

Thursday 11/05/20

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Scientists Determine Lava Planet May Have Supersonic Winds, Atmosphere of Vaporized Rock

A group of astronomers recently provided new insight into the atmosphere and weather cycle of a distant, Earth-sized lava planet that may have an atmosphere riddled with vaporized rock that rains down on the fiery world.

Published Tuesday in the [Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society](#), scientists from McGill University, York University and the Indian Institute of Science Education indicated they used a variety of computer simulations to determine the living conditions on K2-141b.

The distant lava planet, which was originally discovered in 2017, is largely believed to be made up entirely of rock, and as it completes several cycles around its host star in one Earth day, officials found that the temperatures reached on the planet are extreme enough to vaporize rock.

Analysis of the simulations determined that K2-141b's proximity to its host star keeps roughly two-thirds of the exoplanet permanently facing daylight and reaching temperatures of some 3,000 degrees Celsius. Stuck in perpetual darkness, officials estimated the opposing side of the planet sees temperatures of negative 200 degrees Celsius.

"Remarkably, the rock vapor atmosphere created by the extreme heat undergoes precipitation," a [release issued by McGill University](#) explains. "Just like the water cycle on Earth, where water evaporates, rises into the atmosphere, condenses, and falls back as rain, so too does the sodium, silicon monoxide, and silicon dioxide on K2-141b."

"On K2-141b, the mineral vapor formed by evaporated rock is swept to the frigid night side by supersonic winds and rocks 'rain' back down into a magma ocean. The resulting currents flow back to the hot day side of the exoplanet, where rock evaporates once more," the release adds. However, unlike Earth, the conditions on K2-141b aren't as cyclical. Scientists believe that the mineral composition of the lava planet is likely to change over time, since the return flow to the magma ocean is a much slower process.

Officials involved in the study hope that their continued analysis will offer further insight into the stages of planetary evolution.

Moving forward, the group intends to review data collected by the Spitzer Space Telescope to gain a better understanding of the planet's opposing hot and cold sides. Additional opportunities to examine K2-141b are anticipated with NASA's 2021 launch of the James Webb Space Telescope, which will help to analyze the planet's atmosphere.

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Beagle Pup Demands to See Groceries - Video Club

Tucker, a beagle puppy living his best life in Milton Keynes, England, recently put his paw down and demanded to see the contents inside a grocery bag his human was carrying during their walk.

Video shared on social media shows the inquisitive dog diving headfirst into the shopping bag before opting to cling onto the bag's sides, fully refusing to abandon his search and seizure efforts.

Human, give me my treats!

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Social Media Standoff - Cartoon

US President Donald Trump has found himself yet again at odds with social media giants Twitter and Facebook after having many of his election-related posts flagged or labeled with a "misleading" notice.

Since Election Day, Trump has had at least eight [posts flagged on Twitter](#), with content immediately being covered with a label that notes the tweet "is disputed and might be misleading."

Facebook has [followed a similar method](#) on both its platform [and on Instagram](#); however, it has instead marked the president's posts with a tag indicating that votes are still being counted. It seems they're stuck in a Mexican standoff: there's surely no way that the commander-in-chief will be able to outsmart the fact-checkers, but the platforms can't keep him from posting what he wants - unless they ban his accounts, which is unlikely.

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US Air Force Christens New Lab For Developing Advanced 'Space Structures'

by [Morgan Artyukhina](#)

The US Air Force, the parent branch of the Space Force (USSF), has opened a new lab for testing advanced materials and designs for spacecraft and satellites.

On October 29, the US Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL) Space Vehicles Directorate opened its Deployable Structures Laboratory (DeSel) at Kirtland Air Force Base, New Mexico, for testing space structures before they're launched into orbit.

"I'm excited to have a facility that was specifically built for testing novel deployable space structures," Benjamin Urioste, a research engineer who will be heading up the facility's Integrated Structural Systems team, [said in a Monday news release](#).

"With the push towards hybrid architecture and smaller satellites, high packing efficiency structures and the ability to bring large satellite capability to small satellites is more important than ever," Urioste added.

