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Trump drops plan for executive action on census citizenship question ABC report



Inside C2

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Crackdown on immigrant families to start Sunday, Trump says



Activists, many from the Netsroot Nation conference, protest President Donald Trump's immigration policy as they march in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, U.S., July 12, 2019. REUTERS/Jarrett Renshaw

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - A nationwide wave of arrests of immigrants facing deportation will commence over the weekend, U.S. President Donald Trump said on Friday, confirming that the plan, intended to discourage a surge of Central American migrants, was on track after a delay. The operation is expected to target hundreds of families in 10 cities that have recently been ordered deported by an immigration court but have not yet left the country. Trump revealed the operation on Twitter last month and then postponed it. It is unusual for the government to announce deportation operations ahead of time. "People are coming into this country illegally, we are taking them out legally," Trump told reporters on Friday, calling it a "major operation" that would mainly focus on removing criminals. In a typical week, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) arrests thousands of immigrants who are staying in the country illegally, according to government data. Most of those arrests are made without any advance publicity. The president, speaking to reporters at the White House on Friday, said he was not concerned that the advance notice could help targeted immigrants evade arrest. "If the word gets out, it gets out," he said. Since Trump first spoke of the plan, a number of city mayors, nearly all Democrats, have repeated their long-standing policies of not cooperating with ICE officials on deportations and have advertised helplines people can call to understand their rights. Democratic lawmakers, among others, have also sought to inform immigrants of their rights, telling them not to open their door for ICE unless agents present a court-issued warrant, and not to say

or sign anything before speaking with a lawyer. **DETECTING BORDER CROSSINGS** Trump, a Republican who has made cracking down on illegal immigration a centerpiece of his administration, is trying to deal with a surge of mostly Central American families crossing the U.S.-Mexico border. Many families are approaching border officials to seek asylum. The latest planned arrests would follow widespread criticism of the crowded, unsanitary conditions in which immigrants are being detained along the southwestern border and concerns about children being separated from adults by border officials. In a hearing on the subject on Friday at the U.S. House of Representatives, some Democrats said they feared the forthcoming arrests could result in more immigrant children being separated from their families. Elijah Cummings, the chairman of the House Oversight and Reform Committee, asked a federal watchdog about its recently issued report saying detention conditions were below standards. Jennifer Costello, the acting inspector general for the Department of Homeland Security, told the congressional hearing that the government was falling short in terms of "crowding, the prolonged detention, some of the hygiene that the children are supposed to have." Costello said it would be "impossible" to meet required standards under "the conditions that we saw there." "It's shocking," she said. **REPORTERS TAKEN INSIDE**

Trump sent Vice President Mike Pence to visit some of the criticized detention facilities in McAllen, Texas, on Friday along with journalists, who have generally been denied access to detained immigrants. Pence visited one overcrowded and foul-smelling facility where almost 400 men are detained behind metal fences, some sleeping on concrete, after being accused of crossing the U.S. border illegally. The Trump administration has increased pressure on the governments of Mexico and several Central American countries to stem the flow of migrants reaching the U.S. border. Trump is to meet with Guatemalan President Jimmy Morales at the White House on Monday for talks on immigration and security. Morales may sign an agreement with Trump declaring Guatemala a safe destination for asylum seekers, which could prevent many from applying in the United States, according to officials in both governments. Alongside these international efforts, Trump has sought to deter border crossings with highly publicized crackdowns in the United States. The operation that Trump said would start on Sunday is an example. ICE is expected to target families whose immigration cases were handled through an expedited court process that began in 2018. The agency has notified about 2,000 of those people that they face deportation because they failed to appear in court, acting ICE Director Mark Morgan said last month.

Immigration rights activists have complained that in many



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U.S. homebuilding near two-year low; permits extend decline

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - U.S. homebuilding dropped to a near two-year low pulled down by persistent weakness in the single-family unit segment, suggesting the housing market continued to struggle despite falling mortgage rates.

The second straight monthly decline in homebuilding reported by the Commerce Department on Friday probably reflected in part massive flooding in the Midwest, with housing starts in the region plunging to levels last seen in early 2015.

The weak report bucked a recent tide of upbeat data, including retail sales, trade and construction spending, that indicated the economy regained speed late in the first quarter after appearing to stumble at the turn of the year.

"Waiting for construction activity to pick up after a sharp drop in mortgage rates is like waiting for Godot," said Chris Rupkey, chief economist at MUFG in New York. "It is hard to know what is ailing the home construction industry."

