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Police estimate 15K

descend on downtown

Houston for gun violence

Inside C2

Sunday, March 25, 2018

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Massive crowds rally across U.S. to urge tighter gun controls

WASHINGTON/PARKLAND, Fla. (Reuters) - Hundreds of thousands of Americans galvanized by last month's Florida school massacre rallied on Saturday at nationwide March For Our Lives protests led by students demanding tighter gun

Carrying signs with slogans including "If they choose guns over our kids, vote them out," protesters in Washington jammed Pennsylvania Avenue as students from the Parkland, Florida, high school where 17 people were killed called on lawmakers and President Donald Trump to confront the issue.

The massive rallies aim to break a legislative gridlock that has long stymied efforts to increase restrictions on firearms sales in a nation where mass shootings like the one on Feb. 14 at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School have become frighteningly common.

"Politicians: either represent the people or get out. Stand with us or beware, the voters are coming," Cameron Kasky, a 17-year-old junior at the high school, told the crowd.

Another Parkland survivor, David Hogg, said the sun was shining on a new day. "You can hear the people in power shaking," he said to loud applause.

"We're

going to

make sure the best people get in our elections to run not as politicians, but as Americans. Because this - this - is not cutting it," he said, pointing at the white-domed Capitol. "We can and we will change the world!"

Television images showed youthful marchers filling streets in cities across the United States including Atlanta, Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, Miami, Minneapolis and New York. More than 800 demonstrations were set to take place in the United States and around the world, according to coordinators, with sister events taking place as far afield as London, Mauritius and

Organizers want the U.S. Congress, many of whose members are up for re-election in November, to ban the sale of assault weapons like the one used in the Florida rampage and to tighten background checks for gun buyers. On the other side of the debate, gun rights advocates cite constitutional guarantees of the right to bear arms.

In Los Angeles, marcher Carly Dutcher, a high school freshman from Studio City, California, said she was shocked when a theater teacher showed her and her classmates how they could pull a tampon dispenser off a bathroom wall and use it to battle a school shooter.

"Regardless if I can vote or not, it (gun violence) is the most important issue affecting me and the most important issue in the country right now," Dutcher said. Protesters hold photos of victims of school shootings during a "March For Our Lives" demonstration demanding gun control in New York City, U.S. March 24, 2018. REUTERS/Shannon Stapleton



Students and young people gather for the "March for Our Lives" rally demanding gun control in WashingtonW. Hawking discusses theories on the origin of the universe in a talk in Berkeley

IS THE **NORM FOR** US' At a rally near New York's Central Park, a moment of was held for the Parkland

victims.

'THIS

The accused gunman, 19-year-old former Marjory Stoneman student Nikolas Cruz, faces the

death penalty if convicted on multiple murder

Students and young people participate in the "March for Our Lives"

rally demanding gun control in Washington

charges. Pop star Paul McCartney was among the marchers, telling CNN he had a personal stake in gun control. "One of my best friends was shot not far from here," he said, referring to Beatles bandmate John Lennon, who was gunned down near the park in 1980. Jack Graziano, a 16-year-old junior from Long Island's Massapequa High School, said he wanted gun violence to end so his own children would not have to suffer it.

"Anybody who's in high school right now has been growing up on school violence," he said. "As awful as it sounds, this is the norm

Taking aim at the National Rifle Association how many kids have you killed today?" The youthful U.S. organizers have won kudos rights on Saturday. and cash from dozens of celebrities, with singer Demi Lovato and "Hamilton" creator

in Washington. "Trainwreck" star Amy Schumer is set to

Amal, have donated \$500,000 and said they would be at the Washington rally.

On Friday, Trump signed a \$1.3 trillion spend- "Keep at it. You're leading us forward.

that includes modest improvements background checks for gun sales and grants

to help schools prevent gun vio lence.

OSIM

Democrats and nonpartisan groups hope to

register at least 25,000 first-time voters at the rallies, potentially a boost for Democrats, who generally favor stricter gun controls.

White House deputy press secretary Lindsay Walters gun lobby, teenagers chanted, "Hey, hey, NRA, said the administration applauded "the many courageous young Americans" exercising their free-speech

"Keeping our children safe is a top priority of the president's," said Walters, noting that on Friday Lin-Manuel Miranda among those performing the Justice Department proposed rule changes that would effectively ban "bump stock" devices that let semi-automatic weapons fire like a machine gun. appear at the Los Angeles rally. Actor George Former president Barack Obama said on Twitter that Clooney and his human rights attorney wife, he and his wife Michelle were inspired by all the young people who made the marches happen.

