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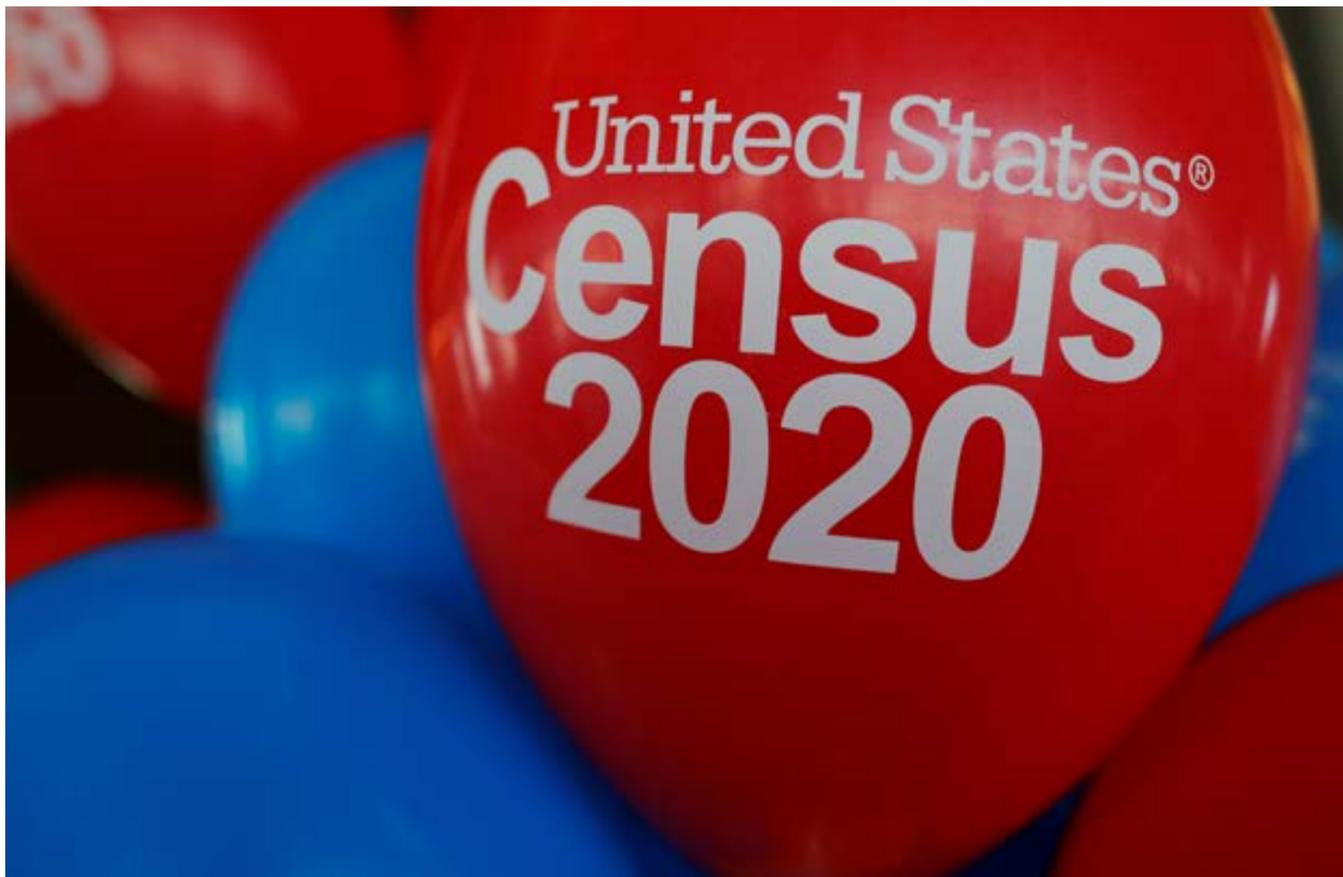
Southern Daily News is published by Southern News Group Daily

Publisher: Wea H. Lee
President: Catherine Lee
Editor: John Robbins

Address: 11122 Bellaire Blvd., Houston, TX 77072
E-mail: News@scdaily.com

Monday, July 8, 2019 | www.today-america.com | Southern News Group

Trump presses for contentious census citizenship question despite legal uncertainty



FILE PHOTO: Balloons decorate an event for community activists and local government leaders to mark the one-year-out launch of the 2020 Census efforts in Boston, Massachusetts, U.S., April 1, 2019. REUTERS/Brian Snyder

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The Trump administration on Friday refused to back down over its bid to put a contentious citizenship question on the 2020 U.S. census, meaning a court case will move forward over whether officials were motivated by racial bias in seeking to add it.

