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John Robbins 832-280-5815
Jun Gai 281-498-4310

Trump: It's my decision when to reopen U.S. economy



Inside C2

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Make Today Different

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Publisher: Wea H. Lee
President: Catherine Lee
Editor: John Robbins, Jun Gai
Address: 11122 Bellaire Blvd., Houston, TX 77072
E-mail: News@scdaily.com

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'There is a real risk' of new outbreak if U.S. states reopen too soon: Fauci



Dr Anthony Fauci testifies remotely to the Senate Committee for Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions hearing on the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in Washington

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Leading U.S. infectious disease expert Anthony Fauci on Tuesday warned Congress that a premature lifting of lockdowns could lead to additional outbreaks of the deadly coronavirus, which has killed 80,000 Americans and brought the economy to its knees.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases speaks remotely during the Senate Committee for Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions hearing on the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), in Washington, U.S., May 12, 2020. Win McNamee/Pool via REUTERS

Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, told a U.S. Senate panel that states should follow health experts' recommendations to wait for signs including a declining number of new infections before reopening.

President Donald Trump has been encouraging states to end a weeks-long shuttering of major components of their economies. But senators heard a sobering assessment from Fauci, when asked by Democrats about a premature opening of the economy.

"There is a real risk that you will trigger an outbreak that you may not be able to control and, in fact paradoxically, will set you back, not only leading to some suffering and death that could be avoided, but could even set you back

on the road to try to get economic recovery," Fauci said.

The COVID-19 respiratory disease caused by the new coronavirus has infected more than 1.3 million Americans and killed more than 80,600.

Fauci, a member of Trump's coronavirus task force, told the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee that the nation's efforts to battle the deadly virus and the COVID-19 disease it triggers should be "focused on the proven public health practices of containment and mitigation."

Fauci, 79, testified remotely in a room lined with books as he self-quarantines after he may have come into contact with either of two members of the White House staff who were diagnosed with COVID-19. He noted that he may go to the White House if needed.

Last week, Fauci was blocked by the White House from testifying to a Democratic-controlled House of Representatives panel. The White House had said such testimony by the infectious disease expert would have been "counterproductive." "All roads back to work and back to school run through testing and that what our country has done so far on testing is impressive, but not nearly enough," Lamar Alexander, the Republican chairman of the Senate committee, said in an opening statement to Tuesday's hearing.

Alexander is also self-quarantining in his home state of Tennessee for 14 days after a member of his staff tested positive.

Alexander chaired the hearing virtually.

Democrats on the health committee largely concentrated on the risks of opening the U.S. economy too soon, while Republicans downplayed that notion, saying a prolonged shutdown could have serious negative impacts on people's health and the health of the economy.

Trump, who previously made the strength of the economy central to his pitch for his November re-election, has encouraged states to reopen businesses that had been deemed non-essential amid the pandemic.

His administration has largely left it to states to decide whether and how to reopen. State governors are taking varying approaches, with a growing number relaxing tough restrictions enacted to slow the outbreak, even as opinion polls show most Americans are concerned about reopening too soon.

Senator Patty Murray, the senior committee Democrat, criticizing aspects of the administration's response to the pandemic, said Americans "need leadership, they need a plan, they need honesty and they need it now, before we reopen."

Others testifying on Tuesday included U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Robert Redfield, Assistant Secretary for Health Brett Giroir and Food and Drug Administration Commissioner Stephen Hahn. Each testified remotely. Meanwhile, House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, a Democrat, told reporters that a Democratic bill to provide significant new federal aid in response to the coronavirus pandemic could be unveiled later on Tuesday, with a possible House of Representatives votes on it on Friday.

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S&P 500 edges lower on risks linked to economy reopening

(Reuters) - The S&P 500 dipped in choppy trading on Tuesday as the risks of reopening the economy too soon overshadowed hopes of a jump-start to a battered global economy, following an easing of virus-led business shut-downs.

Leading U.S. infectious disease expert Anthony Fauci warned Congress that a premature opening of the nation's economy could lead to additional outbreaks of the novel coronavirus.

Optimism about an economic recovery and massive stimulus measures have helped the benchmark index climb about 34% from the lows of a pandemic-driven selloff in March.

"There's an assumption that the worst is behind us, (but) it feels a bit premature to be frank," said Keith Buchanan, a portfolio manager at GLOBALT in Atlanta.

"We do see accelerating infection in some places, but how that story is written into the far is yet to be seen."