Nothing can stand in the way of millions of voices calling for change," Obama said.



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LOCAL NEWS

Police estimate 15K descend on downtown Houston for gun violence march

By Jacob Carpenter and Jordan Blum

Nearly 15,000 descended Saturday morning on downtown Houston for the city's March For Our Lives, advocating for greater gun control in light of last month's Florida school shooting.

A mix of children and adults gathered in Houston's Tranquility Park for the student-led march, many carrying signs that illustrated their fear of violence and demand for legislative action.

"I didn't know what to expect here today, but I just expect change in the government," said Austin Luchak, a ninth-grader at The Woodlands College Park High School who attended the march with his father. "I hope they follow through."

Hundreds of marches are taking place across the country, largely driven by students who are organizing the events. In Houston, organizers expected 10,000 to 20,000 attendees to gather in Tranquility Park and march toward U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz's office. "Today, I hope our voices are heard, because we are the ones that go to school," said Azariah Haro, a junior from Langham Creek High School in Cy-Fair ISD, who traveled to Saturday's event with three friends. "I really hope we're able to make a change." As protesters milled about shortly before the 9 a.m. start, volunteers worked to register young voters inspired into political action. Many brought signs voicing opposition to the National Rifle Association, while others implored replacing legislators who have been more supportive of expanded gun

"The school shooting hit us pretty hard, because all the kids who died there, they all had dreams and aspirations just like us," said Jaqueline Nava, a senior at Conroe High School.

Several speakers addressed crowds that filled nearly the entire park, including students, Mayor Sylvester Turner and U.S. Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee. Turner lauded the student organizers for their efforts, and he called on young people to get involved in politics and ask their parents to back candidates who support more gun control to end violence.

Thousands descend on downtown Houston for gun violence march

"This is a defining moment for our city, our state and our country," Turner said.

"You are making a difference," the mayor told the crowd, especially speaking to the young people. "Make America safe again. Protect our children. End gun

Humble elementary school student Dezmond Floyd, whose Facebook post about volunteering to take a bullet from a school shooting gunman went viral last month, called on adults to make common-sense changes. Some people even held "Dezmond 2028"

"Please protect me. Protect us," Dezmond, 10, told thousands. "America, understand that the lives of our students and educators are worth more than our rights to an assault rifle."

Following a series of speakers, attendees marched a few blocks to Cruz's offices, chanting for his ouster. The march's organizers led the way, forming an armin-arm chain as thousands followed behind them. While a handful of open-carry counter protestors showed up with long guns, Houston police said the event went off peacefully.

Ariel Hobbs, a march organizer and sophomore at the University of Houston, said she almost began crying as she walked arm-in-arm with Turner and Houston Police Chief Art Acevedo, who estimated the crowd peaked at 15,000.

It was powerful because I know there are certain parts of the country where they don't have the support from their mayor or their police department," Ariel said. After several minutes in front of Cruz's office, marchers returned to Tranquility Park to accommodate the large crowd, which wrapped around downtown streets. Organizers originally planned to end the event outside Cruz's office. At his office, they chanted, "Vote him out" and "Hey hey, ho ho, Ted Cruz has got to go." Catherine Frazier, Cruz's senior communications adviser, said the senator welcomes his constituents' engagement on policy issues and the exercise of their

"He's laid out a clear path to combat horrific school shootings by targeting violent criminals, putting more resources into school safety, and directing the Department of Justice to ensure that all federal agencies



report convictions to the National Background Check Database," Frazier said. "He has laid out a specific and thorough approach to solving this problem by updating and reintroducing legislation he "Without them, I don't know if I'd have originally filed in 2013 with Sen. Chuck Grassley. The only effective way to stop these mass shootings is by targeting those everyone." who violate our laws, not by taking away the rights of law-abiding citizens." The 2013 legislation seeks to improve

compliance with the federal firearm background check system, would increase "Ban the piece. Strive for peace." funding for school safety and create a fed- "They are terrified," Jordan said. "They eral task force to prosecute criminals who feel they have to go to school and learn attempt to illegally obtain a firearm. Sisters Rebecca and Torey Irwin, ages 16

and 14, are Atascocita High School students who made the trek downtown for the rally. Rebecca held a sign that asked, "Am I next? #NeverAgain." Their school Friday.