The Department of Justice told Maryland-based U.S. District Judge George Hazel it has not made a final determination on whether to add the question even as President Donald Trump told reporters he was considering issuing an executive order to do it. Hazel, who had asked for a final decision from the government by Friday afternoon on whether it intended to press forward, issued an order saying the case will now move ahead.

In New York, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and its partners asked a federal judge to block the administration from adding a citizenship question to the census. The group said the administration had successfully received an expedited hearing by arguing the census questionnaire had to be finalized by June 30. Given the abandonment of that deadline, they urged the judge to use his authority to "prohibit defendants from concocting a new basis to add a citizenship question" and to stop the government's "shenanigans."

Civil rights groups and some states strongly object to the citizenship question proposal, calling it a Republican ploy to scare immigrants into not participating in the census. That would lead to a population undercount in Democratic-leaning areas with high immigrant populations.

They say that officials lied about their motivations for adding the question and that the move would help Trump's fellow Republicans gain seats in the U.S. House of Representatives and state legislatures when new electoral district boundaries are drawn.

The Supreme Court on June 27 blocked Trump's first effort to add the question, faulting the administration's stated reason. The legal fight seemed to be over earlier in the week when the government said it would start printing census forms without the citizenship question. But the battle reignited on Wednesday when Trump reversed course via tweet. "We're working on a lot of things including an executive order," Trump told reporters on Friday outside the White House as he left for his resort in Bedminster, New Jersey.



FILE PHOTO: A protester holds sign outside the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington

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Iran to announce more cuts to nuclear deal commitments on Sunday-

DUBAI (Reuters) - Iran's senior nuclear negotiator will announce more cuts in its commitments to a 2015 nuclear deal on Sunday, a semi-official news agency reported, amid Iranian accusations that Tehran's European partners have failed to shield it from U.S. sanctions.

Other officials will join the top negotiator, Abbas Araqchi, in making the announcement at a news conference at 10:30 a.m. (0600 GMT), the Fars news agency reported.

Tension has spiked between Tehran and Washington since last year, when Trump quit a 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and six powers and reimposed sanctions that had been lifted under the pact in return for Tehran curbing its sensitive nuclear work.

Under the deal, Iran can enrich uranium to 3.67 percent fissile material, well below the 20 percent it was reaching before the deal and the roughly 90 percent suitable for a nuclear weapon. In reaction to U.S. sanctions, which have notably targeted its main foreign revenue stream in the shape of crude oil exports, Iran said in May that it would scale back its commitments to the deal after a 60-day deadline.

Separately, Ali Akbar Velayati, a senior adviser to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, said Iranian officials were unanimous in raising the level of uranium enrichment beyond the 3.67% set in the nuclear accord, in remarks posted on Khamenei's officials website.

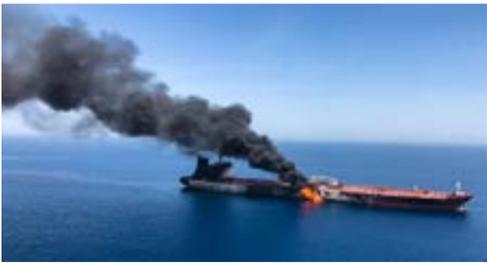
"For example, we need uranium enriched to 5% for use in the Bushehr (power plant) and this is a completely peaceful purpose," Velayati said, hinting that this might be the first step Iran might take in raising the enrichment level.



