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John Robbins 832-280-5815
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Traveling for the Fourth? Expect higher gas prices



Inside C2

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Make Today Different

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Publisher: Wea H. Lee
General Manager: Catherine Lee
Editor: John Robbins, Jun Gai
Business Manager: Jennifer Lopez
Address: 11122 Bellaire Blvd., Houston, TX 77072
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FBI says arrests man who planned to bomb Cleveland July 4 event

(Reuters) - FBI officials arrested a man who discussed setting off a bomb during Fourth of July celebrations in Cleveland, the bureau's top agent in the Ohio city said on Monday.

Demetrius Pitts, who had expressed allegiance to the al Qaeda militant group, was arrested on Sunday after a meeting with an undercover FBI agent where he said he planned to plant a bomb at a parade celebrating the U.S. Independence Day holiday and would target other locations in Cleveland and Philadelphia.

"What would hit them in the core? ... Blow up. Have a bomb. Blow up at the Fourth of July parade," Stephen Anthony, the FBI's head agent in Cleveland, quoted Pitts as saying. Anthony also told a news conference that the man was "willing to chop off hands and heads."

Pitts, 48, is from the Cleveland suburb of Maple Heights, Ohio, the FBI said in a statement.

Like many other American cities, downtown Cleveland puts on a fireworks display to celebrate July 4.

Cities typically ramp up security around such events.

"This defendant, by his own words and by his own deeds, wanted to attack our nation and its ideals," said Justin Herdman, the U.S. attorney for northern Ohio. "He wanted us to be afraid to speak our minds. He also wanted us to be afraid to gather together in public places."

Pitts was charged with attempting to provide material support to a designated foreign terrorist organization. He faces up to 20 years in prison if he is convicted.

Officials said Pitts is an American citizen who had been radicalized in the United States.



FBI SWAT team members confer at shooting scene outside Capital Gazette newspaper in Annapolis, Maryland

In 2015, U.S. law enforcement officials said they had arrested more than 10 people inspired by the Islamic State militant group ahead of the Fourth of July holiday, saying the arrests had disrupted planned attacks.

A pair of ethnic Chechen brothers inspired by al Qaeda killed three people and injured more than 260 with a pair of homemade bombs at the Boston Marathon in 2013.

Eight people were killed in New York last Oct. 31 when an Uzbek immigrant was accused of using a truck to plow them down on

a bike path. The suspect told police that he chose Halloween for the attack because he thought there would be more people on the streets, according to prosecutors.

"We're at a point now where big data is helping optimize inspection programs, so we don't have to send guys into the field," King said.

Drones and crawlers may be a stepping stone. Norwegian oil producer Statoil is eyeing an unmanned,

remotely operated production concept. Noble Drilling and General Electric Co this year launched a partnership to produce a fully digitized drilling vessel, work the companies said paves the way for an autonomous drilling fleet.

"We have the technology. It's just a matter of getting these projects executed. We're not there yet on unmanned platforms for deepwater, but it's coming," said Statoil's Lockhart.

Largest U.S. business group attacks Trump on tariffs

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the nation's largest business group and customarily a close ally of President Donald Trump's Republican Party, is launching a campaign on Monday to oppose Trump's trade tariff policies.

ThayerWith some of America's tightest trading partners imposing retaliatory measures, Trump's approach to tariffs has unsettled financial markets and strained relations between the White House and the Chamber.

The new campaign, detailed first to Reuters, is an aggressive effort by the business lobbying giant. Using a state-by-state analysis, it argues that Trump is risking a global trade war that will hit the wallets of U.S. consumers.

"The administration is threatening to undermine the economic progress it worked so hard to achieve," said Chamber President Tom Donohue in a statement to Reuters. "We should seek free and fair trade, but this is just not the way to do it."

The Chamber, which has 3 million members, historically has worked closely with Republican presidents and praised Trump for signing business tax cuts in December. But

mounting trade tensions have opened a rift with the president. Trump has implemented billions of dollars in tariffs targeted at China, Canada, Mexico and the European Union, saying such moves are needed to offset trade imbalances.

Nations have begun retaliating. On Friday, Canada struck back at U.S. steel and aluminum tariffs, vowing to impose punitive measures on \$12.6 billion worth of American goods until Washington relents. China is expected to impose a new 25-percent tax on soybeans in July. Mexico is adding duties to pork imports. The EU has targeted \$3.2 billion in American goods exported to the 28-member bloc, including bourbon and Harley Davidson (HOG.N) motorcycles.

Pushing back on Trump, the Chamber based a state-by-state analysis on data from the U.S. Department of Commerce and government agencies in China, the EU, Mexico, and Canada.