Housing starts fell 0.3 percent to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 1.139 million units last month, the lowest level since May 2017. Data for February was revised down to show homebuilding tumbling to a pace of 1.142 million units instead of the previously reported 1.162 million-unit rate.

Housing starts in the Midwest, which was devastated by floods during the month, dropped 17.6 percent. Homebuilding also fell in the Northeast and South, but surged in the West.

Economists polled by Reuters had forecast housing starts increasing to a pace of 1.230 million units in March. The dollar was trading lower against a basket of currencies. U.S. stock and bond markets were closed for the Good Friday holiday.

A sharp pickup in home construction appears unlikely. Building permits fell 1.7 percent to

a rate of 1.269 million units in March, the lowest in five months. It was the third straight monthly decrease in permits.

The prolonged weakness in homebuilding is likely the result of land and labor shortages, as well as expensive building materials. A survey on Tuesday showed that though builders reported strong demand for new homes, they continued to highlight "affordability concerns stemming from a chronic shortage of construction workers and buildable lots."

These factors are constraining builders' ability to construct homes in the lower price segment of the market, which continues to experience a shortage of homes for sale. The housing market hit a soft patch last year, with investment in homebuilding contracting 0.3 percent, the weakest performance since 2010.

FUNDAMENTALS IMPROVING

Despite the weakness in homebuilding, the fundamentals for the housing market are improving. The 30-year fixed mortgage rate has dropped from a peak of about 4.94 percent in November to around 4.12 percent, according to data from mortgage finance agency Freddie Mac. Wage growth is also strengthening. Declining mortgage rates follow a recent decision by the Federal Reserve to suspend its three-year monetary policy tightening campaign.

While housing continues to be soft, the other segments of the economy have rebounded from earlier weakness. Retail sales surged in March and trade, inventory and construction spending data have also been bullish, leading economists to upgrade their gross domestic product growth estimates for the first quarter.



FILE PHOTO: A construction worker builds a single family home in San Diego, California, U.S. February 15, 2017. Picture taken REUTERS/Mike Blake



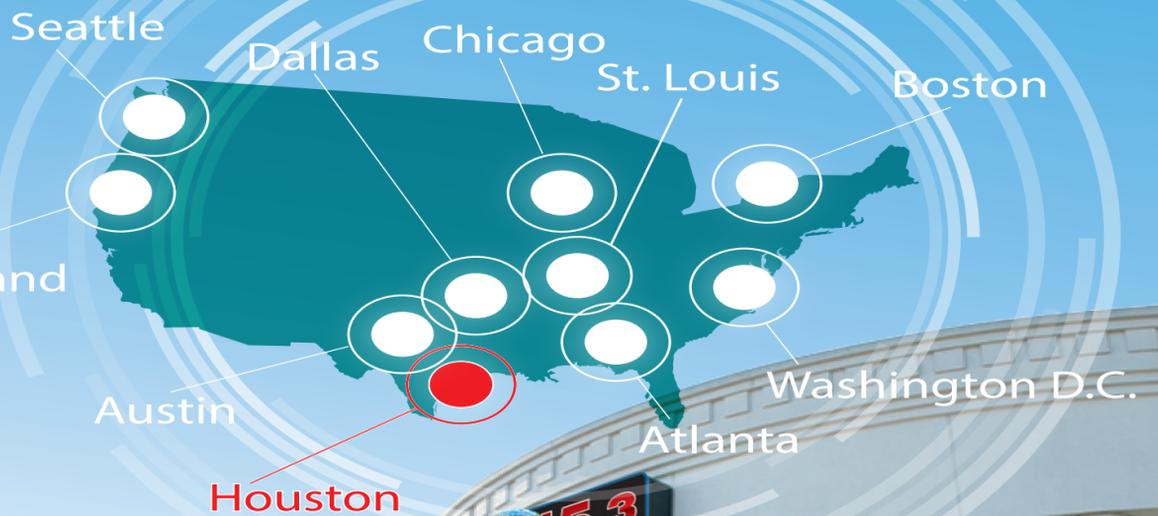
FILE PHOTO: Single family homes being built by KB Homes are shown under construction in San Diego



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Editor's Choice



"Recortadores" try to draw the attention of a bull during a contest in a bullring at the San Fermin festival in Pamplona



Swimming - 18th FINA World Swimming Championships - Mixed Duet Technical Preliminary Round - Yeomju Gymnasium, South Korea - July 13, 2019. Bill May of the U.S. competes. REUTERS/Evgenia Novozhenina TPX IMAGES OF THE DAY