U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) reacts after signing the Taxpayer First Act on Capitol Hill in Washington, U.S., June 21, 2019. REUTERS/Yuri Gripas TPX IMAGES OF THE DAY



People attend a ceremony to bury remains of 150 "martyrs" from 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war in Tehran



An oil tanker is seen after it was attacked at the Gulf of Oman

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Editor's Choice



Choir singers wave an Estonian flags as they perform during a concert to mark 150 anniversary of the Song Celebration festival in Tallinn



Estonian national flags are seen during a concert to mark 150 anniversary of the Song Celebration festival in Tallinn, Estonia July 6, 2019. REUTERS/Ints Kalnins



Cycling - Tour de France - The 194.5-km Stage 1 from Brussels to Brussels - July 6, 2019 - LottoNL-Jumbo rider Dylan Groenewegen of the Netherlands reacts after a crash. Jeff Pachoud/Pool via REUTERS



Jeremy Hunt, a leadership candidate for Britain's Conservative Party, poses with supporters as he arrives for a hustings event in Cardiff, Wales, Britain, July 6, 2019. REUTERS/Rebecca Naden



Soccer Football - Women's World Cup - Third Place Play Off - England v Sweden - Allianz Riviera, Nice, France - July 6, 2019 England players look dejected after the match REUTERS/Eric Gaillard



Families of victims and activists attend a rally against "femicide", gender-based violence targeted at women, in Paris



Assistant bullfighters stop an animal rights activist who invaded a bullring during a bullfight at the San Fermin festival in Pamplona, Spain, July 6, 2019. REUTERS/Susana Vera



Hospital workers set up equipment after a powerful earthquake struck Southern California in the city of Ridgecrest

A 'Dead Zone' The Size Of Massachusetts Could Hit The Gulf Of Mexico This Summer



The rising waters of the Gulf of Mexico crash at the shoreline of the Treasure Island community of West Galveston Island, Texas March 6, 2014. (Photo Reuters)

By Guest Writer Nsikan Akpan, digital science producer for PBS NewsHour and co-creator of the award-winning, NewsHour digital series ScienceScope.

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

April showers might mean May flowers, but this year's May showers could bring a giant choking swarm of death to wildlife in the Gulf of Mexico.

On Monday, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration released its annual Gulf forecast for this summer's "dead zone" — a pocket of little to no oxygen created by overgrown algal blooms of phytoplankton. When the blooms die along the coast — a cycle that happens each year — their rotting corpses cause bacteria to suck up all the oxygen from the ocean, killing off other marine life, like shrimp, fish and molluscs. NOAA forecasts a dead zone that spans approximately 7,800 square miles, which could be about as big as the state of New Jersey, or in more ominous estimates, Massachusetts. If this prediction holds true, this event would be the second largest on the list of Gulf dead zones in more than three decades, though measurements only date back to 1985.

This year's forecasted dead zone would be 50 percent larger than the average seen in the last five years.

Why is this year so much worse? There are a few factors at play. Rainfall in May

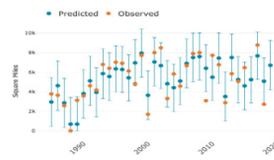
is one of the drivers of the Gulf's dead zone. May 2019 capped off the wettest 12 months in U.S. history. Severe storms, including more than 500 tornadoes in a 30-day span, battered the Midwest and South, causing widespread flooding across much of the nation's farmland.

"Even if farms ceased using nitrogen-based fertilizers today, it would take 30 years for agrochemicals in the soil to shrink to a level that didn't cause dead zones."

But "nutrients lay the groundwork for the dead zone," said David Scheurer, an oceanographer and deputy director of competitive research program at NOAA's National Ocean Service.

While the wet spring and historic flooding played a role, these nutrients — like the industrial fertilizers used by American farmers and animal waste that runs off into fresh waterways during rainfall and floods — also supercharges the growth of microorganisms.

In addition to the toxic consequences for the creatures that live in and around the Gulf, a dead zone of this size may affect the price of your seafood. Here's what you need to know.



