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Minorities, older adults boost Biden atop 2020 Democratic field



Inside C2

Southern DAILY

Make Today Different

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NRA sues Los Angeles over law requiring disclosure of ties to gun rights group

(Reuters) - The National Rifle Association sued Los Angeles on Wednesday over a new law requiring that contractors disclose their ties to the gun rights group as a condition of obtaining business from the second most-populous U.S. city.

Los Angeles was accused of trying to “silence NRA’s voice, as well as the voices of all those who dare oppose the city’s broad gun-control agenda,” by cutting off revenue streams the group needs to advocate for the right to bear arms.

At issue was an ordinance that took effect on April 1, requiring companies that want city contracts to disclose NRA contracts or sponsorships.

The NRA said the law is unconstitutional because it violates its First Amendment right to free speech and association, and its 14th Amendment right to equal protection, according to its complaint in federal court in Los Angeles. Mayor Eric Garcetti, also named as a defendant, signed the law on Feb. 18 following passage by the Los Angeles City Council.

That body said providing public funds to NRA-linked contractors undermines efforts to promote gun safety in Los Angeles, which has about 4 million people.

Spokesmen for Los Angeles City Attorney Mike Feuer said his office will vigorously defend the ordinance. Garcetti’s office did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

The lawsuit was filed 11 months after the NRA sued New York Governor Andrew Cuomo, accusing him of threatening its survival by pushing insurers and state-chartered banks to stop doing business with gun rights groups.

New York has denied the NRA’s “blacklisting” accusations.

The Los Angeles ordinance was passed in response to what it said were more than 1,600 mass shootings in the United States since the December 2012 attack at the Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut.



An attendee speaks to representatives of the National Rifle Association (NRA) at the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) annual meeting at National Harbor in Oxon Hill, Maryland, U.S., March 2, 2019. REUTERS/Joshua Roberts

Trump says U.S.-China trade talks going well

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - U.S. President Donald Trump on Wednesday said ongoing trade talks between the United States and China were going well, as the world’s two largest economies continue to try to hammer out a final deal.

U.S. trade panel locks in steep duties on steel truck wheels from China

“We’re doing well on trade, we’re doing well with China,” Trump told reporters at the White House as he departed for an event in Florida.

The next round of talks are slated to begin April 30 in Beijing, followed by further discussions starting May 8 in Washington.

U.S. administration officials in recent weeks have said that negotiations are progressing but few details have emerged.

Trump had earlier set a March 1 deadline for an agreement, but later extended the timeline and said he would delay an increase in tariffs on Chinese goods, citing productive talks.



FILE PHOTO: U.S. President Donald Trump makes brief remarks to the press as he arrives on the South Lawn of the White House in Washington, U.S., after returning from a weekend at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida, March 24, 2019. REUTERS/Mike Theiler



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Minorities, older adults boost Biden atop 2020 Democratic field

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Former Vice President Joe Biden, expected to declare his run for the 2020 Democratic presidential nomination on Thursday, leads all other candidates in the race and draws his strongest levels of support from minorities and older adults, according to a new Reuters/Ipsos public opinion poll. The April 17-23 poll released on Wednesday focused on the vote preferences of 2,237 Democrats and independents: the two groups that may select the Democratic nominee in most of the statewide contests ahead of the 2020 general election. According to the poll, 24 percent would vote for Biden over 19 other declared and potential candidates.

Another 15 percent said they would support U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont, who ran a competitive campaign for the Democratic nomination in 2016.

No other candidate received more than 7 percent of public support, and 21 percent said they “don’t know” which candidate they would back in a primary. The poll measures how potential voters feel right now. Many may change their minds as they become better acquainted with the candidates. It has a credibility interval, a measure of precision, of 2 percentage points for the combined group of Democrats and independents.

The statewide nominating contests will kick off in early February next year, led by Iowa.

