

## NATIONAL NEWS

## AROUND THE NATION

## FLORIDA

## Principal reassigned after Holocaust denial

BOCA RATON, Fla. – A high school principal was removed from his job and reassigned Monday after writing in an email to a parent that he couldn't "say the Holocaust is a factual, historical event."

The decision to remove Principal William Latson came amid a firestorm of criticism and after he had apologized – and even after he spent a few days at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Latson was removed from his position at Spanish River Community High School in Palm Beach County and will be given a district job, at least temporarily, school system officials said. The county's superintendent and School Board could take further action, they said.

State legislators have called for Latson to be fired.

– *Washington Post*

## CALIFORNIA

## Two Marines accused of smuggling migrants

SAN DIEGO – Two Marines have been arrested after allegedly trying to smuggle three undocumented Mexican immigrants through California after picking them up on the side of the interstate just north of the border.

Lance Cpls. Byron Darnell Law II and David Javier Salazar-Quintero, based in Camp Pendleton, were arraigned Monday in federal court on charges of transporting undocumented immigrants "for financial gain." They were accused of taking jobs from "recruiters" and following instructions from unknown people in Mexico to make extra cash on the side.

– *Washington Post*

## MASSACHUSETTS

## Woman in boyfriend's death cites free speech

PLAINVILLE, Mass. – Among the many text messages exchanged by Michelle Carter and her suicidal boyfriend – as they strained to understand "the worst pain" and discussed the best ways to die – one observation stands out for its recognition of all the two teens could not fathom.

"Sometimes things happen and we never have the answers why," Carter, then 17, messaged to 18-year-old Conrad Roy III on July 13, 2014.

Lawyers for Carter, now 22, filed a petition for Supreme Court review Monday, asking the justices to vacate her conviction for involuntary manslaughter in the death of Roy. He poisoned himself with carbon monoxide in a Kmart parking lot in Fairhaven, after exchanging text messages and speaking twice on the phone with Carter, who encouraged Roy to kill himself, on the day he died. Carter lived about 50 miles away in Plainville.

The petition claims that Carter's right to free speech under the First Amendment shields her from criminal responsibility because her involvement was limited to "words alone."

– *Washington Post*

## Embattled veterans PAC abruptly shuts down

By SARAH KLEINER

CENTER FOR PUBLIC INTEGRITY

FALLS CHURCH, Va. – A Virginia-based political action committee has closed down while under scrutiny for raising millions of dollars in the name of military veterans – but spending almost all of the money on telemarketing, salaries and overhead.

Put Vets First! PAC and two sister nonprofits run by retired Army Maj. Brian Arthur Hampton were the focus of a Center for Public Integrity investigation in late 2017 that prompted attorneys general in New York and Virginia to investigate Hampton's operations.

During the past four years, Hampton personally earned hundreds of thousands of dollars from his operations while telemarketers he hired

earned millions, according to federal records.

Hampton's Put Vets First! PAC filed a termination report with the Federal Election Commission on Saturday. The PAC's website has been taken down.

Since forming in 2010, Put Vets First! PAC alone raised more than \$4.8 million. Telemarketers kept \$4.4 million of that, and Hampton earned about \$183,500, according to FEC disclosures. Most of the rest went to pay the PAC's other employees and consultants, bank and legal fees and rent.

In all, the PAC gave \$15,000 – or 0.3 percent of the money it raised – to political campaigns and committees. After being informed of Hampton's activities, five recipients of Put Vets First! PAC's contributions confirmed they would either give away or return the money.

Hampton's most personally lucrative period running his veterans operations came in 2016 and 2017.

From Oct. 1, 2016 to Sept. 30, 2017, Hampton earned \$469,627 combined from Circle of Friends for American Veterans, the Center for American Homeless Veterans and Put Vets First! PAC, according to the latest federal tax returns he filed and calculations from Federal Election Commission filings.

Out of \$6.5 million spent in that same time period by his three organizations, telemarketers received \$5.7 million. Almost all of the rest paid for salaries and overhead.

Hampton did not return numerous requests for comment.

The New York Attorney General's Office declined to comment, noting the investigation it opened into one of

Hampton's nonprofits – the Center for American Homeless Veterans – is ongoing. The Virginia Attorney General's Office did not respond to multiple requests for comment.

In 2017, Hampton defended his use of telemarketers, who were keeping about 90 percent of what they raised for Hampton's three organizations.

"Over the course of 24 years, I have tried every other fundraising technique known to me in over four decades with fundraising experience," Hampton said in an email to the Center for Public Integrity. "None of those efforts produced revenue remotely close to the revenue generated by telemarketing."

He also defended his compensation: "I am the head of three organizations. I am always working."



New York Times file photo

Traffic in Los Angeles is among the worst in the country. Twenty-four governors, including two Republicans and the governors of four states that voted for President Trump in 2016, are urging his administration to halt his rollback of rules for clean cars.

## Pressure builds as 24 governors urge Trump to halt rollback on clean car rules

By HIROKO TABUCHI

NEW YORK TIMES

WASHINGTON – The opposition to one of President Trump's most consequential regulatory rollbacks – a plan to weaken pollution standards for automobiles nationwide – widened Tuesday when 24 governors, including three Republicans, urged the president to abandon his plan.

The governors' plea adds to a chorus of criticism from an unlikely mix of voices, including not only environmentalists and labor unions but also some of the biggest automakers in the world. The two dozen governors include the leaders of four states – North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Montana – that voted for Trump in 2016, helping propel him into the White House.