Tennis - Wimbledon - All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club, London, Britain - July 13, 2019 Romania's Simona Halep poses with the trophy as she celebrates after winning the final against Serena Williams of the U.S. REUTERS/Hannah McKay TPX IMAGES OF THE DAY



People dressed like Kate Bush take part in "The Most Wuthering Heights Day Ever" flash mob in Berlin



A member of Nepalese army carrying a child walks along the flooded colony in Kathmandu, Nepal July 12, 2019. REUTERS/Navesh Chitrakar TPX IMAGES OF THE DAY



Palestinian demonstrators hurl stones at Israeli forces during a protest near the Jewish settlement of Qadomem, in the village of Kofr Qadom in the Israeli-occupied West Bank



Tennis - Wimbledon - All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club, London, Britain - July 12, 2019 Spain's Rafael Nadal in action during his semi-final match against Switzerland's Roger Federer REUTERS/Carl Recine TPX IMAGES OF THE DAY



Cycling - Tour de France - The 230-km Stage 7 from Belfort to Chalon-sur-Saone - July 12, 2019 - The peloton, with Trek-Segafredo rider Giulio Ciccone of Italy wearing the overall leader's yellow jersey, pass a field with cows. REUTERS/Christian Hartmann TPX IMAGES OF THE DAY

The UT System Has Already Allocated \$160 Million Of Its Oil Money For The Project UT-Austin Will Provide Free Tuition To Undergrad Students With Family Incomes Below \$65,000 Starting In 2020



The UT tower and main building on The University of Texas campus on December 19, 2018. (Photo/Texas Tribune)

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

Seeking to make college more affordable, the University of Texas will use some of its oil money to dramatically expand the financial aid it offers to low- and middle-income undergraduates on its flagship Austin campus.

household income in Texas was just over \$59,200 in 2017, according to U.S. Census Bureau data.



School officials estimate about a quarter of its undergraduates from Texas — 8,600 — would have their tuition fully paid under the new plan, and an additional 5,700 would receive financial aid from it.

of our great state.” “Chairman Eltife understands that college affordability is one of the most critical issues affecting all Texans,” Fenves said, in a written statement.



But a Texas Tribune investigation from 2017 found that just a fraction of the endowment distribution was being used for financial aid at UT-Austin — about \$3 million for undergraduates — and that money dedicated to system-led initiatives, like an in-house technology start-up, had increased.



The Texas endowment dates back to 1876, when the state set aside more than 1 million acres of West Texas land to support the development of the UT and Texas A&M University systems.

and the remainder for A&M.



The board previously approved a more than \$1 billion distribution in May, and Tuesday sent an additional \$90 million to A&M.



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Tech Giants Want The Chance To Build U.S. Military's First "War Cloud" Computing System

Amazon, Microsoft Wage War Over The Pentagon's 'War Cloud'



In this June 19, 2017, file photo President Donald Trump, left, and Satya Nadella, Chief Executive Officer of Microsoft, center, listen as Jeff Bezos, Chief Executive Officer of Amazon, speaks during an American Technology Council roundtable in the State Dining Room of the White House in Washington. Amazon and Microsoft are battling for a \$10 billion opportunity to build the U.S. military its first "war cloud." (AP Photo)

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

Amazon and Microsoft are battling it out over a \$10 billion opportunity to build the U.S. military its first "war cloud" computing system. But Amazon's early hopes of a shock-and-awe victory may be slipping away. Formally called the Joint Enterprise Defense Infrastructure plan, or JEDI, the military's computing project would store and process vast amounts of classified data, allowing the Pentagon to use artificial intelligence to speed up its war planning and fighting capabilities. The Defense Department hopes to award the winner-take-all contract as soon as August. Oracle and IBM were eliminated at an earlier round of the contract competition. But that's only if the project isn't derailed first. It faces a legal challenge by Oracle and growing congressional concerns about al-

leged Pentagon favoritism toward Amazon. Military officials hope to get started soon on what will be a decade-long business partnership they describe as vital to national security. "This is not your grandfather's internet," said Daniel Goure, vice president of the Lexington Institute, a defense-oriented think tank. "You're talking about a cloud where you can go from the Pentagon literally to the soldier on the battlefield carrying classified information." Amazon was considered an early favorite when the Pentagon began detailing its cloud needs in 2017, but its candidacy has been marred by an Oracle allegation that Amazon executives and the Pentagon have been overly cozy. Oracle has a final chance to make its case against Amazon — and the integrity of the government's bidding pro-

cess — in a court hearing Wednesday.