The predicted size of Gulf dead zones (dark) versus the final observations (light), 1985 to 2019. (Image/Virginia Institute of Marine Science)

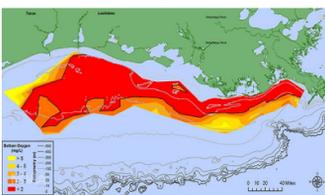
How NOAA forecasts dead zones

NOAA's forecast for the annual hypoxic zone — the technical name for a dead zone — is actually a compilation of predictions made by five universities: the University of Michigan, Louisiana State University, William & Mary's Virginia Institute of Marine Science, North Carolina State University and Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia, Canada.

All of the models have a good reputation for predicting the size of the dead zone — typically pinning down about 70 percent of the variability from year-to-year. For example, here are the predictions versus the final observations made by the Virginia Institute of Marine Science over the last 35 years:

"Each [of these forecasts] work with slightly different assumptions," Scheurer said. "Some weigh the physical effects from the dead zone to different degrees. Some look at nutrient loading slightly different."

The nutrient load refers to the amount of nitrogen (namely nitrate) and phosphorus that wash into watersheds of the Mississippi and Atchafalaya rivers, and then consequently into the Gulf of Mexico. Both nitrate and phosphorus are common ingredients in agrochemicals, and both can fuel algal blooms.



At 8,776 square miles, 2017's dead zone in the Gulf of Mexico was the largest ever measured (pictured). If

the 2019 forecast rings true, this year's dead zone could resemble the one from 2017. (Image/LSU)

In the case of the Gulf of Mexico dead zone, the nitrogen plays an outsized role. May's rainfall washed more than 156,000 metric tons of nitrate and 25,300 metric tons of phosphorus into the Gulf of Mexico, according to estimates from the U.S. Geological Survey.

More than half of that nitrate comes from agricultural activities in the surrounding watershed, said Nancy Rabalais, a Louisiana State University ocean ecologist, who co-authored one of the university forecasts.

Because of the heavy rains, this pollution discharge was 18 percent and 49 percent above the long-term average, respectively, even though many farmers hadn't had the opportunity to plant this year's crops. That could be because the farmers used more fertilizer last year — or, because the rains were so frequent this winter and spring.

"So there's still a history in the soil that could be washed out during a flood year," Rabalais said. Case in point: A 2018 study found even if farms ceased using nitrogen today, it would take 30 years for agrochemicals in the soil to shrink to a level that didn't cause dead zones.



Why it matters

We'll know the final verdict on this year's dead zone in late July, when marine scientists will cruise around the Gulf shore, capturing physical observations of the hypoxic zone. That time of year is typically when the size of the dead zone peaks, but it also represents the tail end of shrimping season.

"When the hypoxic zone is present you can't catch shrimp over an area as large as the size of the state of New Jersey,

which means a reduced catch," Rabalais said.

The dead zone builds over months, in the pockets of water where trawlers catch large shrimp. A bigger dead zone means those shrimp boats must travel farther offshore.

"It costs more to get offshore to get the larger shrimp outside of the low-oxygen zone, and of course that drives the price," Rabalais said.



Deckhand David Merrick shows some of the catch after returning from a two-day shrimp haul at Joshua's Marina in Buras, Louisiana May 17, 2010. (Photo/Reuters)

A 2017 study estimated that every time the Gulf's dead zone increases by 6 percent (400 square miles) over the average, the price of large shrimp rises by 1 percent. Small shrimp live closer to shore and are less affected by dead zones but also bring in less money for states like Louisiana.

Shrimpers along the Gulf Coast operate on fine margins — with the average person netting about \$55,000 per year — so even small fluctuations may affect people's livelihoods. Shrimp in Louisiana, overall, contributes \$170 million to the state's economy.

"It's going to take work in the watershed to try to reduce the nutrients before they get to the Mississippi River — that includes a whole suite of best management practices including cover crops, buffer strips, less fertilizer and more diversity in farming techniques," Rabalais said. "These practices are employed on a small scale, but not on the large scale that's needed to prevent dead zones." (Courtesy <https://www.pbs.org/news-hour/science>)

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Dr. Lai is a board-certified pediatrician who earned her medical degree from The University of Texas School of Medicine in San Antonio and completed her pediatric internship and residency at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston. She is a member of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Her special clinical interests include General Pediatrics, caring for newborns, and managing autism, and childhood obesity. She cares for young patients at Kelsey-Seybold's Spring Medical and Diagnostic Center.