Biden, 76, who has sought the Democratic presidential nomination twice before, remains widely popular since he left the White House in 2016 after two terms as vice president. The former longtime U.S. senator will announce he is seeking

the Democratic nomination reut.rs/2IAxNys on Thursday, a source familiar with the plans said on Tuesday. Sixty-three percent of all Americans say they have a “favorable” impression of Biden, including 88 percent of Democrats, 59 percent of independents and 39 percent of Republicans. In comparison, 58 percent of Americans said they have a favorable view of Sanders and Pete Buttigieg, the 37-year-old mayor of South Bend, Indiana, whose upstart campaign has out-raised some of his more established rivals this year. All three appear to have stronger bipartisan appeal than Republican President Donald Trump. According to the poll, 44 percent of all adults said they have a generally favorable view of Trump. Biden receives his strongest levels of support from older adults and minorities. Thirty-two percent of adults who are 55 years old and older said they would vote for Biden over other candidates. And 30 percent of nonwhite adults, including about 4 in 10 African-Americans, said they would back Biden for the nomination.

The poll shows that at this early stage of the presidential campaign, Americans say they will vote for candidates who have been in the national spotlight for a long time.

Their preferences may change once they get to know other candidates for the Democratic nomination.

More than 80 percent of Democrats said they were at least “somewhat familiar” with Biden and Sanders.



FILE PHOTO: Former Vice President Joe Biden who is mulling a 2020 presidential candidacy, speaks to the media after speaking at the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers' (IBEW) construction and maintenance conference in Washington, U.S., April 5, 2019. REUTERS/



FILE PHOTO: Striking workers gather outside a Stop & Shop store following a speech by former U.S. Vice President

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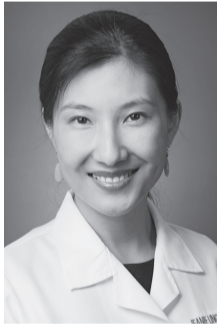


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Editor's Choice



Royal Canadian Navy and Royal Canadian Engineers personnel patrol an area of flooding to look for those in need of help or evacuation in Maskinonge



President of the Danish Parliament Pia Kjaersgaard participates in the commemoration arranged by the youth parties after the bomb attacks in Sri Lanka, in Copenhagen



U.S. President Donald Trump speaks at the Rx Drug Abuse and Heroin Summit



A man holds a banner in the commemoration of Sri Lanka bomb attacks, in Copenhagen



Canadian military personnel load a Light Armoured Vehicle with sandbags near Trois-Rivieres



A model presents a creation from the PatBo collection during Sao Paulo Fashion Week in Sao Paulo



Asian Athletics Championships - Khalifa International Stadium, Doha, Qatar - April 24, 2019 Japan pose with their gold medals in the Men's 4x400m Relay Final REUTERS/Ibraheem Al Omari



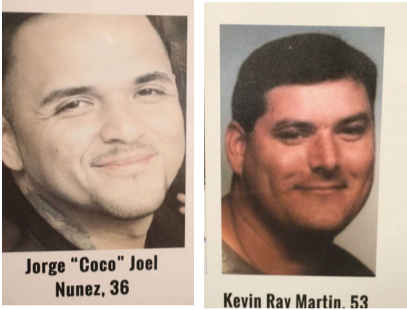
FILE PHOTO: The logo of Tesla is seen in Taipei, Taiwan August 11, 2017. REUTERS/ Tyrone Siu/File Photo

Crushed by an SUV, shredded by in an industrial machine and electrocuted by a hydraulic lift. These are only a few ways in which Houston workers died in 2018, when the death count surpassed 100.

On Tuesday, city leaders joined labor workers, workers’ rights groups and congressional officials to pay homage to these workers and announce the pilot program “Build Houston Better.”

The goal is to protect construction and labor workers who will be essential in rebuilding affordable housing after Hurricane Harvey.

The program is slated to provide an hourly base wage of \$15, workers’ compensation insurance and training to avoid workplace errors that could easily turn deadly.



Jorge Joel Nunez (Left) died on the job in 2018. A press conference held by the Fe y Justicia Worker Center on the 101 workers who died on the job in Houston in 2017 according to the latest available data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Kevin Ray Martin (Right) died on the job in 2018. A press conference held by the Fe y Justicia Worker Center on the 101 workers who died on the job in Houston in 2017 according to the latest available data from the Bureau of Labor

Why this matters: Houston, on average, accounts for 20 percent of all workplace deaths in the state. Most of the fatalities reported in 2018 were workers under the age of 30. Texas leads the nation in such incidents with 534 workplace deaths reported in 2017.