"Small kids who don't even know what a gun is have to learn to hide from them,"

Rebecca said. The sisters followed a common theme of young people Saturday, saying they were inspired to protest and rally for the first time after being inspired by the students of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida.

the courage to come out," Rebecca said. "Once one person stands up, it's easier for

Jordan Trottie, a senior at James Madison High School, echoed those sentiments. He has immediate family who live in Florida and go to school. He held a sign reading,

how to survive. And it's the same here in Houston as everywhere else. We're tired and fed up of being afraid."

Fellow Madison High senior Alicia Nay helped organize a group from her school after feeling empowered by the Parkland iust had active-shooter lockdown drills on survivors and thinking she had to step up and fill a void.

> "Not doing anything hasn't helped," she said. "We figured the people who are supposed to protect us would do that, and they haven't. The lawmakers are not doing



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A Snapshot Of The World



Participants balance on lines during highline event near Beroun



Protesters hold photos of victims of school shootings during a "March For Our Lives" demonstration demanding gun control in New York City



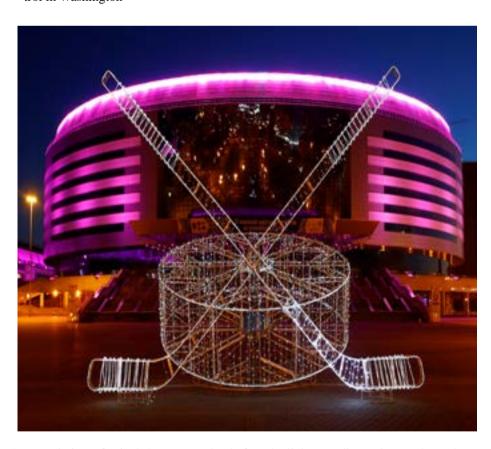
Mirand and Platt performs during the "March for Our Lives" rally demanding gun control in Wash-



Students and young people gather for the "March for Our Lives" rally demanding gun control in Washington



2018 Oxford University vs Cambridge University Boat Race



A general view of Minsk Arena complex before the lights are dimmed to mark Earth Hour, in

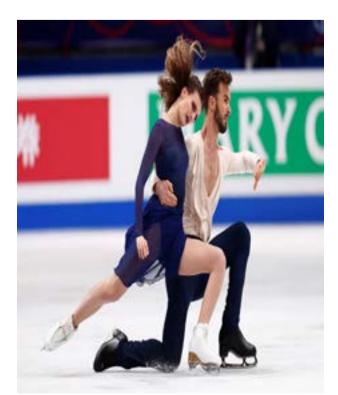


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demanding gun control in Washington



Rowing - 2018 Oxford University vs Cambridge University Boat Singer Cyrus performs during the "March for Our Lives" rall Race - London, Britain - March 24, 2018 Cambridge men's Cox Hugo Ramambason is thrown in the river as they celebrate winning the boat race REUTERS/Peter Cziborra



COMMUNITY

Toys R Us is planning to shutter roughly 180 stores across the country, or about one-fifth of its U.S. store fleet, in a bid to restructure the company and emerge from bankruptcy protection.

The closures still need court approval, documents show, but management is planning to shut those locations beginning in early February and running through mid-April. (See below for a complete list of those locations set to close.)

"The reinvention of our brands requires that we make tough decisions about our priorities and focus," Chairman and Chief Executive Officer David Brandon wrote Tuesday in a memo to customers. "The actions we are taking are necessary to give us the best chance to emerge from our bankruptcy proceedings as a more viable and competitive company."

The Wayne, New Jersey-based retailer added that a number of its existing locations will be co-branded as Toys R Us and Babies R Us stores.

Just four months ago and prior to the holiday shopping season, Toys R Us filed for bankruptcy protection as its sales were waning and debt was piling up. The toy chain faces increased competition from the likes of Amazon, Walmart, and Target, and it's struggled meeting consumers' needs online.



'Store Closing' sign is posted in a Toys R Us store.

Toys R Us has said it's focused on improving the in-store and online shopping experience and is also planning to revamp its loyalty program to appeal to more con-

Toys R Us' Canadian president, Melanie Teed-Murch, said in a separate memo that the 83 locations in Canada won't be impacted by Tuesday's news.

In Canada, Toys R Us "will be taking additional steps to improve the overall customer omnichannel experience with compelling promotions, continued imGoing-Out-Of-Business Sales Will Start In February And End In April

The Closures Represent 20% Of Toys R Us Locations In The U.S.

Toys R Us To Close 180 Stores Across The U.S.

