

**Wednesday 10/21/20**

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US COVID-19 Cases Surge, Only Four States and DC Seeing Weekly Infections Decline  
by [Gaby Arancibia](#)

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to take its toll on the world, Johns Hopkins University's (JHU) coronavirus tracker has revealed that all but four US states have raging outbreaks with steady or rising case counts, despite efforts to curb the spread of the respiratory illness. The university's [Wednesday data release](#) notes that New Hampshire, Virginia, Oregon, Hawaii and the District of Columbia are the only US areas that are reporting a weekly decline in COVID-19 cases.

However, whereas Maine, New York, Maryland, Delaware, Iowa, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Utah, California and Washington have experienced no weekly changes in reported cases, the remaining US states have all undergone COVID-19 spikes.

The five states reporting the highest daily case loads are, in order, Texas, Wisconsin, California, Illinois and Florida. JHU's database notes that of the five states, Wisconsin and Florida have the highest test positivity rates at 13.37% and 12.39%, respectively.

The latest figures reported by the university indicate that about 60,315 new COVID-19 cases were reported Wednesday in the US, as the nation's pandemic-related death toll rose by some 933 people.

The concerning new figures come as the Land of the Free [recorded 70,000 daily cases for the first time since July](#) just last week, a worrying fact which has only amplified the alarm sounded by health professionals who are doubling down on urging Americans to heed COVID-19-preventative measures.

In fact, as many Americans are turning their attention toward the looming holiday season, health experts have underscored that COVID-19 cases will only continue to spread as families gather for Thanksgiving and Christmas and generally opt to meet indoors amid the cold weather.

Most recently, the US Centers for Disease and Control and Prevention (CDC) [issued a new guidance update](#), suggesting that families go for small-scale gatherings among individuals who live in one household, rather than have relatives over. Other options included having a virtual dinner and opting for online holiday shopping.

"I know there will be plenty of families who mock this kind of advice and say, 'That's ridiculous. We're going to get together and enjoy Thanksgiving like it's supposed to be, and no one's going to tell us otherwise,'" Dr. Steven Woolf, director emeritus of the Center on Society and Health at Virginia Commonwealth University, [told USA Today](#).

"That may give them a sense of independence, but then the virus gets to Grandma, and she ends up in the hospital on a ventilator, and then you live with the guilt."

At present, JHU's data states that the US has documented over 8.2 million COVID-19 cases. The death toll has topped 221,000.

Comparing the total count of recorded US deaths in 2020 to data from the year prior, a [CDC report released on Tuesday](#) revealed that an estimated 299,028 more people died between January 26 and October 3 than would normally be expected, with at least two-thirds of those deaths stemming from COVID-19.

The CDC found that the largest percentage increases were reported among individuals aged between 25 and 44, and that the disease has taken a disproportionate toll on Black and Latino Americans, as has been previously noted in other analyses.

Both the report and raging case counts across the US come less than two weeks before the US election, which has seen the COVID-19 pandemic take center stage, as US President Donald Trump has [repeatedly tried to downplay the deadly virus](#) and his overall handling of the pandemic.

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NATO Military Budgets Rise, But Germany Lags Behind Alliance Defense Spending Goal  
by [Morgan Artyukhina](#)

A new report by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) shows that more member nations are increasing their defense budgets to reach the alliance's spending goals, but Germany, which has attracted US President Donald Trump's ire, has yet to do so. [According to a NATO report published](#) on Wednesday, the 30-nation alliance is spending more on their militaries, with European members and Canada having increased such budgets for six consecutive years. However, just 10 of the countries actually meet the alliance's spending goals of 2% of gross domestic product on defense.

France and Norway both reached the 2% threshold in fiscal year 2020, according to the report, and the alliance as a whole increased its collective defense spending by 4.3%.

"We expect this trend to continue," NATO Secretary-General [Jens Stoltenberg told reporters](#). Collectively, the alliance spent roughly \$1.03 trillion on defense in 2020, according to the report, which was released ahead of a meeting of NATO defense ministers in Brussels on Friday. While the 2% goal has always been a part of the mutual defense treaty, Trump has pushed US allies to [take on a larger share of defense expenditures](#) since he took office in 2017, [portraying South Korea and many NATO countries](#) as taking advantage of the US' massive military budget. While Trump has publicly questioned NATO's continuity utility to US foreign policy, he has directed much of his criticism at Germany in particular, the second-most populous country in NATO after the US and Europe's largest economy.