One worker was inside an industrial shredder unjamming the machine that should have been turned off. Another



Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner announced a pilot program called “Build Houston Better.”

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

got an SUV dropped on him when a colleague reaching for a cell phone accidentally hit the controls. Another was electrocuted by a hydraulic lift, and another run over by forklift.

More than 100 workers died on the job in Houston in 2018. Houston on average accounts for 20 percent of the state’s workplace deaths. In response, labor leaders, workers’ rights groups, city and congressional officials alike came together on Tuesday to memorialize the dead and announce a pilot program aimed at preventing future fatalities, as well enforcing pay equity for these workers.

“The City of Houston, which still has so much rebuilding to do after Hurricane Harvey, does not want to see another construction worker or any labor worker lose his or her life,” Mayor Sylvester Turner said at a press conference.

The Build Houston Better program ensures protections for those working on

affordable housing and multifamily housing projects funded by federal rebuilding funds, said Hany Khalil, executive director of the Texas Gulf Coast Area Labor Federation, AFL-CIO.



Houston workers who lost their lives on the job in 2018.

These protections include: an hourly base wage of \$15; workers’ compensation insurance; and Occupational Safety and Health Administration construction certification training.

The program also requires 10 percent

of all project work hours to be done by workers registered in apprenticeship or bilingual craft training programs, and another 10 percent to be completed by low-income residents who are eligible for U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Section 3 housing assistance.

Much of the program was inspired by rebuilding efforts in New York after Hurricane Sandy, Khalil said.

“This certainly is a model that we can use across the country because there is nothing greater and more important than worker safety,” said U.S. Rep. Sylvia Garcia, D-Houston.

Garcia noted that Texas leads the nation in terms of workplace fatalities.

In 2017, Texas reported 534 workplace deaths to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The second highest concentration of deaths happened in California with 376 dead.

The Houston deaths reported in 2018 include workers aged 20 to 68 with a majority under the age of 30. In 2017, there were 101 worker deaths in Houston, including 25-year-old Christion Fitzgerald, a fourth-generation international longshoreman.

Fitzgerald was working at the Port Houston City Docks on April 23, 2017, when he got hit by a large forklift as he was assisting a truck driver with dock receipts.

Memorials to be held for Fallen Workers of 2018

Nine Houston congregations will hold memorials, prayers or other recognition for the service of fallen workers this weekend:

Dominican Sisters of Houston, Saturday, April 27, 4 p.m. Mass. 6501 Almeda Road, Houston, 77021.

St. Luke’s United Methodist Church Gethsemane, Sunday, April 28, 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. 6856 Bellaire Blvd., Houston, 77074.

Emerson Unitarian Universalist Church, altar dedicated to fallen workers, Monday-Sunday, April 22-28. 1900 Bering Drive, Houston, 77057.

Christ Church Cathedral, Sunday, April 28, 1 p.m. Spanish service. 1117 Texas Ave., Houston, 77002,

St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church, Sunday, April 28, 8:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. 1819 Heights Blvd., Houston, 77008.

St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church, Sunday, April 28. 1805 W. Alabama, Houston, 77098.

St. Philip Presbyterian Church, Sunday, April 28, 11 a.m. 4807 San Felipe, Houston, 77056.

Memorial Drive Presbyterian Church, Sunday, April 28, 11612 Memorial Drive, Houston, 77024.

First Unitarian Universalist Church of Houston, Saturday-Sunday, April 27-28. 713-526-5200 for times. 5200 Fannin St., Houston, 77004.

For more information on worker memorials happening across the city on Saturday and Sunday, go to <https://www.houstonworkers.org/wmw> (Courtesy chron. com)

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M02—反煙廣告_B_40直

AUSTIN — While most educators begin the school year amid the heat of summer, Desirae Jackson taught her fifth grade math class for the first time during the chill of February after another teacher abruptly quit to change careers.

“They were sad that he left,” said Jackson, 25, now in her second year teaching at Bellaire Elementary in Harlandale Independent School District in San Antonio. “It hurts my heart for them to leave after kids have fallen in love with them.”