[According to the Air Force Times](#), construction on the \$4 million lab began in December 2019, and researchers and engineers will pick up the work of Kirtland's [Spacecraft Component Technology Center of Excellence](#) in the new 7,000-square-foot facility.

"AFRL has led development of high strain composites for deployed spacecraft structures, and we are excited to see the new mission capabilities that are being enabled," Spacecraft Technologies Division chief Mark Reverse said in the Kirtland release, adding that the testing "will enable new mission paradigms for the US Space Force."

While the new service branch's [recent doctrinal documents have focused on its role](#) in defending US space-based assets, part of its purview will also include deploying space assets that would have formerly been handled by one of half a dozen different agencies scattered across the other service branches.

Last month, the USSF's Space Development Agency [handed L3Harris Technologies and SpaceX hefty contracts](#) to build the first eight "wide field of view" ballistic missile early warning satellites - the first stage of a massive new constellation aimed at tracking adversaries' military movements on Earth and coordinating those of the US and its allies.

However, the new DeSel lab will handle other projects, too. According to Air Force Times, one project that will benefit from the DeSel's research will be the Space Solar Power Incremental Demonstration and Research (SSPIDR) project. The AFRL gave Northrop Grumman a \$100 million contract last fall [to build a space-based solar power plant](#) capable of transmitting the energy it collects to forward operating bases down on planet Earth via radio frequency.

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Chinese Congress Weighs Bill Giving Coast Guard Authority to Fire on Encroaching Foreign Ships

by [Morgan Artyukhina](#)

A proposed revision to China's maritime police law would give China Coast Guard vessels the ability to use their weapons against foreign ships that violate Chinese waters, if necessary. [According to US military publication Stars and Stripes](#), which obtained a version of the bill translated from Chinese into English, the proposed changes would give the coast guard the authority to use their weapons "in the case of unlawful infringement by a national organization or individual" if deemed necessary to "stop the infringement and eliminate the danger on the spot." The National People's Congress Standing Committee is accepting public comments on the proposal through December 3, according to [a blog that monitors the legislature's activities](#).

Beijing's coast guard cutters are not warships: most are lightly armed, sporting twin 14.5-millimeter machine guns as their primary armament; however, one massive cutter, known as CCG 3901, is bigger than a US guided missile cruiser and has two [76-millimeter rapid-fire naval guns](#). The proposed law does not specify which guns are or are not permissible to use in an encroachment scenario.

The coast guard remains a young force, having only been formed in 2013, and its role in law enforcement and paramilitary defense [is still being fleshed out](#). However, the proposed changes are clearly motivated by the increasing boldness with which foreign vessels have challenged Chinese sovereignty claims in recent months.

China's nautical claims overlap with those of a number of other countries in the East and South China Sea, including Japan, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan, the latter of which is itself regarded by Beijing as part of China's territory.

Chinese Coast Guard members off Scarborough Shoal in the South China Sea. file photo
While conflicts [between Chinese authorities and civilians](#) entering China's [claimed waters have increased in recent years](#), and the proposed law would give the China Coast Guard new power to deter their entry, the United States and its allies have also inserted a dangerous new level into the issue by regularly performing "freedom of navigation operations" (FONOPs), [in which warships purposefully violate](#) those claims and sail through Chinese-claimed waters.

Earlier this year, Washington outlined its position on China's South China Sea island claims, rejecting the vast majority of its claims over the waterway but not necessarily rejecting Beijing's control over the islets that dot the sea itself.

The dramatically increased tension created by US policy in the region [has put Chinese forces on high alert](#), as [thinkers in Washington repeatedly](#) encourage military action [to curb Chinese claims in the South China Sea](#).

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US Anti-Daesh Coalition Carried Out Nearly 35,000 Airstrikes in Iraq, Syria Since 2014
by [Morgan Artyukhina](#)

Since the US first began military operations against Daesh in 2014, it has carried out nearly 35,000 airstrikes against the terrorist group that once controlled huge swaths of Iraq and Syria. However, while US President Donald Trump has declared victory over Daesh, the Pentagon is continuing operations against a "low-level insurgency."