Trump has previously been persuaded to back off of trade threats with the argument that states that backed him in the 2016 presidential campaign will be hard-hit.

For example, the Chamber said Texas could see \$3.9 billion worth of exports targeted by retaliatory tariffs; Tennessee, \$1.4 billion; and South Carolina, \$3 billion.



U.S. President Donald Trump and First Lady Melania Trump board Air Force One as they depart for Joint Base Andrews, Maryland, from Morristown

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Houston day care centers cited by state inspectors

By Dana Burke

Summer means a search for new day care providers for many families, whether they're moving into the Houston area, switching neighborhoods or seeking childcare for the first time.

It helps to know a child care center's history and whether the business has received citations for violations of state requirements, such as inappropriate punishments, unsafe or unsanitary facilities or neglectful supervision.

The State of Texas offers the public a useful tool for checking out a day care center's history of violations. Parents can check Texas state inspectors' reports for day care centers, which are available online.

The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services regularly inspects licensed childcare centers and in-home child care operations, reporting violations ranging from missing background

checks to inappropriate punishments and neglect. These are some of the common reasons day cares get cited in the State of Texas.

When a violation is found, or an incident is reported, it is listed as a deficiency on the state DFPS website for two years.

Some day care centers have self-reported incidents to the state, and in many cases childcare workers have been terminated after a serious incident.

The reports in the slideshow above compile state violations from various parts of Houston in the past 12 months. The slideshow is updated periodically to include violations from new zip codes.



Traveling for the Fourth? Expect higher gas prices

Houston gas prices are expected to climb higher on July 4, hitting \$3 a gallon at some stations as drivers gear up for road trips on one of the year's busiest travel days.

The average price of regular unleaded in the Houston area dropped slightly last week to \$2.61 a gallon but is expected to climb as high as \$2.69 a gallon that on the holiday, according to GasBuddy, which tracks fuel costs nationwide. That's the highest July 4 average since 2014, when crude oil prices topped \$100 a barrel and drove the average cost of gasoline to \$3.48 a gallon.

Now, with the U.S. benchmark for crude oil settling above \$74 a barrel last week, national prices are expected to reach \$2.90 a gallon during the holiday, up from \$2.22 a gallon last year. As a result, GasBuddy anticipates that drivers will spend \$1.02 billion more at the pump during the first four days of July.

After declining for more than a month, gasoline prices have jumped alongside oil prices, driven by a decline in global oil inventories and news that foreign producers won't substantially ramp up production amid a U.S. drilling boom.



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Editor's Choice



Migrants intercepted aboard a toy dinghy off the coast in the Strait of Gibraltar, leave a rescue boat after arriving at the port of Tarifa, southern Spain July 2, 2018. REUTERS/Jon Nazca



An explosion is seen as the MOMO-2 rocket, made by Japanese company Interstellar Technologies, crashes moments after lifting off in Hokkaido



Children displaced from the Red Sea port city of Hodeidah are seen behind a fence in a school where IDPs temporarily live in Sanaa, Yemen



Spectators watch a match between local amateur soccer teams at a stadium made of straw in Stavropol Region



Golf - French Open - Le Golf National, Guyancourt, France - July 1, 2018 Sweden's Alexander Noren kisses the trophy as he celebrates after victory REUTERS/Charles Platiau TPX IMAGES OF THE DAY



A protestor holds a placard reading "Merkel must go" outside the CDU headquarters during a Christian Democratic Union (CDU) leadership meeting in Berlin, Germany July 1, 2018. REUTERS/Axel Schmidt TPX IMAGES OF THE DAY



A model present a creation by designer Maria Grazia Chiuri as part of her Haute Couture Fall-Winter 2018/2019 fashion show for fashion house Dior in Paris



Mexico - Samara Arena, Samara, Russia - July 2, 2018 Brazil's Neymar during the match REUTERS/Dylan Martinez



The Wider Image: As stocks deplete, Greek fishermen send boats to scrap

History of the Fourth of July



The Spirit of '76 Painting

Independence Day, commonly known as the Fourth of July, is a federal holiday in the United States commemorating the adoption of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776, declaring independence from the Kingdom of Great Britain. Independence Day is commonly associated with fireworks, parades, barbecues, carnivals, fairs, picnics, concerts, baseball games, family reunions, political speeches and ceremonies, and various other public and private events celebrating the history, government, and traditions of the United States. Independence Day is the national day of the United States.