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



Toys R Us is planning to shut down roughly 180 stores across the country, or about one-fifth of its U.S.

provements to mobile and digital marketing and enhancements to our baby registry and loyalty programs," Teed-Murch explained

One analyst has already speculated Target is positioned to be the biggest winner as Toys R Us closes some of its U.S. stores, considering the big-box retailer's proxim-

ity to the toy chain's loca-

Out of Toys R Us' roughly 880 store fleet in the U.S., 183 stores (including those under the Babies R Us nameplate) have at least one other Toys R Us store within a 15-minute drive, UBS wrote in a note to clients in December. Analyst Michael Lasser

said he believed the company would close these "cannibalized" locations before any

Former Toys R Us CEO Jerry Storch said the toy retailer will likely take on a different form as it fights off e-commerce competition.

Even during the holidays, former Toys R Us CEO Jerry Storch couldn't deny that toys are "a very tough business."

"It got a lot worse when Amazon got in," Storch, also founder and CEO of Storch Advisors, told CNBC's "Closing Bell."



Toys R Us 'will survive in a different form as online competition grows, former CEO says

The rise of e-commerce has effectively dovetailed one of the toy business' top moneymaking strategies, Storch said: raising the price of a small number of redhot products at the right time.

"The internet's a perfect vehicle for

trashing the margins on those products," Storch said, adding that Toys R Us' baby business is also struggling against competitive pressures. "I'm sure, though, that Toys R Us will sur-

vive in some form" as e-commerce giants such as Amazon and Walmart take market share in the toy space, the CEO said. "Toys R Us will survive in a different form."

The key to surviving? Storch, the former CEO of Canadian retailer Hudson's Bay, cast it as a balance between scale and investment

"It's going to take tremendous investment on the internet and in stores to be a retailer in the future," he said, naming Amazon and Walmart the anointed winners of this holiday season.

And while some retailers, such as DIY giants Home Depot and Lowe's and off-

> price favorites TJX and Burlington Stores, will continue to do well no matter what, others will need to sacrifice, Storch said.

'There's going to be significant consolidation ahead; there's going



to be more store closings," the CEO predicted. "Those that are best capitalized are the ones that are going to survive."

For a complete list of all Toys R Us store closings, go to https://www.cnbc. com/2018/01/24/toys-r-us-to-close-180stores-across-the-us.html.(Courtesy https://www.cnbc.com/2018/01)

Related

Early History Of Toys R Us

Toys "R" Us, Inc. is an American toy and juvenile-products retailer founded in 1948 and headquartered in Wayne, New Jersey, in the New York City metropolitan area. Founded by Charles P. Lazarus in its modern incarnation in 1957, Toys "R" Us traces its origins to Lazarus' children's furniture store, which he started in 1948. He added toys to his offering, and eventually shifted his focus. The company has been in the toy business for more than 65 vears and operates around 800 stores in the United States and around 800 globally. Toys "R" Us experienced expansion as a chain, becoming predominant in its niche field of toy retail. Represented by cartoon mascot Geoffrey the Giraffe from 1969, Toys "R" Us eventually branched out into launching the stores Babies "R" Us and the now-defunct Kids "R" Us.

The company filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in the U.S. on September 18, 2017, and has also filed for bankruptcy protection in Canada (see Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act). They have stated their stores will continue to operate. Operations in Europe and Australia, licensed stores and joint venture partnership in Asia, which are separate entities, are not part of the Chapter 11 filing. (Courtesy From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia)



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BUSINESS

The Trump administration will impose about \$60 billion in new trade penalties on China, the first targeted trade measures aimed directly at Chinese "economic aggression."

"We have a tremendous intellectual property theft situation going on," President Donald Trump said Thursday, revealing that he has spoken with Chinese leadership about this issue and the "out of control" trade deficit. As these problems have yet to be resolved, the U.S. is preparing to take punitive action against China to the tune of tens of billions of dollars.

"This is just a fraction of what we're talking about," the president added, announcing that he has asked China to take steps to reduce the trade deficit by \$100 billion or more. Trump said the U.S. is having "very large negotiations" with China on trade.

U.S Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer launched an important investigation of China under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974 last August looking "into Chinese laws, policies, and practices which may be harming American intellectual property rights, innovation, or technology development."

"We are losing to China," Lighthizer told lawmakers Wednesday. "We have a very serious problem of losing our intellectual property." Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross estimates that intellectual property theft and forced technology transfers cost the U.S. several hundred billion dollars annually, and China is generally considered to be the most serious offender.



"The era of American economic surrender is over," Vice President Mike Pence said Thursday. In addition to tariffs, the U.S. is reportedly also planning to block certain Chinese investments

White House Trade Adviser Peter Navarro stressed Thursday that dialogue with China has failed to produce desirable results. "The problem is with the Chinese, talk is not cheap, it's very expensive," he argued. The White House argues that every one billion dollars of the \$375 billion costs the U.S. 6,000 jobs.