US Marine Corps Capt. Jose Uriarte, a spokesperson for the Combined Joint Task Force–Operation Inherent Resolve (CJTF-OIR), [told Military Times on Wednesday](#) the US and its allies carried out 34,917 airstrikes against Daesh between August 2014 and September 2020.

[According to US Air Force data](#), the majority of those strikes took place under the administration of US President Barack Obama, with 23,740 airstrikes occurring from 2014 through 2016.

While the Wednesday statement did not include civilian casualty estimates, [the Pentagon reported last year](#), when there had been a thousand fewer strikes, that some 1,257 civilians had been killed by the airstrikes.

The air campaign was just one part of [a massive effort involving the air and ground forces](#) of several countries, including Iraq, Iran, Syria and Russia, as well as the militias of Kurdish forces and Hezbollah, to roll back the sprawling empire Daesh forces crafted out of the chaos of the Syrian Civil War - [ironically, with help from the US](#) and [some of its allies, such as Saudi Arabia](#). Washington has carried out airstrikes against Daesh [in other countries as well, including Libya](#), but it's unclear if they were included in the tally given by CJTF-OIR.

As early as February of 2019, US President Donald Trump had begun declaring victory, [boasting the US "took over 100%" of Daesh's territory](#). However, the claim was immediately refuted by US military leaders, and the operations continue, but on a much smaller scale. "Despite the territorial defeat of ISIS [Daesh], the degradation of its leadership, and the widespread refutation of its ideology, this violent Islamist extremist group still poses a threat," Uriarte said.

In September, when the aircraft carrier USS Nimitz arrived in the Middle East, [part of its mission included new airstrikes in Iraq](#). However, the warship's main purpose is to take over as chief intimidator of Iran. Iraqi security forces have also recently launched ground operations aimed at killing or capturing Daesh militants, [with one operation in Diyala Governorate](#) concluding on Sunday.

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US Defense Secretary Mark Esper Prepares Resignation Letter - Report by [Morgan Artyukhina](#)

According to insider reports, US Secretary of Defense Mark Esper has prepared a resignation letter as a struggle continues between his boss, US President Donald Trump, and Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden over which has won the Tuesday election.

Three anonymous Pentagon officials told NBC Thursday afternoon that Esper was preparing to retire from his role as Pentagon chief regardless of which candidate is declared the winner. While it is not uncommon for the heads of US government departments and their associated agencies to depart from their roles along with the administration that appointed them, Esper is almost certain to be swept away even if Trump emerges victorious, thanks to his repeated butting of heads with the real estate mogul-turned chief executive.

[Bloomberg reported Esper had notified people](#) close to him of his impending departure as early as August. Weeks prior, Trump and Esper had suffered a major falling out after [Trump reversed an order by Esper to rename several US military bases](#) named after heroes of the Confederacy, a failed breakaway movement from the United States that lasted between 1861 and 1865 and aimed to preserve the legal enslavement of Black people.

"The flags we fly must accord with the military imperatives of good order and discipline," [Esper said in a July memorandum](#) announcing the Confederacy's battle flag could no longer be flown

on military bases. "Consequently, in addition to the American flag, Service members and civilian employees are authorized to display or depict representational flags that promote unity and esprit de corps."

[According to the Pentagon officials that spoke with NBC](#), Esper has himself doubled down on the issue, furnishing a "written framework" for renaming bases presently named after Confederate figures that would bar naming an installation after someone who had not met certain criteria, such as if they had been convicted of a felony offense or failed to attain a certain rank or receive a certain medal.

Although the 2020 presidential election was held on Tuesday, [the results remain unclear as an unprecedented amount](#) of mail-in ballots have frustrated declaring the winner of an extremely close race between Trump and Biden. While Biden has a clear advantage in terms of the popular vote, he has not attained the necessary votes in the Electoral College to have won, and Trump has already declared himself the winner and filed numerous lawsuits in states where ballot counting continues, claiming voter fraud and other election irregularities are afoot.