"Strong vehicle standards protect our communities from unnecessary air pollution and fuel costs," the group wrote.

The statement also noted that vehicles are "the largest source of carbon pollution in the United States," a reference to the need to fight climate change by sharply reducing the amount of carbon dioxide pumped into the atmosphere.

The Trump administration's rule changes, which are expected to land

later this year, would weaken Obama-era rules that would have doubled the fuel economy requirement for new passenger vehicles by 2025 as part of Obama's signature effort to fight global warming. Trump has questioned the scientific consensus of climate change and has suggested that it is a hoax.

A White House spokesman, Judd Deere, said that the Trump administration "believes strongly in a national fuel standard that promotes safer, cleaner, and more affordable vehicles," adding that "the federal government, not a single state, should set this standard."

Opposition to the new rules, notably from some influential manufacturing industries that Trump has pledged to help, is growing.

Last month, 17 automakers asked Trump to soften his approach, saying his plan threatened to hurt their profits and produce "untenable" instability in the auto market given that California, a handful of other states and Canada are already expected to keep enforcing the stricter, Obama-era standards. That raises the specter of a national auto market split in two and a messy legal battle.

The governors also called on Trump to honor California's legal right to write its own clean-air rules, some-

thing the administration has said it is set to challenge, according to a statement by the governors. "We must unite to ensure a strong, science-based national standard, in California and across the country, that increases year over year," the governors said.

Electric utilities and the chemical industry have also objected to the rule change.

The chemical industry, which has invested in lightweight plastic and polymer composite materials to make cars lighter and more fuel-efficient, has also pushed back against a key argument made by the Trump administration in support of the rollback: that lighter vehicles are less safe.

Those studies "are based on outdated technologies and practices," the American Chemistry Council, an industry group, said in an email. "Developing technology to lightweight vehicles spurs advanced innovations and creates high-skilled manufacturing jobs."

In addition, auto parts suppliers say they have invested in technology that will suffer if emissions standards are relaxed. These parts makers, including startups, are often where fuel-saving technologies are developed.

"It's absolutely unprecedented that the automakers would come out and

say 'please regulate us,' " said John Major, regional vice president for the Midwest operations for Achates Power, a small company that develops fuel-efficient engine technology. The pollution standards, he said, "mean jobs, they mean technology leadership, they mean economic gains."

Last year a group of 10 Michigan cities, many of them home to automotive plants, weighed in to say that the rollback "will put Michigan manufacturing at risk."

Labor groups say the standards support nearly 300,000 jobs in developing and building fuel-efficient technology for cars. "What happens if the U.S. ceases to be the place where companies choose to invest in the next generation of technology?" said Zoe Lipman of the BlueGreen Alliance, a coalition of the country's largest labor unions and environmental groups. "It would put these jobs at risk."

The governors' demands add pressure on the Trump administration to reconsider. According to the statement, its 24 signatories represent 52% of the U.S. population and include three Republican governors (Larry Hogan of Maryland, Charlie Baker of Massachusetts and Phil Scott of Vermont) as well as governors from four states that voted for Trump in 2016.

## Correction

A story in Tuesday's edition about an effort by U.S. Sen. Charles E. Schumer to secure a \$25 million federal grant to help bring cars back to Main Street incorrectly identified his title in the Senate. He is minority leader.

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The Buffalo News corrects published errors of substance. To request a correction, please notify the editor by writing to: P.O. Box 100, Buffalo, NY 14240. Or call The News at 849-4444 and ask to speak to the editor of the department in which the article was published. Or email citydesk@buffnews.com or fax your request to 856-5150.

## Rare type of paralysis in children hits record numbers

By PAM BELLUCK

NEW YORK TIMES

WASHINGTON – Last year, health officials confronted a record number of cases of a rare, mysterious neurological condition that caused limb weakness and paralysis in more than 200 children across the country.

Officials with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Tuesday that they were still trying to understand the condition, called acute flaccid myelitis, or AFM.

And though there have been very few cases so far this year, they urged doctors to be on the lookout because the illness has tended to emerge in late

summer and early fall.

AFM often involves sudden muscle weakness in the legs or arms and can also include stiffness in the neck, drooping eyelids or face muscles, problems swallowing and slurred speech. The paralysis can appear similar to polio.

There have been 570 recorded cases since 2014, when the CDC began tracking the condition, and it appears to peak every two years from August through October.

In 2018, there were 233 cases in 41 states, the largest reported outbreak so far, the agency reported Tuesday.

In alternate years, there have been small numbers of cases and 2019, with

11 confirmed cases so far, is looking like other off years, CDC officials said. Still, Dr. Anne Schuchat, the agency's principal deputy director, cautioned parents and clinicians to be aware of possible symptoms and report suspected cases quickly.

"We don't right now have an explanation for the every-other-year pattern," she said, "and we really need to be ready to rapidly detect, report and investigate each case this year and be ready for possibly a bad year this year."

Children affected by AFM have been 5 years old on average, and most were previously healthy but had "a mild respiratory illness or fever less

than a week before they developed arm or leg weakness," Schuchat said.

There has been no common denominator found so far among affected children, and officials said they were undertaking an intensive surveillance project with seven children's hospitals in hopes of learning more.

Dr. Tom Clark, deputy director of the CDC's division of viral diseases, said 98% of patients were hospitalized, more than half in intensive care units, and more than a quarter needed machines to help them breathe.

He said that at least 70% to 80% of children whose cases had been followed still had some limb weakness months after developing AFM.