Background

During the American Revolution, the legal separation of the Thirteen Colonies from Great Britain occurred on July 2, 1776, when the Second Continental Congress voted to approve a resolution of independence that had been proposed in June by Richard Henry Lee of Virginia. After voting for independence, Congress turned its attention to the Declaration of Independence, a statement explaining this decision, which had been prepared by a Committee of Five, with Thomas Jefferson as its principal author. Congress debated and revised the Declaration, finally approving it on



Independence Day 2018

Happy Fourth of July!!!

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



July 4. A day earlier, John Adams had written to his wife Abigail: "The second day of July, 1776, will be the most memorable epoch in the history of America. I am apt to believe that it will be celebrated by succeeding generations as the great anniversary festival. It ought to be commemorated as the day of deliverance, by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty. It ought to be solemnized with pomp and parade, with shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires, and illuminations, from one end of this continent to the other, from this time forward forever more."



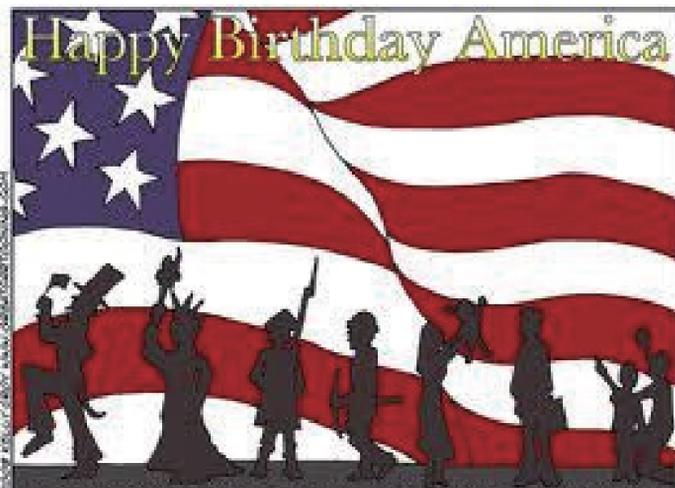
Adams's prediction was off by two days. From the outset, Americans celebrated independence on July 4, the date shown on the much-publicized

Declaration of Independence, rather than on July 2, the date the resolution of independence was approved in a closed session of Congress. Historians have long disputed whether Congress actually signed the Declaration of Independence on July 4, even though Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, and Benjamin Franklin all later wrote that they had signed it on that day. Most historians have concluded that the Declaration was signed nearly a month after its adoption, on August 2, 1776, and not on July 4 as is commonly believed. In a remarkable coincidence, both John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, the only signers of the Declaration of Independence later to serve as Presidents of the United States, died on the same day: July 4, 1826, which was the 50th anniversary of the Declaration. Although not a signer of the Declaration of Independence, James Monroe, the Fifth President of the United States, died on July



holiday was celebrated on Monday, July 5.

- In 1781, the Massachusetts General Court became the first state legislature to recognize July 4 as a state celebration.
- In 1783, Moravians in Salem, North Carolina, held a celebration of July 4 with a challenging music program assembled by Johann Friedrich Peter. This work was titled "The Psalm of Joy".
- In 1791 the first recorded use of the name "Independence Day" occurred.
- In 1820 the first Fourth of July celebration was held in Eastport, Maine which remains the largest in the state.
- In 1870, the U.S. Congress made Independence Day an unpaid holiday for federal employees.
- In 1938, Congress changed Independence Day to a paid federal holiday. While the official observance always falls on July 4th, participation levels may vary according to which day of the week the 4th falls on. If the holiday falls in the middle of the week, some fireworks displays and celebrations may take place during the weekend for convenience, again, varying by region. The first week of July is typically one of the busiest American travel periods of the year, as many people utilize the holiday for extended vacation trips.



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People wait in line for an emergency food pantry. (Photo/Getty Images)

President Donald Trump is making a big push to expand work requirements in the nation's social safety net, calling on his administration to propose tougher rules for America's most vulnerable population to benefit from welfare programs.



"Since its inception, the welfare system has grown into a large bureaucracy that might be susceptible to measuring success by how many people are enrolled in a program rather than by how many have moved from poverty into financial independence," the executive order reads.

The order calls on the Treasury, Agriculture, Commerce, Labor, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Transportation, and Education departments to use the next 90 days to submit a report with their recommended policies to the White House.

The order doesn't yet set any new policy, but it does reflect a hardline conservative view of the nation's entitlement system — one that welfare experts say relies on faulty arguments and could cut off the nation's neediest from lifesaving safety net programs.

Trump's executive order implies tougher requirements for safety net programs. The text of the executive order calls for a review of all welfare programs across agencies, something a senior White House

The President And His Cabinet Propose Stronger Work Requirements For Welfare Across The Board

Trump Wants To Slash Welfare With Stricter Work Requirements

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

official calls a push for a "coordinated" effort across federal and state agencies to reform the welfare system.