In late July, US Defense Secretary Mark Esper announced the [redeployment of nearly 12,000 US troops](#) from Germany to other locations, some of which are in other parts of Europe.

"Germany has to pay," [Trump told Fox News in early August](#). "Germany is a wealthy country, and they have to pay, and we're not going to have 52,000 troops in Germany, where they make a fortune off the troops. You know, they build cities around our troops. We'll let ourselves get rich first, so Germany took advantage, and that's what happens."

According to the report, Germany spent 1.57% of its GDP on defense in fiscal year 2020, and Berlin has set a goal of 2% by 2031. However, in 2014, amid the crisis created by the Western-backed coup d'etat in Ukraine and Crimea's secession from that country to rejoin Russia, the NATO allies set the goal of all reaching 2% in 10 years - by 2024. The NATO allies spending the least on defense include Luxembourg, Belgium, Spain and Italy, while the highest-spending members are the US, Greece, the UK and Romania.

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'We Will Not Stop Looking': US Lawyers Can't Locate Parents of 545 Separated Immigrant Children  
by [Morgan Artyukhina](#)

Civil rights lawyers attempting to reunite immigrant children separated from their parents by the Trump administration's "zero tolerance" policy reported on Tuesday they had yet to find the parents of 545 of those children.

[The American Civil Liberties Union \(ACLU\) filed a grim update](#) with the US District Court for the Southern District of California on Tuesday: it has still not been able to track down the parents of 545 of the immigrant children who were separated from them by US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

The number represents roughly one-third of the 1,556 names passed to the civil rights group by a San Diego judge who ordered the practice halted in June 2018. However, despite the court order, the Trump administration continued to separate parents from children at the US-Mexico border, [reaching a total of 5,460 by October 2019](#).

"It is critical to find out as much as possible about who was responsible for this horrific practice while not losing sight of the fact that hundreds of families have still not been found and remain separated," [Lee Gelernt, deputy director of the ACLU Immigrants' Rights Project, told NBC](#).

"There is so much more work to be done to find these families.

"People ask when we will find all of these families, and sadly, I can't give an answer. I just don't know," Gelernt said. "But we will not stop looking until we have found every one of the families, no matter how long it takes. The tragic reality is that hundreds of parents were deported to Central America without their children, who remain here with foster families or distant relatives." The ACLU's filing describes the parents as "unreachable" and notes the various ways in which the organization has attempted to attract the attention of the parents, including soliciting ads in several Central American nations and establishing hotlines for them to call, as well as contacting local non-governmental organizations who work in the communities where the children are believed to be from and sending its own representatives there as well. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has greatly frustrated these efforts, the ACLU notes.

When then-US Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced a "no tolerance" immigration policy in May 2018, he promised to prosecute immigrants with illegal entry into the US upon their first arrest, separating them from their children.

“If you cross the southwest border unlawfully, then we will prosecute you - it’s that simple,” [Sessions said at a San Diego news conference at the time](#). “If you’re smuggling a child, then we’re going to prosecute you, and that child will be separated from you. If you don’t want your child separated, then don’t bring them across the border illegally.”

However, [according to the Houston Chronicle](#), US Customs and Border Protection had been separating parents from children at the border for months before Sessions’ speech. The total number of migrant children in US detention had skyrocketed, reaching nearly 13,000 children by September 2018, [according to data obtained by the New York Times](#).

Efforts to free the detained children, many of whom entered the US alone, peaked with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, and US District Judge Dolly Gee ordered the children released. Despite this, [Gee noted in August that at least 120 children](#) remained in ICE custody. Earlier this month, a US Appeals Court upheld a September order by Gee for the Trump administration to [stop housing detained immigrant children in hotels](#), in which at least 577 children have been placed since March.

“Unfortunately, there’s an enormous amount of work yet to be done to find these families - work that will be difficult, but we are committed to doing,” [Gelernt told the Washington Post](#). “Not only are we still looking for hundreds of families, but we would have never even known about these families if the Trump administration had its way.”