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'Chill, Donald!' Teen Climate Activist Dunks on Trump's Post-Election Fuming With Ironic Tweet by [Morgan Artyukhina](#)

As US President Donald Trump takes his rage over the undecided election outcome to Twitter, he's gotten mockery from an unexpected source: 17-year-old autistic climate activist Greta Thunberg.

The Swedish teen turned on its head an attack against her by Trump last year that mocked her age as well as the fury with which she has denounced the complacency of world governments toward the impending climate crisis.

"So ridiculous. Donald must work on his Anger Management problem, then go to a good old fashioned movie with a friend! Chill Donald, Chill!"

The Thursday tweet was a mirror image of one The Donald threw at Thunberg on December 12, 2019, following her appearance on the cover of Time magazine, and [which attracted widespread criticism](#).

Netizens were clearly amused by the reversal, providing a welcome, humorous respite from an unprecedented political crisis in US history.

Trump's Twitter has become a site of more rage than usual for the head of state after he [failed to emerge as the clear winner](#) in the presidential election on Tuesday. Many of his tweets over the last three days have had all capital letters, and even more have been censured by Twitter for violating the social media site's rules against spreading disinformation about the election. Trump has declared victory ahead of any decision by election officials in several key states, and filed lawsuits claiming election irregularities have cost him the win.

At the time this article went to publication, neither Trump nor Democratic challenger Joe Biden had reached the necessary 270 electoral votes to be declared the winner, and ballots continued to be counted.

However, Thunberg wasn't the only person giving Trump an ironic jab on Thursday. Some entrepreneuring artist took to the sides of a railway bridge over the US Capitol Beltway outside Washington, DC, and spelled out "Surrender Donald" on the side for drivers to see. The message harkens back to an infamous guerrilla ad for a local band in the 1990s that in turn referenced a scene at the end of the 1939 film "The Wizard of Oz," [in which "Surrender Dorothy" is written in the sky](#) by the Wicked Witch of the West, the film's primary antagonist.

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Pennsylvania Official Says 'Overwhelming' Majority of US Voter Ballots to Be Counted by Friday by [Morgan Artyukhina](#)

Pennsylvania Secretary of the Commonwealth Kathy Boockvar announced Thursday evening that the "overwhelming" majority of uncounted ballots would be counted by Friday, cautioning that announcement of an election winner would be further delayed because of how close the race remains.

As tensions continue to mount over which presidential candidate will win the 20 electoral votes of Pennsylvania, the state's chief secretary announced nearly all of the remaining ballots would be counted before the weekend. However, she cautioned that ballots cast overseas, including those by US soldiers stationed abroad, would continue to be counted through next Tuesday. "We're coming in the home stretch here. The counties have been working incredibly, incredibly hard. Hundreds of thousands of ballots have been counted so far today, and we're in very good shape, but there's still some to count," Boockvar told reporters at a news conference. "They are working incredibly hard. They are going to keep counting into the evening," she said, adding that the number of late-arrival ballot was "significantly lower" than expected. Boockvar told reporters she was unaware of any recent allegations of voter fraud. The campaign of US President Donald Trump [has filed several lawsuits in the state](#) as well as several others, alleging improper procedures in handling the ballots, including that Republican officials were not given equal access to the vetting process. During the campaign, Trump also called into doubt [the reliability of mail-in ballots](#), saying they have the potential for fraud. At present, neither Trump nor Democratic candidate Joe Biden has garnered the necessary 270 electoral votes to be declared winner of the presidential election, but Trump has [nonetheless declared his campaign's victory](#) and cast doubt on the validity of the election itself. If Biden won in Pennsylvania, it would put him over the finish line, but Trump would have to win several other states that also remain in limbo before he could be declared the victor.

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US Sets New Pandemic Record After Reporting 100,000 COVID-19 Cases in Single Day

The United States on Wednesday recorded more than 100,000 new COVID-19 cases in a single day, marking the largest one-day increase since the pandemic began.