But the result could be recommendations that propose drastic changes to programs like Medicaid, which offers health care for low-income individuals; food stamps; and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), which gives poor families financial aid.

Agencies are ordered to follow nine "Principles of Economic Mobility" to guide their proposed policy changes, including adding work requirements, giving states more flexibility — usually in the form of block grants — consolidating duplicative programs, and encouraging involvement from the private sector.

Put together, this order outlines much of the conservative welfare agenda, which has long promoted cutting welfare programs, either through pushing people off the federal rolls with harsher work requirements or block-granting funding to the states, giving them more purview over how to allocate money to welfare programs.



Trump has long called for tougher requirements to receive welfare benefits but hasn't been specific on what policies he would like to see and which programs he'd like to target.

The White House is citing faulty evidence that work requirements work

Trump signed a welfare executive order on April 10. Mark Wilson/Getty Images

White House adviser Andrew Bremberg told reporters that Trump's executive order is meant to "highlight the success" of President Bill Clinton's 1996 reforms to TANF. Those reforms added work requirements to TANF and fundamentally adjusted how the program's funding worked, giving money to states in a lump sum and allowing the states to allocate their funding as they saw fit.

But over the past decade, poverty experts have reached a consensus that TANF no longer works, because states stopped using the money for the safety net programs. "TANF is not an effective program," James Ziliak, director of the University of Kentucky's Center for Poverty Research, told Vox last year — it's served fewer and fewer families over the years.

This is a common misunderstanding of the longstanding effects of the 1996 welfare reform effort — and one that conservatives continue to push when proposing cuts to entitlement programs.



A misunderstanding of '90s welfare reform is not the only faulty evidence the White House used when promoting the order signed on Tuesday. In a fact sheet sent to reporters, the White House cites the effec-

tiveness of food stamp work requirements implemented in Kansas and Maine — the case studies often used to promote work requirements.

"Studies conducted after reforms in Maine and Kansas show that individuals who left welfare and went back to work saw their incomes increase, more than doubling on average; this increase more than offset the welfare benefits they lost. Welfare enrollment also dropped by 75 to 90 percent," the White House said.

But a decrease in welfare enrollment isn't an indication of much other than the federal government spending less money.

And a Center on Budget and Policy Priorities audit of the reports on Maine and Kansas found that when actually taking into account the loss of SNAP benefits after being cut off, the difference in income before and after reinstating the work requirements is much less stark than what the White House cited. The total resources (including earnings and SNAP benefits) available to SNAP participants who were cut off was 3 percent lower a year after the cutoff.



In other words, there is no clear indication that reimposing the three-month time limit reduced poverty levels. While CBPP did find some increase in wages, the slight differences aren't necessarily because of the policy changes.

The CBPP notes that the economy was getting better in 2014 — the same time those work requirements were put into place.

These safety net programs are the last resort for millions of Americans. Republicans have long demanded reforms to the American welfare system, decrying bloated federal handout programs that they claim disincentivize Americans from working. They argue that additional work requirements would encourage more people to get out of the cycle of poverty.

While poverty and welfare experts will point out there's always room for reforms, the statistics paint a very different picture of how some of these conservative reforms actually play out.

For example, food stamp recipients are mostly children and elderly or disabled people. The number of able-bodied adults without dependents is slim, and not nearly enough to make up the numbers in savings that the projections for this proposal indicate. Waste and fraud in the program are also relatively inconsequential.

There is strong evidence that SNAP reduces food insecurity and improves health outcomes, especially among children, who make up the majority of SNAP beneficiaries. But the evidence from randomized studies of work requirements shows that they have little or no effect on poverty — and leave many people who aren't induced to work without a safety net.



"It's a false narrative," Ziliak told me last year of a conservative proposal to cut food stamps. "The evidence shows that the program actually works. Not all programs work. But SNAP actually is one of those that does what it is supposed to be doing." As is, SNAP and TANF, which provide services like child care or income assistance, already have work requirements for able-bodied adults without dependents.

Those requirements are often waived when the economy is doing poorly and reinstated when the job market is more stable, which is what Maine and Kansas did. Already conservative lawmakers — like Rep. Jim Jordan (R-OH) have proposed harsher requirements at the federal level, like tightening the window individuals have to find a job from three months to one month, increasing the number of hours they have to work per month from 80 hours to 100, and extending the requirements to able-bodied adults with dependents.

It's not clear what the Trump administration plans to propose, but they said reforms to SNAP and Medicaid are front and center. (Courtesy https://www.vox.com/)

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