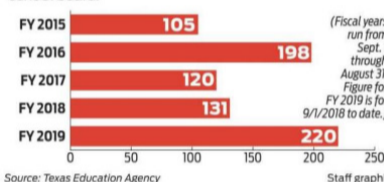
This school year, playing catch up in the classroom has become more common in Texas as state education officials have cited at least 220 teachers for leaving their jobs mid-school year and breaking their contracts, putting the teachers at risk of temporarily losing their licenses.



Poor school management and an emphasis on standardized testing are two major complaints that spur teachers to leave, said educators gathered at a recent Texas AFT union rally at the Texas Capitol. The Texas Education Agency opens a “contract abandonment” case every time a school district files a complaint about a teacher leaving his or her contract early. So far in the 2018-2019 school year, the state has opened more cases of teacher abandonment than in any year since 2014. What’s unknown is the number of teachers who quit the classroom to take a promotion elsewhere in their schools or districts, or due to a medical condition, or to move for a spouse’s new job or other reasons acceptable under Texas law.

Leaving in the middle

The Texas Education Agency has opened 220 cases against teachers accused of contract abandonment for leaving in the middle of the current school year. These figures do not include those who took promotions within their districts, or who left with the approval of their local school board.



SPECIAL REPORT

‘A Tough Job,’ Getting Even Tougher

Texas Hits 5-Year High In Number Of Teachers Faulted For Leaving Mid-Year

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



Zoe Jane Rodriguez, 6, of Edinburg, Texas, joins teachers and support staff at a rally at the State Capitol in Austin, Texas, Monday, March 11, 2019. A large crowd gathered at the capitol to urge the Texas Legislature for public school funding. (Photo/houstonchronicle.com)

The number of contract abandonment cases hints at a trend that teachers and education groups say they’ve noticed in recent years — that teacher turnover is continuing to creep up as more teachers call it quits.

‘A tough job,’ made even tougher

A look at more than a dozen cases shows educators left their positions for a mix of reasons. Some left for higher salaries or better jobs. Others cited reasons like mental health, or the declining health of a rel-

ative. In several cases, teachers resigned just before the beginning of the school year, although state law requires they give at least 45-days notice before the first day of school if they plan to leave.



One in 10 teachers quit teaching in Texas schools after their first year, according to state records. Five years after earning their teaching certificate, three in 10 teachers are either no longer in the profession or have left the state.

The vast majority of teachers stay on the job throughout the year. Texas is home to more than 358,000 teachers, with less than 1 percent of them accused of abandoning their contracts in any given year.

However, this year’s spike of teachers

under investigation for breaking their contracts is a 68-percent increase over last year, when the state opened 131 cases of teacher abandonment. Texas opened 198 cases in the 2015-16 school year.

Most teachers who abandon their contracts do so at the beginning of the school year, said Paul Tapp, managing attorney for the Association of Texas Professional Educators who has represented teachers for more than 20 years. He said teachers deal with more negativity now than they did decades ago — from politicians, from the media, and even from some parents.



“Our public schools are failing.’ ‘Teachers are failing.’ It’s been repeated so many times, it’s just gotten to be a truism,” said Tapp. “We’ve seen a lot of long-time educators just basically say, ‘I don’t enjoy it anymore. It’s a tough job, it’s always a tough job. I don’t get the satisfaction I used to get out of it anymore. I’m leaving the profession.’” State rules generally allow teachers to terminate their contracts at least 45 days before the beginning of a school year. Those who break their contract outside of that 45-day window without good cause or approval of the local school board could face a suspension of their teaching license for up to one year.

Lawmakers target low salaries

Rep. James Talarico, a Round Rock Democrat and former teacher, speculates the uptick may stem from increased expectations for student performance on end-of-year standardized tests and pay that lags behind the national average.

“Expecting more and giving less is difficult in any profession, especially a profession that is as difficult as teaching,” said Talarico, who taught in middle school from 2011 to 2013.

The average salary for a Texas teacher is \$54,122, according to the Texas Education Agency. Nationally, teachers average \$60,483, according to a survey by the National Education Association. (Courtesy houstonchronicle.com)

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