According to a New York Times database, the total number of infections reached 107,872 cases on Wednesday. The number of average cases in the past week has also increased by around 51% to an average of 91,878 cases per day. The US' previous daily record for cases, 97,000 cases, was set on October 30.

In addition, 23 states have recorded more cases in the past week than in any other 7-day period throughout the pandemic. Five states, such as Maine, Minnesota, Indiana, Nebraska and Colorado, also set single day-case records on Wednesday.

Although data by the [COVID Tracking Project](#) offers a slightly different figure, with only 103,087 news cases on Wednesday, the database shows that over 1,000 new deaths and 2,800 hospitalizations occurred in the last 24 hours.

Hospitals are also quickly filling up with more than 52,000 COVID-19 patients in US medical facilities, the highest number since August 6.

An analysis by the New York Times shows that in the last 14 days, daily cases in Minnesota increased by 102% while cases in Indiana surged by 73%. Elsewhere, new cases in Wyoming spiked by 73%, whereas cases in Iowa more than doubled in the last two weeks.

"We are again in danger of losing control of this pandemic in Iowa," Suresh Gunasekaran, chief executive of the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics, [wrote in an appeal to the state's residents](#). "Our COVID positivity rates skyrocketed twice before, but this is the first time we have seen rates this high while also dealing with record patient hospitalizations."

The surge in new cases comes as public health experts have warned of an increased risk for cases and deaths as the flu season quickly approaches, with Francis Collins, director of the National Institutes of Health, urging Americans "to do the right thing" and wear a mask to help prevent the spread of the virus in the coming months, [the Washington Post reported](#).

Melissa Nolan, an infectious disease expert and professor at the University of South Carolina, also warned that all respiratory infections tend to increase in the winter as people tend to gather indoors more frequently during the colder months.

"Unfortunately we don't have a crystal ball," [Nolan noted](#). "We do have a portion of the population with prior exposure, so that should help mitigate and slow transmission compared to March when everyone was vulnerable to infection."

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Canada Reports First Case of Rare Swine Flu Virus in Alberta Patient

Health officials in Canada on Wednesday reported the country's first case of a human becoming infected with the H1N2 virus, a rare strain of swine flu.

According to health authorities, the case was detected in the western province of Alberta in mid-October and appears to be isolated.

In a Wednesday statement obtained by CBC News, Alberta's Chief Medical Officer of Health Dr. Deena Hinshaw and Chief Provincial Veterinarian Dr. Keith Lehman revealed that the case is the 27th such infection globally since 2005.

"A confirmed case of variant Influenza A (H1N2)v has been detected in central Alberta," Hinshaw and Lehman [said in the statement](#).

"This currently appears to be one isolated case and there is no increased risk to Albertans at this time. This is the only influenza case reported in Alberta so far this flu season," they added. The health professionals also noted that despite the fact that there is only one case of the virus, it still needs to be taken seriously. "We are taking this seriously, as any human infection with a non-seasonal influenza virus needs to be followed up under our international obligations," Hinshaw said.

The chief medical officer also explained that the virus caused flu-like symptoms in the patient. "In this particular case there was nothing about the presentation or the history that indicated any different concern than anyone else presenting with an upper respiratory tract type infection - influenza-like illness symptoms," she explained.

"As part of our typical lab process, whenever we get an influenza positive, especially early in the season, part of the process is to move through into a typing, to understand what type it is, and as a part of that process it was identified that it was a non-seasonal strain," she added.

The patient was advised to stay at home for 10 days and followed that recommendation.

Health officials are currently collaborating with Alberta Agriculture and Forestry, Alberta Health Services and the Public Health Agency of Canada to determine the source of the virus.

According to [News Medical Life Science](#), H1N2 is a subtype of the influenza A virus and is a highly contagious respiratory infection that can spread among both human and pig populations. Some of the symptoms associated with the disease include a sore throat, a cough, general malaise, fever and muscle aches.

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People of Color Remain 'Brutalized' by US Electoral System Rooted in Inequality - Activist

Niko House, political activist, independent journalist and podcaster, joined Radio Sputnik's Political Misfits on Thursday to discuss the deep divide in America, how the red and blue framing is no longer useful and how people of color have been brutalized by the two-party system in the US.