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US State Department Approves Costly Missile Arms Sales to Taiwan  
by [Morgan Artyukhina](#)

The US State Department approved on Wednesday the sale of roughly \$1 billion in long-range cruise missiles and \$436 million in rocket artillery vehicles to Taiwan, just the latest incident of Washington supplying advanced weaponry to a government China considers to be a province in rebellion.

The Defense Security Cooperation Agency, the Pentagon’s office that oversees US military assistance to other nations, [announced on Wednesday the State Department had approved sale](#) of \$1.008 billion worth of AGM-84H Standoff Land Attack Missile Expanded Response (SLAM-ER) and related equipment to the Republic of China, the official name of the government in Taipei, Taiwan.

According to the announcement, the Taiwanese envoy to Washington requested 135 SLAM-ER cruise missiles as well as four telemetry missiles for test-firing and 12 Captive Air Training Missiles, used to simulate the missile onboard aircraft in training.

The SLAM-ER is a version of the Harpoon anti-ship missiles that has been modified to strike land targets and [has an extended range of 170 miles](#) - long enough to reach across the Taiwan Strait and strike the Chinese mainland.

In a separate announcement, the DSCA revealed the State Department [had approved sale of 11 High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems \(HIMARS\)](#) M142 launchers and related equipment to

Taiwan for \$436 million. The deal includes 64 Army Tactical Missile Systems (ATACMS) for the vehicles to fire and 54 training pods.

The deal is just the latest sale in advanced weapons by Washington to Taipei. Since US President Donald Trump took office four years ago, the US has supplied Taiwan with \$15 billion in weapons. In August, the US [finalized the largest single deal, an \\$8 billion sale of 66 F-16V "Viper"](#) advanced fighter jets, and floated selling Taipei MQ-9B Reaper drones as well. It has previously supplied Taipei with torpedoes, air defense systems, and fighter aircraft.

[The New York Times reported on September 17](#), citing officials familiar with the proposals, that another massive weapons sale was in the works that included SLAM-ER missiles. The missiles were [reported to be part of a massive \\$7 billion sale](#) that would also include the Reaper drones [and other weaponry such as anti-submarine mines](#).

[According to Defense News, a third sale is likely](#) to be approved soon that would supply Taiwan's F-16s with advanced external sensor pods.

Beijing views Taiwan as a province in rebellion, the People's Republic of China having been victorious in the civil war and enjoying the subsequent acknowledgment by all but a handful of the world's nations as being the sole legitimate representative of the Chinese people.

Accordingly, US aid to Taiwan, which travels through informal back channels, is seen as meddling in China's internal affairs.

"The Taiwan question concerns China's sovereignty, territorial integrity and core interests," [Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Zhao Lijian said in August](#). "China has firm resolve in upholding its sovereignty and security. We urge the US to earnestly abide by the one-China principle and the three China-US joint communiqués and stop arms sales to and military ties with Taiwan, lest it should gravely harm China-US relations and cross-strait peace and stability."

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Reform Group, Fiancee of Slain Journalist Khashoggi Sue Saudi Crown Prince for Damages by [Morgan Artyukhina](#)

A new lawsuit has been brought against Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and 28 other people by the fiancee of slain journalist Jamal Khashoggi and a reform group Khashoggi helped found prior to his gruesome October 2018 death.

[The lawsuit, filed in a Washington, DC, District Court](#) on Tuesday, seeks payments for damages caused by Khashoggi's death, including "severe mental pain and suffering" by his widow and interference in the operation of Democracy for the Arab World Now (DAWN), a reform group Khashoggi helped establish before he died.

The suit was brought by DAWN and Hatice Cengiz, a Turkish citizen and the late Khashoggi's fiancee.

Khashoggi, a Saudi journalist of Turkish descent, was killed in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul on October 2, 2018, by agents purported to be operating at the behest of the Saudi crown prince. A critic of the Saudi government who was close to the Muslim Brotherhood, Khashoggi had been forced to flee the kingdom for the United States in 2017. However, he was forced to

journey to Istanbul to obtain documents related to his forthcoming marriage, a visit from which he never returned.

However, Cengiz argues in the suit that the two were, in fact, already married two weeks earlier “according to the traditions of Islam” and that Cengiz was financially dependent Khashoggi under Turkish law, thus entitling her to compensation for his death.