Beijing has already signaled that it may retaliate against punitive U.S. trade measures. China "has expressed its position on many

Trump Hits China With Close To \$60 Billion In Trade Penalties Over Intellectual Property Theft

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



U.S. President Donald Trump holds his signed memorandum on intellectual property tariffs on high-tech goods from China, at the White House in Washington, U.S. March 22, 2018. (Photo/REUTERS)

occasions that we resolutely oppose this type of unilateral and protectionist action by the U.S. China will not sit idly by while legitimate rights and interests are hurt. We must take all necessary measures to firmly defend our rights and interests," the Chinese Ministry of Commerce said Thursday.

"China will have a choice of how to respond. They have benefited far more from this relationship than we have and they will take that into account," a White House official revealed. China is believed to be preparing its own penalties in response. (Courtesy http://dailycaller.com/)

Related

China Is Ready To Retaliate

China showed readiness to retaliate against President Trump's announced trade penalties by declaring plans to levy additional duties on up to \$3 billion of U.S. imports including fruit and wine in response to U.S. import tariffs on steel and aluminum, which were due to go into effect on Friday.

The inevitable fall in demand from a fullblown trade war would spell trouble for all economies supplying the United States and

Feeling the chill, MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan fell 2.5

percent, tracking heavy losses on Wall Street. China's main indexes tumbled the most in six weeks, skidding up to 3.6 percent.



Trump takes aim at what he sees as unfair trade practices, even as markets remain skittish about a possible trade war.

"Today's (U.S.) tariffs amount to no more than a slap on the wrist for China," Mark Williams, Chief Asia Economist at Capital Economics, wrote in a note. "China won't change its ways. Worries about escalation therefore won't go away."

Williams estimated that the \$506 billion that China exported to the United States drove around 2.5 percent of its total gross domestic product, and the \$50-60 billion targeted by the U.S. tariffs contributed just around 0.25 percent.

Trump, however, appears intent on fulfilling election promises to reduce the record U.S. trade deficit with China. A commentary published by the official Xinhua news agency said the United States had adopted a "Cold

War mentality", and "panic" over China's economic rise was driving Washington's confrontational approach.

U.S. multi-nationals at a business gathering in Shanghai were warned by Stephen Roach, a Yale University economist, "to prepare for the worst" and make contingency plans until calmer heads prevail.

Roach said he could foresee "the Chinese government moving to restrict, in some form or another, the financial as well as the supply chain activities of American companies operating in this country."



China Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying.

Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said China would not hold back in retaliating.

"It's impolite not to give as good as one gets," Hua told reporters.

Low Hanging Fruit

Alarm over Trump's protectionist leanings mounted earlier this month after he imposed hefty import tariffs on steel and aluminum under Section 232 of the 1962 U.S. Trade Expansion Act, which allows safeguards based on "national security".

On Friday, Trump gave Canada, Mexico, Argentina, Australia, Brazil and South Korea and the European Union temporary exemptions. China was not exempted even though it was a far smaller supplier than Canada or South Korea.

Also omitted from the exemption list was U.S. ally Japan, though a government spokesman said Tokyo would press to be

included. And Finance Minister Taro Aso expressed empathy with Washington over protecting intellectual property.



China's retaliation against the U.S. tariffs on steel and aluminum appeared restrained.

China has drawn a list of 128 U.S. products that could be hit with tariffs if the two countries are unable to reach an agreement on trade issues, the ministry said.

Without giving a timeframe, the commerce ministry said China was considering implementing measures in two stages: first a 15 percent tariff on 120 products including steel pipes, dried fruit and wine worth \$977 million, and later, a 25 percent tariff on \$1.99 billion of pork and recycled aluminum.

U.S. wine exports to China last year were \$79 million, according to the U.S. Wine Institute, which represents Californian wine makers.

Fruit growers in California, Florida, Michigan and Washington all stood to lose as China's list also included close to 80 fruit and nut products. The U.S. exported \$669 million of fruit, frozen juice and nuts to China last year, and it was the top supplier of apples, cherries, walnuts and almonds.



Trump can realize his errors and mend his ways," said Xu Hongcai, deputy chief economist at the China Centre for International Economic Exchanges, a Beijing think tank. "If we really want to counter, the strongest response would be to target soybean and automobiles. China is drawing its bow but not firing. We still have some cards to play." (Courtesy http://www.oann.com)



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