrold Nadler (D-N.Y.), the committee's chairman.

•Tech stocks fell in Monday trading as the



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

federal interest in the companies came into focus.

Between the lines: The investigation could help lawmakers develop a factual record to shape legislation overhauling the nation's antitrust laws, which reformers say are inadequate for reining in corporate power as it exists today.

The announcement followed reporting over the weekend and into Monday that the Justice Department and the Federal Trade Commission had split up the field of investigations into anti-competitive behavior by tech giants.

•DOJ got Apple and Google, according to the Wall Street Journal and Reuters.

•FTC got Amazon and Facebook, according to the Washington Post and the Journal.

•While the agencies' plans remain somewhat unclear, the Journal reported that interest in investigating Google and Facebook was more advanced.

Why it matters: Of the many ways critics want to address concerns about Big Tech, antitrust action has always been among the most significant — although it was largely seen as the least likely route.



•It could result in action as serious as the firms being broken up, but even if it doesn't, it could seriously distract the platforms' efforts to grow their main businesses and anticipate new waves of tech innovation. Microsoft learned this lesson the hard way after its antitrust fight with Washington two

decades ago.

Looking Ahead: Congressional hearings on the issue will unfold in the coming months, and signs that DOJ and FTC are moving forward with formal investigations into the tech giants could leak out in the form of official inquiries sent to the companies or their competitors.

Once inquiries like this get started, they develop their own momentum even as they proceed at what feels like a leaden pace to tech insiders. These companies likely face years of entanglement. (Courtesy axios.com)

Big Tech grilled on hate speech, accountability at Code Conference

The attacks on the tech industry were many and frequent throughout the first two days of the Code Conference.

Why it matters: There has always been a measure of skepticism on stage at Code, but this year the negative side of tech was the

primary focus, with only occasional mentions of new products or technology.



Vox's Ezra Klein, RAICES' Erika Andiola and RAICES' Jonathan Ryan (from left to right). (Photo/Vox Media) Details:

•**Hate speech:** On Monday night, executives from Facebook, YouTube and Twitter were all peppered with questions about their role in allowing hate speech and harassment to flourish on their platforms.

•**Immigration:** On Tuesday, the CEO of immigration rights center RAICES, Jonathan Ryan, argued that the tech industry is enabling the Trump administration's violation of immigration rights at the border. He called out Palantir, Amazon, Salesforce, Dell and Hewlett Packard Enterprise as among the firms making the work of ICE possible. “The tech industry deserves a lot of blame for what is happening on our borders,” Ryan said. (Full video here.)

•**Accountability:** Later in the day, author Baratunde Thurston highlighted some of the points in his New Tech Manifesto. He called on attendees to push for a tech industry that collects less data and is more transparent and accountable, but also is attuned to the potential misuse of their creations. He added, “we should start treating people's data as a part of their property.” (Courtesy axios.com)

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