The brutal murder sparked a slew of investigations in Turkey, the US and Saudi Arabia. [While the CIA found bin Salman had masterminded](#) the assassination, US President Donald Trump has refused to assign blame. However, last month [Trump was revealed to have boasted to Bob Woodward](#), a Washington Post journalist and former colleague of Khashoggi’s, that he “was able to get Congress to leave him [bin Salman] alone. I was able to get them to stop.”

“I saved his a\*\*,” Trump said, Woodward recounted in his book “Rage.”

Riyadh’s separate investigation found 13 Saudi officials responsible for the conspiracy, but declined to fault bin Salman or several close advisers as having masterminded the killing. Some of those, such as Saud al-Qahtani, who was fired from his posting as the royal court’s media chief in late 2018, and Ahmed al-Assiri, Riyadh’s former deputy intelligence chief who met the same fate, were both exonerated in their murder trials but are now named in this new suit.

The other half of the suit is based on the argument that bin Salman purposefully interfered with DAWN’s plans by killing Khashoggi, whose death deprived the group of resources it would have otherwise had if he had remained alive.

“The objective of the murder was clear – to halt Mr. Khashoggi’s advocacy in the United States, principally as the executive director of plaintiff DAWN, for democratic reform in the Arab world,” the suit argues. DAWN makes an open-ended request for financial compensation in the suit.

[With DAWN, Khashoggi hoped to unite dissident groups](#) including intellectuals, reformists and Islamists such as the Muslim Brotherhood to set up a media watch organization in the Arab World, especially targeting repressive states like Saudi Arabia.

King Salman, Mohammed bin Salman’s father and the titular ruler of Saudi Arabia, [decreed in 2014 that the Muslim Brotherhood was a terrorist](#) organization seeking the overthrow of the Saudi monarchy, after that group came to power in Egypt following the overthrow of longtime Saudi ally Hosni Mubarak in the 2011 Arab Spring uprising. The new laws criminalizing support for the Brotherhood were also used to crack down on [a growing Shiite protest movement in Eastern Province](#) that was given new life by the Arab Spring.

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'We've Got to Vote Like Never Before': Obama Makes First Campaign Stop for Biden-Harris Ticket

by [Morgan Artyukhina](#)

On Wednesday, former US President Barack Obama began his tour in support of Joe Biden, his former vice president who now seeks the presidency himself on the Democratic ticket in November. Obama's first stop was Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Obama's stump speech in the City of Brotherly Love focused heavily on the failings of US President Donald Trump, who is seeking reelection in the November election.

"I've sat in the Oval Office with both of the men who are running for president," the former two-term president told attendees at the drive-in rally outside of the South Philadelphia Sports Complex, "and they are very different people."

Obama said that Trump "has not shown any interest in doing the work or helping anybody but himself and his friends or treating the presidency like a reality show he can use to get attention ... But the thing is, this is not a reality show. This is reality."

He faulted Trump for his handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, in which some 222,000 Americans have died thus far.

"We literally left this White House a pandemic playbook that would have shown them how to respond before the virus reached our shores. They probably used it to, I don't know, prop up a wobbly table somewhere," Obama quipped.

"Presidents up for reelection usually ask if the country is better off than it was four years ago," Obama said. "The only people truly better off than they were four years ago are billionaires who got his tax cuts."

Obama also pointed out that Trump gets away with one scandal after another, and that if he had done them, he would have earned nicknames from the conservative media like "Beijing Barry."

"Of the taxes Donald Trump pays, he may be sending more to foreign governments than he does to the United States," Obama said, noting he likely paid more in income tax working a summer job in high school than the \$750 Trump did in 2019.

"Voting is about using the power we have and pooling it together to get a government that's more concerned and more responsible and more focused on you and your lives," Obama told the crowd, who listened from their cars. "The fact that we don't get 100% of what we want right away is not a good reason to vote. It means we gotta vote, and then get some change, and then vote some more, and then get some more change, and then keep on voting until we get it right."

"We've got to vote like never before," he added.

The Keystone State is one of the most hotly contested states in US presidential elections. While Obama won the state in both 2008 and 2016, Trump, a Republican, carried it in 2016. However, Biden, who was raised in the northern town of Scranton, hopes to flip it to the Democrats once again. The state has 20 votes in the Electoral College.