"The whole red and blue framing thing is complete and total nonsense," House told show hosts Michelle Witte and Bob Schlehber, commenting on an article released by the Washington Post on Wednesday titled "[Election reveals deeper divides between red and blue America](#)."

The article states that the divide "underscores fundamental disagreements among Americans about how to control the coronavirus pandemic or whether to even try; how to revitalize the

economy and restore jobs; how to combat climate change or whether it is an emergency at all; and the roles of morality, empathy and the rule of law in the body politic.”

However, according to House, the election doesn't highlight a divide between red and blue America, but rather highlights how the Democratic Party has failed to engage with and listen to the needs of Black voters.

“This election is bizarre for a lot of reasons. One of the main reasons for me is that [US President Donald] Trump just set the record [for getting the highest number of Black voters voting red]. This is the most that any Black electorate has voted for Republicans since the '40s or '50s or something like that,” House told Sputnik.

House also noted that the election highlights the polarizing effects of mainstream media and that Americans across the board don't have confidence in the election system anymore.

“You've got Pennsylvania, where the Democratic Party is suing, [claiming] that Trump can't have poll observers when traditionally people on both sides are allowed to observe the vote,” House explained.

In July, the Pennsylvania Democratic Party sued the state's top elections agency and 67 county election boards over the commonwealth's vote-by-mail procedures, which state that poll watchers must live in the county where they are working, [WITF reported at the time](#). The Trump campaign, however, has argued that Pennsylvania residents should be able to be poll watchers anywhere in the state.

House also noted that [rapper Ice Cube](#) shouldn't have received backlash in the last week for working with Trump on a plan to help the Black community, adding that Black people shouldn't be condemned for being open to the Republican Party's proposed policies.

“I'm Black, and I get called a bad-faith actor because I defended Ice Cube talking to both sides ... What the Democrats are telling us is that you better still vote for us, and you better still be happy about it, even if we don't give you a damn thing,” House noted.

“As a person of color, I recognize how much we've been brutalized by this electoral system, by both parties, whether it's voter suppression, keeping us off the voter rolls or just marginalizing our voices if we decide to speak out against one party or another,” House added.

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Photo: Ohio Home Sustains Gunfire Over 'Dump Trump' Sign
by [Evan Craighead](#)

Ohio authorities are on the hunt for at least two suspects who reportedly fired several shots at and into a home shortly after stealing a “Dump Trump” campaign sign.

Cops with Ohio's Summit County Sheriff's Office responded Wednesday to a homeowner in the city of Green who reported their front window and house siding had been damaged by gunfire. The local resident told cops that an “unknown suspect” trespassed on his yard and stole a “Dump Trump” sign Wednesday morning - hours after US election polls had closed, police detailed in a [Wednesday news release](#).

Soon after, a second suspect took aim and fired at a second "Dump Trump" sign that was hanging in the front window of the home. No one inside the home was injured.

"The Sheriff's Office recovered two shotgun casings near the residence," the release noted.

A surveillance image provided by the homeowner shows what appears to be a barefoot individual trespassing in the yard.

Suspect trespassing during theft of "Dump Trump" sign from property in Green, Ohio.

The Green resident claims that he has recently received a number of unsolicited brochures in his mailbox supporting US President Donald Trump. He has also been receiving photos of his "Dump Trump" sign.

"We have provided photos that may help in identifying the culprits. If anyone has information regarding this incident, please call the Summit County Sheriff's Office Detective Bureau at 330-643-8637," Summit County authorities requested.

This news comes amid continued uncertainty surrounding the results of the US presidential election between Trump and Democratic challenger Joe Biden. In recent weeks, numerous stories of campaign sign-related violence and vandalism have made headlines.

[The New York Times reported](#) Sunday that a Volusia County, Florida, resident punched his neighbor in the face after alleging that the neighbor's pro-Biden sign was blocking his pro-Trump sign.