Wall Street's fear gauge slipped for the fourth day running, hitting a ten-week low, even as data showed U.S. consumer prices in April dropped by the most since the Great Recession.

Among the 11 major sectors, financial stocks, which generally lag when the economic outlook dims, weighed the most on the S&P 500.

Also dragging the sector lower was a 6.3% fall in BlackRock Inc, after its top shareholder PNC Financial Services Group Inc planned to sell its entire 22% stake in the world's largest asset manager.

"The market is little bit too optimistic over what the economy is going to look like this summer," said Steven Blitz, chief U.S. economist at TS Lombard.



FILE PHOTO: The New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) is seen in the financial district of lower Manhattan during the outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in New York City, U.S., April 26, 2020. REUTERS/Jeenah Moon

"The stories about economy reopening has to turn into data showing that people are coming back and spending."

At 12:52 p.m. ET, the Dow Jones Industrial Average was up 6.36 points, or 0.03%, at 24,228.35, the S&P 500 was down 3.51 points, or 0.12%, at 2,926.81. The Nasdaq Composite was up 34.92 points, or 0.38%, at 9,227.26.

Among other stocks, online food delivery company GrubHub Inc surged 34% after a

person familiar with the matter said Uber Technologies Inc was in advanced talks to buy the company in an all-stock deal. Tesla Inc rose 3.3% as President Donald Trump urged the electric carmaker be allowed to reopen its vehicle assembly plant in California.

Declining issues outnumbered advancers for a 1.22-to-1 ratio on the NYSE. Advancing issues outnumbered decliners for a 1.04-to-1 ratio on the Nasdaq.

The S&P index recorded eight new 52-week highs and two new lows, while the Nasdaq recorded 80 new highs and 18 new lows.

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BUSINESS

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More U.S. Deaths Predicted As States Open Up And Relax To Social Distancing



President Donald Trump speaks about the coronavirus during a press briefing in the Rose Garden of the White House on May 11 in Washington, D.C.

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

A key model of the coronavirus pandemic favored by the White House nearly doubled its prediction Monday for how many people will die from the virus in the U.S. by August – primarily because states are reopening too soon.

The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation at the University of Washington's School of Medicine is now projecting 134,000 coronavirus-related fatalities, up from a previous prediction of 72,000. Factoring in the scientists' margin of error, the new prediction ranges from 95,000 to 243,000.

Dr. Christopher Murray, the director of IMHE, told reporters on a call Monday the primary reason for the increase is many states' "premature relaxation of social distancing."

For the first time, Murray explained, the model is factoring in data from four different cell phone providers showing a major uptick in Americans' going out in

public.



Assemblywoman Cottie Petrie-Norris, chair of the Assembly Accountability & Administrative Review Committee, questions Mark Ghilarducci, director of the Governor's Office of Emergency Services, about the state's purchase of protective equipment to battle the coronavirus, during an oversight hearing in Sacramento, Calif. on May 11.

This rise of mobility in the last week or 10 days is likely leading to an increase in transmission, he said. Monday's update is the fourth since the

model debuted in late March. It's been relied on by the White House in recent months because it presents a more optimistic forecast on health system capacity, cases and deaths than other experts have predicted.

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Nicki Raman serves Beth Derry and Scott Deckard at the Peppermint Downtown Thai restaurant on May 11 in Palm Beach, Florida.

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have predicted.

Even with its latest forecast, the University of Washington model is still far more optimistic than a model developed by Johns Hopkins for CDC predicting as many as 3,000 deaths per day by June. Murray said that model, which the New York Times published Monday, is likely inaccurate.

The White House on Monday acknowledged the existence of the internal administration document but asserted that the grim modeling had not gone through interagency vetting and "is not reflective" of any projections from or analyzed by the White House coronavirus task force.



Massachusetts US Army National Guard soldiers distribute food at John Ruiz Park to people suffering from food insecurity due to the coronavirus pandemic on May 11 in Chelsea, Massachusetts.

In a statement to reporters, White House deputy press secretary Judd Deere said that the internal report obtained by The New York Times was "not a White House document" and hadn't been presented to the coronavirus task force.

The alarming modeling comes as some states are already beginning to put parts of the White House's phased reopening plan into motion despite concerns that the administration's guidelines for doing so have not yet been met. It also underscores fears that moving too fast to relax strict social-distancing restrictions could fuel a dangerous second wave of infections.

The CDC document found some reason for optimism, noting that nationwide, the trajectory of new illnesses in "multiple counties, including hard hit areas in

Louisiana and in the New York City region" has continued to decrease, and that incidence rates have recently plateaued around Chicago.