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'We Will Come After You': Threatening Emails From Alleged Proud Boys Urge US Voters to Reelect Trump

Voters in Alaska, Pennsylvania, Arizona and Florida on Tuesday received threatening emails supposedly sent by the Proud Boys, a far-right group, telling them to vote for US President Donald Trump.

According to a report by [Florida Today](#), the emails appear to come from the address [info@officialproudboys.com](mailto:info@officialproudboys.com).

"We are in possession of all your information. You are currently registered as a Democrat and we know this because we have gained access into the entire voting infrastructure. You will vote for Trump on Election Day or we will come after you," read one such message, obtained by Florida Today.

"Change your party affiliation to Republican to let us know you received our message and will comply. We will know which candidate you voted for. I would take this seriously if I were you." Voter intimidation is a federal offense that can be punished with a one-year prison sentence. So far, the emails appear to have only targeted registered Democratic voters.

As of Tuesday afternoon, the domain for the sender's email, officialproudboys.com, was inactive. However, the site does seem to have been previously affiliated with the Proud Boys group.

According to [WUFT](#), Max Zinkus, a computer scientist at Johns Hopkins University, analyzed the routing information from one of the emails and said that it could be traced to a computer server in Saudi Arabia. He also said that the email seemed to have been created on a management interface used on older web servers with software vulnerabilities frequently exploited by hackers.

"It's also possible that someone compromised a device and used it to connect to this Saudi server, or compromised the Saudi server itself, or both," Zinkus explained.

Proud Boys chairman Enrique Tarrio told WUFT that his organization did not send the emails.

"We don't do mass emails. This is definitely, definitely not us," Tarrio said, adding that the group has never been involved in voter intimidation.

"It's just never been a thing," he noted.

"We have spoken to the FBI and are working with them. I hope whoever did this is arrested for voter intimidation and for maliciously impersonating our group," he added, [The Hill reported](#).

Chris Krebs, head of the US Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, confirmed on Twitter Tuesday that the agency was aware of the emails. "These emails are meant to intimidate and undermine American voters' confidence in our elections," [Krebs tweeted](#).

Trump faced criticism in late September [during the first presidential debate](#) when he told the Proud Boys to "stand back and stand by" when he was asked about the group. The following day, Trump said the group should ["stand down"](#) and let law enforcement do its work.

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Environmental Groups Sue US Homeland Security Agency Over Tear Gas Use at Portland Protests

Five environmental groups, represented by attorneys from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Oregon, filed a lawsuit against the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) on Tuesday for using tear gas against protesters in Portland, Oregon.

According to the [environmental groups](#) Neighbors for Clean Air, the Northwest Center for Alternatives to Pesticides, Cascadia Wildlands, 350PDX and Willamette Riverkeeper, the DHS violated the National Environmental Policy Act by not examining the impacts of chemicals on the

environment before using them against demonstrators protesting racial injustice and police brutality in response to the May police killing of Minnesota resident George Floyd.

“The organizations seek a court order forcing the DHS to halt their use of chemical munitions, including tear gas, until the DHS performs a thorough analysis of the health and environmental impacts of these chemicals, and makes this information available to the public,” [an ACLU news release reads](#).

According to the ACLU, protesters in Portland have been subjected to “teargas, pepper spray and other chemical munitions” linked to cancer and kidney and liver damage.

The federal government’s use of these chemicals has “reportedly caused loss of appetite, hair loss and irregular menstrual cycles among those exposed,” the release adds.

In addition, chemical munitions and residue have accumulated on vegetation, on buildings and in the streets of Portland, raising concerns that chemicals may be seeping into the city’s stormwater system and negatively impacting water quality and wildlife habitats.

“For months we have tried other avenues to obtain the information the public is entitled to under the law, but have been denied at every turn. Disclosure and scientific analysis is the minimum requirement. It is a pretty low bar, but DHS has completely flouted its responsibility,” Elisabeth Holmes, Willamette Riverkeeper’s staff attorney, said in the release.

Kelly Simon, interim legal director with the ACLU of Oregon, stated that the police use of tear gas and other chemical weapons has disproportionately affected Black, Indigenous and Latinx people and other people of color.

“The large volumes of tear gas and other chemical weapons that federal officers recklessly and thoughtlessly unleashed in Portland is yet more evidence of the Trump administration’s racist disregard for public health and a safe living environment. So we will see them in court, again,” she noted.