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Photo: No-Fly Zone Implemented Around Biden's Delaware Home as US Election Call Nears by [Evan Craighead](#)

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has issued temporary flight restrictions (TFRs) around the hometown of Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden, ordering aircraft to avoid an area in Wilmington, Delaware, as the former US vice president's campaign nears the necessary 270 Electoral College votes to win the White House.

The FAA announced in a [Wednesday Notice to Airmen](#) that the no-fly zone - spanning 1 nautical mile in radius - will remain active over Biden's Delaware home until November 7. Citing "special security reasons," the notice detailed that pilots are not permitted to fly over the defined area - unless extraordinary circumstances, such as an emergency landing, prevent compliance.

While the federal transportation agency did not provide an explicit reason for the no-fly zone, the FAA directive has traditionally been extended to the presidential and vice-presidential nominees of both parties.

US President Donald Trump, US Vice President Mike Pence, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Sen. Tim Kaine (D-VA) [were all provided TFRs around their primary residences](#) on November 8, 2016, the day of that year's election.

The no-fly zones around Clinton's Chappaqua, New York, home and Kaine's Richmond, Virginia, residence were promptly lifted around 5 p.m. EST on November 9, 2016.

At the time, President-elect Trump and Vice President-elect Pence had their full-time TFRs in effect until the inauguration ceremony on January 20, 2017.

The primary no-fly zone designated for Trump was around the Trump Tower in New York City's Manhattan.

[Some have speculated](#) the FAA's Wednesday TFR issuance to Biden came in anticipation of his campaign's expected victory.

However, the no-fly-zone around the former vice president's residence expires on Saturday. Furthermore, the TFR's period appears to be based on the lagging results of the current US presidential election.

As of this article's publication, Biden and Democratic vice-presidential nominee Sen. Kamala Harris (D-CA) have obtained 264 Electoral College votes, compared to Trump and Pence's 214. If Biden's campaign accumulates the necessary 270 Electoral College votes to win the presidential election, new TFRs will presumably be issued for both him and Harris through the January inauguration.

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Hong Kong Launches Snitch Line for Civilian Reports of National Security Law Violators
by [Evan Craighead](#)

Hong Kong authorities are calling on city residents to anonymously snitch on their neighbors via a new national security hotline that many pro-independence and human rights groups fear may be easy to exploit and further divide the region.

"To facilitate the provision of information or reports related to national security, the National Security Service of the Hong Kong Police Force has officially launched the 'NSSA Reporting Hotline' today," the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) [announced in a translated Thursday news release](#).

Authorities emphasized that Hongkongers should only use the hotline to issue non-emergency reports pertaining to matters of national security.

The NSSA Reporting Hotline accepts texts, images, audio and video, according to the announcement. Furthermore, the caller's personal information will be protected and processed in accordance with [Hong Kong's Personal Data \(Privacy\) Ordinance](#).

"The telephone hotline does not answer any calls and does not reply. In addition, the hotline is not used for general reporting, and if you want to report it, please call the nearby police station or 999," the release emphasized.

Information gathered via the snitch line will be utilized by agents in the HKPF's National Security Department.

The hotline can be reached by SMS, WeChat or LINE.

A Hong Kong government source [told the South China Morning Post](#) that the NSSA Reporting Hotline was first suggested in July as an enforcement tool of the Beijing-implemented Hong Kong national security law.

The legislation, passed June 30, came as an unprecedented tightening of Beijing's active control over the city. The legislation calls for acts of "secession," "subversion," "terrorism" and "collusion with foreign forces" to be met with possible life imprisonment.

[Amnesty International has classified](#) the national security law as "dangerously vague and broad," as "virtually anything could be deemed a threat to 'national security' under its provisions, and it can apply to anyone on the planet."

A protester holds a "Free Hong Kong revolution" flag during a rally calling China to release 12 Hong Kong people arrested at sea by mainland authorities, in Taipei

Maya Wang, senior China researcher with the Human Rights Watch, [denounced the NSSA Reporting Hotline](#) on social media, arguing the system is "replicating the Chinese Communist Party's model of relying on grassroots informants."