Still, it found that there "remains a large number of counties whose burden [of illness] continues to grow or are in an elevated incidence plateau, including in the Great Lakes region, parts of the Southeast, Northeast, and around southern California.



A medical worker walks by a 'Thank You' sign outside of a special coronavirus intake area at Maimonides Medical Center on May 11 in New York.

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This rise of mobility in the last week or 10 days is likely leading to an increase in transmission, he said. (Courtesy <https://www.msn.com/>)

Editor's Choice



A visitor takes a selfie as the Shanghai Disneyland theme park reopens in Shanghai, China. REUTERS/Aly Song



Personal trainer Flo Dowler leads the residents of Napier Avenue in a workout fitness class in Fulham, West London, Britain. REUTERS/Kevin Coombs



Nurses wearing face masks take part in an event held to mark the International Nurses Day, at Wuhan Tongji Hospital in Wuhan, the Chinese city hit hardest by the coronavirus. China Daily via REUTERS



Karle Manke, 77, cuts a customer's hair at his barber shop which he opened on May 4th and has since been issued two citations, defying the coronavirus executive order of Governor Gretchen Whitmer, in Owosso, Michigan. Manke says he will keep his shop...



Palestinians run away from tear gas fired by Israeli forces during a raid after an Israeli soldier was killed by a rock, in Yabai near Jenin in the Israeli-occupied West Bank. REUTERS/Mohamad Torokman



Mortuary workers Stuart Emans and Graham Cowper move the body of a deceased person from a trolley to a coffin in the mortuary at Poppy's Funerals in Lambeth Cemetery, in London, Britain. REUTERS/Hannah McKay



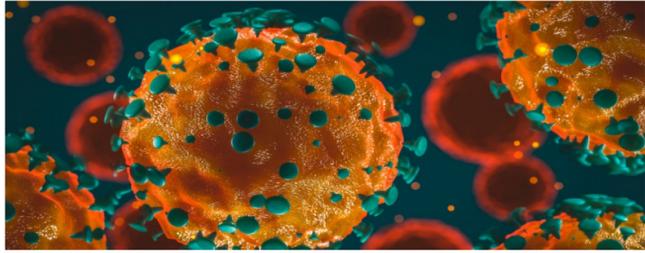
Argentine couple Constanza Coll and Juan Manuel Dordal play with their son Ulises on their sailboat in the waters of the Guanabara Bay, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. REUTERS/Ricardo Moraes



A student has her hands sanitized in the schoolyard, as schools outside the greater Montreal region begin to reopen their doors, in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, Quebec, Canada. REUTERS/Christinne Muschi

The Efforts May Eventually Support Scientists On Their Quest For The Cure

Oak Ridge National Research Lab Using Supercomputing To Combat Coronavirus



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

As researchers race to identify and unleash new scientific breakthroughs to combat the COVID-19 outbreak, the Energy Department's Summit supercomputer is playing a role in the fight.

the Summit supercomputer to enhance civilian-focused scientific research, and also the Sierra supercomputer, which was designed for nuclear



Oak Ridge National Laboratory weapons simulations and is located at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. An Oak Ridge official confirmed Wednesday that Summit had not previously been used to address public health emergencies or virus outbreaks in the past.

called a "spike" protein and inject their genetic material into host cells. However, if particular drug compounds bind to the virus' spike proteins, they could potentially block COVID-19 from infecting humans.



The Energy Department's Summit supercomputer

at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory. "In any situation where time is a critical factor—for example, a health issue or a company trying to get a new product out to market—supercomputers can play a critical role through digital simulation.

computer's help, the team was then able to narrow down the compounds, which include medications and natural compounds, to a "top-ranked" subset of at least 77 that might impair the new coronavirus' strain from infecting host cells.



Experimentation generally follows computation, so now, Smith and

his team must collaborate with relevant experimentalists to test those top compounds on the virus to see what works and what doesn't, and ideally from there, eventually identify a drug that can be used to fight it.

virus that attaches to and infects human cells—known as the spike protein," Kharya said. Smith and his team now also plan to run their computational study again with this new, "highly accurate" version of the spike protein.



IBM's Turek emphasized that a sort of all-hands-on-deck approach made possible through public-private partnerships "like the one [IBM has] with Oak Ridge, NVIDIA, and Mellanox" are paramount in paving the way for new scientific breakthrough, because they open many relevant experts up to a "wealth of new technology, perspective, insights, and ideas that we may never realize if we operated in a silo."