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#### San Francisco CAREN Act Seeks to Curb Racially Biased 911 Calls

Legislation approved on Tuesday at a San Francisco Board of Supervisors meeting may soon make people civilly liable for racially biased 911 calls in the California city. Sean Blackmon, the host of By Any Means Necessary, joined Radio Sputnik’s Political Misfits to discuss the new law and discriminatory police actions against Black Americans.

The Caution Against Racially Exploitative Non-Emergencies (CAREN) Act is a reference to the name Karen, used by people on social media to describe people who commit racially biased actions. Other names, like Becky, Susan and Chad, have also come to represent stereotypes of whiteness. The law was signed by all 11 supervisors, according to the [Associated Press](#).

“First thing I want to say is I do think it’s hilarious that they went out of the way to call it the CAREN Act; that’s pretty funny. I mean the fact that that term has entered the mainstream to the extent that it has is just kind of mind-blowing to me,” Blackmon told [Political Misfits hosts Michelle Witte and Bob Schlehuber](#) on Wednesday.

Although the act sounds promising, Blackmon told Sputnik he's interested in seeing how things play out in actuality.

"I'd be interested to see how it actually plays out in action and if someone could sort of be successfully sued. I think they should be. We should be clear that there is a class of people in this country, and it isn't just white women ... We're talking about a class of people who understand innately that the police serve and protect them and their interests," Blackmon explained, saying that such people use the police as a "personal army" or "street sweeper" to apprehend people of color, poor people and homeless people for "miniscule" and "trifling" issues.

"We've seen the police called on Black people for like sitting, standing outside, just for the most ridiculous things," Blackmon noted.

Racially motivated 911 calls are not uncommon in the US. Earlier this summer, a white hotel employee in North Carolina [called the police](#) on a Black family using the hotel's swimming pool while they were staying at the hotel as guests. In May, Amy Cooper [was fired](#) after she called 911 on a Black man bird-watching in New York's Central Park. In July, Cooper was [charged with a misdemeanor](#) for falsely reporting the incident.

Several California residents have called on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors to consider renaming the act.

"The only aspect I wish the Committee to consider is changing the name of the Act," one resident [wrote in a letter to the board](#).

"Even if this letter is mistaken in its analysis of racial or gender equality, the Committee must also consider the impact it has on innocent women's names that have nothing to do with the atrocious behavior of the women being mocked as the 'Karens' of the world. We all go through life with our skin color and our name. The former less mutable than the latter. However, we can spend a lifetime building our name and reputation, which can be lost in a moment. The Committee should not participate in that effect," the resident added.

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Photos: Botched Anti-Biden Billboard Mocks Presidential Hopeful's Alleged 'Dimensia'  
by [Evan Craighead](#)

A new billboard in Fayette County, Pennsylvania, attempted to trash Democratic presidential nominee and former US Vice President Joe Biden, but its presidential fitness argument missed the mark after misspelling "dementia."

"Fayette County Billboards... absolutely obliterated the word 'dementia,'" tweeted Twitter user [@evan\\_ludy](#) on October 15.

The billboard, which was viewable on Route 21, near Uniontown, Pennsylvania, targeted "Sleepy Joe" Biden and "Phony Kamala," Democratic vice-presidential nominee Sen. Kamala Harris (D-CA).

The political attack ad pushed rumors and unsubstantiated reports claiming that the former vice president is exhibiting signs of dementia, a condition in which an individual loses a variety of cognitive functions, including the ability to remember an experience or event.

“Biden’s dimensia [sic] is worsening,” read the ad, misspelling the name of the condition. “He is not fit.”

The billboard is owned by [Penneco Outdoor Advertising](#) and reportedly has a history of displaying anti-Biden and anti-Democrat ads.

User @MaxSuchevits tweeted a photo of a previous ad, which appeared to argue Biden, if elected, would accidentally send the US into nuclear war.

US President Donald Trump recently attacked Biden and further cast doubt on his mental state while commenting on footage of Biden presumably forgetting the name of Sen. Mitt Romney (R-UT).

“Joe has never been a nice or kind guy, so it’s easier to find this obvious & rapidly getting worse “dementia” unacceptable for USA!” the US president said.