In this May 7, 2018, file photo Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella looks on during a video as he delivers the keynote address at Build, the company's annual conference for software developers in Seattle. Amazon and Microsoft are battling for a \$10 billion opportunity to build the U.S. military its first "war cloud." (AP Photo)

"This is really the cloud sweepstakes, which is why there are such fierce lawsuits," said Wedbush Securities analyst Daniel Ives. Ives said an opportunity that was a "no brainer" for Amazon a year ago now seems just as likely to go to Microsoft, which has spent the past year burnishing its credentials to meet the government's security requirements.

For years, Amazon Web Services has been the industry leader in moving businesses and other institutions onto its cloud — a term used to describe banks of servers in remote data centers that can be accessed from almost anywhere. But Microsoft's Azure cloud platform has been steadily catching up, as have other providers such as Google, in both corporate and government settings. With an acronym evoking Star Wars and a price tag of up to \$10 billion over the next decade, JEDI has attracted more attention than most cloud deals. A cloud strategy document unveiled by the Defense Department last year calls for replacing the military's "disjointed and stove-piped information systems" with a commercial cloud service "that will empower the warfighter with data and is critical to maintaining our military's technological advantage." In a court filing last month, Lt. Gen. Bradford Shwedo said further delays in the Oracle case will "hamper our critical efforts in AI" as the U.S. tries to maintain its advantage over adversaries who are "weaponiz-

ing their use of data." Shwedo said JEDI's computing capabilities could help the U.S. analyze data collected from surveillance aircraft, predict when equipment needs maintenance and speed up communications if fiber and satellite connections go down. Amazon was considered an early front-runner for the project in part because of its existing high-security cloud contract with the Central Intelligence Agency. It beat out IBM for that deal in 2013.

Worried that the Pentagon's bid seemed tailor-made for Amazon, rivals Oracle and IBM lodged formal protests last year arguing against the decision to award it to a single vendor.

In an October blog post, IBM executive Sam Gordy wrote that a single-cloud approach went against industry trends and "would give bad actors just one target to focus on should they want to undermine the military's IT backbone."



In this Feb. 14, 2019, file photo people stand in the lobby for Amazon offices in New York. Amazon and Microsoft are battling for a \$10 billion opportunity to build the U.S. military its first "war cloud." (AP Photo) LE - In this Feb. 14, 2019, file photo people stand in the lobby for Amazon offices in New York. Amazon

The Government Accountability Office later dismissed those protests, but Oracle persisted by taking its case to the Court of Federal Claims, where it has pointed to emails and other documents that it says show conflicts of interest between Amazon and the government. Oral arguments in that case are scheduled for Wednesday. The case has delayed the procurement process, though the Pentagon says it now hopes to award the contract as early as Aug. 23.

Oracle's argument is centered on the activities of a Defense Department official who later went to work for Amazon. Amazon says Oracle has exaggerated that employee's role in the procurement using "tabloid sensationalism."

Some defense-contracting experts say the conflict allegations are troubling.

"No one seems to deny that these were actual conflicts and the players affirmatively attempted to conceal them," said Steven Schooner, a professor of government procurement law at George Washington University. "That simply cannot be tolerated."

But Goure, whose think tank gets funding from Amazon but not from its cloud rivals Microsoft, Oracle or IBM, said the criticism is "coming from the also-rans." He says rivals like Oracle "missed the boat" in cloud technology and are trying to make up lost ground through legal maneuvers.

The Pentagon has repeatedly defended its bidding process, though the concerns have trickled into Congress and onto prime-time TV. Fox News host Tucker Carlson devoted a segment last month to the cloud contract that questioned an Amazon executive's 2017 meeting with then-Defense Secretary Jim Mattis. Carlson also aired concerns by Republican Rep. Mark Meadows, who said "the allegations are incredible" and should be investigated.

A Wall Street Journal report on Sunday further detailed government emails about that meeting and another one between Mattis and Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos later that year. In response, Sen. Chuck Grassley, an Iowa Republican, said the bidding process should be started over.

Pentagon spokeswoman Elissa Smith said while military leaders are expected to engage with industry, no one in the defense secretary's "front office" participated in drafting the contract requirements or soliciting bids.

Ives said it remains to be seen how much the conflict allegations will hurt Amazon or help Microsoft. Microsoft has largely stayed quiet during the dispute. In a statement, it focused on highlighting its 40-year partnership supplying the military with services such as email. (Courtesy axios.com)

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