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Federal Government Starting To Apply Antitrust Heat On Big Tech

Broad U.S. antitrust action against Big Tech moved firmly from the speculative realm to the investigative mode in the last few days, as both Congress and regulatory agencies appeared to be moving forward with inquiries.

The big picture: While the pressure on the likes of Google, Facebook, Amazon and Apple has been mounting for years, the one-two punch of a public Congressional investigation into their dominance and possible antitrust probes by regulators marks a major escalation in tensions.

•Last year saw high-profile testimony by CEOs like Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg, but the action will now shift to more mundane yet substantial document and evidence gathering that would form the basis of court cases or settlements.

The House Judiciary Committee said Monday that it was launching a bipartisan investigation into whether big tech platforms are engaged in monopolistic practices.

•A person familiar with the investigation said that, in addition to public hearings, the inquiry would include requesting documents from a wide range of companies.

•That could allow the committee to receive information from small competitors of the tech giants who would otherwise be wary of testifying publicly, the person said.



“Given the growing tide of concentration and consolidation across our economy, it is vital that we investigate the current state of competition in digital markets and the health of the antitrust laws,” said Rep. Jerrold Nadler (D-N.Y.), the committee's chairman.

•Tech stocks fell in Monday trading as the



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

federal interest in the companies came into focus.

Between the lines: The investigation could help lawmakers develop a factual record to shape legislation overhauling the nation's antitrust laws, which reformers say are inadequate for reining in corporate power as it exists today.

The announcement followed reporting over the weekend and into Monday that the Justice Department and the Federal Trade Commission had split up the field of investigations into anti-competitive behavior by tech giants.

•DOJ got Apple and Google, according to the Wall Street Journal and Reuters.

•FTC got Amazon and Facebook, according to the Washington Post and the Journal.

•While the agencies' plans remain somewhat unclear, the Journal reported that interest in investigating Google and Facebook was more advanced.

Why it matters: Of the many ways critics want to address concerns about Big Tech, antitrust action has always been among the most significant — although it was largely seen as the least likely route.



•It could result in action as serious as the firms being broken up, but even if it doesn't, it could seriously distract the platforms' efforts to grow their main businesses and anticipate new waves of tech innovation. Microsoft learned this lesson the hard way after its antitrust fight with Washington two

decades ago.

Looking Ahead: Congressional hearings on the issue will unfold in the coming months, and signs that DOJ and FTC are moving forward with formal investigations into the tech giants could leak out in the form of official inquiries sent to the companies or their competitors.

Once inquiries like this get started, they develop their own momentum even as they proceed at what feels like a leaden pace to tech insiders. These companies likely face years of entanglement. (Courtesy axios.com)

Big Tech grilled on hate speech, accountability at Code Conference

The attacks on the tech industry were many and frequent throughout the first two days of the Code Conference.

Why it matters: There has always been a measure of skepticism on stage at Code, but this year the negative side of tech was the

primary focus, with only occasional mentions of new products or technology.



Vox's Ezra Klein, RAICES' Erika Andiola and RAICES' Jonathan Ryan (from left to right). (Photo/Vox Media) Details:

•**Hate speech:** On Monday night, executives from Facebook, YouTube and Twitter were all peppered with questions about their role in allowing hate speech and harassment to flourish on their platforms.

•**Immigration:** On Tuesday, the CEO of immigration rights center RAICES, Jonathan Ryan, argued that the tech industry is enabling the Trump administration's violation of immigration rights at the border. He called out Palantir, Amazon, Salesforce, Dell and Hewlett Packard Enterprise as among the firms making the work of ICE possible. “The tech industry deserves a lot of blame for what is happening on our borders,” Ryan said. (Full video here.)

•**Accountability:** Later in the day, author Baratunde Thurston highlighted some of the points in his New Tech Manifesto. He called on attendees to push for a tech industry that collects less data and is more transparent and accountable, but also is attuned to the potential misuse of their creations. He added, “we should start treating people's data as a part of their property.” (Courtesy axios.com)

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