The election of Trump or Biden would result in the inauguration of the oldest person in US history to take the oath of office.

Like Biden, Trump has also experienced online accusations of dementia. George Conway, husband of former counselor to the president Kellyanne Conway, notably challenged the president’s mental health in March 2019, [arguing that he is “nuts.”](#)

A few days before that, he also posted screenshots from the “Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders” regarding [narcissistic personality disorder](#) and [antisocial personality disorder](#).

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Photos: New ‘Borat’ Film Shows Trump Lawyer Giuliani in Questionable Scene in Hotel Room by [Evan Craighead](#)

US President Donald Trump’s personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani, once regarded as America’s mayor, is now being accused of possible sexual impropriety after he was caught in a compromising position in the latest installment of the “Borat” movie series.

[The Guardian revealed](#) on Wednesday that [“Borat Subsequent Moviefilm.”](#) set to premiere on October 23, will include a scene in which Giuliani is interviewed by an actor portraying a “feral child posing as a far-right journalist.”

Following their interview, the actor suggests they have a drink, and the two retire to a hotel room rigged with a number of hidden cameras. Moments later, the actor removes her microphone, and the 76-year-old is then seen “fiddling with his untucked shirt and reaching into his trousers,” while on the bed, The Guardian reported.

Images from the scene have since been posted on social media.

Here's a still from Borat's Giuliani scene. You can thank me later. [pic.twitter.com/0gJvLeSrds](https://pic.twitter.com/0gJvLeSrds) — Nikora (@MoaVideos) [October 21, 2020](#)

Sacha Baron Cohen, who plays Khazkh journalist Borat Sagdiyev, then busts into the room and yells: "She's 15. She's too old for you."

Maria Bakalova, the actor who posed as the 15-year-old and portrays Borat's daughter in the movie, is actually 24.

However, this is not the first time Giuliani's involvement in the forthcoming film has made headlines. The 76-year-old told the New York Post in July that he called the cops on Baron Cohen after agreeing to what he believed to be an interview about the Trump administration's COVID-19 response.

"This guy comes running in, wearing a crazy, what I would say was a pink transgender outfit," Giuliani [said to the New York Post](#). "It was a pink bikini, with lace, underneath a translucent mesh top, it looked absurd. He had the beard, bare legs, and wasn't what I would call distractingly attractive."

The attorney then called the cops, but authorities detailed that no crime had occurred.

"I only later realized it must have been Sacha Baron Cohen. I thought about all the people he previously fooled and I felt good about myself because he didn't get me," Giuliani said.

"I am a fan of some of his movies, 'Borat' in particular, because I've been to Kazakhstan.

[Adopting a Borat accent, Giuliani repeats a famous line from the movie:] 'She is my sister. She is number four prostitute in all of Kazakhstan.' That was pretty funny," he concluded back in July.

In a fresh statement addressing the controversial scene, Giuliani tweeted in a Wednesday thread that the "'Borat' video is complete fabrication."

"I was tucking in my shirt after taking off the recording equipment," Giuliani explained. "At no time before, during, or after the interview was I ever inappropriate. If Sacha Baron Cohen implies otherwise he is a stone-cold liar."

New details about Giuliani's upcoming scene coincide with the 76-year-old's recent push of [unsubstantiated claims that Hunter Biden](#), son of Democratic presidential nominee and former Vice President Joe Biden, had child porn on his computer hard drive.

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US Intelligence Claims Russia, Iran Acting to Influence 2020 Election  
by [Evan Craighead](#)

Director of National Intelligence (DNI) John Ratcliffe has announced that US intelligence reflects that "two foreign actors, Iran and Russia, have taken specific actions to influence public opinion relating to [US] elections."

"First, we have confirmed that some voter registration information has been obtained by Iran, and separately by Russia," Ratcliffe claimed during a Wednesday evening address to the US public.

"This data can be used by foreign actors to communicate false information to registered voters that they hope will cause confusion, sow chaos and undermine your confidence in American democracy".

He detailed that US intelligence officials have already caught Iran sending "spoofed emails designed to intimidate voters, incite social unrest and damage" US President Donald Trump. Citing the Department of Homeland Security and other federal and local government officials, [the Washington Post reported](#) earlier Wednesday that emails said to be addressed from the alt-right, pro-Trump group Proud Boys were actually issued by a "deceptive campaign making use of a vulnerability in the organisation's online network".