川普政府恐對中國留學生OPT開刀, 律師: 為了政治目的

【美南新聞記者蕭永群報導】疫情發展至今, 川普政府逐漸限縮移民政策, 除了目前因疫情暫停受理綠卡申請以外, 還傳聞川普政府恐對持有OPT與CPT的中國留學生實施限制。



些簽證的族群要多加留意。陳文律師指出, 目前川辦對綠卡限制法案, 參照了2015年由兩位參議員提出法規的

S2394, 雖然2018年該法案被眾議院推翻, 此次卻趁著疫情的特殊情況, 被川普政府以國家利益為前提, 拿來作暫時限制綠卡法]命令。

陳文也指出, 從1月中國疫情爆發以來, 美國就下令禁止中國遊客、訪問交流、等各種短期簽證申請。隨後也限制了與歐洲、加拿大、墨西哥等地的交流, 等說是已經禁止了大部分的人進入美國。然而這些命令的實施, 缺乏了與經濟學家的商討, 也沒有建立預測模型, 來說明移民對美國防疫的影響是好是壞。

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除了綠卡禁令之外, 美國國土安全局局長沃爾夫(Chad Wolf)在上周左右宣布, 川普政府正在思考要重新改革留學生的OPT與CPT制度。這項提議源於佛羅裏達國會議員柯頓(Tom Cotton), 柯頓提出不能讓中國留學生來美國學習專業技術, 甚至調侃道只能讓留學生學「莎士比亞」, 即使莎士比亞根本不是美國文學。

由此可見, 此次川普政府主要目標是中國留學生, 陳文律師認為, 隨著大選將近, 川普急於用這些措施來實施政治目的, 因此關於這類簽證的改革很有可能不久後就會提出, 對華人學生十分糟糕。陳文律師也提出一些學生因應的措施, 如: 還沒有申請者抓紧时间遞交案件、考慮轉別的身份(O1, J1, F2, H4等), 而對於高學歷人才, 可以考慮在就讀期間就遞交EB1A或NIW, 盡快申請綠卡。

陳文認為, 總體來講這些可能針對移民限制措施政治意味濃, 因為11月要大選, 為了滿足許民口味, 卻沒深思熟慮、未對美國長期利益進行思考。她指出美國社會中活躍者很多都是海外移民, 尤其是科研機構中有很多華人學者等, 對美國科技經濟發展有很多貢獻, 盼出現明事理的政治家, 否則國家發展將十分受限。

市長: 新冠使休斯頓失1.07億營業稅收, 財政預算編列大挑戰

【美南新聞記者蕭永群報導】休斯頓市長特納(Sylvester Turner)12日上午公佈了2021財政年度城市預算的細節, 並稱這是有史以來最艱難的預算。

特納市長說, 所有基金的擬議預算總計為51億美元, 增加了6220萬美元, 也就是1.2%。普通基金的擬議預算為25.3億美元, 比2020財年的當前預算25.5億美元減少了2217萬美元, 或0.9%。新冠大流行對休斯頓市的預算中造成了1.69億美元的缺口。由於這場大流行, 預計休斯頓市將損失1.07億美元的營業稅收入, 這將對城市服務產生重大影響。因此, 特納列舉以下措施, 用以彌補1.69億美元的預算缺口、縮小差距, 該提案將包括以下內容: 增加1450萬美元的新收入來源

、暫停五項1390萬美元的休城警局學員課程、減少1,370萬美元的應急費用、停職3000名市府員工10日以節省700萬美元、部門裁員以節省90萬、從資金餘額中提取9800萬美元, 提取資金來源包括來自預算穩定基金的1500萬美元等各項措施。特納宣

布, 如果預算獲得批准, 將有3000名市府員工面臨被停職10天。這些休假將從七月開始, 但對警察、消防員、或公共汙染處理工人不會有影響。市長還表示, 將推遲



五個休斯敦警察學員課程。此外, 市長說這些措施也將預算穩定基金被用罄, 該基金是為了在哈維颶風等緊急事件中使用的。他說, 隨著6月1日即將到來的颶風季節, 這也為到時候的局勢造成了不穩定性。市長說: 「如果要在六月, 七月, 八月一場風暴來襲, 那這項基金的錢就沒了。」市長坦言: 「儘管面臨嚴峻的財務挑戰, 但這項預算將為警察加班、消防訓練班、公園、圖書館、垃圾收集以及排水系統和街道的升級提供了資金。這是一個精簡的預算。而且對我來說, 這是我上任市長以來最艱難的預算。」