Hong Kong Democratic Party legislator James To also raised concerns regarding the snitch line, claiming to [Hong Kong public broadcaster RTHK](#) that the system is unnecessary and will likely "disintegrate society and seriously undermine trust between families, students and teachers, and among friends."

"It will be a serious blow to freedom in Hong Kong and will undermine the trust between people ... much of the reports will be related to individuals' political opinions," he asserted prior to the HKPF announcement.

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'We Can't Let That Happen': Trump Vows to Stop Democrats From 'Stealing' Election
by [Evan Craighead](#)

US President Donald Trump, who is trailing 40 Electoral College votes behind his Democratic opponent, claims he has "already decisively won" several states and will win the overall presidential election "if you count the legal votes."

"Fake polls were designed to keep our voters at home, create the illusion of momentum for Mr. Biden," Trump told reporters at the White House Thursday evening, slamming what he termed "suppression polls."

He explicitly called out Quinnipiac and Washington Post polls which saw Biden leading in Florida, Ohio and Wisconsin.

"There was no blue wave" for Democrats when it came to securing additional seats in the Senate, Trump pointed out.

He argued that Detroit, Michigan, and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, are corrupt and "cannot be responsible for engineering the outcome" of the election.

Black voters make up [78.6%](#) and [43.6%](#) of the population in Detroit and Philadelphia, respectively. Black individuals have overwhelmingly called out Trump's targeted statements as racist and unacceptable considering the historical context of Black voting rights in the US. Trump continued to argue that "tremendous corruption and fraud" was being carried out with mail-in ballots. The US president has argued for months that widespread voter fraud would occur, but he has yet to present any evidence that supports this claim.

"They're finding ballots all of a sudden," he asserted, arguing ballots not received by Election Day, November 3, should be thrown out.

"No illegal votes being cast after Election Day," Trump argued without proof of such an occurrence.

Legislation in several states across the US calls for the counting of all mail-in votes postmarked by a defined date. No states permit voting following November 3.

[Pennsylvania state law](#), for example, allowed voters to send in their ballots until 8 p.m. local time on November 3. Election officials in Pennsylvania will count all mail-in ballots that arrive by 5 p.m. local time on November 6.

Furthermore, military and overseas absentee ballots postmarked by 11:59 p.m. on November 2 will be recorded up until November 10 in Pennsylvania.

[Military Times reported Wednesday](#) that "tens of thousands" of American military voters' ballots have yet to be counted by US election officials.

No questions were taken by the US president following his address.

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Photo: US Law Enforcement Stunned by Driver's Attempt to Transport Snowmobile on Car Roof by [Victoria Teets](#)

A Wisconsin state law enforcement officer was not impressed with a driver's ingenuity during an unusual traffic stop.

The Wisconsin State Patrol reported pulling over a sedan on Sunday afternoon in Polk County that had a snowmobile strapped to the roof.

The trooper reportedly pulled over the driver on Highway 63 in northwestern Wisconsin after seeing the snowmobile perched sideways on top of the Toyota Corolla, [the Star Tribune reports](#). The driver, 23-year-old driver Matthew Schmit of Clayton, told the trooper he had just bought the snowmobile and was driving it over to a friend's house to show it to him.

"I know it looks sketchy, but we had it strapped down and shook it," he said, according to the Star Tribune. "Up like in this kind of region, stuff like this gets seen all the time, but more like the back roads."

Schmit also told the trooper that the Minnesota license plates on his sedan were the result of his purchasing the car in the Twin Cities last spring. He hadn't gotten around to transferring the title to Wisconsin.

Schmit was issued a warning about his hauling method and cited for failing to buckle up, according to Wisconsin Department of Transportation spokeswoman Christena O'Brien. After the trooper gave Schmit the \$10 ticket, she told him to "just turn around and drive it home," he said.

On Monday, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation published a photo of Schmit's vehicle on Twitter, writing a public service announcement alongside it.

"Folks, don't try this at home," read the tweet. "This isn't a safe way to transport a snowmobile. If you're transporting equipment this winter, you are advised to safely haul it secured on a trailer or in a truck."