According to "numerous analysts" who spoke with the outlet, "metadata gathered from dozens of the emails pointed to the use of servers in Saudi Arabia, Estonia, Singapore and the United Arab Emirates".

Ratcliffe asserted Iran was also behind a video that erroneously "implies that individuals could cast fraudulent ballots, even from overseas".

[Vice reported](#) that election experts view the strategy exhibited in the video as a "fear-mongering tactic" that is unlikely to work, but may have been disseminated to "undermine faith in the electoral process".

However, US Attorney General Bill Barr testified during a July 28 House Judiciary Committee hearing that "common sense" tells him foreign actors could change the results of the elections via mail-in ballots.

"Although we have not seen the same actions from Russia, we are aware that they have obtained some voter information, just as they did in [the] 2016 [presidential election]", Ratcliffe noted.

The DNI did not disclose how Russia had obtained said information. Furthermore, US [officials revealed in 2018](#) that they lacked evidence that registration rolls allegedly scanned and probed by Russia were altered in any fashion.

"Rest assured that we are prepared for the possibility of actions by those hostile to democracy", Ratcliffe said.

This is not for the first time that Russia has been accused by US officials of interfering in US internal affairs, and a presidential election in particular. Moscow has repeatedly denied the accusations, noting that Russia abides by the international legal principle of non-interference. 'You Should Be Confident That Your Vote Counts' - FBI Director

Federal Bureau of Investigation Director Chris Wray also spoke to Americans Wednesday night and argued that despite the alleged foreign interference, US voters should know that there is no way for such foreign actors to change their votes.

"You should be confident that your vote counts", he expressed. "Early, unverified claims to the contrary should be viewed with a healthy dose of skepticism".

He also noted that federal authorities were working with the private sector, including social media companies, to ensure that their platforms do not become mediums for the dissemination of disinformation and propaganda during the time leading up to November 3.

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'It's a Hoax': Trump Supporter Verbally Attacks Starbucks Barista Over Mask Mandate - Video by [Evan Craighead](#)

More than 1,500 people have rallied around a Black Starbucks barista in Santee, California, after a viral video showed her being disrespected by a customer who hurled profanity and racist remarks at her while professing support for US President Donald Trump.

The video posted to Twitter on October 18 shows Alex Beckom, a Black, 19-year-old barista, serving a white female customer who says the Starbucks employee is "discriminating" against her "because I'm a Trump supporter."

"F\*\*k Black Lives Matter," the unidentified customer is overheard saying. "I need a straw."

The barista continues to serve the woman, also handing her the sugar packets she requested soon after.

"Next time you come in I'm going to need you to keep a mask on, or else I can't help you," expressed Beckom.

As explained in the video, the customer had a face covering, but had it tucked under her chin while she was barking orders at the barista.

"No, it's not a law. It's not a law," retorts the customer "And I can show you the penal code and everything. It's a hoax. I don't have to wear a mask. I'm not going to wear a mask. This is America, and I don't have to do what you say. Trump 2020!"

"You need to leave, thank you," says Beckom as she tries to serve other customers.

"No, f\*\*k you," the customer says as she walks out the door, only to swing back into the coffee shop and utter "f\*\*k Black Lives Matter" one more time.

Another customer, who is white, is overheard apologizing on behalf of the Trump supporter. It's unclear how Black Lives Matter would have come up in the conversation had it not been for Beckom's skin color.

After she posted the video on various social media platforms, a number of netizens have teamed up to tip Beckom. Nearly \$21,000 have been raised by more than [1,500 donors via GoFundMe](#) as of this article's publication.

[She detailed on Twitter](#) that 25% of the donations will be going "back to my store."

"I'm Black in America, so I've dealt with these kinds of situations before, so I am able to stay calm and collected in these types of situations because I don't want to risk my job," the 19-year-old [told NBC San Diego](#).

"Even the president got [COVID-19], so I don't understand how now it's something that's turned into such a them or or me situation when it should be everyone coming together to make sure we all don't get sick or get hurt."

A spokesperson for Starbucks [told NBC News](#) that "this behavior is not welcome in our stores."

"Our focus right now is providing support to our partner who demonstrated tremendous composure during a very difficult interaction."